

The Use of a Deobjectivizer in Conservation Analysis

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Abstract - The epistemological schism between the arts and sciences is a phenomenon with long antecedents. It has been characterised on the vulgar level as a conflict between fact and anecdote. A device called a deobjectivizer¹ is described for reconciling the two philosophical approaches and thus bringing the practices of science and conservation into a unified field. That is the theory.

Introduction

The epistemological schism between the arts and sciences is a phenomenon with long antecedents. It has been characterised on the vulgar level as a conflict between fact and anecdote. A scientific analysis may provide extensive information on the subject at hand, but may yet fail to place the information in a contextual, social or historiographic framework. While it has been argued that both cognitive processes have valid output in scholarly terms, it is nevertheless overt that this output has been directed by the socio/economic framework of the past two or more centuries into separate channels of endeavour, *viz.* the arts and the sciences. While co-equality is apparently axiomatic, it is nonetheless transparent that hierarchical structures exist within this apparent unity. The following formula has been devised:

$$\text{BSc} = \text{BA} + x$$

(where *x* is a numerical value for higher intellection²)

The Deobjectivizer and the Profession

Naturally, the conservation profession is riven by the hierarchical implications of this simple mathematical construct, although it must be argued that, as the construct itself is expressed in non-anecdotal terms, it is therefore only fully approachable by application of a concrete cognitive process. (Only half the people involved know what's going on.) The deobjectivizer is a high speed microprocessor which can be fitted into any analytical instrument. Its input is the hard, objective data from analysis; its output is the data additively modified by the inclusion of such subjective input as thoughts, reflections, suggestions, suppositions and feelings.

Installation

You buy it. *We'll* install it.

How It Works

A simple demonstration of the device in use will convince all but the hardened septic of its unifying role in conservation science and practice. Following is a set of questions followed by the answers from an instrument *not* fitted with the deobjectivizer (1), and *then* retrofitted with it (2):

Q: What is brass?
 A1: An alloy of copper and zinc.
 A2: It has been reported to contain copper and zinc.

Q: What is this pigment?
 A1: It is vermilion.
 A2: Well, *x* always used vermilion...

Q: Is this material stable?
 A1: Yes, it is.
 A2: I've used it for years.

Conclusion

By introducing a value of imprecision to the measurable data, and adding layers of parallel and interconnected value judgement statements, it is possible to produce results which are

Notes

1. It is also known as the 'confusticator' or 'anecdotalizer'.
2. See also *Maclean's Magazine* survey of Canadian Universities.