

WEEK 05- AURA
ARCH-572, ARCHITECTURE THEORY AND CRITICISM

Lovejeet Gehlot
Section:08

2/2/19

Martin Heidegger, in his lecture "Building dwelling thinking", raises two questions: "What is to dwell?" 2.How does building belong to dwelling?". He argues that though dwellings can be attained only by building, yet not all buildings can be dwelled upon. Heidegger finds his first answer through etymology. He comes up with a theory of three-fold nature of building: "1-Building is really dwelling. 2-Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on earth. 3-Building as dwelling unfolds into building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings." [1]350. Hence Heidegger concludes that "the fundamental character of dwelling is sparing" [1]351, which means that to dwell is to remain in a place in peace, with no harm or danger. Heidegger then introduces a "fourfold" theory by stating that humans are mortals, and as they remain on earth under the sky and before the divinities. Mortals are hence in the fourfold by dwelling. [1]352. To answer his second question, Heidegger states that a bridge is a thing (locale/in itself) that allows 'space' to gather the fourfold. [1]355-56. Finally, he concludes that the building can be characterised a "letting-dwell", that it gives form to the dwelling that preserves the fourfold. [1]361.

Kenneth Frampton, in his essay "Towards a Critical regionalism", argues that it is important for the architects and specially underdeveloped countries to stay connected to their culture during the process of modernisation. Modernisation is not to reject your historic and spiritual character, but to study their scientific and political terms and reinterpret it wisely in future qualities. Frampton argues that architecture is being polarised between hi-tech production approach and compensatory facade that covers up the former. [2]17. Modernisation cannot be liberative if it is rationalised through instrumental reasonings. [2]19-20. Hence, in order to sustain its true form of cultural-identity practice, architecture needs to distance itself away from the indigenous forms of history. [2]20. Frampton asserts that there is a difference between Critical Regionalism and vernacular architecture. Populism evokes a desire for direct experience through imagery advertising in the most economical way. However, Critical Regionalism focuses on perception of the cultural reality that it bears in itself as a quality. To Frampton, place-form (space for human appearance) can be created by a balance between social culture and natural context, that are both the symbolic representations of the site. [2]25.

Walter Benjamin's essay "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" written in 1936, focuses on the transformations of art over a period of history and how art functions particularly in the age of mechanical productions. He begins by stating Marx's terms that capitalistic production is to exploit the working class, ultimately leading to abolishment of capitalism itself [3]217. According to Benjamin, reproduction of art existed forever, but it was mechanical reproduction that brought a change to its meaning and the labor relations of the production. [3]218 As it developed from mere technical reproduction (founding and stamping) to printing and further to photography, emancipates artists from production [2]219. However, mechanical reproduction though perfect, lacks its authenticity of time and space. Without authenticity, the element lacks history. And without history "that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art". [3]221. He further states that the human perception of aura is to stay closer to art, and that in the age of mechanical reproduction "can be comprehended as decay of the aura" [3]222. Mechanical production denied history and rituals as it began to be based on politics. [2]224 To Benjamin, mechanical reproduction changed the reaction of masses toward art, known as progressive reaction [2]234. Films allowed the distracted masses to critique without having to stay in attention [2]240. In the epilogue, Benjamin argues that through film as an art commodity, authoritarians attempt to repress the working class by pressing down ritual values into the production. In Fuhrer's era, art was merely created aesthetics into films that culminated to one thing: War. It had lost its aura without true history.