"How does the concept of mediation help us understand how social worlds are made?"

In this detailed exposition of a causal argument, I’m putting forward a theory for the Concept of Mediation that makes the social world what it is, which in turn helps us to understand how social worlds are made. As I disagree with John R Searle who states that "...language creates and maintains the elaborate structures of human social institutions. These institutions serve to create and distribute power relations that are pervasive and often invisible. These power relations motivate human actions in a way that provides the glue that hold human civilisation together..." (Making the Social World published by Oxford University Press) within the main body of the essay.

For I will argue that the making of social worlds depends upon the Concept of Mediation because it regulates and empowers, and that this occurs through the theory of attachment/detachment that I will discuss. And I will use the topic of the body to discuss this aspect further that also includes another dimension to explore and that is the mind, which is part of this mediation process, with the example of solitude linked with the mind and intimacy linked with the body, for which humans act as the mediation device for both, on the whole. Thereby, from this conduct we construct a social reality which gives us security, thus understanding social worlds from the concept of mediation.

A theory of this correlation which I have aforementioned, is shown in figure 1 below of a conceptual model that I’ve devised, to recognise the relations between each aspect of the making of the social world and its existence of criss-crossing distinctions. Therefore I have tried to make the theory explicit in finding out how social worlds are made and thereby understanding them from the perspective of and applying the concept of Mediation.
The Concept of Mediation

At the core of Figure 1 above, it can be understood that all experience in social worlds have to be mediated to people and learned, as Martin Albrow (1999) to paraphrase states that the ‘Concept of Mediation’ is in reality the actual social relations which are maintained through the senses and the ways in which people express themselves in and through the material world, and this is done by a ‘mediation’ process that is invisible and in the background of societal functions. However, we can perceive this embeddedness of relations in reality through the notion of a ‘medium’. And by which a ‘medium’ permits, in some chosen way, information about two or more subjects, to be conveyed between them, hence they are 'mediated' and there are four broad types of media of social relations: sensate, ideational, technological and abstract systems.

Therefore, I will be applying in this essay, the ‘ideational’ type, which means looking at it from the perspective of impact rather than creativity, that is the “... ideational structure that we use to interpret the world dictates which features of social reality we focus upon, the logic that we use to analyse a problem, and, perhaps most importantly, it shapes the goals we perceive to be in our interests. In this perspective, action is not teleological in structure. An action is shaped first and foremost by an actor’s choice of a means for interpreting and organizing information. It is the choice of ideational structure that will drive subsequent action...” (Edwards,
2009, p.128) thereby giving a frame of reference to what follows on from applying the concept of mediation in understanding social worlds.

Thus as an example, one can see how mediation not only is a regulation of how society functions, through an instructive process, like sex education which pertains to the Body, but most importantly, how it empowers too, through a grooming process, like managing personal relationships which pertains to the Mind, for which humans in the social world are mediated through such experiences. Thus in a turn of phrase, mediation is ‘hidden in plain sight’, if taken from a constructivist point of view of social worlds, which can take the form of attachments and detachments in negotiating terms (for the Body) and conditions (for the Mind) in a mutually constitutive manner.

**Attachment and Detachment**

For in any attachment and detachment in the social world, as seen from Figure 1 above, is from a primary position, and this ‘Mutually Constitutive Approach’ can be understood in terms of making the connection to a living system, due to it offering a framework for describing and analysing any empowering relationships, and is the intrinsic factor to regulate the movements regarding relationships between individuals, as there being a “…range of social norms and expectations surrounding the expression of intimacy and the meaning of close relationships which provide a framework through which our experience of such relationships will be mediated…” (Miell & Croghan, 1996, p.304), but more on that intimacy and meaning of close relations with regards to the Mind and Body later on in the essay, which details more on this topic, as humans being mediation devices.

For in this transference of attachment and detachment through social interaction, for example that of intimacy and solitude, has to be projected via humans as mediation devices, therein becoming a commitment which is practiced daily, thereby allowing a person to understand the social world in which they live, through the concept of mediation. Of which Redman and Whitehouse-Hart (2008) reaffirm in their analysis of the concept, as to involve “…taking in to the self ‘aspects or functions of a person or object’ from the external world, which in consequence ‘come to constitute and differentiate [our] internal world [for] this mediation is said to occur primarily through projection: the bringing of people and objects in the external world to subjective left by investing them with aspects of the self…” (Redman and Whitehouse-Hart, 2008, pp.64-65) which again are socially mediated through instruction and grooming and which, I’d say, that this can only happen
through a shared history in “... so far as kinship relationships are stripped of their traditional duties and obligations, their continuance tends to increasingly depend on the qualities enumerated above and nominal in character or they are reformed through the reflective achievement of intimacy...” (Giddens, 1994, pp.264-5) that has been sustained and time invested in any social relations into the social world through a meditative model, thereby making that social world explicit as it how it operates in society is through the concept of Mediation in mediating social relations.

