Capitalist ideology spatial syntax analysis cultural studies essay

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1. 0 Provisional Title of Study

Architectural Ideologies

1. 1 Background

In this dissertation I will endeavour to investigate the power of buildings by looking into two ideological systems of power. The first will be the feudal system and how the state illustrated power through the building of palaces, using the Tower of London, as an example. To juxtapose this, I will also investigate the ideologies of the capitalist system and its influence in by examining government buildings, using the Greater London Authority (GLA) City Hall as a case study. Both are buildings which accommodate the ruling institution, however, the demonstrations of power through the two ideologies are entirely diverse. The first deals with the power of the monarchy using religion and spiritual representation to impose coercion to society. The latter has its premise in the capitalist function of producing and capital circulation and how these buildings promote seeming transparency with their forms to indicate a progression of society. Therefore, my chosen question of debate

is; how do the ideological effects of feudal and capitalist architecture ensure social coercion and consent? The two representations of power pose two different methods of control and exhibit the methodologies accordingly through architectural design. The feudal system relied primarily on imposing its influence by power over society however the capitalist system has been argued to influence a power to society (Dovey, 1999, 02). This transition of ideology signifies the Post- Marxist theoretical perspective that society has surpassed the production of commodity into a society which consumes and reproduces information and product. The medieval palace as a representation of feudal ideology, exhibits power through the building fabric experienced both externally and internally by the arrangement of spaces to coerce individuals within its confines. Likewise the geographical location of the building signifies its importance within the feudal society. To juxtapose this historical aspect, the modern equivalent expresses its ideology through its material composition and geographical location also, however, it exhibits itself contrarily to its counterpart. Therefore, this investigation is to understand how our perception and urban experience has changed, and if so has the urban condition hidden power to a subconscious state by the circulation of capital and sublime power to ensure social consent?

1. 3 Aims/Objectives:

The aim of this document is to produce an 8000 word dissertation which examines the effect of ideologies of two systems of power and their relationship in asserting coercion and consent to society. This paper will endeavour to investigate how architecture has been used as a vehicle to illustrate power and how it has assisted in the transition of ideologies from

an obvious statement of power to a sublime state in society. To identify the institution of power in the feudal state and how it achieved coercion and consent via intimidating statements of power and religious dogma through structures. To identify the capitalist ideology through the circulation of capital and to achieve social coercion and consent by a seemed transparency to government through the promotion of economics. To examine two buildings of state power by using Hiller and Hanson's (1984) spatial syntax analysis method to understand spatial restrictions and prohibitions to individuals of the opposing buildings. To understand and illustrate the argument by using a Post-Marxist theoretical perspective.

Literature Review

The following section is to introduce a variety of authors texts which aim to demonstrate the argument presented in a balanced form. In this section, the texts outlined will identify with the subject of power, ideologies and the institutions which promote the leverage of social power. The literature review will subsequently discuss the institutions of power via feudal and capitalist social influence upon society.

2. 1 Power and Ideology

Dovey discusses that the ideological constructions of place concerns itself with several factors which lead around basing a core social structure around the idea of living the good life. This includes the spectrum of property, family and privacy, human rights and the individual which all are manipulated to fit in with this system of belief. Likewise this extends further to assumptions about the state, justice, democracy, authority, gender, status and class which fall into a broader category which concern a group of people rather

than the individual (Dovey, 1999, 45). Williams argues that this form of ideology legitimises itself within the built environment through reproducing itself from the small scale such as a house, to the large urban city scale. This is intrinsically linked with the traditional Marxist notion of a false consciousness which is integrated into our model of meaning, or rather culture (Williams, 1983, 16 – 33). This construct fits well with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which identifies that human beings have layers of needs and which each one requires to be fulfilled in order for the next criteria to be accomplished. The main goal of this process is for the individual to reach self-actualisation, whereby all the previous needs are met and the individual has reached their full potential (Zastrow et al, 2010, 448 - 449). This construct would suggest that it allows for ideologies to assist, or provide the necessary framework for an individual to reach self-actualisation as it provides notions of belief, or lifestyle desires. Therefore, the systems of belief and ideologies become almost viable to the needs of an individual perhaps are not just a notion of mere false consciousness. Bourdieu expresses that architecture and the ideology it represents is sublime, ' The most successful ideological effects are those that have no words, and ask no more than complicitous silence' (Bourdieu, 1977, 188). This argument expresses that the social order is undetected and taken for granted within its context and is the given structure of social order and therefore, becomes subconscious. It is, Bourdieu argues, the silent discourse of architecture which seduces society and ensures compliance. It is this context that architecture possesses the deepest associations with power (Dovey, 1995, 01). Markus discusses buildings and power by understanding its users whereby he explains that there are two users of a building; the inhabitants

and its users. The inhabitants have investment of power and therefore, possess the control and are the controllers. Although, the visitor experiences the building for only a short period of time and so is argued to be the controlled group, typically visitors, shoppers, inmates patients or an audience whose duration is variable depending on the function of the building (Markus, 1993, 13).

