

UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA
GRADUATE SCHOOL

**CRITICISM IN DESIGN:
THE SEARCH FOR THE CONDITIONS
FOR A NEW POLITICS OF DESIGN EMANCIPATION**
DISSERTATION

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Nova Gorica, 2012

I declare that the present dissertation is the result of independent work, based on my own knowledge with the help of quoted referential literature and sources.

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the critiques that have emerged in the discipline of design from the conceiving of its professionalization played a key role in the formation of the profession as we know it today. These selected critiques, by traversing the existent, created gaps in the knowledge, created a discontinuity, which led to the creation of capabilities for the changed way of working. Consequently, today the discipline of design is missing such a criticism; criticism that would challenge the condition in which the design uncritically subordinates to market requirements and agrees to the general relativity of social consensus. It seems for the first time in the history of design that the professionalization of discipline is more and more determined by its historical origin – by being a by-product as in the times of its birth in an era of industrial revolution and the division of labour. But it is also the first time that we are indifferent to such a situation in the profession.

Key words:

design, critique, emancipation, Ruskin, Morris, Loos, DeStijl, Anti-Design

I would like to express my gratitude to my mentors, Prof. Dr. Jelica Šumič Riha and Prof. Dr. Jonathan M. Woodham, for their consistent professional and institutional support. I would also like to thank Katja Paladin for language revision and Nataša Velikonja whose translation enabled my regular communication with the professor Woodham. My sincere thanks go also to Boris Benko and all other readers of this text for their well-intentioned comments.

Criticism in design:

the search for the conditions for a new politics of design emancipation

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Introduction: Formulation of questions

Norman Potter writes in his book *What is a designer*: “Design at its best has an honourable history; affirmative, questioning; socially and personally committed, seeking to bring things together in good sense. A very large area of this effort has degenerated into managerial eyewash”¹

With extremely critical, but very lucid statement Potter cuts into the discipline of design, which during the 20th century became lazy, uncritical, self-sufficient and complacent. Discipline of design lost its potential of resistance that was put in its cradle by the main critics of the growing industrialisation of the 19th century, John Ruskin and William Morris, but it also lost the enthusiasm of avant-garde movements that sought in design a response, a tool for building a better tomorrow. Potter with his critique of the state of mind in the discipline seeks to reactivate the ability that is given to every designer: the ability to do something. With this I mean knowledge, the potential that we have as designers. This potential enables us – in Agamben’s sense – to change the environment in theory and practice, to change the context with which we are not satisfied.

By reading Potter’s critique we must not overlook the sub-questions that arise before us: from where such a change came; what led to the creation of such a situation in design; what causes such a resignation of the designers? The answer seems known as we regularly hear it from the mouths of many designers: we are only one link in the assembly line of production. A very important link, to be exact; namely, the design is an interdisciplinary discipline that is able to walk in the shoes of the user, it is able to translate the client’s wishes, it can take advantages of technological developments and with a handful of mentioned knowledge it has the ability to create functional, artistically harmonious and potentially sustainable product. On the one hand we create but on the other hand we are just one wheel in the machine. It is important to highlight that the process of devaluation of design (to the level of only one of the wheels) was

¹ Norman Potter, *What is a designer: thing, places, messages*, Hyphen Press, London 2002 [first published in 1969], p. 162.

gradual. In the course of formation and development of the discipline a number of important persons from the design field challenged the latently present desire of industry to reduce a design to just one of the branches in its service. After all, design could be – strictly speaking – defined as a by-product of the division of labour, as one of the consequences of industrialisation. With this many have disagreed already at the time of the formation of the discipline and many reject this argument today. The protagonists of the future discipline located design in a broader societal context, they identified it as the element which builds our material culture and consequently not only affects our everyday living, but also in practice manifests the level of development that we achieve as a civilisation. The fact is that the condition described by Potter was brought about by a set of situations, forces and changes in society. In the context of the content I indirectly address this described transition also in the following text. However, by outlining the condition we come to a much more important question which can be perceived in Potter's critique: what must the discipline of design do to get out from the described, indifferent, toothless situation in which it finds itself?

In the present thesis I build the answer to the last question through five chapters. I build it on the criticism that has taken place since the conceiving of the professionalization of the discipline of design, especially looking for those effects of selected records whose traces can be identified in the proverbially pragmatic design practice. Throughout the text I will demonstrate how the selected critiques by traversing the existent created gaps in the knowledge, created a discontinuity, which led to the creation of capabilities for the changed way of working.

Michel Foucault writes about the critique in his text *What is Enlightenment?*: “It has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them”.² The latter, the search for limits and possibilities of them being exceeded, is common to all discussed

2 Michel Foucault, *What is Enlightenment?*, <http://foucault.info/documents/whatIsEnlightenment/foucault.whatIsEnlightenment.en.html> (March 2012).

critiques. We can find it in the critiques of John Ruskin, William Morris and Adolf Loos, and also in the records of De Stijl movement and Italian Anti-Design. The latter is the last *real* critique in design and it happened more than forty years ago. The discipline of design misses radical, critical intervention in the condition we witness. Namely, in design the criticism was present since its formation to subsequent professionalization of discipline. Individuals who were able to establish the distance from their own time proved to be – in retrospect – the key catalysts of changes in the discipline. But they were crucial also because beside their refusal of their time they offered an alternative to the existing. Today the discipline of design is missing such a criticism; criticism that would challenge the condition in which the design uncritically subordinates to market requirements and agrees to the general relativity of social consensus. It seems for the first time in the history of design that the professionalization of discipline is more and more determined by its historical origin – by being a by-product as in the times of its birth in an era of industrial revolution and the division of labour. But it is also the first time that we are indifferent to such a situation in the profession.

Fredric Jameson writes that in the time of modernism we strived to create new worlds, whereas in an era of postmodernism we are looking for breaks.³ Prerequisite for the very ability of break is the establishment of a distance to the existing; therefore, what we need is the existence of criticism. It creates the ability for a different working and conditions for the event, for the searched break. According to Rado Riha, for the revolution to be seen two steps are necessary: “on the one hand an act of unconditional resistance and on the other the concrete requirements of concrete emancipative struggles”, because only with such a connection “the desire to see will be activated”.⁴ The very desire to see – “we want what we desire”⁵ – is according to Riha a prerequisite for us to even begin to think about breaking the given situation. At Riha’s thought we cannot avoid the question: what in fact we want to see in the field of design? What are

3 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, Durham 1991, p. IX.

4 Rado Riha, “Kako lahko vidim revolucijo?” [“How Can Revolution Be Seen?”], *Filozofski vestnik*, XXVII, No. 1, Ljubljana 2006, p. 46.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

the concrete requirements of concrete emancipative struggles? Given that most of the discipline doesn't even require a break with a given situation. Moreover, it doesn't even question a given situation to a greater extent. It accepts the situation as a given, as a matter of course. The utopian striving towards building the new world was replaced by a challenge in the form of market interest, of continuous improvement of the existing world. Consequently, in the flood of everything being virtually new defining the *real* problem in the manner of Sullivan seems much more difficult, almost impossible task. But defining the impossible in design is exactly the objective of this text. The purpose of this text is that in an age when everything seems possible we find the point of impossibility. In other words: what is impossible in design today?

The Return to Ruskin

The industrial revolution represents the beginning of the professionalization of design. It caused a rupture in the ways in which work was executed that not only led to the rise of a new discipline, but also radically altered the development of society. It was a break with the past. The gradual separation of the professions in the making of products⁶ resulted in a previously unseen division of labour. The person who drafted the product was divorced from the person who manufactured it. This new profession (*draftsman* of products) was the embryo of the design profession as we know it today. The second critical break for design happened with the separation of client and user. As long as a designer was a craftsman (and in numerous cases also a tradesman), he also knew his final users, for these were most often also the ones who ordered the product. Manufactures and the later development of more and more automated production started to introduce new materials and techniques⁷ and – if we compare them with manual work⁸ – literally proliferate industrially made products. Consequentially, the prices of products are lowered and thus more accessible to the masses. User no longer participates in the process, but takes over the role of arbiter of what is made and offered to market. The increase of products influences the increase of choices and so the user with his choices – consciously or not – takes part in defining the direction of further development of chosen product (or just multiplication of copies). The ultimate split

6 As John Heskett points out, specialisation first appeared with the development of commerce in the middle ages. He cites as tangible evidence the period of the Renaissance (the early sixteenth century), when for the first time sample books were published containing various forms that could be repeatedly applied to different content. It was at this point, Heskett says, that the sample designer first became divorced from the one who used the samples, the one who applied them to products. See John Heskett, *Industrial Design* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 11. The ultimate separation of the professions may be ascribed in greater measure, however, to the period following the industrial revolution.

7 See: Jonathan M. Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1997, p. II.

8 David Pye writes about workmanship of risk and workmanship of certainty. The essential idea in the workmanship of risk is “that the quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making. [...] [In] contrast the workmanship of certainty, [is] always to be found in quantity production, and found in its pure state in full automation. In workmanship of this sort the quality of the result is exactly predetermined before a single salable thing is made.” David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, The Herbert Press, London 2010, pp. 20–24. The difference between the two workmanships provides the basis for understanding Ruskin’s thought and his rejection of automatized production.

in the professions occurred with the advent of mechanisation, or, as Walter Benjamin labelled it, the age of mechanical reproduction.⁹

The entrance point into technical reproduction is marked by transition from manual to machine production that resulted in the industrialization of society. The period of the Enlightenment paved the way to this transition. This movement challenges the monopoly of guilds, strives for progressive society and emphasizes reason and science. Kant's essay *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* (1783) coincides with an era in history books labelled as a beginning of industrial revolution (1780). In this essay he wrote: "One age cannot bind itself, and thus conspire, to place a succeeding one in a condition whereby it would be impossible for the later age to expand its knowledge [...] to rid itself of errors, and generally to increase its enlightenment. That would be a crime against human nature, whose essential destiny lies precisely in such progress".¹⁰ In writing this essay Kant didn't have in mind the approaching industrial revolution and all its influences on further development of society, but nevertheless, retrospectively his words seem almost like a prophecy. A prophecy in the sense of progress, errors and critiques¹¹ that industrial revolution encouraged mostly in 19th century, but also in the sense of cleansing of errors that – at least from the perspective of design – happened at the turn from the 19th to 20th century in the context of reconciliation with the industrial revolution. The reconciliation came with the first representatives of the engineering line and organisation as Deutscher Werkbund, movements Futurism and De Stijl, educational institution the Bauhaus and, of course, the International Style, to mention only the most obvious.

9 Walter Benjamin, "Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati" ["The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility"], *Izbrani spisi*, Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 1998, pp. 145–176.

10 Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?," <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html> (March 2011).

11 Errors of the nineteenth century industrial production are well described by Nikolaus Pevsner: "all industrial art was crude, vulgar, and overloaded with ornament. [...] Responsible for this state of affairs were the Industrial Revolution and – less known but equally important – the theory of aesthetics created since 1800." (In: Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern design. From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, Penguin Books, London 1991, p. 20.) Pugin, Ruskin, Morris and many others criticized the aforementioned situation. More on this topics in the next chapters.

