

MODULE TITLE: Cultural Context of Architecture VI
MODULE CODE: ARC 711B1
HAND OUT No: 24

Reading:

There are many books on behaviour linked to architecture

Smith A, The Wealth of Nations, Penguin, London, 1986

Brecht B, The Life of Galileo, London, Eyre Methuen, 1960

Bryant G A, Practical Sociology, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995

Chandler A D, 1977, The Visible Hand, Belnap Press, Massachusetts & London, 1999

Giddens A, The Constitution of Society, Polity Press, 1984

Giddens A, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994

Giddens A, Modernity and Self Identity, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991

Searle J R, The Construction of Social Reality, Allen Lane, 1995

Taylor C, Multiculturalism; The Politics of Recognition, Princeton, Princeton Uni Press, 1994

The Visible Hand

The hand refers to Adam Smith's metaphor, that of an 'invisible hand' (Wealth of Nations) in 1776

<http://plus.maths.org/issue14/features/smith/>

just at the time of the American Revolution or war of independence

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution

in which the interaction between a free market and the personal interests of each individual provided a dynamic sufficient to resemble that of gravity in the cosmos – that Adam Smith so revered in the work of Sir Isaac Newton

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Newton

which became part of the mechanics believed to run the economy simply, as it were, by promoting a free market and encouraging individual economic activity.

At the same time

Although not necessarily materially linked in such a way as this page might imply

The enlightenment

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment

which was based on the premise that individuals could understand the world in which they lived by personal effort and enquiry – and carried with it, especially after biological research from the 19th Century onwards – the supposition that kings and queens were biologically similar to all individuals and that constitutions were collectives of some kind or another that required a new politics – usually democratic and revolutionary and some form of exegesis concerning perception which during this period was provided by Kant

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant#Kant.27s_theory_of_perception

offering a transcendental perception linking reason to experience – mind to world (see Gelernter) that is generally limited and restricted to the sort of mental image/environmental surroundings that has led or leads to the concept of forms in space being perceived as mental images of forms in space which is quite wrong and yet is also the generally accepted understanding of perception.

The Mirror of Nature

The concept of a mirror of nature, a representational model of the world available to reason i.e. in the head and correlated to natural science by way of action on the world and action of the world on the mental model is approximately the model used by the construction industry.

Discourse is perceived as discussion about the world and about the model of the world. However by the end of the 19th Century, beginning of the 20th, the novel and later film, started to explore what many

people still call subjective issues and art had already commenced work on exploration of itself, particularly as photography and moving pictures took over the job of pure picture making.

Social Science

Also in a parallel development the concept of scientific investigation of humanity in the form of a social science had emerged from the enlightenment and the French revolution

<http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist7.html>

based on the original ideas of Saint Simon for some kind of social interpretation

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Henri_de_Rouvroy%2C_Comte_de_Saint-Simon

developed by Comte

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auguste_Comte

who coined the term sociology

the belief in science based on Newtonian cosmology had the effect of linking politics to the economy as a mechanism with an increasingly hands on attitude that has now, today, arrived at the ecological proposition of full control of human society in relationships to planet earth.

The catastrophic split between science and art that typified the split between those who wished that the enlightenment had gone further by allowing knowledge to become discursive and those who wished that knowledge would become fixed, as a take on the issue, obscured the fact that knowledge is of course both discursive and fixed for *homo sapiens sapiens*. Incursions by both sides into each others transactional space makes it almost impossible to remedy the situation especially whilst it remains common to discuss subjective and objective as if we can take the body out of the world or the world out of the body. Overall the problem of consciousness is seminal – made difficult by the obsession known as the problem of mind because the introspection that failed for psychology in the late 19th early 20th Century is perpetuated in cognitive science by the subject of consciousness acting on the rational models of time and space that we produce by way of work and labour.

If we take the discontent with work and labour as an issue, the plan and structure that has sedimented out in the form of work practices and daily expectations (labour) will require corrections that must emerge not as structure but as discourse. It is this discourse that is the political and economic manifestation of change required or desired and not thought or introspection, which is necessary but simply a neural organisation of phenomena that will otherwise be edited and boosted out or in of the lexicon of phenomena used in plans and structures already sedimented by virtue of speed and correctness and accuracy within such plans and structures.

In the current political economic climate it appears that the necessary discourse is unfree and converted into consumer product rather than a political economic necessity of change and adaptation.

Bachelard (see handout 22) called this the epistemic shift and such a shift would be expected precisely when there is a failure of any existing plan and structure to provide for the economic moment or to avoid any movement too far about the moment of excess, especially in a democratic situation.

Liberalism generally led to rationalising plans and structures so that psychological profiles became necessary to explain how agents of such plans and structures could conform to plan and structure and similarly be antagonistic to such plans and structures. Egalitarian socialism can be similar when equality is seen not as freedom to engage in discourse but as equal shares of a 'pot' and freedom from hunger or illness – the fact of freedom to engage in discourse is the only way to engage all homo sapiens sapiens without requiring a plan which, whilst it definitely provides a commensurate model for all, fails to be inclusive of all individuals simply because many individuals will not agree with one plan.

Is there then the obvious idea of a discursive architecture?