Research on the Development of Modern Design
Under the Society Culture Context

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Abstract. This thesis attempts from the social cultural point of view, to re-examine the development of modern design. Through this perspective, the author discusses the definition, method, function and purpose of modern design in different social cultural development periods. And attempts to explore the meaning of today's design from the perspective of social culture. It is concluded that design itself has evolved from one kind of behavior to one culture, which affects the way of human society from product to all levels of society. Modern design and social mass culture both promote each other and influence each other, and finally form the impetus on the development of human society. The thesis also discusses the problems and the cognitive bottlenecks encountered of China design today.

Introduction

What does design really mean? This question has always existed since the modern design existence and troubled every design researchers. Design disciplines have always attempted to produce a complete definition of the term "design" with respect to its own cultural identity. As the social and cultural characteristics of the ever-changing, for the definition of design also in the continuous development and change, therefore, design researchers must start from the social culture, in different social times, repeated the face of this problem. Western scholar write the book of the design history, generally believed that the initiation of modern design began in the industrial revolution, the arts and crafts movement for the Enlightenment, and before the industrial revolution in the production of "design" classified as handicrafts (Chinese academia called the arts and crafts). If from the perspective of sociological development, in fact we can partition four development stage of modern Western design: the design of the industrial revolution after the Enlightenment; the rise of modernist design after World War II; the design of the commodity economy and the Internet wave of the new modern design. This paper will focus on the last two stages the design because of it has the more closely relationship with today’s society and design, and discuss the Chinese today ‘s design with the China society context.

The Origin of the Modern Design

Industrial Revolution and Design Budding

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, the Western so-called design products are mainly handmade products, and the design activities existed to serve the European royal family. At this point the mainstream society culture was the aristocratic elite culture, the civilians or the publics had no right to speak and lack of spending power. Therefore, the folk products is short of design, the formation of aristocratic stratum became a huge single product consumer groups, English called "royal patrons"[1]. Design activities affected with a small people by the flatter.

The Industrial Revolution completely overturned this situation. With the mechanization of production, the product began to affordable, the general purchasing power of consumers increased
significantly. At the same time, the Industrial Revolution bring the subversive impact on the whole of Western society's daily life, the public on the shoddy product aversion and lack of daily products constitute a pair of design Extreme contradiction. This contradiction broke out after The First World Expo in England in 1851. when the design was reinterpreted by British design critic Ruskin. Ruskin thought that the industrial society divided the social crowd into the “gentleman” and “workman”, which tear the society is extremely improper.[2] He believes that design in modern society has a very important significance, it cannot be ignore the design of their own characteristics; meanwhile he particularly stressed that the design has a social function. To build a perfect society design activities cannot be missing, and the design of the service object is The masses or people, not the dignitaries.[3] His idea in the later produced a lasting far-reaching impact. Design activities really enter the public eye progressively. At this point the design activities began to gradually affect the social and cultural.

The Development of Modern Design after the War

An very important result of the First World War from 1914 to 1918 is the birth of the world's first socialist country- Soviet Union. Western society, whether from the ideology, ideology or social culture have entered a period of intense collision. The modern design truly is formed in the period after World War I to 1939 World War II outbreak, the development of the core period. At this point, With the rapid development of modern design is made up of social demand has increased dramatically, new technologies and new social mechanism of changing. It is the inevitable result of social development to a certain stage. The social reality prompted the design to abandon elite culture minority far behind, completely open to the public embrace. fact makes a small number of elite culture, Behind the head, completely open arms to the public.

At that time, a profound impact on the design, it is a social movement called modernism. When modernism becomes a storm that sweeps almost all areas of human social ideology, design cannot be left alone. The discussion of modernism itself is obviously not within the scope of this article, but it must be emphasized that modernism actually changed the modern design fundamentally, progressed down from the cultural and spiritual levels, and finally changed the principles and scope of modern design, so that the Modernist Design to be a professional nouns in the design history. Meanwhile, Modernist design becomes a way to reflect on human society.

The great contribution of modernist design is to regard social interests as the design’s the ultimate aim. Modernist design has three important design features, democracy, elitism and idealism. Modernist design principles is “to the public for the purpose”, look forward to using the design to achieve social improvement, full of utopian characteristics of democracy at the same time. Although that is the purpose of public service, but in essence is designed to change the public life, "Save common people" type of elitist thinking. Modernism design not only in the ideological highlights of the times and social, while it emphasizes the function, abandon the decoration, close with the new materials and new technology design principles, also completely breaking the shackles of the handicraft era. In the modernist design period, in addition to the traditional art design, graphic design architectural design, environmental planning and design, visual communication design are really established, especially the industrial design (product design) to establish and rise, in fact formed a relatively complete modern design system. At this time, from the classical art education of modern design education system is also fully developed, and today's design education still have a lasting impact.