But the path to movements mentioned above ran through the Victorian period in England. Through time of degenerate forms that flourished in all their vociferation. The beginning of *deconstruction* is caused by hybrid production¹² of 18th century, characterised by partial mechanisation with a good measure of manual (most often final) treatment. Designers are replaced by artists who devote their attention to creation of various patterns in neo-classicist style, and in numerous cases they even border on eclecticism. Patterns that represented the highest point of craftsmen tradition and were made from topmost materials are simply copied on mechanically made cheap industrial products made from new cheap materials. According to Jonathan M. Woodham, the nineteenth century manufacturers' "relentless exploitation of new techniques and materials increasingly made accessible to middle-class consumers a wide range of objects with rich and elaborate decorative detailing in an encyclopedic variety of historicizing styles."¹³ The main reason for this sudden surge in the production was that, the "manufacturers were, by means of new machinery, enabled to turn out thousands of cheap articles in the same time and at the same cost as were formerly required for the production of one well-made object."¹⁴ can be found in the fast-growing demand of the nascent working class. Increased consumption that tried to satisfy the need for products that resembled expensive items of upper classes, and created a base for products that were totally inappropriate for developing industrial production.¹⁵ As a result, we can see a social change, which is evident in the new orientation towards the masses. Benjamin, too, points to this: with technological reproduction, he notes, we enter a period when "mass reproduction is especially favoured by the reproduction of the masses"¹⁶ Exploited and

12 Examples of companies: Boulton, Wedgwood etc. More in: John Heskett, *Industrial Design*. The beginnings vary depending on research. According to David Pye, the first embryonic forms and techniques of hybrid production emerge in the Middle Ages. Their importance increases steadily over the years due to the economic factor. (See: Pye, *The Nature and ...*, pp. 20–21.) See also: Herwin Schaefer, *The Roots of Modern Design. Functional Tradition in the 19th Century*, Studio Vista, London 1970.

13 Woodham, *Twentieth-Century ...*, p. 11.

14 Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern ...*, p. 20.

15 First theoreticians and experts who publicly responded to this inappropriate situation were Augustus N. W. Pugin with his work *Contrasts* (1836) and Thomas Carlyle with social critique *Past and Present* (1843). John Ruskin followed loudly.

16 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Third Version)", *Selected Writings, 1938–1940*, (ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2003, 282n47.

mostly uneducated masses can finally afford industrially made imitations of expensive products. The more artificial the products are the bigger is consumption. And rapidly expanding capitalists enraptured with new purchasing capabilities, hurry to satisfy this increased consumption.

Immanuel Kant, too, wrote about the masses in his essay *An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?* In Kant's view the phenomenon of the masses is not something bad, since a mass of people ('the public') has a greater chance to become enlightened than does the individual. Enlightenment, he says, "is almost inevitable, if only the public is left in freedom." After all, for this enlightenment, "nothing is needed but *freedom*; and indeed the most harmless of anything that could be called freedom: namely, freedom to make public use of one's own reason in all matters".¹⁷ As history shows us, at least in design, the establishment of the "public use of one's own reason in all matters" relies in an essential way on individuals, on people whom we might call "catalysts" – on those, indeed, who are able to establish a certain distance from their own age. As for the masses that too often can be recognised only by fashionable changes of taste and even these are often encouraged by mass media:¹⁸ the idea of progression out of condition of immaturity in the time of mass consumption seems almost utopian.

The culmination of celebrating "new" industrial products happens in London in 1851 at the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations that was housed in the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park.¹⁹ at the first Great Exhibition of industrial products. The

17 Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?' (1784), in *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (ed. Lara Denis, tr. Thomas K. Abbott with revisions by Lara Denis), Broadview Press, Peterborough, Ontario 2005, p. 120.

18 Here we have to emphasise that technical reproduction brought into play also numerous new brands of art (for example, photography and film) that had an important role in "modernisation" of the public.

19 The main reason for the Great Exhibition was to show symbolically the industrial, military and economic superiority of Great Britain. Nevertheless it was a great exhibition: data shows that the palace (built on the plan of Joseph Paxton) covered more than 80.000 square meters. Exhibition showed more than 13.000 products, it was visited by more than 6.200.000 visitors. John Ruskin described the building as a big cucumber building between two chimneys. Source: John F. Pile, *A history of interior design*, Laurence King Publishing, London 2005, p. 243.

main organizer,²⁰ Sir Henry Cole, points out in his text from 1852 *On the International Results of the Exhibition of 1851*²¹ that the exhibition was – beside the fact it presented the topmost achievements of industrial production – important also as a landmark for it generated numerous social changes. According to Sir Cole among the most relevant for further development we can undoubtedly mention the beginning of the so-called free movement of goods because it encourages boundless competition and it is still a base of capitalist system. Before that, local products were protected from foreign rivalry; consequentially the majority of producers were not familiar with the development and products from other parts of the world and so they believed in their superiority – most often wrongly. The second immensely important consequence – in Cole’s opinion – was that the representatives of art, science and trade for the first time in history gained an equal voice in the parliament along the representatives of politics, juridical bodies and armed forces. As Cole believes, this chance was essential “for the progress of mankind”²² for it was finally acknowledged that the latest changes in science and industry demonstrate the national welfare is based on national industry and not on wars that in the long run bring only enormous costs.²³

Beside all these consequences Sir Henry Cole mentions also the meaning of education – especially education in the field of designing usable products. He made a selection of products exhibited at the Great Exhibition. After the conclusion of the latter, these

20 The initiative and funds for the exhibition came from Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria. Beside him the main supporter was Royal Society of Arts. In: *The Industrial Design Reader* (ed. Carma Gorman), Allworth Press, New York 2003, p. 3.

21 Part of this text is published in: *The Industrial Design ...*, pp. 3–11.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

23 Beside these changes the exhibition influenced also the development of postal communications. Namely, in the time of exhibition the postal association was established with the aim of enabling everybody in the world to exchange opinions by writing. Before that each national post had its rules and posting from one country to the other meant quite big bureaucratic problem. After the Great Exhibition this association wanted to create the international postal system with freedom of communication as a main goal. As the fourth important consequence Sir Henry Cole emphasised changes regarding patent protection. The Great Exhibition raised a question of rights regarding intellectual property – for the wish to exhibit raised also the fear of stealing ideas and innovations. The state ensured participants that it will protect their authorial rights with proper certificates. The protection originally lasted only few months, but soon the law was introduced that protected products on the long run.

products became a pillar of the collection in London's Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington. The main purpose of Museum was to offer examples of good design and decorative motives to design students and producers.²⁴

In spite of all good intentions and long-term consequences, the new changes were not met by indiscriminately enthusiasm. John Ruskin²⁵, one the most influential critics of art and society in the nineteenth century, completely rejected the breakthrough brought by the industrial revolution, i.e. the developing mechanization and the emergence of a new discipline. In the period of enthusiasm over mechanisation, he was one of rare breed of people able to reject the existent direction of development. With this rejection he actually influenced further development of design discipline, although he was probably not aware of it. He saw the new surplus of products as a crucial problem that, in its essence, had no place whatsoever in the field of art. He was aware of the conflict between high (traditional) art and (most often cheap) technically reproduced, copied and uninventive products. In this context, rejection was the only possible solution for Ruskin. At the same time, however, we should stress that Ruskin was not content merely with this stance of rejection. In his theoretical thought, along with this categorical rejection²⁶ of industrialization, he champions the cause of craft and so proposes his own – anachronistic – direction of development. He offers the possibility that was in total conflict with the logic of time he belongs to, but this very distance from his time enables him to propose a way how to think about an alternative.

To understand Ruskin's role in further development of design we might do well to turn to Giorgio Agamben's essay *What is the contemporary?* For it is only when we are *contemporary* that we can in fact think about an alternative. According to Agamben, to be

24 Sir Henry Cole also organised the 'Chamber of Horrors; at Marlborough House, London, the first home of what was to become the V&A. This provided a display of 'bad' design. See: Suga Yasuko, "Designing the Morality of Consumption: 'Chamber of Horrors' at the Museum of Ornamental Art, 1852–53", *Design Issues*, vol. 20, št. 4, Autumn 2004, pp. 43–56.

25 The essays of John Ruskin (1819–1900) on art and architecture had enormous influence in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. That was the time of Queen Victoria (marked as a height of British industrial revolution and British Empire) and his successor King Edward VII. (1901–1910).

26 Train was the exception.

contemporary means that we do not coincide with the age in which we live; we do not “adjust ourselves” to the demands of the age and, consequently, are “irrelevant”. And it is this so-called irrelevance to our time, this non-coincidence, this anachronism, or “dys-chrony” (as Agamben calls it), that in fact allows us to perceive and understand the time in which we live. As Agamben further explains:

“Contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one’s own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is *that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*. Those who coincide too well with the epoch, those who are perfectly tied to it in every respect, are not contemporaries, precisely because they do not manage to see it; they are not able to firmly hold their gaze on it.”²⁷

If anybody, then Ruskin dared to firmly hold his gaze on on his era. Looking from today’s perspective, in the course of time his rejection proved to be the key thought for it in large measure shaped the subsequent development of the discipline of design. The core legacy of his thought led designers to what was a fundamental reversal in the way they worked, to the understanding that the new manner of production demanded a change in the approach to “designing” (art manufacturing) the product. Ruskin’s work, therefore, proves that something which seems anachronistic for its time can revolutionize the time that just arriving. We are justified in calling Ruskin a rebel, and it is his rebellion, in particular, that makes him and his ideas interesting from today’s perspective. He offers us a paradigm in the search for alternatives, and – in retrospect – Ruskin therefore becomes an event.

According to Kant, a historical sign is

“some experience in the human race which, as an event, points to the disposition and capacity of the human race to be the cause of its own advance toward the better, and (since this should be the act of a being endowed with freedom), toward the human race

²⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *What is Apparatus? And other Essays*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2009, p. 41.

as being the author of this advance. But from a given cause an event as an effect can be predicted [only] if the circumstances prevail which contribute to it”²⁸

In the case of design, the *cause* is Ruskin’s ability to extricate himself from the prevailing current of development through a critical and clear recognition of the negative aspects introduced by the system of rapid industrialization. The *event as an effect*, meanwhile, is found in the way the work of design begins to change. Similarly as Kant, in Michel Foucault’s opinion, with the question *What Is Enlightenment?* launches philosophical question of contemporary time,²⁹ Ruskin with his critique – as we will see further in the text – creates convergence of effect. The trace of Ruskin’s thought is clearly visible in our basic notions of contemporary design. We can track his ideas in the works of William Morris and Morris’s Arts and Crafts movement, as well as in the thinking of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Deutscher Werkbund group, and in the basic tenets of the Bauhaus, perhaps the most influential design school in the world.

If, however, we look at the *event* through the lens of Alain Badiou, it is Ruskin who becomes himself the desired *event*, the desired *cause* in the history of design, for with his rejection of the industrial age and his proposed alternative, he gives rise to the history of a new discipline. The impact of his thought is unmistakable in the movements and designers just mentioned, who are the foundation of contemporary design. The difference is that now Morris, the Deutscher Werkbund, the Bauhaus, and many others become the *sign*, for they see in Ruskin that desired *more*, which guides them in their subsequent work and which at the same time compels them to return again and again to his ideas. What Ruskin shows us, in a most illustrative way, is that the development of the discipline of design is, once more, bound in very clear correlation with individuals and movements. These are not some isolated cases without any connections with the past, but all of them rest on cause and effect. And in design, the key *cause*, the key *event*, happens with the thought of John Ruskin. His thought was quite adjusted through time to new situations, but the fact is that the trace of his thinking is very alive in 1919 Bau-

28 Immanuel Kant, “The Conflict of the Faculties”, *Religion and Rational Theology*, (ed. Alan W. Wood and George Di Giovanni), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England 1996, 301.

