



Heavenly Discourses Week 1

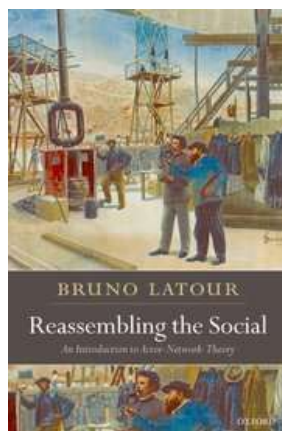
The Sky As An Agent



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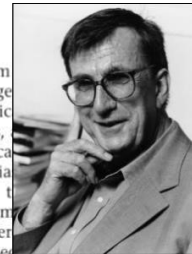
AIM

Understanding how the sky acts an agent for us.



Third Source of Uncertainty: *Objects too Have Agency*

If sociology has been marked from the moment that action was overtaken by other agencies, more forcefully by the ethical, political, and economic, there exist hierarchies, asymmetries, and a world is just as differentiated a landscape as the terrain; that no amount of enthusiasm can make those asymmetries go away; that the world is as heavily as the pyramids, which hamper the explanation why society should be considered as a whole; that any thinker who denies these inequalities is either a fool or a liar.

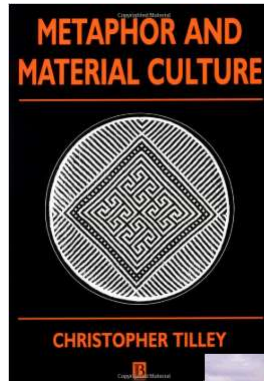


that which has the ability to move us in some way to take action

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp.63-86.

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METAPHOR AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD

simply not the case. Things create people as much as people make them. From a *theoretical* point of view it is obvious that people do encode metaphorical meanings into things which would themselves have no meaning. But from the point of view of *methodology*, of the analysis of material forms, things once created work themselves to reproduce or transform the social contexts in which they are encountered and move. They are active rather than passive and dialectically related to their social conditions of existence. Things, as Kopytoff (1986) usefully emphasizes, have biographies, or life-phases, like persons. We can ask such questions of things as: what are the socially constrained biographical possibilities of the object (as, for example, bulk commodity or prestige valuable)? What is the usual or ideal biography of a thing? What are the recognized 'phases' in a thing's life? How does its use and meaning change with age? What happens when it moves from one cultural context to another? How is it redefined and put



Tilley, Christopher. *Metaphor and Material Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

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Understanding how the sky acts an agent for us.
Through human history we have made use of the sky.

What is the sky?

Observation: Cycles (diurnal and nocturnal):

- Light – sunlight, starlight, moonlight.
- Patterns – star patterns, cloud shapes





Alto-cumulus clouds over Recanati, Italy. Photo: Marco Cingolani.

'I see the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against my house, from day-break to sun-rise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Nature' from *Nature; Addresses and Lectures*, Boston: J. Munroe, 1849.

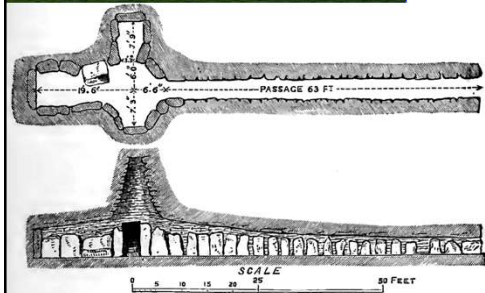
The sky also influences what we build.

1. Direct sun falling onto an object at a particular time of the day or year, captured through an aperture.



Newgrange and the illumination of the back stone (Skyscapes).

Images: Wikimedia Commons and <http://www.newgrange.eu/tri-spiral.htm>.

