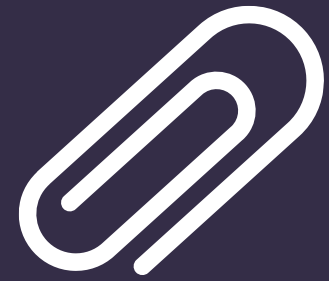


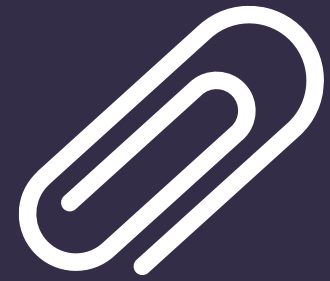
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The design theory cannot be understood, and even less defined, as a certain scientific theory. In terms of the theory that has a precise conceptual appliance that interprets the legality of certain natural or social phenomena, the theory of design does not exist. But there is no doubt that there is a certain continuity of more or less congruent critical thinking of individual designers during the development of this activity itself: the accumulation of historical experience that only requires its scientific processing and expansion. This circumstance greatly hampers the formalization of access to this relatively large historical and problematic structure. However, it is obvious that an adequate analytical instrument can only be determined by a narrower thematic choice, that is, the interest aspect from which the historical experience of design can be accessed. Considering the design theory itself, that is, just its emergence, we count with the fact that this critical and analytical instrument in it will not be found in it. We will only establish it in relation to the main theme of the action - in relation to design to environmental problems. Of course, the word is primarily about the thought or design of the relationship, not technical-operational. More than in another intentional activity, there has always been a profound connection between theoretical and ideological thinking, a connection in which it is very difficult to distinguish the theoretical settings from programmatic, just as it is difficult to extract its methodology from its historical practice. By analyzing key textual documents of major thinkers and designers, we will try to identify the main trends and shifts that have taken place in looking at the inherent design issues, as well as the general understanding of the nature and features of industrial civilization in which design has emerged as organized industrial scale practice.

I will try to demonstrate that the problem of the environment as its intervention area is latently present in the ideological positions and the theoretical formulas of its protagonists. Indeed, precisely to the extent that in the way that all the complex perception of environmental issues has come into the domain of conceptual, theoretical and practical preoccupations of design,

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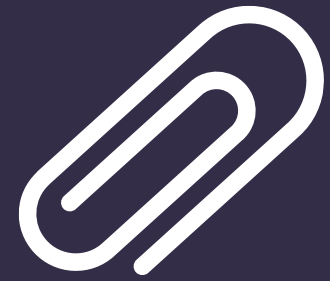


we will be able to monitor and determine the criteria of its own theoretical evolution.

This development is inseparable not only from the ability of self-reflection and criticism of individual authors in terms of general socio-historical determinants and human consciousness and freedom of human action, but also in close connection with the general dynamics of the historical development of industrial society and manufacturing power in it. In that sense, design both as a term and as a business experienced significant and profound changes. It sometimes overlapped with architecture and urbanism in pretense to theoretical and problematic coverage, or pointed to some problem areas that other disciplines failed to address. Today, these design pretensions are renewed, alongside a complete revision of the design itself as a concept that gives it a specific meaning (industrial design, visual design, and environmental design) to a general: an integrated design. The ideas of metamorphosis of design have become evident and can be historically followed in the theoretical crystallization of its own professional interests and methodological principles. The initial connection, which for a long time followed it as the shadow of the spirit of the fallen pre-industrial era, with the cult of the uniqueness of the humanistic tradition that the appearance of the machine deeply disrupted, gradually eradicated at the beginning of the century at the level of production tools, without recognizing the essential meaning of production relations.

