Gothic Architecture And Divine: Gothic Cathedrals In Europe And St Peter’s Cathedral In Russia

Throughout this essay, the question” What are the ways in which the Divine was used as a generating concept in the design of Gothic cathedrals and churches in the Middle Ages?” will be discussed. Questions including “How did the resulting design goals generate new structural technologies to support a Gothic cathedral?” and “how were they expressed in the St Peter’s Cathedral interior?” will be answered throughout this essay.

Gothic Architecture came out in the Middle Ages with the first Gothic building built by the French in 1140A.D. The word “Gothic” always leads the mind to think of darkness, haunted or ghostly pale people. But actually the Gothic style is originally developed to bring sunshine into the churches and to the people. (Spanswick, 2014) It is a medieval styles of architecture and is developed from the Romanesque’s style, the term originally had a negative cogitation and it originated from the goths which were “a dramatic tribe that was considered barbaric by the distinguish romans”. (Coleridge, 1772-1834) So the reason of this architectural style came to be linked with barbarians is that the Gothic Architecture departed in pretty dramatic fashion from the classical Greek and Roman architecture styles, they were considered more formal. Quoted by Samuel Taylor Coleridge “the principle of the Gothic Architecture is infinity made imaginable. It is no doubt a sublime effort of genius than the Greek style but then it depends much more on execution for its effect.” (Coleridge, 1772-1834)

Gothic cathedrals are recognisable by its large size walls of stained glass windows, which allows light to fill up large spaces and create a heavenly environment to the cathedrals. One of the main challenge for Architects back then when lightbulbs was not invented yet, is how to best use ambient light to try to brighten the building. As Gothic cathedrals are known to be ferly dark in the inside as they are made out of Brikin stone. (Przybylek, 2015) The concepts and the ideas the French took were traditional methods of construction from around the near east and Europe and modified them to reduce large columns and walls and build higher than before.

Gothic Architecture started in France but the style quickly start on and became the standard of the cathedrals and churches around Europe, they are local variations like England; where the design is more horizontal and Italy embraced more colourful ornamentations. But they all share basic designs and engineering elements. Gothic Architecture lasted until the late fifteen hundreds, around the begging of the renaissance when it was gradually replaced, but the Gothic style will reappear again in different times, places and history. Gothic Architecture is a universal style but is also localized and each one of these original style has its own patristics that make it unique.

One on the themes in Gothic Architecture is verticality, and related to verticality is this idea of height so Gothic cathedrals buildings tends to be very tall and most of time they are the tallest building in the area. The religious significant of verticality and of height is to suggest that if these buildings are reaching toward the heavens. (Britannica, 2016)

One important element in Gothic Architecture is the pointed arch or also called as the ogival arch, which is used all over the building. From the wall and windows to decorations and ceilings,

for example figure 1.

Before Gothic Architecture, the French were aware of the rounded arch, which provides open space while maintain the strength of the walls. The French imported the pointed arch from the near east and can be seen on the Al Aqsa building; which is an Islamic Architecture design. The French took this idea as it gives the building height, as well as distributing the weight of the walls and roof that were mainly Birkin stone. (Inarh, 2016)

The groin vault ceiling was also created thanks to the pointed arch structure. This can be seen on figure 2. (Przybylek, 2018)By having vaulted ceilings lessens the need of stone columns. But usual if this was the case the columns that were use are thinner and taller which provided a new characteristic of Gothic Architecture. (Przybylek, 2015)

Looking at a gothic designed building it is very common to have rib vaulting ceilings Figure 3. (Anon., 2012) A structural development that allowed Architects to design these buildings to be taller than possible. This kind of design can hold a tremendous amount of weight due to its steep angle of the vaults. They also tend to be narrow for example the height of the wall are longer compared to the width of the ceiling. Which contribute with the verticality structure of the building, kind of like when a person is really skinning it makes them look taller than they really are. (Beyer, 2018)

Gothic Architecture is also known for its big doors and its timpanon; this will be shown on figure 4. (DANNIELLADIAZ, 2016)The timpanon usually contains sculptures and in some cases includes a rose window. Rose windows are very common in Gothic Cathedrals and rose window is usually on the west door. But in some cases the Gothic building that do not have them are the English cathedrals.