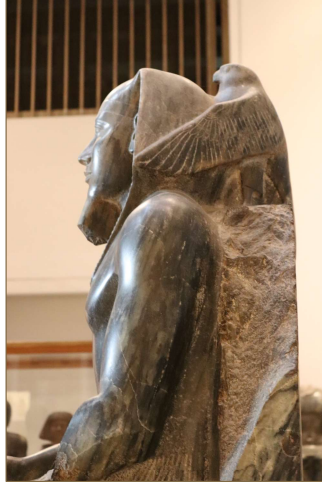


Plan and Section of Chamber in Newgrange Tumulus.

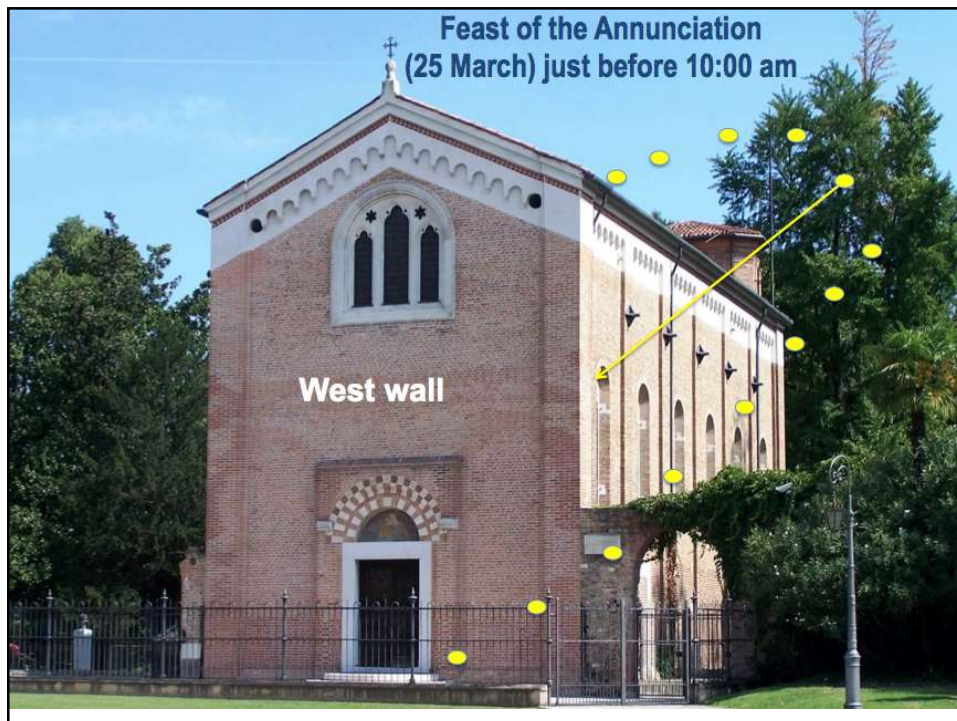


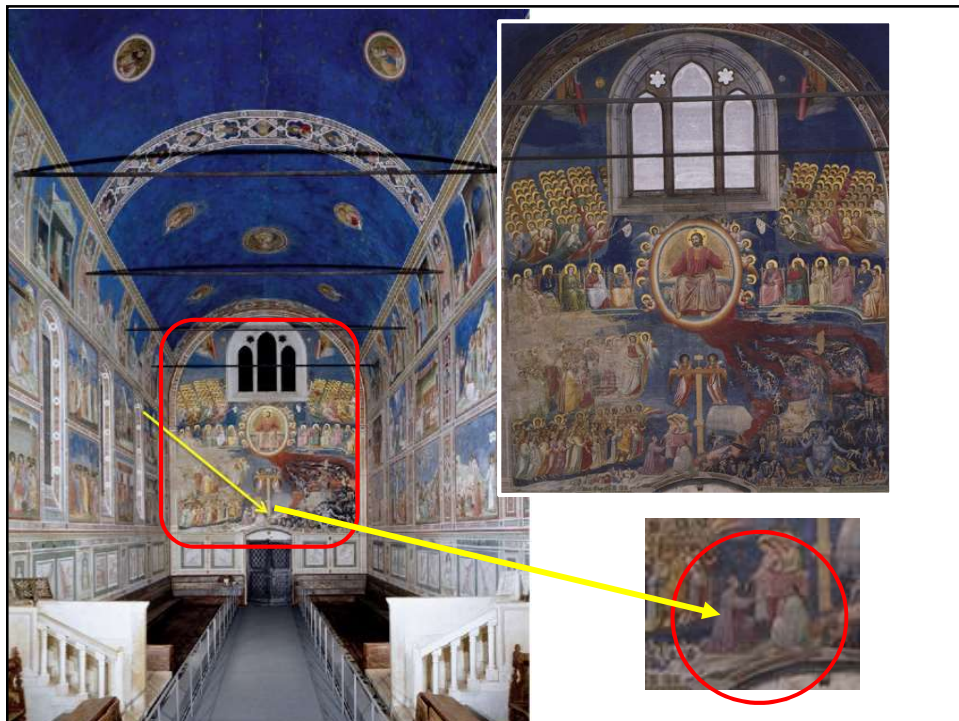
