

MODULE TITLE: Cultural Context of Architecture VI
MODULE CODE: ARC 711B1
HAND OUT No: 26 with apologies for being ill we will make up the time

Essential Reading: -

Scott G, The Architecture of Humanism, New York London, W W Norton, 1999

Hysterical Structures

Possibly more appropriately Obsessive Constructs

Perhaps we should stop fooling ourselves and understand that the silo mentality will not go away unless the benefits of having a silo mentality go away first of all.

Cultural hegemony is a concept coined by Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci. It means that a diverse culture can be ruled or dominated by one group or class, that everyday practices and shared beliefs provide the foundation for complex systems of domination.

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

If we understand the political economy as being that general democratic provision of asking a smallish group of administrators to assess the wealth of the total group of constituents and then handle the economy so as to sustain wealth and economic activity, then it is pretty clear that knowledge will become valuable.

We know that knowledge is a construct – but there are two distinct views about this The KANTIAN model in which reason perceives reality and the construct transcends both so that a construct is understood as a model of reality.

Appended to this *kantian* model is the notion of LOGOS being the location of transcendental REASON as the human relationship to reality transcended into either utopian or idealistic constructs as perfect or true (without doubt *because* agreed as without doubt by another sceptical thinker – see **Scruton R**, A Short History of Modern Philosophy, Routledge, 1995 p.31 [which is wrong by the way in case you thought it was right])

These utopian and idealistic constructs have taken several forms and Scott's book is a good indication of these as four categories of hysteria or obsession being

- The biological fallacy
- The ethical fallacy
- The mechanical fallacy
- The romantic fallacy

And reading Scott's book will be very helpful to you I believe

Unfortunately Scott's interest in anthropomorphism

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropomorphism>

is plain daft

although his dislike of what he irritatingly calls academic tradition which is really scientism and historicism

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientism>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism>

- both execrable activities of silo academics it is true -
however to call it an academic tradition does not help us to understand that academe is probably the only place in which the silo can be deconstructed and ignores the fact that the silo is well and massively held in place by practice and research as it happens, sadly.

The OTHER model I am going to call the LACANIAN or psychiatric model

This model also has the perception of reality but from a place of appearance from which we also become conscious of our neural organization so that our very understanding is a construct and never transcends but only represents, it is thus symbolic and uses symbols, signs and is essentially linguistic not as a SPECIFIC language but as the very concept of language.

Constructs are concepts having phenomena, categories, syntax and articulations that allow understanding to take place by an individual who may then seek to socialise that understanding through the use of spatial and temporal distinctions.

Social structures are spatial and temporal distinctions

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

in the production of which architecture must surely have a particular part to play – particularly in the experimental provision of temporal and spatial distinctions based on social understandings that are socially relevant to individual participants as constituents in a constitution

Those of you who wish to explore more about the alternative to LOGOS which is the possibility of a limited form of relativity in which social relativities are combined more or less according to the freedom in which they are immersed (the absence of cultural hegemony for example) and the use of dialogue then see

Schrag C O, Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity, Indiana, Indiana Press, 1986

And also read

Frampton K, Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance, IN Foster H, The Anti Aesthetic, Port Townsend, Bay Press, 1983, pp.16-30

Some of you may well also think about the difference between social relativity and global homogenization in the way values are altered significantly when the KANTIAN and LACANIAN models are compared and you may like to consider planning to read

Simmel G, the Philosophy of Money, London and New York, Routledge, 2004 later on in your studies if you are going on to do a PhD, for example.

And of course you will find

Arendt H, The Human Condition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969 of interest as is often the case in this particular module

I will be interested to hear your comments on this and ask you to find a time when we can make up the hours lost through my unwelcome absence this week, apologies again.BT