29 Foucault, *What Is Enlightenment?* ..., (January 2011).

haus Manifesto. In this Manifesto the conceptual father of Bauhaus – Walter Gropius – indicated the ideological connection between crafts and idea for uniting all arts. He wrote: “Architects, sculptors, painters we all must return to the crafts! For art is not a ‘profession’. There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman”.³⁰ These words could be easily ascribed to John Ruskin.

Generally speaking Ruskin’s thought is deeply marked by the rejection of the existent and by the return to past that follows that rejection. In his 1853 essay *The Nature of Gothic*, Ruskin explains why it is necessary to turn back towards the past. He turns to Pugin³¹ for the answer: the latter, Ruskin says, is revealed in the grotesque monsters we can see on Gothic churches. These images “are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure”.³² If we resume Ruskin’s answer to the new situation we can say: we have to return to Gothic.³³ Or if we read from the perspective of design discipline – we have to return to craft’s way of work and production. The key to understanding Ruskin’s return to the past, then, lies in his attitude toward work. What he sees in Gothic architecture is, in fact, the same Kantian “freedom of thought” we have mentioned – the freedom to establish one’s own mind, which is manifested in the conception and production of a product. This is the freedom that technological reproduction takes out of work and excludes from production. This is freedom of

30 Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Manifesto, <http://www.bauhaus.de/english/bauhaus1919/manifest1919.htm> (January 2009). This particular early moment of Bauhaus history was influenced by left wing disaffection with industry, particularly the German arms industry that had exerted such an influence on the First World War. This was to change with the move away from a craft-led philosophy towards that of a machine-led philosophy (symbolic and real) and practice with the upturn in the German economy in 1923–24 and the move from Weimar to the industrial centre of Dessau in 1925.

31 See: A. W. N. Pugin, *Contrasts and The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, Spire Books Ltd. In Pugin Society, Reading 2003, pp. 5–6.

32 John Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *The Stones of Venice, Volume II: The Sea Stories*, Cosimo Classics, New York 2007 [first published in 1853], p. 163.

33 We have to emphasize that for Ruskin the Gothic means the opposition to Classic. With this he describes modern development. He sees the Gothic as morally uplifting and the embodiment of a healthy society whereas when Venice was later overthrown its architecture was epitomised by ornamental excess and, in Ruskin’s eyes, was the sign of a morally decadent, indulgent society. This paralleled Victorian society with its inclinations towards ‘decadent’ ornamentation and was very much part of his return to the Gothic as the sign of a healthy society.

thought and expression as the main component of human creativity, which, in Ruskin's view, we last witnessed in the Gothic period, while all other modern-age production alternatives deprive us of our freedom of thought.

Or, if we lean once more on Foucault's commentary on Kant's essay *What Is Enlightenment?*, where he marks as the obvious consequence of critique "a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression"³⁴, even more:

"this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom"³⁵.

If we mark degenerated industrially produced forms as a contingency, then we can change our way of acting and thinking. In that sense Ruskin's critique of work of industrial production opens the possibilities for a new approach to work – precisely, to design. He tries (similarly as Kant) to show us a way out from immaturity, a way to re-establish freedom of thinking. In Kant's opinion, a way out is marked by "enlightenment [...] a process that releases us from the status of 'immaturity'"³⁶. According to Ruskin, with the industrial production we – in relation to work – regress instead of progress. Namely, with the industrial production we gave up³⁷ our freedom for immaturity and incapacity for free reflection. In this context, Ruskin's call to return to Gothic remains topical, for in the (post)industrial time we still have an open question how to find *new impetus to the undefined work of freedom*.

34 Foucault, *What Is Enlightenment? ...*, (January 2011).

35 *Ibid.*

36 *Ibid.*

37 This denouncement was not something given. Let us mention resistance movements, also Luddism as one of the most notorious. Its members struggled against machines by smashing them with hammers.

In Ruskin's turn to Gothic we don't find *just* a critique of work, for he extends it to the critique of society as well and at the same time opens a discussion about conditions for the introduction of the past into work praxis. In Victorian era labelled as a height of British development, he, like Friedrich Engels, recognizes – beside prosperity of production – “brutal indifference” that for the achievement of progress has to “sacrifice better part of its humanity”.³⁸ Or, to summarize Ruskin's words, changes that industrial production brought about for the first time in history affected deeply the social structure.³⁹ Consequentially, the main problem of society that strives only for progress and bigger and bigger profit is that the human being is viewed only as a skeleton. “An ossifant theory of progress” is based on this presumption,

“on this negation of a soul; and having shown the utmost that may be made of bones, and constructed a number of interesting geometrical figures with death's-head and humeri, successfully proves the inconvenience of the reappearance of a soul among these corpuscular structures. I do not deny the truth of this theory: I simply deny its applicability to the present phase of the world”.⁴⁰

In a society that was praised for its scientific and technological excellence, Ruskin saw that industrial production in its drive for profit neglected human beings, robbing them of joy in their work.⁴¹ In the industrial production that was still far away from Ford's assembly line, he recognized consequences of promise of progress. He saw a death of human being on the assembly line, all for a benefit of triumphant capital. In his opinion, yearning for progress dehumanize,⁴² similarly as the machine work deconstruct the production process on several minor parts. Because of mechanisation, human be-

38 Friedrich Engels, *Položaj delavskega razreda v Angliji* [*The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*], Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1948, pp. 49–50.

39 Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *The Stones ...*, p. 86.

40 John Ruskin, “Unto this Last”, *Unto This Last and Other Writings*, (ed. Clive Wilmer), Penguin Books, London 1997, p. 168.

41 Later William Morris continues to develop the idea of losing joy in work (as we will see in the next chapter). In: Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 86.

42 Ruskin writes about unrestrained expansion of poverty and exploitation of new working class in essays titled *Unto this Last*, where he intentionally attacks the development of political economy. “I am not one who in the least doubts or disputes the progress of this century in many things useful to mankind; but it seems to

ing was “broken into small fragments and crumbs of life”.⁴³ He was broken to someone not capable of individually making not even a pin. If once a human being was a part of nature, in this new situation he becomes only an extension of the machine.

How is design incorporated in all this? The understanding of conditions under which the design discipline was formed enables us with better understanding of further steps and effects that happen in design with its professionalization. Ruskin writes that “we manufacture everything [...] except men”.⁴⁴ In this aspect he already directs his attention and critique to things we produce. Not only to the way and conditions of production, but also to what we produce, how do we value these things and what are the effects in society.⁴⁵ In other words, Ruskin starts to raise important questions about rapidly developing material society and in fact establishes the ground for design theory.

He deals with this very systematically. He opens a discussion on work and devotes himself to the search for the best way to manage with given situation. He rejects to preach – for with it we only mock – and declares for teaching that can bring us to the proper level of understanding and capability to recognize a good work that makes people happy.⁴⁶ In accordance with his belief, in before mentioned essay *The Nature of Gothic* he offers basic principles of work. He conceives them on three “broad and simple rules”:⁴⁷

- Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which *Invention*⁴⁸ has no share.

me a very dark sign respecting us that we look with so much indifference upon dishonesty and cruelty in the pursuit of wealth”. In: *Ibid.*, p. 129.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

44 *Ibid.*

45 A number of these views had been broached by A W Pugin. In: Pugin, *Contrasts and The ...*, p. 87.

46 Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 87.

47 Before that we find rules for work in design and architecture in Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. He conceives them on two principles: 1. First that there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety. 2. Second that all ornament should consist of the essential construction of the building. Source: <http://lifeloom.com/263HistArch1.htm#Pugin> (February 2009). As we know, Pugin had a strong influence on Ruskin. He is also known as a big advocate of Gothic in architecture.

48 Capital and italics are taken from Ruskin’s text.

- Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end.
- Never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving records of great works.⁴⁹

In the middle of 19th century Ruskin conceives rules that are still topical in design today. Still more: with the actualization of rules he offers a sustainably oriented design code. Why? If we focus on the first half of sentence in the first rule, we see that he demands we make only products we need.⁵⁰ In that way he opens one of the most important questions of design still present today for the development of the discipline in the next centuries is marked by defining and understanding the role of the need in design. According to Ruskin the main problem with the production of unnecessary products is that by engaging the worker for making useless product (or buying it) we support contemporary slavery. With Ruskin's first rule, the production of many variations of the same product that is differentiated only in incrustation also becomes unnecessary.⁵¹ But to produce an absolutely necessary product we also need – as he wrote in his text – the innovation. Ruskin understands the innovation as a part where worker/designer uses his own intellect. Therefore this assumption – in accordance with before mentioned Ruskin's critique of work – is the key guidance in conceiving/making the product.⁵²

I base the assertion that Ruskin's demands are much more sustainable than today's on the fact that in today's design codes we cannot find a principle that would clearly dictate an estimation if the ordered product is necessary at all. Today, the prevalent constraint is that designers should in all aspects of their work reduce the damage their products

49 Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic", *Unto This Last ...*, p. 88.

50 As an example of useless products Ruskin indicates glass balls. I discuss the problem of the need (and a desire) in design in the following chapters.

51 Ruskin defends the idea that the decoration also has to satisfy its purpose. If it fails to do so and if it is carried out without proper decorative power, then we can talk about incrustation that not only doesn't satisfy its purpose but also wastes hours of redundant work. According to Ruskin, a satisfactory goal is accomplished when during the work the purpose of an architecture or product for which the decoration is made is constantly present. In: John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1989 [first published in 1849], pp. 26–27.

52 Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic", *Unto This Last ...*, p. 89.

could in any way cause to environment.⁵³ Today's rules are mostly submitted to the capitalist logic of continuous growth of production even though that kind of production unnecessarily fills up the market and rubbish dumps. In this chain the designer's task is directed to reduction of the damage that undoubtedly originates in the production of unnecessary products. Therefore Ruskin's call to anti-production remains radical and topical at the same time. We can trace a revival of his thought in the second half of 20th century, in Ken Garland's manifesto, in the theory of Victor Papanek and in the radical Italian movement Anti-Design.⁵⁴ Members of this movement, like Ruskin unsatisfied with the position of design subjected to industrial production, call for break, anti-production, in their wish for redefining the design discipline. It is a kind of call for collective rejection of work. By repeating Ruskin's demand, the protagonists of Anti-Design movement (and the rest) confirm that his demands are always anew topical. Actuality is confirmed also by Dieter Rams' ten principles of a good design. His first and second principles sound like an echo of Ruskin's words: Good design is innovative⁵⁵ and Good design makes a product useful.⁵⁶

Today we must not forget that we read Ruskin's rules through spectacles, embedded in the logic of industrial production. Because of today's quite pathological cravings to the best, it would be interesting to revive the second rule: "Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end". According to Ruskin, two approaches are significant for understanding of principle *do the best*. Both must be understood through his critique of work. On one hand he rejects the cravings to the best because "[...] work may be wasted by being too good for its material, or too fine to bear

53 My assertion is based on the ICSID code of professional ethics from 2001. In the 3rd point titled *Protect the environment* we find cases that offer rules of work in relation to protection of environment. The code is available on: www.icsid.org (July 2004).

