

MODULE TITLE: Cultural Context of Architecture IV
MODULE CODE: ARC303B2
HAND OUT No: 14

Related Reading:

Forty A, *Objects of Desire*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1995

The Public Realm

Once the interpretation of the individual is established as the ultimate place of understanding – for that individual – then there are problems of interpretation and thus action upon a world that must remain for ever unknown to others and indeed to the world, which has very little capacity for understanding.

The three possible concepts linked to this paradox are the individual, the union of others with the individual and the world.

The world may be seen as alien to the union and/or to the individual or as including the others and the individual. For some time the concept of ideal perception or ideal interpretation, usually associated with Kant and Hegel, similarly correlated to Descartes,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/d/descarte.htm>

as the mind/body problem

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind-body_problem

or the spirit/material problem, confused the issue and it was probably people such as Nietzsche

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

who popularised the notion of the non meaning world so that interpretation could get a look in.

None the less the problem of money, following on from the origination of the banking 'system' in the late 17th Century, gave rise to the control not of interpretation but of money and the ability to pay in what had become a dynamic rather than a static system. Prior to the 18th century the concept of wealth was material wealth but subsequently it was spending power or controlling power of the FLOW of cash and the ability to dip into it at leisure, perhaps literally.

Re-examined in this way the flow of cash can hardly be said to be in the hands of the workers, although in the majority, especially as slave labourers and day workers, the workers had no control of the flow of cash except from payment to table, the labouring classes as Arendt points out in her work are removed from politics except as a liability and cost that has to be met or allowed to wither away.

Workers, the servicing classes and managers, are more likely to dip into cash flows but it would seem that their ability to do so corresponds to their licking the boots of their owners and masters rather than applying their own interpretations. The flow of cash, then, is a major controlling mechanism and since the 17th century it has made a civilised version of violence and hedonism possible since the use of brute force and ignorance is less necessary when people are able to make choices based on cash

rewards rather than simply fear and the possibility of discomfort being visited upon them. Essentially however it is exactly the same condition in which authority is in place for its own purposes rather than for the benefit of all, thus the public domain simply does not exist!

Make a note of the industrialising tendency of manufacturers in the 18th Century based on work produced in the 'Forty' book listed above, related reading,

This is what the site suggests

<http://www.wedgwood.com/BrandWedgwood.aspx?Market=221&MenuIndex=6>

"Wedgwood is a name recognized instantly around the world. Josiah Wedgwood, the 'Father of English Potters', founded the company in 1759. He set the standard for high quality and continual innovation that has made Wedgwood an essential in the homes of today. From the creation of Jasper and Queen's Ware then to the purity of fine bone china now, Wedgwood has never accepted second best. Today a stellar cast of International designers lend their skills to shape Wedgwood for the 21st century and beyond." Accessed Feb.08

however according to Forty the original reason for Wedgwood's business was, quite legitimately, to make money in a field that was open to exploitation. The selling of goods by image (book and sample) meant that consistency became necessary in manufacture, this gave rise to sorting out difference between workers and processes so that the individuality of a person did not get in the way, alter, improve or adapt, the work ordered by the punter so that exactly what was ordered was delivered. The designer became part of the wedgwood stable of designers, horses for courses, as did all the craftspersons, but only those who could and would bow to the authority of similarity and profit.

Forty suggests that the designer is one who does indeed bow to several influences, including cost and popularity, thus the designer is not such an innovator in the way of the 'artist' although the artist signifier, the label artist, may be applied to part of what the designer does. The designer though is not as free from authority, unless of course the designer becomes the owner and entrepreneur as well and risks his or her capital on the product, in which case however the designer may then become a business person and bow to the influences of the banking system and its definition of good design.