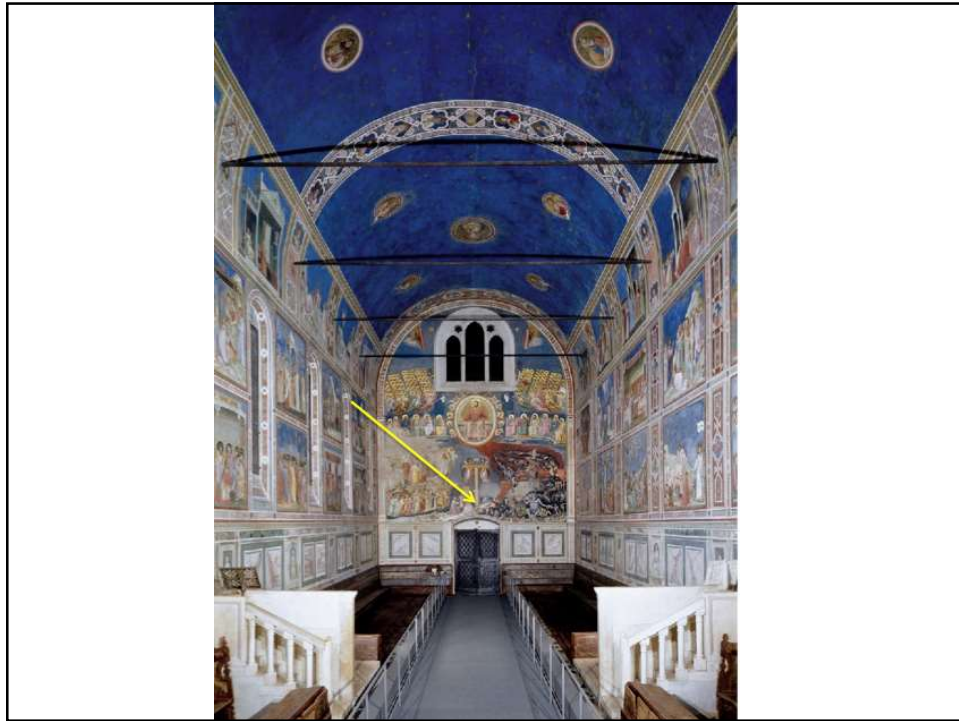
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When sunlight shines on a statue, is the statue adoring the sun or are we adoring the statue? (Astral religions)