54 I discuss more about Anti-Design movement in the chapter *The revolt of Anti-Design*.

55 The principle continues: "It does not copy existing product forms, nor does it produce any kind of novelty for the sake of it. The essence of innovation must be clearly seen in all functions of a product. The possibilities in this respect are by no means exhausted. Technological development keeps offering new chances for innovative solutions". In: *Sustainable alternatives in design: It's time we start losing time*, (ed. Barbara Predan and Cvetka Požar), Muzej za arhitekturo in oblikovanje and Društvo Pekinpah, Ljubljana 2009, p. 31.

56 "A product is bought in order to be used. It must serve a defined purpose – in both primary and additional functions. The most important task of design is to optimise the utility of a product". *Ibid*.

exposure; and this, generally a characteristic of late, especially of renaissance, work, is perhaps the worst fault of all”.⁵⁷ Why renaissance? He equated Victorian era he was a part of with the material degeneration of high renaissance for in the time of renaissance the gap between craft and art was shown for the first time – the gap between the one who conceives (the architect) and the one who just produces (the craftsman). He resists because in the time of renaissance the new understanding of art occurs described by Ruskin with words of nobility: “grandeur, magnificence, and symmetry”. He marks this as typical “vulgarity and narrowness of mind”.⁵⁸ According to him this move in its wish to satisfy nobility brings the alienation of a common man. In this sense we can easier understand Ruskin’s rejection of a newborn profession – a designer who in Ruskin’s opinion undoubtedly joins to those who from renaissance on maintain the alienation, the sublimation of everyday items.

But on the other hand the leading line of Ruskin’s reflection is led precisely by sublimation of material and work; “[...] by the Spirit of Sacrifice, first, that we should in everything do our best; and, secondly, that we should consider increase of apparent labour as an increase of beauty in the building. [...] It is not [...] a question of how *much* we are to do, but of how it is to be done; it is not a question of doing more, but of doing better”.⁵⁹ Reading carefully we can see that Ruskin loudly objects to the falsification of material and work (typical example of falsification of work is mechanisation). To give an impression of something that it is not. But striving for the best is a virtue as long as it is in respectful relation to material and exerted (possibly manual) work. In striving for the best, Ruskin makes a distinction. Reaching for the best is conditioned with maintenance of respect he connects with manual work, whereas the loss of it is connected with redirection to industrial production. Here we turn again to Ruskin’s understanding of concept of work. Namely, the work ascribes the value to product and makes the difference between *the real* product and the product that is *not*.

57 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 26.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21. This is another thought more and more topical today. For example, in March 2008 Dieter Rams gave in Ljubljana a lecture with the title *Less but Better*.

Making the difference between *the real* product and the one that is *not* enables us to tear the ordinary object out of everyday experience that in Ruskin's time was industrial production. In that sense we can easier understand Ruskin's sublimation. Lacan wrote for art:

“Works of art imitate the objects they represent, but their end is certainly not to represent them. In offering the imitation of an object, they make something different out of that object. Thus they only pretend to imitate. The object is established in a certain relationship to the Thing and is intended to encircle and to render both present and absent”.⁶⁰

Ruskin also calls attention to the need to recognize the difference. In his opinion, an object is made as something else because of before mentioned usage of designer's or worker's intellect and his capability to make the best according to his abilities. Industrial production robs us of this, but at the same time the multiplication of original isn't something feigned, but becomes a paradigm. The industrial production of 19th century copies and multiplies excellent forms and procedures of craft, manual work. And for Ruskin's striving for craft logic, that kind of design is unacceptable and it will become – on the basis of Ruskin's and Morris's rejection – unacceptable also in the nearing industrial production of 20th century.

In the difference between the *real* products and the ones that are *not* we find a key to understand Ruskin's term *the best*. For him *the best* doesn't mean a perfection of expression, it also about 'the joy of making'⁶¹ and a resistance to the 'division of labour' which characterised a great deal of Victorian manufacture. And occupied the thoughts of many involved with, and writing about, the arts and crafts movement. He wrote: “For the finer the nature, the more flaws it will show through the clearness of it; and it is a law of this universe, that the best things shall be seldomest seen in their best form”.⁶² He defends a statement that the demand for a perfect form, perfect work, means en-

60 Jacques Lacan, *Etika psihoanalize* [*The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*], Delavska enotnost, Ljubljana 1988, p. 141.

61 I discuss more about 'the joy of making' in the chapter *Morris's design for all*.

62 Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 83.

slavement of a human, it means to create “only a machine [...], animated tool”.⁶³ In this regard he gives us a choice whether we want to create a machine or a human out of the worker. If we decide for a human, we have to know in advance that to demand perfection means to demand inhumanity. Namely, if we decide for a human, we give him an opportunity to think, to develop imagination, to create on his own reason and knowledge. In the product he will create we will find “all his roughness, all his dullness, all his incapability; shame upon shame, failure upon failure, pause after pause: but out comes the whole majesty of him also”.⁶⁴ And all of this is in fact killed by mechanisation based on creation of products as perfect as possible where all of them have to be absolutely the same and without any mistakes.⁶⁵ According to Ruskin, these belong to category of products that are *not real products*, whereas products where the whole worker’s dignity is fully mirrored are described as the *real* ones.

Furthermore, in Ruskin’s opinion the absence of manual work brings worthless things. He even equates the disrespect for material with criminal act:

“The violations of truth, which dishonour poetry and painting, are thus for the most part confined to the treatment of their subjects. But in architecture another and a less subtle, more contemptible, violation of truth is possible; a direct falsity of assertion respecting the nature of material, or the quantity of labour. And this is, in the full sense of the word, wrong; it is as truly deserving of reprobation as any other moral delinquency”.⁶⁶

63 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

65 But there might be some serious flaws in this line of thinking as Le Corbusier was to point out in the 1920s. His critique of many mass produced artefacts/products was that they were far from perfect and often used a plethora of ornament in order to disguise the imperfections of machine production. See: Le Corbusier, *Towards a new Architecture*, BN Publishing, Thousand Oaks 2008 [first published in 1923].

66 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 34. In his essays Ruskin often writes about the respect for nature of material. In the text *The Work of Iron* (p. 123) he warns that “your art is base if it does not bring out the distinctive qualities of that material”. That means that before choosing the material we have to know precisely what do we want to achieve and what material would correspond to given characteristics of work. With this we can make good use of *real* characteristics of material and create the ground for an art work. In fact, this is essential for with the wrong or – even worse – improper usage of material we violate the potential product, art work and material also.

Tony Fry in a text *Sacred Design I* exposes an interesting dilemma. He agrees with Ruskin, that the problem of mechanisation lies in potential dehumanisation of process, but on the other hand he detects the main problem, still present in design today, precisely in the fact that Ruskin and William Morris with Arts and Crafts label mechanisation as the enemy of craft.⁶⁷ Namely, with the domination of industrial production, designers very rarely accept happily the label *craftsmen*. In numerous cases they even perceive it to be an insult as if they would not complete their job or do enough quality work or as if their work remained on a manual, manufactured level that did not see the light of industrial production. As craft products they designate products that are (often amateurishly) based on tradition and therefore do not contain the desired surplus designers like so much in their work. The additional meaning often surrounding the term *craft* in design circles is work somebody exerts on someone else's order. It's a skill somebody masters but without any intellectual potential – therefore without the part that it is according to Ruskin a base for any *real* product. All these are just terms that became integral components of design thinking with the help of prejudices but mostly they stand on rotten grounds. Especially if we perceive craft through Ruskin's thought: as we saw, he equates craft with concept of work and usage of intellect. David Pye's perception of craftsmanship is similar: "If I must ascribe a meaning to the word craftsmanship, I shall say as a first approximation that it means simply workmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on the judgement, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works."⁶⁸

These components are oftentimes absent in contemporary design. Similarly, in his essay Fry emphasizes the necessity of introducing craft thinking back into design and mechanised production. Namely, in craft he finds the key element absent from design

67 Tony Fry, "Sacred Design I", in: *Discovering Design. Explorations in Design Studies* (ed. Richard Buchanan in Victor Margolin), University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1995, p. 208. I would like to emphasize that Morris was not *a priori* against machines. I discuss this topic in the next chapter.

Again, I have to stress the significance of craft in relation to much later 20th century industrial design, an idea pursued in Andrea Branzi's *The Hot House* (1984). The workshop, or craft skill, is seen as a locus for experimentation. This is most significant in terms of Memphis, for example, where the prototypes were fashioned by craftsmen. More obviously it has been an important facet of design manufacture in the Scandinavian countries, where the idea of the industrial 'artist' has an important role.

68 Pye, *The Nature and ...*, p. 20.

work and production: care. Care for material, quality and product along all its way.⁶⁹ With this argument he repeats Ruskin's call for necessity of expressing respect to material, work and product. Today we cannot imagine exclusively manual, craft production but at the same time the inhuman conditions in industrial production are nearing those from 19th century, therefore the logical step seems to be the search for quality in hybrid, craft-industrial production. Ruskin didn't foresee this step but nevertheless his insistence on necessary turn to craft approach paved the way to later movements that acknowledged hybridisation and exerted it in their initial phases of praxis.⁷⁰

We have to read Ruskin's opposition to technical reproduction also in the light of relation to nature and our changeability in relation to laws. For Ruskin's so-called violation of truth,⁷¹ false respect for work and material is in fact the main reason for the decline of Gothic, but also the reason for its incapability for a new rise. In opposition to renaissance (and to all that followed) the Gothic – in its rise and on its peak – nobly combines imagination and law.⁷² This brings us to the point that in Ruskin's thinking plays an essential role in the understanding of our working: to law and its nature. According to Ruskin in the time of Gothic we witness the *proper* usage of knowledge – in contrast to 19th century when the main reason for domination of ugly products was the *improper* usage of knowledge. This is pointing at potentially changeable nature of law and consequently unreliable rules of working.

Being aware of traps and potential changes development brings – as the lack of rules that regulate subject's activities – Ruskin suggests – beside the already mentioned rules – additional measures for easier judgement at work. Namely, he is not satisfied that anybody has the possibility to decide what is right. In contrast to “modern”, Kant's moral

69 Fry, “Sacred Design I”, *Discovering Design ...*, pp. 203–215.

70 I have in mind association Deutscher Werkbund (especially the period after the 1st World War), first years of Bauhaus and numerous cases of Scandinavian design where the hybridisation of production is most alive.

71 According to Ruskin this violation of truth started in German and Swiss Gothic for it resorted to deceitful systems of imitation. With time these came stealthily upon French Gothic and caused even more violations. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 67.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

law,⁷³ where we are according to Foucault responsible by ourselves for our immaturity and we can escape from this condition only by change we bring about to ourselves and in a way that enables us to follow the renaissance motto “dare to know”,⁷⁴ Ruskin offers help. With the help of instructions and in a manner of classic ethics he enlightens our way and abolishes the dilemma between right and wrong. In classic ethics “the subject [...] originally does not know what to do, so he is looking for wisdom”.⁷⁵ But here it comes to already mentioned split with instructions and changing nature of law that *determine* what is right and what is wrong. This opens some questions. Why does Ruskin despite changeable nature of law and consequentially unreliable rules of working decide to suggest his own rules? How can anybody who rejects the law on the basis of changeability conceive rules? How can he create the law on which we could act?