**The Body & Mind**

Consequently, from the secondary position in figure 1 above, unlike what the sociologists Erving Goffman and Michel Foucault state in their theories, having placed only the concept of the Body at the centre of their ‘interaction order’ as in empowering and ‘disciplinary systems’ as in regulating how its acts in society from a monist perspective, which excludes dualism in understanding the social world. On further exploration from these theories, it can be understood that as its been mediated from the core point of empowering and regulating when taking a dual approach to the embodiment of both Mind and the Body, as it can be seen that it’s a integral part of human agency overall, ideational that is, people place attachment/detachment to both the Body and Mind.

Therefore, humans can be considered as ‘mediation devices’ that exist solely as a social-construct, to bring forth and work together from having the dual needs of the Body and Mind to consider, and by which it has to be mediated in order to work in a sequenced manner to sustain relationships with others in the social world, for example, “...this is in part because there is so little to say that is concrete; it is also because we have so little practice in everyday life in exploring what self might mean. Descriptions of self do not come wrapped in a familiar vocabulary. Even forthright conversation would rarely enable someone to ask: ‘Who are you beyond your identity?’ But it is precisely into that territory — beyond the identifying landmarks of job, town, children, religion — that we move when we take on the challenges of intimacy and of solitude, when we are, or long to be, most ‘ourselves’...” (Dowrick, 1991, pp.6-7) and therein some form of mediation with oneself has to occur for this to take place first and foremost, in that it has to know when to be intimate and whether or not to seek solitude before joining the network of social action.

And that is because all mediation, whatever its device, has a dual relation of simultaneously being themselves, who aren’t only artefacts by their actions by the use of their Body, but also mediation devices by their attitudes by the use of their
Mind, which when both are combined, in that being self-distant from their own authority, a human recognises that he must understand that in order to make sense of a new way of conduct, he would have to translate that experience into a new form. And by this he must have self-awareness, that in order to see himself differently as a human, he must therefore be able to reconstruct and reconstitute himself in any given environment that makes up his social world, and give it shape in how its conducted from having understood the concept of mediation.

**Conduct**

Therein, the influence on conduct, given in a higher tertiary position in figure 1, has been formed from the idea of having transferred; from the mode of mediation of humans as the devices of mediation, in which the social codes have operated in the background, to that of the projection of conduct of humans that becomes visibly in the social world when called upon in their daily life.

For example, through sexual gratification, on serial occasions, because this is the closest we come to realise that from start to finish there is a mediated process occurring, as in when do we kiss and what type of kiss should be given, which of the genders initiates that kiss, and when do we move on from foreplay after how long to full intercourse, or do we stop here at this point because of an unforeseen situation, like no condom at hand, or the male needing to go to the bathroom, then how is it understood to continue during this mode of mediation? If not, through the concept of mediation learnt and practiced.

As also from the perspective of Norbert Elias in his concept that humans are a ‘figuration’ because with their individual will and their form make them interdependent upon networks that are expressed in an outside activity, which I’d say is the case in point from the viewpoint of the Body, which forms and acts as an device of mediation, with the impetuous coming from the Mind, thereby a fundamental element, and would have a direct and distinct bearing on the interchanging modes of self to practice in a daily routine in their lives, which all in all, gives people some sense of security in their relationships with others by understanding the concept of mediation to some degree in how it applies to the social world.

For it can be agreed somewhat, as Paul du Gay says “...that agency, the ability to act and give meaning to action in different social worlds, does not possess a unitary form...” (Gay, 2008, p.45), however I’d argue that it does start out as a
unitary form by being mediated, and ends up with the influential attitudes and actions due to a consciousness and will that is revealed in a persons conduct in making their social world complete.

**Security**

The idealisation of having a strong sense of security has to come about by understanding how social reality has been constructed in the first instance from the use of an agency, and in figure 1 of the model as aforementioned, that’s why it has been allocated a lower tertiary position, because in making the social world it has to work in conjunction with the codes of social conduct from humans and by its application with regards to the concept of mediation, because in constructing a social reality it becomes concrete, and can only be shifted by humans on a very personal basis.