Glass and sculpture around the building was not only for decoration. These windows were used to convey the stories in the bible to a population of people that cannot read; for example if the person is blind or any situation a person who physically cannot read it, or people who has not read the bible before. This is also called the poor man’s bible, a way that they can share the stories or the meanings to more people just by looking at windows. (Pfingsten, 2018) .

At a time the population was a literate the embellishments showcase history to everyone and of course the gothic cathedral would not be complete without gargoyles. On a practical level they were spouts that move rainwater off the roof, on the spiritual level they scar people going to church.

An Adelaide Cathedral that is influenced by the Gothic Architecture that will be thoroughly analysed is St. Peter Cathedral.

Back in 1847 there were no cathedrals in Adelaide and that was also the year that the Trinity Church on North Terrace was denoted as the pro-tempore Cathedral church.

In 1848 the first Bishop of Adelaide Augustus Short, held the first ordinations there on St Peter’s Day. And in 1869 the foundation stone of St Peter’s Cathedral was laid on St Peter’s day on the 29th of June.

William Butterfield was the Architect that Augustus Short worked with to get the design and the

concept. Mr Butterfield was interested with working with stones and brick and create patterns with them. Example of his work can be seen on the buildings are the font near the front door and the Lady Chapel. They started building in 1869 and opened fully for services in 1877. But there were still elements of the building that were not finish. In 1901 they completed the rest of the nave, in 1902 the towers, 1904 the Lady Chapel and crypt. In 1911 the front steps were completed and was the last section to be completed on the Cathedral.

The St Peter's Cathedral Church have been influencing of French Gothic Architecture and it can be seen throughout the building especially the west front, where the rose window can be seen and the element/symbol can be found in many cathedral all over the world.

When entering the cathedral the structure of the reredos is one of the first people see, which can be seen on figure 5. (Andrews, 1984)It is massive and is 34 feet high and contains twenty-three panels and figures, and each one of them are coloured and gilded. On each side of the reredos are eighteen feet screens and in the centre is our lord leading in glory and under him are angels adoring him. By looking at figure 5 (Andrews, 1984) you can see Gothic Architecture all throughout the sculpture. All the panels that shows the intricate patterns and the centre piece that resembles a meaning or a story from the bible. Looking at the side of the structure is also two pointed arches that Gothic Architecture are known for, as well as verticality is also in this structure as it is very tall in size. (T.T. Reed C.B.E., 1983)

"The windows of the cathedral are great interest and fine quality. They provide examples of the stained-glass work's art since 1870. The largest is that in the southern Transept. It was designed by C.E. Kempe and dedicated on 15th August 1926." (Andrews, 1984) this quote was taken from a book that Brian Andrews wrote called "Gothic in south Australian Churches." By looking at figure 6 (Anon., 2019) it can be seen that there are a lot of door an windows for light to come through, which is an element that gothic architecture have. It can be seen that the St Peter building has a flower symble on the middle of the building, it is known to be called the rose window. Written above; the rose window is a signiture design that a lot of Gothic churches have.

Looking at figure 7 (Anon., 2019)you can also see that it symmetrical with its design and the size is a lot larger than other buildings in the area.

Figure 8(Anon., 2019) is the stained-glass windows inside the Cathedral. It can be seen that it resembles a story from the bible and back then call the poor man's bible. The shape that they use to hold it all together is the pointed arch, and the patterns on the windows is really similar to Islamic art that is all throughout Gothic Architecture. Figure 9(Anon., 2019) is the coloured photo of the reredos which is a centrepiece of the Cathedral. The photo shows the size of the sculpture and all the details that they have done on the panels. The figures and shape that they use made the sculpture look taller/vertical. Figure 10 (Anon., 2019) is an image of the inside of the front side of the building and is also an image that Gothic Architecture elements are shown. Gothic elements like the rose window, pointed arch, large doors and timpani, rib vaulting ceilings and groin vault ceiling can be seen. By looking these three images, it is clear to say that the Architecture design that they use all throughout these buildings is Gothic.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the St Peter's Cathedral has be large influences by Gothic Architecture, by the enormous size of the building to the stained-glass windows. Gothic elements like the pointed arch and the rose window are shown by just looking at the face of St

Peter’s Cathedral. Gothic Architecture has influenced the designs of churches all throughout history and even today. Not only it looks good but they included symbolism and thoroughly research how they can include techniques like light in the cathedral very well. (Anon., 2018)