Ruskin finds the solution in human nature as he conceives his rules on the basis of virtues of human nature. Namely, in his opinion nature can challenge knowledge. Again, this is showing the ambivalence present in Ruskin all the time. With anachronistic turn to nature he also practices modern relation to knowledge. Therefore, in his own way Ruskin manages to connect classical moral law with the modern, Kant's. The searching subject who does not know the answer can find one by constant acting on principles given in advance and based on (merciless) values of human nature. This reminds us of the principle of veracity that Jacques Rancière explained in his *Ignorant Schoolmaster*:

“No one makes an error except by waywardness, that is to say, by laziness, by the desire to no longer listen to what a reasonable being owes himself. The principle of evil lies not in a mistaken knowledge of the good that is the purpose of action. It lies in unfaithfulness to oneself. ‘Know yourself’ no longer means, in the Platonic manner, know where your good lies. It means come back to yourself, to what you know to be unmistakably

73 Moral law I have in mind is – according to Jelica Šumič Riha – marked by enigma and “structural indefiniteness, [...] that says *Act!*, but not how to [which] puts the subject into position where he must decide by himself what is it that the law demands. It is not the law that decides but the subject”. Jelica Šumič Riha, *Mutacije etike. Od utopije sreće do neozdravljive resnice [The Mutation of Ethics]*, Založba ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2002, p. 14.

74 Foucault, *What Is Enlightenment? ...*, (January 2011).

75 Šumič Riha, *Mutacije etike ...* p. 14.

in you. [...] This principle of veracity is at the heart of the emancipation experience. It is not the key to any science, but the privileged relation of each person to the truth, the one that puts him on his path, on his orbit as a seeker. It is the moral foundation of the power to know”.⁷⁶

With return to ourselves we abolish the possibility of mistake or as Ruskin would say we bar the improper usage of knowledge. In that sense he in fact repeats modern Kant's principle that by daring to know we cause change in ourselves. Ruskin insists on the key emphasis in construction, that is, he doesn't conceive instructions on knowledge (for this is the main reason for situation we are in) but on human nature. On nature that according to Rancière directs a person to the path of emancipation. In Ruskin's opinion we have lost the contact with our own nature, therefore to find again the way to ourselves he offers us seven lamps. These are: sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory and obedience. He offers measures that would enable us to return to ourselves and at the same time to distinguish *the good* from *the evil*. In spite of all written from today's perspective Ruskin's ideas look incomplete for it seems we cannot find a more slippery thing as human nature. Moreover, every our coquetry with nature is just our interpretation of nature for we cannot know what nature “really” wants. And when we find ourselves in some situation we can in accordance with response try to figure it out what was that led us. What did Ruskin think then when he conceived rules on human nature? In what way did he judge?

In the first essay of the collection *Unto This Last* he wrote that he believes that “every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust”. He goes on: “And all of us may know also, that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves, though we can neither say what *is* best, or how it is likely to come to pass”.⁷⁷ He adds in Kant's manner: “We may always know what is right; but not always what is possible”.⁷⁸ He ties this to answer of an artist William Mulready

76 Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster. Five Lessons in Intellectual*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1991, p. 57.

77 Ruskin, “The Roots of Honour”, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 169.

78 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 2.

who on Ruskin's question how he manages to combine the perfection of a drawing with splendid colours answered: "Know what you have to do, and do it". According to Ruskin in this answer we can find the basic principle of any human effort. He also writes: "For I believe that failure is less frequently attributable to either insufficiency of means or impatience of labour, than to a confused understanding of the thing actually to be done".⁷⁹

If we follow Ruskin's thought we see we don't have an ideal that would lead us, but when we do something we know if it is a *just act*. We are led by knowledge taken from praxis. Similarly as Rancière, Ruskin also suggests we all have the possibility of practicing, but it's not necessary we decide for it. We can still decide for an *easier* way, for a lazy way, that is according to Rancière, determined by the sentence *I can't*. But when we decide to act we are, according to Ruskin on the crossroad before every single act. We can decide for argument based on the "representation of the expediency or inherent value of the work, which is often small, and always disputable; [or argument] based on proofs of its relations to the higher orders of human virtue".⁸⁰ If we translate this into contemporary language: Ruskin puts designers on the (today quite well known) crossroad that leads on one hand into (more spread) satisfying the capital, but on the other hand into designing for the benefit of society. At this point Ruskin is again very topical for today's design theory. The designer decides on everyday basis between good and better decision where – as we will see further in the text – the praxis itself in Ruskin's sense writes the code of acting. But the question that remains open is: if you follow *only* knowledge from praxis, how do you develop new cognition?

If we establish the thesis we all have a possibility to practice a *just act* we approach the presumption based on axiom that all people think. Axiom is close to – as Jelica Šumič Riha describes – spontaneous interpretation based on assertion if people think then we believe they already know.⁸¹ And precisely on this knowledge that it is supposedly given

79 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

80 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, pp. 5–6. Further in the text, Ruskin for the source of virtue indicates God.

81 Jelica Šumič Riha, "Jetnik Drugega, ki ne obstaja" ["Prisoners of the Inexistent Other"], *Filozofski vestnik*, letnik XXVIII, No. 1, Filozofski inštitut ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2007, p. 83. Beside this interpretation the

to majority, Ruskin establishes the seat of eternity of human nature in contrast to the changing nature of law. He establishes the capacity of appealing to qualities of human nature on its universality and immutability – which we cannot claim for law based on knowledge.

“There is no law, no principle, based on past practice, which may not be overthrown in a moment, by the arising of a new condition, or the invention of a new material. [...] [Therefore we have to] endeavour to determine, as the guides of every effort, some constant, general, and irrefragable laws of right – laws, which based upon man’s nature, not upon his knowledge, may possess so far the unchangeableness of the one, as that neither the increase nor imperfection of the other may be able to assault or invalidate them.”⁸²

Hannah Arendt also writes about the constancy of changeable ideas. More than hundred years after Ruskin she says: “Constant flow is characteristic for human matters domain where mortals usually move. Fluent manhood opinions that are also subjected to constant changes correspond precisely with these changeable circumstances”.⁸³ Herbert W. Kapitzki recognizes this in design:

“Visual design means the production of signs. Signs are not necessarily unequivocal they can be interpreted in different ways. The production of signs is subject to social change Changes depend on the *Zeitgeist*. That means that ethical and moral values are not fixed for all time”.⁸⁴

Here we clash with the relation between truth and knowledge. If truth is constant, our knowledge about it seems to be changeable – changeable as to circumstances. Or, as we already saw in Rancière, the truth itself – also one of Ruskin’s lamps – is the base offering the capability of cognition. “Truth exists by itself; it is that which is and not that

importance lies also in the unknown knowledge, the symptom I will discuss in the following chapters.

82 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 3.

83 Hannah Arendt, *Resnica in laž v politiki [Truth and Politics]*, Društvo Apokalipsa, Zbirka Aut, Ljubljana 2003, p. 60.

84 Herbert W. Kapitzki, “Ethics and commitment in design”, *Essays on Design 1*, AGI’s Designers of Influence, Booth-Clibborn Editions, London 1997, p. 138.

which is said. Saying depends on man, but the truth does not”.⁸⁵ And because of our (non) knowledge our relation to truth and our understanding of it (can) consequently change – equally as our knowledge and understanding of the world. What – according to Ruskin – does not change is the human nature. At this point we cannot ignore the sentence that Rancière added to quotation above: “But for all that, truth is not foreign to us, and we are not exiled from its country”. The truth is not dependent on human and his expression but that does not mean we cannot know it. With this we can easier understand Ruskin’s statement that it is always possible to know what is right unless we rest on changeable nature of knowledge. Ruskin tried to avoid this with the establishment of universal moral rules and by approaching *prescribed* duties through nature of things. For he was well aware rules similarly as knowledge change through time, and therefore he introduced nature.

At this point Ruskin could be marked as a critic of knowledge. But in his introduction to *Unto This Last* he emphasises the meaning of knowledge. Namely, he conceives a (socialist)⁸⁶ political program in which he points out the need that the state establishes vocational schools for youth throughout the country. In the first point of his program he defines knowledge as the means for achieving “habits of gentleness and justice”.⁸⁷ On the long run this knowledge will bring about *proper* direction of youth – the *direction* toward values that do not strive only for richness. With the proper arrangement of society the design and architecture will be properly arranged too, for Ruskin believes: “What is true of human polity seems to me not less so of the distinctively political art of

85 Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster ...*, p. 58.

86 Ruskin avoided the expression *socialist*, but he was undoubtedly much closer to socialism than to dominant capitalism. Beside already mentioned first point of the program, he also wrote: 2. In connection with vocational schools we should – on the basis of governmental regulations – establish state manufactures and workrooms that would make everything necessary for living. (He doesn’t abolish private production, but merely offers an alternative. At the same time he believes that this ensures competition and needed quality level of work and final products – for a fair price.) 3. In the case of unemployment we should – as to ability – include an unemployed person into the vocational school and provide him work in accordance with his profession. (In case that he doesn’t want to work, he should be tutored and motivated; in case he cannot work because of illness he should be provided with proper care.) 4. To old, weak and poor ones it is necessary to ensure home and comfort. In: Ruskin, “Unto This Last”, *Unto This Last ...*, pp. 163–164.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Architecture”.⁸⁸ This is in fact the key sentence for with it we become aware that design is intertwined with social system. The search for a thin line between being intertwined and merely dependent is still essential for design. And when we search for a border we can still be led by subtle Ruskin’s observation that “all architecture proposes an effect on the human mind, not merely a service to the human frame”.⁸⁹ Ruskin’s thought was further developed by William Morris: he introduces theory of design as a constructor of society into the context of intertwinement. Both thoughts represent a base of contemporary understanding of design as a discipline whose wish to transform the world – a wish that returns us to the beginning of this text and to Ruskin’s cynical relation to progress – belongs to the field of politics.

In spite of rejecting the present and turning to the past Ruskin does not ignore the inevitable future. Walter Benjamin in the text *On the Concept of History* marks the progress with the metaphor of the storm that despite of resistance pushes us into the future. The resistance to what is coming ceases in emptiness for the future cannot be avoided. Or – as Benjamin also writes: “The only writer of history with the gift of setting alight the sparks of hope in the past is the one who is convinced of this”.⁹⁰ He adds:

“The historical materialist approaches a historical object solely and alone where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he cognizes the sign of a messianic zero-hour [Stillstellung] of events, or put differently, a revolutionary chance in the struggle for the suppressed past. He perceives it, in order to explode a specific epoch out of the homogenous course of history; thus exploding a specific life out of the epoch, or a specific work out of the life-work. The net gain of this procedure consists of this: that the life-work is preserved and sublated *in* the work, the epoch *in* the life-work, and the entire course of history *in* the epoch. The nourishing fruit of what is historically conceptualized has time as its core, its precious but flavourless seed”.⁹¹

88 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 2.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

90 Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/Theses_on_History.pdf (December 2010).