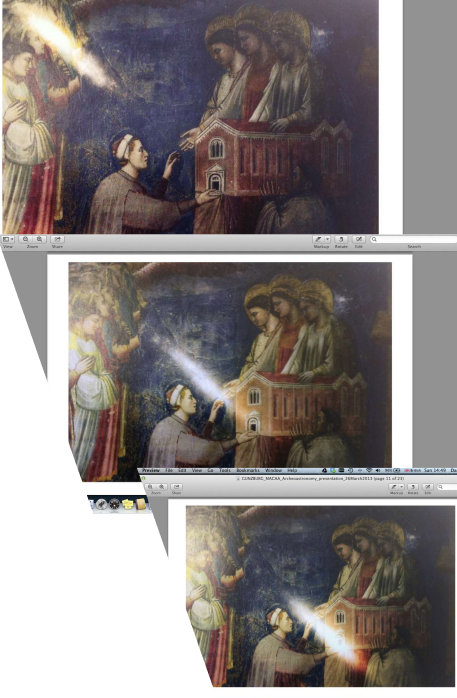
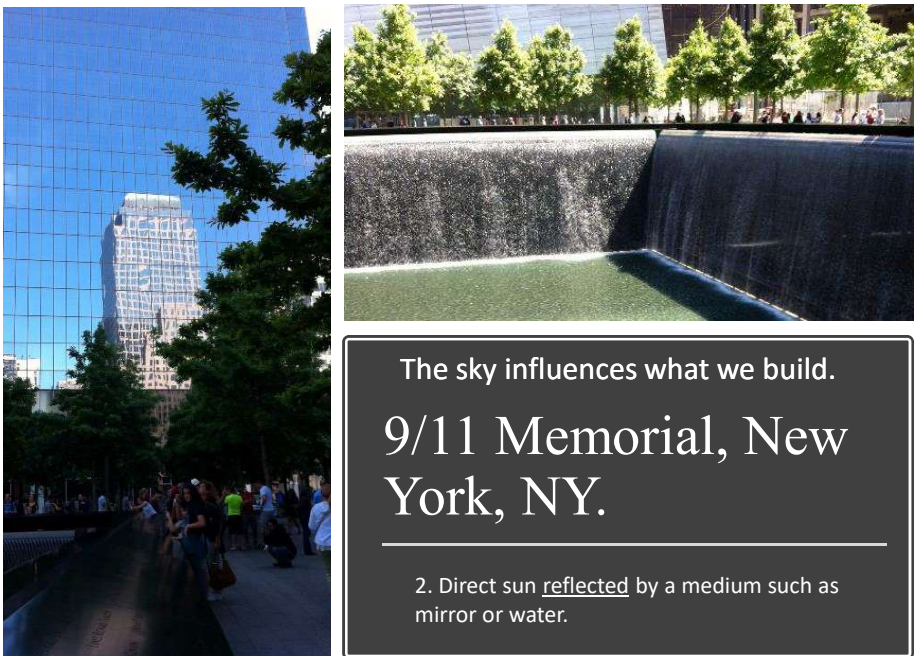
Khafre Enthroned with Horus on his shoulders, 3rd king of the fourth dynasty, son of Khufu, Old Kingdom, Cairo Museum. Photo: Darrelyn Gunzburg.





Romano, Giuliano, and Hans Michael Thomas. 'Sul significato di alcuni fenomeni solari che si manifestano nella cappella di Giotto a Padova.' *Ateneo Veneto* 178: 213-256.

