

MODULE TITLE: Cultural Context of Architecture I

MODULE CODE: ARC115

HAND OUT No: 3

Reminder of Essential Reading:

- **Addis B**, Building, Phaidon Press, 2007

For those students who have not managed to arrange their lives in such a way as to

- a. purchase the Addis or
- b. look at it in the library or
- c. borrow the Addis from a friend and look at it

We have provided a few slides taken from the Addis which you can see in the book list below.

The point about being at the university is to gradually learn to arrange the epicentre of your attention so that, for a short or long period of time, important references to the way the world works, so to speak, are related to you and you to them. Sometimes you must move to them, sometimes they move to you. Cognizing importance when it appears and learning how to cope with sentience

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

is a skill acquired by practice. Those of you who have looked at the Addis will recognise the images you see. Those who have not will merely cognize them – unless of course you have seen them before coming onto this course. In many cases you will have seen similar images because they are archetypal to human activity when making. Thought, Word and Deed.

Thinking and the Expression of Thought

Unfortunately there is a long history of common sense attitudes to communication. For example we still talk about the rising sun. I would imagine that half of each year's first year intake actually still believes that the sun rises. They know that the earth goes round the sun but it has never, ever, occurred to half of the year that this is not at all what we say. We say that the sun rises and sets; it is what it appears to do. We refer to it and if we try to refer to it as it really is, as a disappearance and appearance of the sun as the earth we are on revolves on its axis and around the sun most people would find us strange, representing that half of the year who will have found this paragraph odd and strange.

Many people believe that either

- a. Because it is difficult to get people to alter the way they communicate or
- b. Because the way people communicate is adequate enough for the purpose

that any attempt to make the expression of belief manifest by struggling to find a way to express it is rather pointless; a waste of effort.

If any individual can manage to believe that the world is a place of sweetness and light in which everyone gets fed and watered and sheltered (somehow) and if not they must be very very bad people indeed, then the idea that manifesting a struggle is pointless has value. However the physical struggle to find food and water and a place in which to sustain such findings, these have proved to be difficult to manage in all locations and for all people. The basic physical struggle is only partially successful. Thus there is more to be done; obviously not by everyone.

You may have seen the argument on posters, that to provide a fish is short term, to teach an individual to fish is long term. To make fishing part of a way of life is sustainable. Some people don't like fish? The point is not about fish, it is about sustainability. The thing about fish is choice, it could be making gardening a way of life, farming a way of life and so on.

The architectural thing is about taking part in a sustainable way of life. The choice is not to take part or to leg it to some poor part of the world and start handing out fish. The choice is to start thinking about how we can manage to obtain a sustainable way of life. This is usually what people think about because they need food and water on a less than daily basis, particularly water.

Our particular interest is in architecture. The reasons for our interest will be many and varied but hopefully it is not simply that there is a job in it for someone and it may as well be (me). That in itself is fine so far as it goes, labour and work are useful and necessary. However the point about sustainability is that labour and work can simply make fish or a sustainable fishing technology.

We can make buildings or a sustainable building technology.

On what is the sustainable building technology based?

What is a building technology? The one we are talking about in our meetings is not the one that simply provides us with fish.

We can learn from history

That is if we have picked up the Addis at all and looked through its pages (or carried out a similar process by touring the world – less likely for most of us) that there are many technologies just as there are many types of fish.

It is in the nature of things that there are reasons for difference, but it is often the case that the reasons given are combinations of things and relationships that actually alter and as it were cause the difference to become yet again different from its previous differences.

In your essay you must elaborate and articulate your thoughts and the procedures that you believe take place in the real world. In addition you should start to imagine how the real world might be altered by circumstances, which means you must think of the circumstances that matter and compare them to what you can find out about the real world and what you already imagine to be real and imagine to be done and thought in the real world.

Remember that for help on setting out an essay you have the book reference

Warburton N, The Basics of Essay Writing, London and new York, Routledge, 2007

And there is Paddy's 'exciting writing' at the head of this web site that will help you to understand more about creative writing.