91 *Ibid.*

Undoubtedly, Ruskin saw the spark in Gothic which he tore out from the course of history. The lost taste of his ideas was returned to us by his followers and in their theories we can surely recognize his trace. The key characteristic in Ruskin's thought is he wasn't satisfied only with the rejection of existent condition but through all his texts he also consistently searched for solutions and offered them too. He perceived his time – with Agamben's words – through phase delays and anachronism. That's why he succeeded to see through his era for (as Agamben writes):

“[...] the contemporary is the person who perceives the darkness of his time as something that concerns him. Darkness is something that – more than any light – turns directly and singularly toward him. The contemporary is the one whose eyes are struck by the beam of darkness that comes from his own time”.⁹²

To Ruskin *the beam of darkness* of contemporary times is always a reminder of newness approaching that carries the demand to destruct the old. In spite of principled advocacy of anachronistic way of work he at the same time believes in change (let us think of the first principle about the necessity of innovation). For in his opinion, the talent does not reveal itself in the monotony but in the ability of changeability. He tolerates variations, but at the same time he believes that “it is always in the new arrangement or invention that his intellect is shown, and not in the monotony which relieves it”.⁹³ He therefore approaches the idea that the search for newness is reasonable regardless the tradition to which we belong, but at the same time he states even more clearly that the Gothic truly serves as a model, but he does not ask for a mere imitation of it. Even more, in fact he speaks about a concrete change, not only cosmetic one. Similarly as futurist architect Sant'Elia who writes:

“in the course of history changes of fashion are frequent and are determined by alterations of religious conviction and political disposition. But catalysts of deep change in the state of the environment are extremely rare, changes that unhinge and renew, such as the

92 Agamben, *What is Apparatus?* ..., p. 45.

93 Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *Unto This Last* ..., p. 96.

discovery of natural laws, the perfecting of mechanical means, the rational and scientific use of material”⁹⁴

With this last sentence he and Ruskin meet on the same side – heretic as it may appear. If anybody then Ruskin pleaded for rational and, of course, *proper* usage of material. Of course in contrast to futurists Ruskin as the initiator of cultural heritage protection would never agree in the extremity of futurism’s demands to destroy everything old, but nevertheless by recognizing an echo of Ruskin’s theories even in such extreme movement as futurism we in fact become aware of the strength of his thoughts. We become aware of Ruskin as a catalyst of changes in discipline. His persistent looking back enlightens also our – in Agamben’s meaning – contemporary way.

From what we wrote it follows that Ruskin demands from us the return to a doorstep of a new choice – and to this end he unconditionally strives for. His search leads him to Gothic. This opens up the discourse that directs to instructions we need to read Ruskin’s return to Gothic in the broadest possible sense. For him, Gothic represents an unlimited richness of discourse. It is not about the condition, it is merely about the illustration of something that can be created if we follow rules. If you act in consistence with rules, you act in consistence with truth and nature. And this is a foundation, to which he strives for. The return to history is therefore just an example of how we were already capable of acting and how should we continue in the future. In this sense, his looking back doesn’t suggest nostalgia, but a threshold where we chose the wrong direction of development. And as I wrote at the beginning, with the ability of establishing a distance to his time Ruskin offers a paradigm of conceiving an alternative.

His critique of senseless mechanisation of craft paved the way to the purified modernism of 20th century. With this he in fact contradicted his own aphorism that it is not possible to know what is possible. Ruskin’s critique lucidly analysed and rejected the existing state of affairs and offered a way to do things differently. And in this context, he

94 Antonio Sant’Elia, *Futurist Manifesto of Architecture*. The manifesto is reprinted in the article: Lebbeus Woods, *Sant’Elia’s Words*, <http://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/2009/11/02/santelias-words/> (July 2011).

was, and remains, contemporary, for his striving to go back can also be read as a guide for our research and work today. The questions Ruskin posed continue to be relevant. Just as Ruskin sought freedom of thought in work, we too still ask ourselves how we can discover a space today where freedom remains possible. And in this sense, the relevance of Ruskin is reconfirmed each time.

Morris's design for all

Fredric Jameson begins his lecture *Future of Culture, Future of Utopia*⁹⁵ by saying: “Any talk about the future must first confront globalization as its absolute horizon”. After all, globalization has redefined all social relationships and – if we focus our attention on the globalization of culture – brought with it a fear of universal standardization, or, as Rem Koolhaas has called it, “generic culture”. And this generic culture, Jameson says, “seems to correspond to the weakening of political ideologies today and the eclipse of passionate political-valued visions of radically different futures”. But despite such pessimism about the potential relevance of today’s “official” utopias, Jameson goes on to underline what he calls the “utopian impulse”.

According to Jameson, the utopian impulse is about “longing for utopian change”:

“This impulse is [...] to be found everywhere in a society which has lost its historicity, its conscious experience of the past and future, and which imagines itself to be imprisoned, caged, in a present which it cannot change – there is no alternative, except for the worse. In a present about which it has been said that, in it, it’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.”⁹⁶

And for this reason, he says, the task of today’s sociologists and cultural theorists is “to decode and detect the active presence” of these utopian impulses. William Morris⁹⁷ – a central figure in British design in the nineteenth century – is, from today’s point of view, undeniably one of the key utopian impulses in the design field. But Jameson’s words are in a way echoes of Morris’s texts, for creating and detecting utopian impulses represent the main Morris’s tasks that he set himself when he was trying to find and create art and consequentially a better world for all. Inspired with practice and Ruskin’s

95 Fredric Jameson, lecture *Future of Culture, Future of Utopia*, from the inauguration of Jackman Humanities Institute at the University of Toronto, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxtUgTLqMAk> (November 2010).

96 *Ibid.*

97 William Morris (1834–1896), the designer, poet, theorist, craftsman, and socialist (if I mention only the most important).

theory he was looking for a solution for art that would reintegrate all that the progress in the form of industrialisation and the division of labour separated. In his search for an ideal world he transferred solutions he couldn't realise into practice, into theory, into utopia, where he solved all that troubled him in design field. In his utopia, Morris created the world that, according to Jameson, "combines the not-yet-being of the future with a textual existence in the present".⁹⁸

According to Agamben and following Greek philosophers to create something in the sense of transferring it into existence means to act in the sphere of *poiesis*. In the antique Greece, the category of *poiesis* was clearly distinguished from the *praxis*, where as Agamben explains, the latter meant "prattein, 'to do' in the sense of acting".⁹⁹ The difference is therefore that "central to praxis was the idea of the will that finds its immediate expression in act, while, by contrast, central to poiesis was the experience of production into presence, the fact that something passed from nonbeing to being, from concealment into the full light of the work".¹⁰⁰ And this, the central experience of passing from nonbeing to being is the basis for understanding William Morris. In an era, imbued with the advancement of industrialisation, in the world where work became a mere executing Morris set himself a task how to reinvent the moment of capability for a new mode of work. That means work as *bringing into being* something that didn't exist before, work as a source of new ideas, the antipode of industrial reproduced novelty that exists for its own sake in contrast to real novelty as something that didn't exist before. But if we want to understand Morris's relation to work, we have to return to his practice.

In retrospect, Morris seems to provide the logical and, at first glance, mainly practical superstructure to Ruskin's theoretical thought. According to design historians,¹⁰¹

98 Fredric Jameson, *Archeologies of the Future. The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, Verso, London in New York 2005, p. XVI.

99 Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1999, p. 68. Agamben discusses both categories in the chapter § 8 *Poiesis and Praxis*, pp. 68–93, but he opens this topic already in the chapter before, § 7 *Privation Is Like a Face*.

100 *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69.

101 I refer to Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design* (Penguin Books, London 1991 [first published in 1936]), the book *William Morris* (ed. Linda Parry, Victoria and Albert Museum, London 1996) and Clive

Morris devoted his attention to design instead of painting or – as he put it – to handicraft practice of making everyday, applied products, when he wanted to equip his studio. As he, in the flood of industrially made products, didn't find anything that could satisfy his criteria,¹⁰² he decided to make the equipment for the studio and his family house on his own.¹⁰³

Like Ruskin, Morris, too, saw industrialization as responsible for the production of useless and ugly products, and this awareness was behind the central idea in Morris's practice: namely, that to achieve quality and happiness it was necessary to work towards reuniting the planner and the maker. In this, he was directly following the words of Ruskin, for whom the biggest mistake of industrialization was precisely this division of labour, that is, the separation of the one who plans the product from the one who makes it. The result of this separation is that both are unhappy – as Ruskin puts it, both the “morbid thinker” and the “miserable worker”,¹⁰⁴ who makes things only by order of the former. Or as Morris writes: “The artist came out from the handicraftsmen, and left them without hope of elevation, while he himself was left without the help of intelligent, industrious sympathy”.¹⁰⁵ If Ruskin seeks freedom of thought in work, then Morris sees the reuniting of the designer and the craftsman as the key to preserve humanity,

Wilmer's introduction in the book *William Morris. News from Nowhere and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics, London 2004).

102 Morris was very influenced by Ruskin's text *The Nature of Gothic*. I discuss it in the chapter *Return to Ruskin*.

103 As Nikolaus Pevsner writes, Morris soon discovers, “that before one can settle down to paint elevating pictures, one must be able to live in congenial surroundings, must have a decent house, and decent chairs and tables”. When he starts to make equipment he becomes aware of the deficiency of products on the market so together with his friends he decides to design and make solid, genuine furniture. He first thought about it when he equipped his studio. As Rossetti later remembers, with designing the equipment they wanted to “to build chairs ‘such as Barbarossa might have sat in’ and a table ‘as heavy as a rock’”. As a result, the famous Red House at Bexleyheath is built. Being occupied with the equipment, Morris finds out what he likes the most in creating and at the same time he recognises numerous possibilities in making equipment and products for everyday use. In practice he manages to carry out what Ruskin only lectured: applied products made by high quality handicraft knowledge, extremely beautiful and thoughtfully designed. Enraptured with this new potential in 1861 he establishes the company Morris, Marshall & Faulkner, Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture, and the Metals devoted only to manual, on the medieval knowledge based making of church and home equipment. Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern ...*, p. 22.

104 Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 90.

105 William Morris, “The Lesser Arts”, *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, (ed. Stephen Coleman in Paddy O'Sullivan), Penguin Books, London 2004, p. 238.

for through such unification we will again find happiness in work. And happiness in work and the attitude we have in our manner of work are essential for preserving dignity and meaning in life. In the march of industrial production, however, happiness in work was compromised, for industrialization brought with it inhumane conditions for the new working class.

Agamben draws our attention to another meaning of the separation of artist/designer from the material and production.¹⁰⁶

“[...] once the creative subjectivity of the artist begins to place itself above his material and his production, like a playwright who freely puts his characters on the scene, this shared concrete space of the work of art [the space of art shared by all, by artists and non-artists] dissolves, and what the spectator sees in it is no longer something that he can immediately find again in his consciousness as his highest truth. Everything that the spectator can still find in the work of art is, now, mediated by aesthetic representation, which is itself, independently of any content, the supreme value and the most intimate truth that unfolds its power in the artwork itself and starting from the artwork itself. The free creative principle of the artist rises up like a precious veil of Maya between the spectator and such truth as he can attain in the work of art, a veil of which he will never be able to take possession contentedly, but only through the reflection in the magic mirror of his taste”.¹⁰⁷

In this new situation, with this break we get “on the one side the aesthetic judgment and on the other artistic subjectivity without content, the pure creative principle”.¹⁰⁸ Today this situation is still one of the main problems of design discipline which has been for the last hundred and fifty years fighting with the aesthetic taste of the individual and at the same time repeatedly tries to re-establish the lost connection with the user.¹⁰⁹ In the

106 Agamben in his work *The Man without Content* focuses on art. All references to design are mine.

107 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, pp. 36–37.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

109 I refer to so-called “human-centred design” that is radically changing the methodology and practice of design.

nineteenth century, the power of public taste was the main arbiter of decisions regarding *tasteless* industrially produced items, and in this context we can understand even more Ruskin's and Morris's rejection of new division of labour and their striving for a condition where the art space would be common to artist and non-artist. Ruskin recognised this space in the Gothic, whereas in his mind Morris¹¹⁰ returned into his childhood.