Modernist design which the design sublimate from material is the first time in history and the design’s aim would be raised to the social level, getting the real meaning of the far-reaching impact on the movement of society. Modernist design (and its development after World War II Internationalist design) is of great significance to the construction of human social life. Today, the objects all around us, architectures, social living environment of the basic framework and basic principles are built in this period. The design of postmodernism, the design of new modernism and so on, which are constantly reflecting and discussing the design of modernism, still affect our society till now.
The Design under Commodity Culture

After World War II, human society has entered a golden age of rapid development, modern design also opened a new chapter of development. From the beginning of modernist design, the purpose of design was raised to the social level, at that time, the connection between design and social was always concrete, through the products or buildings to build people’s concrete daily lives. It looks more like the culture shaped the society itself by design, rather than design shaped the social culture.

In the 1960s, a theory of cultural study which we defined semiotics today began to emerge. Roland Barthes, in his important book *Mythology*, extensively used symbolic representations to analyze and deconstruct the human society, "... by abolishing the complexity of human behavior to compensate the loss of history "do not reject the goods ... but simplifying them ... to give the goods some clear statement of the fact ... a natural and eternal rationality... "[4]Semiotic approach led to a earth-shaking change of the whole of human society and social cultural towards the cognitive method. Also in this period, popular culture as a concept and study object came into the focus of social scientists.

1970, German critic Wolfgang F. Haug's book *Aesthetics of Commodity Criticism* clearly pointed out that "commodity aesthetics" refers to the relationship between people and products, the constraint of this relationship is the reality of the industrial capital and industrial products as commodities. Haug officially begins criticism of design in the commodity consumer society, he is essentially trying to find a radical approach to meet the consumption interest of society at that time.

In 1979, anthropologist Mary Douglas in her book *The world of goods*, puts forward a "consumer anthropology" research idea. That, the understanding of people must take the consumption into account, “as an integral part of the same social system, it interprets the desire of people’s work ..."[5]Mary regards goods (products) as the communication tools, depends on what people could establish relationship. She also believes that all the items are given the meaning of the community, through the choosing activities people could ensure the connections with their associated culture, as well as reflect the correct social groups.

The establishment of semiotics and consumer anthropology has changed people's perception of the product, thus bringing about significant changes in design theory and design practice. In a "commodity" world, the commodity not only refers to the specific product, its abstract form also conveys the expression of social relation. For designers, the traditional days that focusing on the product itself faded away, they must pay more attention to a series of behavior lead to the design. The cultural, aesthetic or symbolic value delivered by the product becomes a definite responsibility of the designer. With products gradually become the core of human society, various disciplines start to research and question it, therefore forming the criticism of design based on different disciplinary positions. The definition of design proposed by International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) in the 1970s is as follows: Design is a kind of creative behavior, and its purpose is to make the product having a comprehensive quality not only in the whole process of production, sale, use, as well as in the application system. The design is a creative core elements that makes the science and technology more human, and a key factor of cultural and economic exchanges.[1] It could be seen that the design becomes a cross-core in an extremely decentralized social system, and its meaning becomes vague and uncertain again. On the one hand, the design has a popular social attribute, driven by economic interests, to produce useful commodities closely around the market; the other hand, the design’s cultural property requires it to break away from the simply market logic, become the components of social structure, the symbols of social class identification and the tools of communication. A straightforward summarization should be as follows: the design should be a tool of social analysis, a medium of daily life’s interference, a special communication language, and a commodity under fetishism.[6]

Thus, around the 1980s, a vague concept of "design culture" began to emerge, meaning that all rules, phenomena, knowledge, economic and social models must be taken into account in carrying out the modern design activities. In layman's terms, when designer face the specific problems in design practice, he must consider carefully of the cultural issues behind the design. The original design activities, focused on product or object itself, for the purpose of use, production and sales...
become no longer appropriate. All of this is because the design product itself, in the commodity society has been given a more important cultural status. In this context, the boundaries of various design categories began to become blurred. Objectively speaking, compared with the previous design, its influence becomes more widely and far-reaching, the practicableness becomes more intense, but also more difficult to be accurately conceptualized. Design has become an important component of the whole social culture.

