

5504640284

Grace Oktaviani

Gian Lorenzo Bernini

Word Count: 1034

By using art styles most famous back then, art and architecture back then was used as a medium to present the ideas to the audiences. Hence famous and influential artists would always be asked to do work of arts assigned by high ranking or wealthy individuals. One of the artists famous back in the seventeenth century was Gian Lorenzo Bernini. As a highly regarded sculptor and architect, most of his artwork would be in the form of sculptures and architectural design. As a result of this, Bernini's art and architecture were effective tools used to gain support for the Catholic Church.

In order for his art works to be used effectively, Bernini uses the baroque style in the sculptures and architectural designs he had partaken in. The baroque style, which had just started to emerge and become well known in the seventeenth century, was known to be a style of art that uses expressive emotions or actions in order to deliver the idea being made known.<sup>1</sup> As one of the most prominent and leading sculptor and architect that popularized the baroque style, he was often asked to create various pieces of art by influential people such as the pope of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this his pieces could be seen in various places such as in Catholic churches. Additionally Bernini was also known to be a devout catholic therefore enabling him to produce pieces of artworks

---

<sup>1</sup> "Baroque." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.. 02 Sep 2012. Web. 06 Sep 2012. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque>>

that depict these religious beliefs.<sup>2</sup> One of his most famous artworks that reflect the ideology of Catholicism is the Ecstasy of Saint Theresa.<sup>2</sup> From these works that he has produced, it was able to convey the message of Catholicism through the emotions present on his artworks, such as the Ecstasy of Saint Theresa, hence allowing it to be an effective way used to gain support for the Catholic Church.

When the churches were influenced by the baroque style, they would also contain artworks (such as sculptures and paintings) and be more colossal than ones without the baroque influence.<sup>3</sup> These sculptures and paintings present in the churches would help gain support for the church through its messages from these artworks. Individuals who usually come would feel responsive by looking at this kind of representation for Catholicism. This is possible as the baroque style is used to illustrate an idea being made, usually of Catholicism or how much power one has.<sup>4</sup> As a result people who see these creations influenced by baroque would feel responsive, as their reactions would be conformed to what they see. Therefore if one sees a baroque work of art that is depicting about the Catholic religion people would remember about the Church and God and their obligation towards them, which would result in people supporting the Church.<sup>4</sup> One example of a sculpture that demonstrates this reaction is the Ecstasy of Saint Theresa. From this sculpture it is trying to convey the message of the feeling of ecstasy when one receives a message from God.<sup>4</sup> In order to convey this message, this sculpture is in front of hidden windows in order for the light to strengthen this message.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore having

---

<sup>2</sup> "Gian Lorenzo Bernini". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.* Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 06 Sep. 2012

<sup>3</sup> "Churches and Chapels: Triumph of the Baroque-NGA." *Churches and Chapels: Triumph of the Baroque-NGA.* National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2012. Web. 06 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2000/baroque/church1.shtm>>.

<sup>4</sup> Norman, Joanna. "Performance Art." *History Today* 59.4 (2009): 6-7. *Humanities Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*. Web. 6 Sept. 2012.

sculptures of the Cornaro family each donning a surprised facial expression on the left and right side of the chapel further highlights its message of abundant happiness from obtaining a message from God.<sup>4</sup> Additionally when one enter this chapel, since the highlight of this chapel is this sculpture, it is possible for these people to experience the emotions being brought out by this sculpture. Thus it is possible for people to convert into Catholics as people admire these artworks, unlike the Protestant churches where the interior of the church would be bare from any kind of artworks.<sup>5</sup> Consequently as more people would convert into Catholic or strengthening their beliefs by viewing the artworks, there would also be more people supporting the Catholic Church.

Additionally as the emergence of baroque was after the time where the Protestant reformation occurred, seeing that the baroque style was very popular with the people at that time the Catholic Church also used this as a method of counter-reformation against the Protestants and a medium to publicize their beliefs.<sup>6</sup> This was made possible as the Church and the Council of Trent believed that art should be one way to teach people and believers about the religion.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the Catholic Church supporting the development of baroque, this resulted in the widespread of baroque from Italy to around Europe.<sup>7</sup> Through the usage of this style of art, ideas regarding this religion were reinforced causing people to support this religion. Furthermore as this style of art, which was supported by the church, was different from the style of art Protestants had, as there were no artworks present in the Protestant churches.<sup>5</sup> This resulted in the increase of

---

<sup>5</sup> Jackson, James. "THE REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION." *THE REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Sept. 2012. <<http://staff.jccc.edu/jjackson/reformation.htm>>.

<sup>6</sup> "Gian Lorenzo Bernini". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 06 Sep. 2012

<sup>7</sup> "Baroque." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.. 02 Sep 2012. Web. 06 Sep 2012. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque>>

popularity for Catholicism. With the increase of popularity, more artworks would emerge hence strengthening people's faith regarding Catholicism. In return this would have resulted in more people supporting the Church hence showing how it is an effective method to gain support for the Church.

As a result of its popularity many used this style in order to gather support for the Church. This was possible as it was able to make people feel the emotions produced by the artworks. From these points it is evident that through the usage of emotions on the art and architecture, Bernini was able to effectively gather support for the Catholic Church.