Morris's childhood is closely connected with rural England, the landscape that in the time of his growing up slowly became industrialised. The memories of pure landscape marked his image of idealised past. The memories of what was once became an idea of what could be (again) if we only could return to the past mode of work. This is the key to understand his persistent striving for the past or, as Morris would undoubtedly say, the only true striving for the future. In spite of all the progress in Victorian era, Morris didn't overlook the consequences that industrialisation provoked in relation to people and environment – the consequences that defenders portrayed as unimportant side effects, as collateral damage on the way to the most progressive era. Morris was not so convinced so he looked for an alternative in theory and practice.

Nikolaus Pevsner, one of the pioneers in design theory,¹¹¹ in his book *Pioneers of Modern Design* describes Morris's practice¹¹² as an event that heralds "the beginning of a new era in Western Art".¹¹³ Pevsner bases this on two¹¹⁴ points he ascribes to Morris, his work and theory:¹¹⁵

1. Morris is a true prophet for the 20th century, and we owe him thanks for that an ordinary man's dwelling house has once more become a worthy object of the architect's thought. From the rich Morris's collection of texts Pevsner stresses these two statements:

110 I took biographical information from Pevsner's and Wilmer's books.

111 Pevsner as a pioneer in design history undoubtedly influences designers' perception of Morris. His work is considered as one of the first design textbooks.

112 Pevsner has in mind the establishment of Morris's company *Morris, Marshall & Faulkner*.

113 Pevsner, *Pioneers of modern ...*, p. 22.

114 Pevsner mentions two halves of Morris's lesson. In the further text I add one more, the third Pevsner's thought about Morris, for it seems important for the relation of contemporary design to Morris's work.

115 Pevsner, *Pioneers of modern design ...*, pp. 22–26. If I in the next three points don't explicitly mention the referential source, I refer to Pevsner's book.

“I don’t want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few”¹¹⁶ and “What businesses have we with art at all unless all can share it?”¹¹⁷ Pevsner marks this last statement as the great question that would decide the fate of art in 20th century.

Pevsner takes the first statement from Morris’s text *The Lesser Arts* and the second one from J.W. Mackail’s *The Life of William Morris*, where he finds the context of these prophetic thoughts. Morris described them as the answer to polemics he provoked with his lecture *Art, Wealth, and Riches*¹¹⁸ in March 1883 in Manchester Royal Institution. According to J. W. Mackail the public enthusiastically accepted Morris’s instructions on art and decoration, but totally rejected his critique of their way of life. They claimed his thinking transgressed the borders of art. Morris answered in the correspondence column:

“It was the purpose of my lecture to raise another question than one of mere art. I specially wished to point out that the question of popular art was a social question, involving the happiness or misery of the greater part of the community. The absence of popular art from modern times is more disquieting and grievous to bear for this reason than for any other, that it betokens that fatal division of men into the cultivated and the degraded classes which competitive commerce has bred and fosters; popular art has no chance of a healthy life, or, indeed, of a life at all, till we are on the way to fill up this terrible gulf between riches and poverty. Doubtless many things will go to filling it up, and if art must be one of those things, let it go. What businesses have we with art at all unless all can share it? I am not afraid but that art will rise from the dead, whatever else lies there. For, after all, what is the true end and aim of all politics and all commerce? Is it not to bring about a state of things in which all men may live at peace and free from over-burdensome anxi-

116 Morris, “The Lesser Arts”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 253.

117 See note 118.

118 Morris presented the lecture *Art, Wealth, and Riches* to public on the 6th of March 1883 in the Manchester Royal Institution. In April 1883 the newspaper *Manchester Quarterly* reprinted the text (pp. 153–75). See more in: J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, first published in 1899, one of the numerous reprints: The Electric Book Company Ltd, London, 2001, pp. 499–501. The lecture is also available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1883/riches/> (April 2011).

ety, provided with work which is pleasant to them and produces results useful to their neighbours?”¹¹⁹

According to Morris, popular art, decorative art or applied art, however we call it, was missing in society in the nineteenth century, in spite of the rushing flood of products that people didn't really need. These were produced for the sake of production only. All that really counted was creating marketable surplus value with the aim of satisfying or generating suitable markets¹²⁰ – even though that meant enormous production of useless products. Before the industrialisation, division of labour and lumber of products the industrialisation deposited, anybody – according to Morris – could get an excellent, arty, local craftsman's product. Working tools were only in the service of handicraftsman. With the industrialization and especially after its automation phase (we discussed both in the chapter about Ruskin), art – as we knew it – lost its favour. It lost it because of the reproduction. Namely, classical artwork is based on its unrepeatability and consequentially – as Agamben marks it – on its shape and its end. “Reproducibility causes the product never to possess itself in its own shape as in its own end, and thus the product remains in a condition of perpetual potentiality”. Agamben continues, “We usually express this by saying that the industrial product is not a ‘work’ but, precisely, a product”.¹²¹ Morris equalled topmost handicraft (manual) work with art and at the same time rejected industrially made products. But on the other hand, the *perpetual potentiality* generated by industrial production coincided with the spirit of time that strived for novelty which in fact wasn't a real novelty, but just something fictive that as a fashion vagary adjusts to a taste or non-taste of public.

In his response Morris directed his attention to another division, to a fatal division of people on “the cultivated” and “the degraded classes”. Agamben also talks about this division. He recognises the crucial turn in the understanding of art in the *appearance* of figure of *a man of taste* in the middle of the 17th century. This figure is transmuted from

119 *Ibid.*, p. 500.

120 More in: Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Imperij* [Empire], Študentska založba, Ljubljana 2002, pp. 188–190.

121 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 65.

the user into a mere observer who bases his opinion on his good taste, his aesthetic feeling, his capability to recognise a real perfection.¹²² According to Agamben, with this division – of the one who creates from the one who judges on the basis of uncertainty of taste – the principle of perversion¹²³ in the art field came about. “It seems, that is that genius and good taste cannot cohabit in the same brain, and that the artist, in order to be one, must first of all distinguish himself from the man of taste”.¹²⁴ Only that way he will be capable to create the before-mentioned *concrete space of art* that will surpass the mere aesthetic representation and create – in a spirit of Morris’s call – art that will be available again to everybody.

In the light of understanding that the artist is not capable to distinguish himself from following and satisfying *the good taste of cultivated* or those from *degraded classes*, Morris’s call to art seems less radical. Morris understands art as a connecting element in society that breaks the borders and not just fills the gap between banks. In this context we can return to Morris’s class struggle. In the industrial production he recognises one more factor that deepens the gap between the privileged cultivated class, which now has the role of producers-capitalists (as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt designate them in their *Empire*), and deprived class of proletarians who in the production process become only the “means of production”.¹²⁵ The industrial production therefore brings about another division in society that is the division of producers and means of production. The very fact that the working class was perverted to a level of means of production, and that with *the development* and growth of production it took less and less share in the final product value were in total opposition with Morris’s understanding of work and consequentially of art.

In Victorian England Morris recognised three classes: class of rich people doing no work who are therefore the burden for society, for they “consume a great deal while they produce nothing”; the second class is a middle class which is, according to Morris,

122 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

124 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

125 Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2001, p. 257.

composed of those who seem to work, but in fact don't produce anything; and the third, working class, the only class that works, but only by order of the first two, therefore everything that produces is useless. Because of this system "the civilization therefore wastes its own resources, and will do so as long as the present system lasts".¹²⁶ It's no surprise that in the proverbially traditional England Morris clashed with the anger of people, but nevertheless he insisted with his critique of class differences. He believed that only with the fall of class differences it can be possible to recreate the space for art that could finally be reachable for everybody. In this context Morris understood art and its accessibility as a wider problem of society. Even more, "for as all roads lead to Rome, so the life, habits, and aspirations of all groups and classes of the community are founded on the economical conditions under which the mass of the people live, and it is impossible to exclude socio-political questions from the consideration of aesthetics".¹²⁷ This transfer of art into the socio-political field brings about the already-mentioned superstructure to Ruskin's theoretical thought, and Morris's comprehension of design in its social context remains topical until this day. And this is in fact an extremely important ground where the professionalization of design discipline occurs in the twentieth century.¹²⁸

We have to stress that designers of the twentieth century for the most part *accommodated* – very broadly speaking – Morris's thought. In contrast to Morris they find an answer to the question – *What businesses have we with art at all unless all can share it?* – in the industrial production. In their work they accept Morris's instruction that the main problem of industrialization is the production of useless products, and then they gradually *repair* them. We find Morris's thought already in the very beginning of the twentieth century, in the lecture of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1901, in the text *The Art and Craft of the Machine* he writes:

126 Morris, "Useful Work versus Useless Toil", *News from Nowhere ...*, pp. 289–293.

127 William Morris, *The Revival of Handicraft*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1888/handcraft.htm> (July 2010). Similar thinking can be traced also in John Ruskin's texts.

128 This stands especially for European design. American design in contrast with European builds its base mainly on the consumption and stimulation of it.

“in the Machine lies the only future of art and craft – as I believe, a glorious future; that the Machine is, in fact, the metamorphosis of ancient art and craft; that we are at last face to face with the machine – the modern Sphinx – whose riddle the artist must solve if he would that art live – for his nature holds the key.

[...]

That he [William Morris] had abundant faith in the new art his every essay will testify. That he miscalculated the machine does not matter. He did sublime work for it when he pleaded so well for the process of elimination its abuse had made necessary; when he fought the innate vulgarity of theocratic impulse in art as opposed to democratic; and when he preached the gospel of simplicity.

[...]

Nor was it so grown as to become apparent to William Morris, the grand democrat, that the machine was the great forerunner of democracy. The ground plan of this thing is now grown to the point where the artist must take it up no longer as a protest; genius must progressively dominate the work of the contrivance it has created; to lend a useful hand in building afresh the 'Firness of the Earth'«. ¹²⁹

With Wright's thought the gap between the ideas of nineteenth century and the logic of twentieth century becomes quite clear. Morris's ideas were certainly transferred into the next century, but with the important difference – they were transferred into the industrial production. In fact, the key difference lies in the very relation: if we cannot even imagine or understand Morris's practice and theory without the idea of rebellion, the twentieth century brings about the will to dominate. Badiou writes: “History is a huge and powerful beast hanging over us and yet we must endure its leaden gaze, forcing it to serve us”.¹³⁰ We can read Wright's instruction on machine in a similar way. We have to master and subordinate the machine we made from our intellect. Our task is to *force it* to work on our instructions and for our benefits. Even more: what Morris strived for in the nineteenth century but failed because of his resistance to machines, becomes possible – according to Wright – if we recognise a machine as a key to recre-

129 Frank Lloyd Wright, “The Art and Craft of the Machine”, v *The Industrial Design ...*, pp. 55–56.

130 Alain Badiou, *The Century*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2007, p. 15.

ate the lost common space of art. In the twentieth century Wright sees – as Badiou would say – the possible link between the past and the next century: “the twentieth century fulfils the promises of the nineteenth. What the nineteenth century conceived, the twentieth realizes”.¹³¹ Designers of the twentieth century, with their determination for the machine and industrial production managed to win and mainly keep the masses, but at the same time they didn't overlook one of the goals that Morris wanted to accomplish: a good design for all.