2. 2 Feudal Ideology

To understand the premise and ideology of religious power through monastic rule, I must identify what the paper determines by religion and kingship. This can be supported by Monod, that the term of religion is a system which is based on the belief of a supernatural deity, which through self-control and behavioural constraints, an individual can achieve enlightenment or salvation (Monod, 1999, 09). The king likewise, is a term which will be used to understand the figurehead of the monarchical system, which equally encompass queens, emperor and tsars. The hierarchal system of power may also include other notions of nobility which may encompass barons and lords with the king as the head of state. Monod argues that in the medieval era, the monastic rule in Europe was not solely confined to a system of world power, but rather it was a link and reflection of God. The king provided the bridge to the divine and conversely provided a link to the common man (Monod, 1999, P1). Monod examines the argument that the state developed via the canon of religious faith, which used visions of the sacred and divine at the centre of the system. This relationship however, has experienced tensions at times due to beliefs that the king was answerable to the papacy, rather than a link to god himself. Therefore, Monod exemplifies that the state

surpasses the notion of a governing framework; it is an ideal of governance. To represent this notion, the medieval monarch figureheads of kings are used to be the mortal representation of that ideal (Monod, 1999, P9). Their power and representation therefore, provided ample justification for their position within the feudal society and the architecture therefore acted as a physical embodiment of this power. Pugin understood that architecture, for him, the gothic form was the truest embodiment of architecture and expressed his viewpoints against the prevailing industrial capitalist style of architecture as being fake or dishonest. He personifies the power of religious faction and will power, by being a contributor to the gothic revival in the 19th century (Hill, 2007). In Pugin's treatise The Principals of True Christian Pointed Architecture and Contrasts, Pugin openly criticises the emerging capitalist architecture. Through this, he demonstrates that architectural forms and techniques used in feudal society were far superior to his social context. This could indicate that industrial capitalism signified the decline in the feudal system, which also meant a decline in the power of the church and monarchy. Likewise, Daniel Rock also understood the power of architecture and its effect on society. ' He too believed in the sacred power of art and architecture; they were, he thought to the mass itself as the body was to the soul, the physical expression of a spiritual reality' (Hill, 2007, 168). This link with religious ideology signifies the importance of architecture and its links with the spiritual plain of the connection by the individual and their architectural interactions with feudal buildings.

2. 3 Capitalist Ideology

Harvey states that the city houses the process of circulated capital, from which employs an assortment of productive forces undertaken out by labour for profit. This process is sustained by the demand from global markets, from which the city's product is exchanged further on the global market, which is distributed accordingly and organised for further continued circulation of capital. This system is populated by individuals whom reproduce themselves via income, and finance acquired from the process and circulation of capital, which derives from wages (Harvey, 1985, 250). Although not strictly a Post-Marxist, Grayling argues that late capitalism has replaced religion ' both the language and the images offer what religion once did – a common structure' (Grayling, 2001, 148). Grayling argues how capitalism has perhaps replaced the spirituality in our lives with materialism and that we are not influenced by priests preaching religious dogma, rather we are influenced by the structure of the capitalist agenda. Therefore, one could argue that this causes a passive submissiveness of society that is instilled by capitalism, that unlike religious preaching we are unaware of the institutions of power, and therefore society gives consent to be controlled. Grayling suggests that the argument that consumption is not oppression is very robust. Therefore, it could be argued that happiness is things worth having such as love, kindness and wisdom and that these could all be bought. However, it seems none of these may be purchased in the world's many shopping malls (Grayling, 2001, 149). This idea contributes to the perceptions of social lifestyle, and the style of the individual whom has their own desire to cohere to this perception. This idea contributes well to Harvey's argument that this affixes workers and individuals into their own conceptions of lifestyle, which incorporate the

participant's desires and therefore consumer habits, it provides capitalists a platform to secure passivity to the labour practice. Moreover, the capitalist is able to acquire unique and thriving niches in the wider market for their own sales (Harvey, 2000, 112). With this compliance and control over the market and perceived lifestyles of the target markets, this ensures further compliance and consent by society as their materialistic desires and needs are fulfilled and therefore, satisfied. Lowe argues that our current model of lifestyle is based within the confines of social associations of consumption in late capitalism, which are both, diverse from class status as the social relations of production (Lowe, 1995, 67). This consumption identifies with the capitalist notion of growth and progress and therefore contributes to the action of the individual within the capitalist ideology.