**Design under the Network Culture**

The scope of modern design under the network culture is further extended, because the “goods” of the times concerned about the design of things in the Internet era into a virtual object. It should be noted that the development of modern design discussed above has a historical linear relationship and is progressive. However, the design under the network culture and the modern design under the commodity culture are not progressive relations, to some extent this two period are parallel. The difference in design between cybeculture and commodity culture is that the design object has undergone tremendous changes, and the product of design is no longer merely tangible items, but may be a digital product in the virtual world. Internet era of this virtual product design in the final analysis, in essence, just a bunch of code, but in fact still have the attributes of goods— can be used, consumption. Modern design under the impact of network culture, because of its design object virtualization, which in design theory, design methods and design objects have produced many new content. As far as design methodology is concerned, service design theory provides a strategic design method based on management, and new methods of interaction design are developed based on the user experience of human behavior and new technology. The meaning and scope of modern design has penetrated into every corner of human society.

International Industrial Design Association (ICSID-International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) held in Gwangju, Korea from October 17th to 18th, 2015, Will be officially changed its name to "International (WDO-World Design Organization), also announced the design of the latest definition of design: " Design is a strategic problem-solving process that drives innovation, builds business success, and leads to a better quality of life through innovative products, systems, services, and experiences. Design bridges the gap between what is and what’s possible. It is a trans-disciplinary profession that harnesses creativity to resolve problems and co-create solutions with the intent of making a product, system, service, experience or a business, better. At its heart, Design provides a more optimistic way of looking at the future by reframing problems as opportunities. It links innovation, technology, research, business, and customers to provide new value and competitive advantage across economic, social, and environmental spheres.. "[7]

Through the WDO definition of modern design, we can find that the purpose of design is to transform our world, the design is not limited to a single action, but a variety of complex sets of behavior. Designers place the human in the center of the process. They acquire a deep understanding of user needs through empathy and apply a pragmatic, user-centric problem-solving process to design products, systems, services, and experiences and their contribution towards co-creating a better quality of life. Design is shaped by both socio-cultural influences and at the same time can be a better social culture. Design is the ultimate manifestation of human social values.

**China Design Issues Today**

When we look at the development of modern Western design changes, China's modern design problem becomes very clear. From a historical and political perspective, China's social and cultural contexts are completely different from those of the West for well-known reasons. Chinese society took decades to catch up with centuries the development of the West. China's modern design from the date of birth directly into the footsteps of modernism, continue to imitate the West, and soon entered the commodity culture and Internet culture era of design.
This status quo in China in terms of design theory and practice are caught in an extreme torn dilemma. From a theoretical point of view, China design pay attention to effectiveness, focus on design methodology, especially neglect of the design’s cultural properties. In the absence of a deep accumulation of modern design, the China design has never been raised to the social construction and social cultural aspects to thinking, especially the general public, almost no recognition of the relationship between design and social culture, from a strategically located design to achieve a social and cultural purposes. China design practice is torn itself. On the one hand, Chinese enterprises and designers have been awards in the global design field frequently, on the other hand Chinese-made products in the international are labeled with shoddy, which have to say Is a painful but real phenomenon. In addition, due to China's thousands of years of cultural deposition under the deep handicrafts or arts of crafts background, making China's modern design has always been subject to arts and crafts, Chinese design has always been difficult to get rid of the shadow of traditional art. The most prominent manifestation is that today China does not have a independent modern design institute outside the traditional art school.

Development, learning, transcendence, these words constitute the core of today's Chinese social culture, so decades of Chinese design is also constantly developing and learning to the West. Today's Chinese design needs to stop and think carefully about how to develop a truly consistent with their own social and cultural design.

Conclusion

From the point of view of the development of modern Western design, design has developed a cultural system of its own, which like every other cultural system in society culture, is itself engaged in a dialectical relationship expressed by this society. Modern design has been inseparable from society. It is not only influenced by social culture, but also influenced social culture. It is a kind of active tool that can be used for shaping social culture. If design is seen as a discipline rather than a concept of behavior in the general sense, design is a cross of sociology, anthropology, linguistics, art, industrial production, commercial sales, etc., and has a height Social responsibility which this social is given to the daily social life. China's modern design, though from a practical point of view, has been catching up with the pace of modern Western design to a certain extent. But from the objective point of view, is far from the Western modern design which has a high level of social and cultural.

References