For example, in forming a relationship with a partner, when does it go from being an appreciation of an acquaintance, to mutual attraction in the form of a courtship, to perhaps a commitment in marriage? All these have to be mediated, and its something that isn’t taken for granted, but understood by most people that it has to be regulated; how often do we see each other initially, and empowerment; how do we get to know each other in this new context of the relationship.

Then once this has been conducted, there is a shift in the rules and rituals given to the security of constructing a mediated reality for the individual concerned or their familial relationship, for as stated “...[o]ut of their scope or in their degree of obligation and permanence. Out of many different strivings, longings, efforts and mistakes, out of successful and often unsuccessful experiments, a wider spectrum of the private is taking shape. As people make choices, negotiating and deciding the everyday details of do-it-yourself relationships, ‘a normal chaos’ of love, suffering and diversity is growing and developing...” (Beck, 1995, pp.67-8), however even through these choices they are mediated everyday with the possibility that the relationships formed through this mode, will work out with the end goal of a guaranteed security to which both partners feel the benefits reaped through their efforts of perseverance in which the mediation has evolved over a period of time. However it does not always mean that the mode is fixed, and by this I mean that the mediation is ever changing even with the platform of security within the social context of their social world in which they as a singular entity commutate on a daily basis.
Therefore if for an unspecified reason the mediation were to break down in which their relationship is dissolved through lack of trust or loss of love, due to the constant strain of making an effort to sustain the relationship; in which both partners will feel in their courtship, which has progressed over a period of time, this separation can be amicable depending if the mediation is understood, if mediation is not understood and one faction of the united entity feels that the ending of the relationship was premature, then this could lead to a long drawn out process in which both will feel a certain degree of emotional pain, and this will effect any of their future relationships formed after the aftermath of this painful parting.

However it should be noted that a relationship formed directly after divorce or separation, could have no emotional value only sexual satisfaction to which two individuals come together; as an acknowledgment to their mutual physical attraction for however long they wish, and perhaps whether or not they wish to form a long term relationship after the recently separated partner has had the time to get over their relationship failure, is again a decision that both undertake, therefore it could be said that mediation through relationships and the security of them is an ongoing process, and that the outcomes are endless, whether we finally succeed in finding the right balance is another question entirely.

Summary
In summary my causal argument and my ‘Model of Mediation and Making Social Worlds’ (see Figure 1 above) which is not given in a hierarchical way, but in a circular manner; radiating from this inner position of a monolayered concept; to the state of overlapping within the embodiment of a human, has also been to show how the concept of Mediation not only has a ‘transference’ and ‘projection’ quality that is in reference “…to the ways in [which] people are brought subjectively to life, or given emotional tone, texture and colour, by processes that are largely unconscious…” (Glossary, 2008, DD308), as a method for understanding mediation, as well as also exploring how its applied in the making of social worlds, that also leads to an ‘interlocking’ of a whole social construct that forms a social reality in the social world. Thus the concept of mediation helps us understand how social worlds are made.

Concluding Remarks

It can be agreed that one needs to have a level of maturity in order to understand the concept of mediation as an adult, because even though the mode of mediation is ever changing throughout our lives, it could be argued that the young are still within that mode of discovering their mediation ability, they have yet to have a fixed secure knowledge of who they are as an individual, in order to live within a pre-existing social world that can be harsh and brutal, particularly if the level of knowledge regarding the concept of mediation is not developed adequately.

Thus you gain a strong understanding of how social worlds are made, in which we all live in and conduct our everyday decisions and actions, as “...[m]ediation in the form of cultural, media and social institutions, stories and narratives, traditions, belief systems, rituals and so on, helps keep a potentially hostile reality at bay and turns the world into something that humans beings can cope with...” (McFall, 2008, p.190) and during the course of my essay I have found the aforementioned quote applies to my topic question of the coalition of The Body and The Mind and the ways in which they are affected through the Concept of Mediation.

And through my primary and secondary research, I have also found that these essential parts of Mediation effect aspects of the human social conditioning that I did not associate with the theory of mediation so readily, for example, the conduct of sex and the mediation of security in relationships, which was unexpected as generally we as humans, take this so much for granted as we conduct what we think is a social reality but yet aren’t conscious that we are in actual fact mediating unconsciously to make sense of the world in which we inhabit.
Thus I feel that my essay has done my chosen area of course themes, theories from the use of examples, in which I have explored and looked at in depth do justice to my causal argument of understanding how social worlds are made through the Concept of Mediation.

REFERENCES:


