

MODULE TITLE: Cultural Context of Architecture VII

MODULE CODE: ARC 731

HAND OUT No: 32 - Ricoeur and Habermas

Essential Reading:

Ricoeur P, *The Conflict of interpretations : essays in hermeneutics*, London, Continuum Publishing Group, 2004

Habermas J, 1990, *Justification and Application*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993

See also these web sites:

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

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%BCrgen_Habermas

The work of the French philosopher Ricoeur is seminal to the work of the phenomenologist Don Ihde¹. Any interest in Ricoeur is usually connected to the theological background of his work that suggests some sort of truth may be found through hermeneutics, which is to say that interpretation might give us truth. This is discussed in some detail in Porter - Porter R, *Ideology*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2006 – in which one of the subjects is Ricoeur. Ricoeur's interest in existential effort and hermeneutics is linked to his belief or questioning belief in a theological basis for global truth and Ihde's interest or adulation of Ricoeur seems to rely on the value provided by any isomorphic technological links between interpretation of the world and our provision for humanity by way of creating environments. Problems of serendipitous differences between local-global realities and thus values of representations when used globally and locally and subliminal differences between authors who may seek global accommodation and assimilation make the possibility of a single truth extremely unlikely.

Habermas has a similar quest for truth with discourse providing a mediating and dynamic interface between people so that there is a potential for truth to be a dynamic discourse constantly altering to allow for changes brought about by serendipitous and subliminal inseminations of individuals and environments during the discourse. Since these changes are continuous what seems to be a solution becomes a problem of value for most individuals whose lives are spent labouring and hoping for a replacement of labour with work and social action to bring work into a range of celebrations of humanity such as music, poetry, sculpture as work or sustainable accumulation in the form of musician, poet and artist and the freeing of value from superstition and force majeure. This is particularly a problem for radical democracy since the labourers are the greatest in number when value of humanity is at low tide and a few individuals dictate what is valuable on the purely hedonistic basis of their own interests. It should be clear that an individual who has a vision or context or even paradigm of their own installed into what ought to be discursive interactions between all people cannot hope to be local enough or global enough to be truthful so that it is either a lie or less than full of truth. The problem with philosopher kings and benevolent dictators is just that. They are either incapable of any overarching global truth or incapable of any satisfactory isomorphism between local truths with the result that cloning of types is licensed removing in the process the license for most people to think. The model of modern democracy is very much along those lines and the people have colluded by reducing

¹ Ihde D, *Expanding Hermeneutics*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1998

their own valuation of voting rights whilst simultaneously handing over more and more authority to newspapers, television and legislation based on single issue politics rather than justice.

Problems arise because in order to cooperate individuals must share deterministic logic. This can be strong or weak in the sense that it can be applied fundamentally or with a sense of irony as indeed Richard Rorty *1931* - suggests.

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

Language can be used to extend what Kant described as a transcendental completion of a-priori and a-posteriori situations - experience and recursive exploration of experience (thinking through experience and possible future experience) to a structural coupling of pointing to and pointed at which is the signifier and the signified in semiotics. This allows a reference to be made to phenomena without fixing them other than the agreement to agree to the structural coupling and the use of phenomena in so doing. Thus words can point to things and declarations and procedures can be made in a number of strengths and with varying skill.

The ability of language to point to and bring into consciousness the pointed at allows phenomena referred to as paradigmatic in that they are included within a boundary that matches the performance of other individuals rather than the fact of the language. Thus the number of words available to users and the skill in grammatical constructs produces individuals who are novices, natives and experts within that paradigm.

This leaves the belief in the paradigm as a major issue so that the value linking labour, work and social action (i.e. the strength of logical determinism extant within a paradigm) becomes the provenance of the belief. The current problem of democracy, which is the development of the logical deterministic cooperation to a sustainable level of immersion, is that value is in the hands of bankers rather than the elected representatives of the people AND of course that the elected representatives of the people are in it for the money rather than the development of the logical deterministic cooperation to a sustainable level of immersion.

On this point see - Paine T, *Rights of Man*, London, Penguin Books, 1985

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

In architectural terms logical determinism is not something that is out there waiting for us because ultimately it relies upon a belief in value that corresponds to the emphasis upon the paradigm which in turn relies upon the structural coupling that relies upon the phenomena to couple which relies upon the individuals and their willingness and ability to transcendently couple perception, imagination and representation into belief. The term for this is teleology with a caveat regarding provenance.

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

The caveat is that no matter what the wiki site says in places the teleological nature of belief in the paradigm relies upon the constant experience of any individual to exist in the local whilst believing in the global, hence the requirement for cultural hegemony and the notion of a diaspora of individuals invoking that hegemony so that social action continually reasserts belief by supporting the values associated with it.