

MODULE TITLE: Cultural Context of Architecture II

MODULE CODE: ARC116B2

HAND OUT No: 7.2

Constructs and Programs

Essential Books for the course

Thompson B, Architectural Hermeneutics XIII: The Missing Link, IN, Crossing Boundaries, Craig T (ed), Scott Sutherland School, Aberdeen, 2003, pp.27-34 (copy on www.billthompson.info)

1. keep a sense of humour
2. remember to retain a sense of proportion socially in that when in Rome at least be aware of the Romans and perhaps even when away from Rome be aware that they may be listening and might have an opinion and a notebook handy

What should perturb us is that the industrial approach to providing our basic needs has become so far removed from common experience and even social discourse whilst the global experience remains one of terror and internecine belief systems rather than any effort to encourage cultural links between different parts of the basic infrastructure that sustains us.

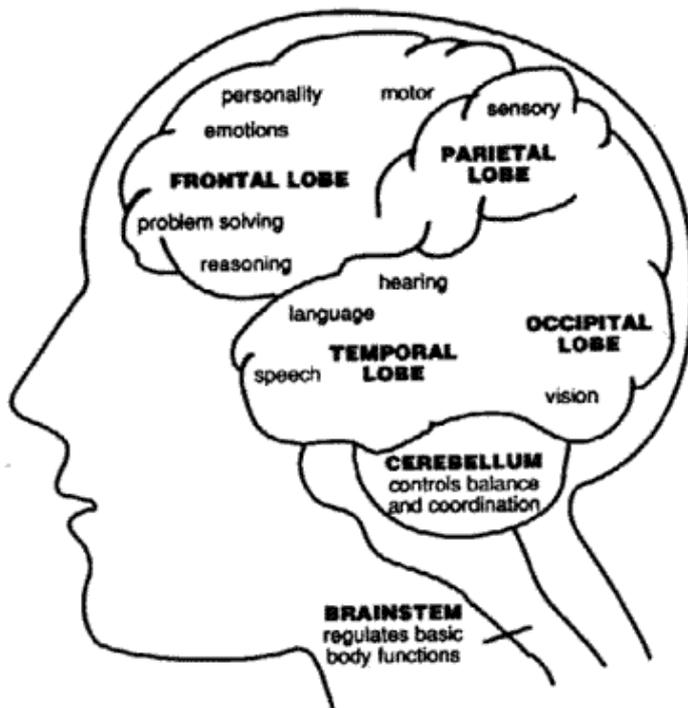
Even dear old Amos Rapoport¹ who has studied culture and architecture for decades maintains that we can't explain culture but that's because he can't or at least is restricted from doing so by the hegemonic American culture. In fact he explains it quite sufficiently as the leaning towards certain traits in any identity so that an apparently heterogeneous group of people (thus a group that does not appear to be identified easily in any social identity) acts and thinks aloud to promote those traits and the identity that is most fitting for it no matter what the circumstances².

The opposite of cultural hegemony is existential freedom and the way that works is that the individual is allowed to value whatever they want with whatever context they feel appropriate and they transact with those around them both geographically and as is now possible intellectually (in other words the immediate senses may be biochemically removed from our immediate apperception but we do have direct access to the results via our emotions/feelings and we can act directly on what surrounds us but once we refer to anything beyond our immediate analogue distal relationships we must have intellectual means in order to explore the meaning and value of what appears to consciousness in its phenomenological beginnings so that we can take appropriate action in relation to it.

We, the human species, use this intellectual apperception all the time but we imagine it applies to a geographical area all too easily because we move through a geographical area as an experience of our everyday lives. In fact much of what we experience throughout any day is very much removed from our direct surroundings as a percentage of what we believe to be contextual. Thus our intellectual ability is far more important, especially in the urban scale of interpersonal transactions, than our reflexive abilities in most immediate surroundings, emergencies excluded and so it should be no surprise that we have huge intellectual resources in the shape of our cerebral cortex:

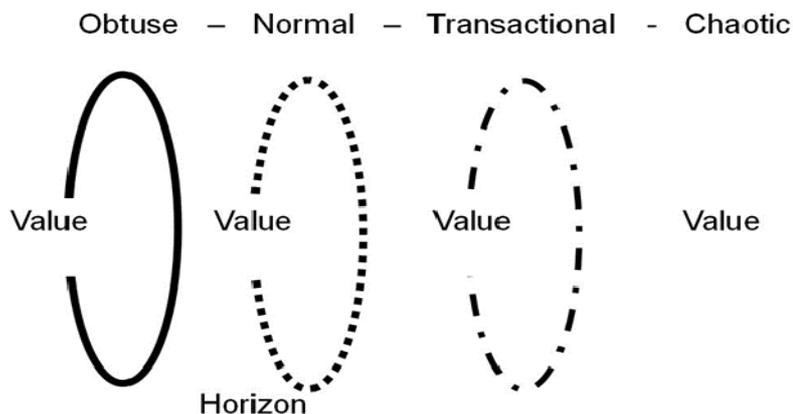
¹ **Rapoport A**, Culture Architecture and Design, Chicago, Locke Science Publishing Co, 2005

² Only a small percentage of the first year u/grads may be interested in reading more about this but later years and those who are keen in year one can see the following two authors on this **Castells M**, The Power of Identity, Oxford, Blackwell, 1997 and **Agnew J**, Hegemony, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2005



You should take the relationship between value and image as one that you arrive at as the result of an intellectual relationship with your own experience (or else as the result of valuing the images you are given and/or are told to value and then reverse engineer your emotions to agree with what you are told to do because you are punished or rewarded accordingly).

The value relationship to image may take several forms and these may be usefully categorised as having four types:



The image represents the value and the strength of the horizon represents the intellectual context in which the image relates to other images held in the imagination as constructs and programs that allow the intellect to relate to more than simply the immediate surroundings in thought whilst being compelled to react only to the immediate surroundings in action (for good or ill).

I know this is difficult to understand but hey, you do it every single second of your life!