The great depression of the thirties has ripped off the latest veil of artistic illusions about the design mission, since it has virtually been in the midst of market demands, adapting to them completely. Recognized as a profession for the merits of a substantial reduction in production costs and increased sales, the design left the pioneering phase and the enlightenment ambition. Meanwhile, the priority that urban planning has gained in architectural design, as a modern construction requirement, represents the

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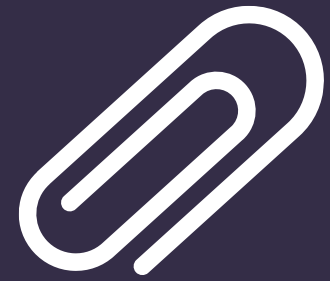


first extension of the design methodology to the environment plan: mass housing and settlements could not be successfully upgraded without industrial technology. That was also led in the methodological-didactic rationalism of Gropius's Bauhaus.

The most important focus of internationalized European culture between the two wars was the first synthesis of fruitful experiences of visual avant-garde and experimental knowledge of humanities, in the detection and perception of visual-plastic phenomena as the basis of modern formative instrumentation. But formal rationalism of the classically "neutral" positions of most intellectuals of the international movement was unable to enter into the problems of growing social conflicts. In postwar years, they renewed the ethical sensitivity of the design profession. From the bitterness of historical experience, they re-emerged the ideas of preachable avant-garde, but they are sacrilegied before they are critically reviewed. Bauhaus didactics again served as the only healthy tradition for educating new generations of designers with whom the industry is in a new grasp of computers. The rise of the scientific-technological revolution required increased scientificity and design, but unilaterally, according to the technical organization requirements, where the technological forces discovered new sources of surplus value.

Self-management is a genuine anticipation of a society of the future, and therefore assumes a completely different material civilization than is historically known today. However, conflicts between the awakened social aspirations and the processes of interiorization of new social values are caused in the global social behavior of numerous paradoxes and contradictions. This can be interpreted as excluding the necessary projections of life and physical frameworks in our social theory and practice in which self-governing society will be brought into harmony with one's own being. It lacks design as a long-term concept and the foundation of the integral development of the material culture of our society. The vacuum of design in ours is cramped for structuring

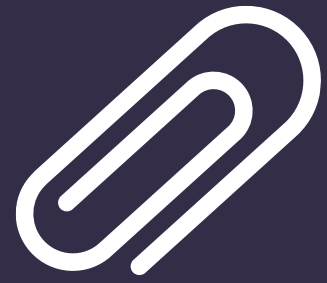
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social intervention in the areas of human needs in all the areas of our lives. This intervention has to come from a whole set of efforts to liberate work from all its spheres of alienation. Its scientific criteria and a specific, flexible operational and creative organization have to be considered within this framework and in the spirit of new traffic relations that develop in the whole of the social organism.

An adequate conceptual framework in which design reflection can be considered as a thought-action that goes for the complete transformation of the historical world, must be found in the conceptualization of science itself as "conscious production of historical movement," a science of historical thinking that studies the social reality of nature, the natural reality of society. And the most elemental approach to such a concept of design with the growing environmental problems faced by modern societies implies a terminological discussion whose outcome must distinguish not only the point of view or the scale of the theoretical coverage but the actual position of the actors on the stage of historical events. Ecology, according to the dictionary, is defined as 1. Biology branch that studies relationships between organisms and their environment (bionomics), then 2. Branch of sociology dealing with the distribution of people and their institutions, and the interdependence that arises from them, while the environment is 1. The aggregate of surrounding things, conditions or impacts, then 2. The act of the surroundings, 3. the condition (state) of the surroundings and 4. That which surrounds. Taking literally the stated primary meanings of these words could be understood as science or scientific discipline, and the environment as the phenomena and processes that this science studies, the first of which implies the scientific aspect of a given subject, and the other events in an objective whole. Secondary and other meanings of both words, however, especially if they are more closely compared and interpersonalized, show something else, that is, that ecology can be considered as a branch of social rather than just natural sciences, and that the environment implies not only the state of the environment but also an active occurrence in it, actually all the environments involved.

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