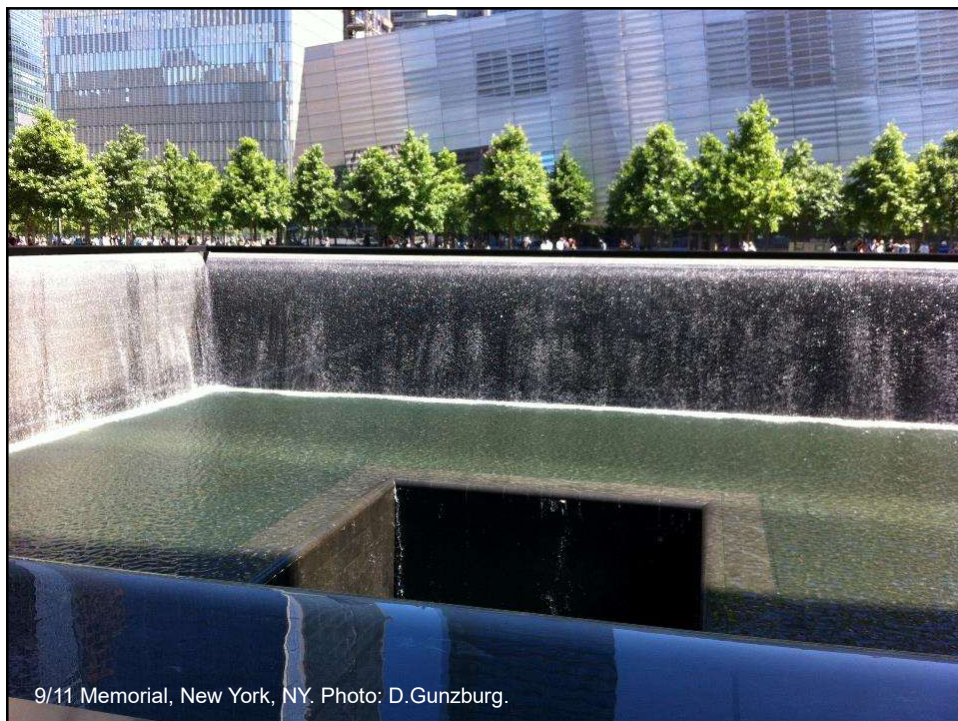
Jacobus, Laura. 'Giotto's Annunciation in the Arena Chapel, Padua.' *The Art Bulletin* 81, no. 1 (1999): 93-107.

The sky influences what we build.

9/11 Memorial, New York, NY.

2. Direct sun reflected by a medium such as mirror or water.

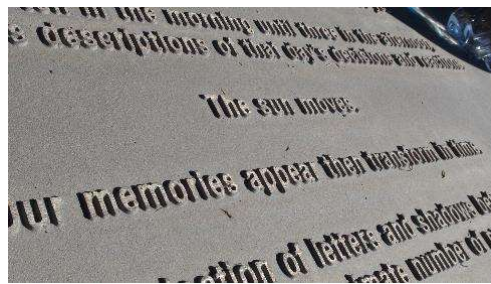


9/11 Memorial, New York, NY. Photo: D.Gunzburg.





9/11 Memorial, New York, NY. Photo: D.Gunzburg.



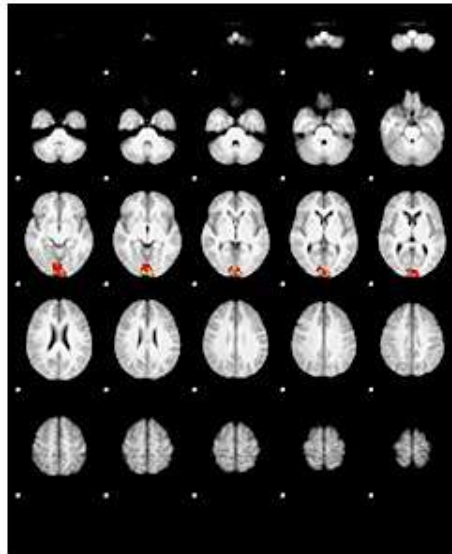
Sunlight shines through laser-cut phrases at the Moving Memories Memorial in **Phoenix**. The phrases are meant to reflect a range of thoughts from Arizonans affected by 9/11, and were picked after months of research.

Eddie Jones said the phrases are first a blur, or an 'illegible memory', from the aftermath. But they become clear when the sun illuminates each phrase as it moves across the sky. Then, the lit words contrast against the dark concrete... Jones said the words almost inhale and exhale when clouds cast shadows. 'It's an organic process that invites visitors to contemplate', he said.

Photos: LaKeidra Denay Bronner







Unique brain activations of the cerebellum were effects of subjects viewing Sky Factory photographic sky compositions.

Image: Texas Tech NeuroImaging Institute.

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The Cloud Appreciation Society: <https://cloudappreciationsociety.org/>