2. 4 Spatial Syntax Analysis

Markus explains in his publication Buildings and Power, the method of analysing various buildings via Hiller and Hanson's (1984) spatial syntax method. The paper will identify this tool, and attempt to illustrate the evidence of power through the analysis of the palace and a government building. This should identify and reinforce the argument that the feudal ideology imposed its power through the controlled movement of its user, or restricted paths to certain individuals by coercing their paths physically according to their status in the social hierarchy. Whilst the contemporary counterpart of capitalism could perhaps appear to be more transparent however, the tool will attempt also to understand if there are any controlled spaces with respect to the individual and their respective social status.

3. 0 Theoretical perspective

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will endeavour to use a Post Marxist perspective with regards to research matter and discussion. The dialogue will outline viewpoints from influential thinkers such as Michel-Foucault, Antonio Gramsci and Kim Dovey which will form the basis of debate. The points discussed will be in relation to the social effect of power and ideological values which aim to reinforce the discussion. The Post Marxist perspective contributes well to this discussion due to the recognition that there has been a transition in society from the production of commodity to a society which reproduces information and images for consumption. This basis therefore, follows the argument which Foucault presents that power is not centralised to a specific group, or class. Rather, the location of power is situated within the fabric of society and which affects each individual and therefore, situates power from the bottom up (Watt, 2012, 13). This contributes well to the discussion because it enforces the argument that through both feudal and capitalist ideologies requires self-regulation of and participation of the individual. Likewise, Post Marxist theorists understand that there are many sub cultures which contribute to society which includes divisions of sexual, ethnic, gender and religious identities. This contradicts the Marxist view of a social class which illustrates the notion of the class struggle against traditional forms of power. The Post Marxist perspective understand that the sub cultures fragment the idea of a whole social class, and therefore are currently exhibiting oppression and struggle which now replaces the idea of the traditional social class struggle (Watt, 2012, 13).

4. 0 Methodology

To produce a coherent and well formulated dissertation, this methodology will outline the methodology and the steps necessary to answer the given question. This section also includes for ethical issues and limitations, resources and schedule of work. To investigate the feudal and capitalist institutions of power and the ideologies that are affiliated by using relevant literature via historical and current records. To analyse two buildings of power via a palace and modern government building using the spatial syntax analysis method to establish differences and social reflections within the feudal and capitalist state using the GLA and the Tower of London palace as an example due to their relevance to their respective institutions of power and control. This will also require a visit to site to gather information such as floor plans, information and visual representations. Acquire plans and schematics of the GLA and the Tower of London palace. To understand the institutions and social conditions within the respective contexts with regards to social discourse. This includes evidence of art, literature and social narratives which demonstrate the respective ideologies which will be sourced from relevant texts and archived information. Include and locate relevant images whether they are sourced or authors own supporting the written information. To provide a conclusion to the study which encompasses the context of the institutions of power and the methods used to coerce and ensure consent to society by endorsing a Post-Marxist theoretical perspective and using selected authors of the theory.

4. 1 Ethical issues and limitations

The dissertation is to identify ideological effects of two systems of power such as the monarchist, religious and capitalist forms of power over society. The paper does not endeavour to either ridicule, nor belittle religious practices or power and control institutions.

4. 2 Resources

To provide the references and argument for the discussion, the resources used for the dissertation will use information from journals, e-journals, books, e-books and possibly the locations and information from the two examples themselves. Likewise, the images may also be authors own, however if not the paper will reference the relevant sources.

4. 3 Schedule of Work

The table below is an indication of the process of work which will be required for the successful completion of the paper.

Action

Start Date

Continue reading and preparing literature29th January 2013Conduct a site visit to the GLA and St James's Palace25th February 2013Start to amalgamate information to prepare first draft30th February 2013Hand in first draft for feedback10th March 2013Prepare final submission after receiving feedback from first draft. 25th March 2013Final Submission29th April 2013