Here we have to stress that Morris in his texts did not reject the machine totally. The radical rejection was in fact ascribed to him by others. One of them was Wright and later Pevsner who took one of his thoughts out of the context.¹³² In *Pioneers of Modern Design* he wrote: “The machine was Morris's arch-enemy”.¹³³ To affirm this he cited Morris's statement: “As a condition of life, production by machinery is altogether an evil”, but Morris continued it with: “as an instrument for forcing on us better conditions of life it has been, and for some time yet will be, indispensable”.¹³⁴ In short, Morris did not reject the machine absolutely, but accepted it as some kind of intermediary phase on the way to better times. In this better future there will be time again for manual work for the destruction of trade means just a “degradation of life”.¹³⁵ To let the machines to take control over our lives would bring our enslavement to machines, instead of striving for society of equals that would make possible to live on everybody's own choice. We can clearly see that Morris didn't really believe in the control over machines

131 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

132 I would like to refer also to E. P. Thompson who in 1959 in his lecture about William Morris on Williams Morris Society talked about misinterpretations of Morris's theory – and also about misinterpretations of Morris's relation to machines. See: E. P. Thompson, *Persons and Polemics, Historical Essays*, Merlin Press 1994, pp. 66–76. Also available on: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/thompson-ep/1959/william-morris.htm> (January 2011).

133 Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern ...*, p. 24. In the further text Pevsner mentions also the other side of Morris's relation to machine but he marks it as a cautiousness and inconsistency [“he was careful (and inconsistent) enough to admit that we ought to try to become ‘the masters of our machines’ and use them ‘as an instrument for forcing on us better conditions of life’.”] (p. 25).

134 Morris, *The Revival of Handicraft ...*, (July 2010).

135 *Ibid.*

that the twentieth century announced. That is the reason that in spite of his tolerance to machines he constantly called for a rebellion against them.

When design denounces the rebellion (artist's work is not a rebellion anymore but supremacy) it obviously takes sides of industrial production and the capital. Consequentially, parallel and later calls for revolutionary changes of (social) system mainly become benign. Fighting for design or art in which everybody can participate gradually becomes only fashionable and marketable slogan. At the turn into twentieth century these changes become predominant not only in design but also in society.

“The process of modernization and industrialization transformed and redefined all the elements of the social plane. [...] society itself slowly became industrialized even to the point of transforming human relations and human nature. Society became a factory”¹³⁶

Design that just became an independent discipline followed these social changes and actually became excellently adjusted to them. Saying differently, it won its position in the process of making a new product. But in spite of this, Morris's echo in design in the twentieth century remains more than present. We can trace him in movements and calls for changes in design and its role. Between more interesting we can mention Italian movement Anti-Design, the theory and practice of Buckminster Fuller and Victor Papanek's striving for responsible design.¹³⁷ But nobody was so politically engaged as Morris who almost in every text wrote about the revolution and the need to change the social system. All mentioned loudly criticise social systems in which designers work in the twentieth century¹³⁸ but at the same time remain captured – aside from the theory of Anti-Design – in the industrial production. This fact neutralises the radicalism of their actions.

136 Negri and Hardt, *Empire ...*, p. 234.

137 I will return to them latter in the text.

138 Victor Papanek is especially interesting for he rejects all social systems because they all support consumption. Consequentially, he finds some revolutionary potential in ecological, responsible design. I discuss more about all mentioned actors and movements of the 20th century further in the text.

Consequentially designers in the twentieth century overlook two of Morris's key points. The next Pevsner's statement leads us to the first:

2. As it was possible to foresee already from the first statement, with the democratisation of art Morris succeeded to transfer the problem of art (with strong link to Ruskin's thought) from aesthetics into the wider field of social sciences. Pevsner derives this from Morris's definition of art which should be "the expression by man of his pleasure in labour".¹³⁹ Design movements from the beginning of the twentieth century usually overlooked this statement. At the beginning – especially because of enormous influence of Morris and *Arts and Crafts* movement – the protagonists of the professionalization of design discipline directed their actions wider; of course they were looking for their own pleasure, but they were also thinking about the pleasure in work of those who made their designs. The interesting example is the association *Deutscher Werkbund* which already from the beginning strived for the highest standards in design of mass-produced items – in spite (or right because) of Hermann Muthesius's many years of studying Morris and *Arts and Crafts* movement. Muthesius following Morris enthusiastically connected art and trade, and successfully integrated this idea into majority of German schools for applied arts, but at the same time and similarly as Wright six years before he saw the solution in uniting art and industry, not in separating them. Even more, he established the distance to Morris's work;¹⁴⁰ in the text *Aims of the Werkbund* he wrote:

"To help form to recover its rights must be the fundamental task of our era; in particular it must be the content of any work of artistic reform embarked upon today. The fortunate progress of the arts and crafts movement, which has given new shape to the interior decoration of rooms, breathed fresh life into handicrafts and imparted fruitful inspiration to architecture, may be regarded as only a minor prelude to what must come. For in spite of all we have achieved we are still wading up to our knees in the brutalization of forms".¹⁴¹

139 Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern ...*, p. 23.

140 Muthesius ironically designates members of *Arts and Crafts* movement as *Sozialkunstgewerbler*. In: *The Werkbund. Studies in the history and ideology of the Deutscher Werkbund 1907–1933* (ed. Lucius Burckardt), The Design Council, London 1980, p. 7.

141 Hermann Muthesius, "Aims of the Werkbund", *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (ed. Ulrich Conrads), The MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1971, p. 26.

From given objectives it is obvious that the problem that design is trying to solve in the twentieth century is in fact basically the same as Morris defined it. And that is – the fight against *the brutalization of forms*. In accordance with the maxim of the new century we have to – as Muthesius wrote – *help the form to recover its rights*. What is the base of his statement? We can get an answer from Fritz Schumacher’s inaugural speech of the association. According to him, the industrial production is the form of production we have to accept. The aim of *Werkbund* will be “to overcome the alienation that had arisen between those who invent and those who carry out to bridge the gap”.¹⁴² This thought takes us back to the beginning of the chapter where I set out that we can talk about the establishment of the profession of designer with the separation of the one who plans the product from the one who makes it. Ruskin marks this separation as a precipice, Morris as an insatiable gulf of class differences whereas *Deutscher Werkbund* accepts this gap as a matter of progress and starts to think about the ways for its bridging. What is even more important – they find the bridge over this gap in the rapidly developing discipline, in industrial design. This is extremely important because until recognising design as a potential bridge, one of the emerging gaps was exactly the one that originated from the separation of the planner and the craftsman, of the one that plans from the one that makes. The designer is therefore only one bank. Pact between design and industrial production makes possible for design to change its position and becomes the bridge. In this role it insists more or less till today.

Morris would probably answer: the bridging is not enough. As he didn’t believe in art as a bridge between social classes, he wouldn’t believe in design as a bridge either – for bridging cannot generate pleasure. It is something fictive, and we still have two banks and the precipice. Through his practice Morris came to acknowledge two kinds of work – one good, the other bad. The difference is – according to Morris – that in the first there is hope whereas in the second there is none. He divided the nature of hope in the *good work* into three parts: “hope of rest, hope of product, hope of pleasure in the work itself”. The hope of rest is the simplest and the most obvious hope. No matter how pleasant the work is there is always a pinch of pain, and for this reason the com-

¹⁴² *The Werkbund. Studies ...*, pp. 7–8.

pensation in the form of rest is necessary. In the hope of product we are – according to Morris – compelled by nature. Namely, the meaning of our work is that “we do really produce something, and not nothing or at least nothing that we want or allowed to use. If we look to this and use our wills we shall, so far, be better than machines”.¹⁴³ The last hope gives a dignity to worker and the possibility for him to feel like a human and not just a part of the machine, or, characteristically for the twentieth century, of the assembly line. The work without hope is – according to Morris – “worthless; it is slaves’ work – mere toiling to live, that we may live to toil”.¹⁴⁴ That kind of work should be rejected by the society.

Morris’s explanation of good work takes us back to already-described Agamben’s division of work between *poiesis* and *praxis*. Agamben is aware that from today’s point of view it is hard to understand fully the meaning of *poiesis*, because everything we do today – from art and trade to politics – we designate as “praxis, that is, manifestation of a will that produces a concrete effect. When we say that man has a productive status on earth, we mean, then, that the status of his dwelling on earth is a practical one”.¹⁴⁵ One of the tasks of *poiesis* is *bringing into being*, but the key difference between *poiesis* and *praxis* is also that the *poiesis* is “a mode of truth understood as unveiling”.¹⁴⁶ Or if I repeat Morris’s words: the good work is the one that *really produce something and not nothing*. In this sense, the Greek *poiesis* and Morris’s good work are both raised above the *praxis* – above the work that Greeks defined as work out of necessity that no free man is willing to do. These words were repeated also by Morris for he defined a bad work as work we do just for a living – and that kind of work is, according to Morris, slaves’ work. Or, saying differently, it is the work that is forced upon people by progress, by industrial revolution. That kind of work should be rejected.

In spite of a clear distinction on which Morris gave a fair warning, the capitalism perverts his good work and seemingly finds answers to his hopes. In design we can find

143 Morris, “Useful Work versus Useless Toil”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 288.

144 *Ibid.*, p. 289.

145 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 68.

146 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

answers in the work and theory of *Deutscher Werkbund*. Based on Morris's theory they build an answer to his demand for work that generates pleasure in the form of bridge. Members of industry – at least those that participated in the formation of association – gladly support the designers' striving for humanisation of circumstances by building the bridge for this doesn't really change anything, just seemingly bridges the gap. In this story the role of the industrialists isn't just enthusiastic, although it may seem so. They were deeply aware of workers' discontent. They commissioned designers to do everything to make workers enraptured with work in the factory. Thinking about their good feelings, they built – by designers' and architects' plans – new homes for workers and spacious factories and hoped they will satisfy the hope of pleasure in work. Even more, designers trying to satisfy Morris's demand for hope of product took care that the products they made in these new spacious factories were useful and beautiful. An excellent example is German corporation AEG with designer and architect Peter Behrens. He made everything, from factory, homes, corporative identity and all the way to the last product made in this corporation.

But the important reason for this unusual concern and understanding of industrialists lay – according to Julius Posener – somewhere else. “Those Captains of Industry who have taken the pleasure of work away from the workmen”¹⁴⁷ were – beneath the mask of their sudden care for workers – directed to one end only: to stop the increasing influence of the Left, the power of Social democrats – subversive party, as they called it then. Namely, Social democrats (being inspired by English Socialists) – according to Posener – multiplied its membership by pointing to nonhuman conditions in industrial plants. To create pleasant and quality conditions for work was – according to Walter Rathenau, the son of AEG founder – really more the wish “to hit doctrinary socialism right in the heart!”¹⁴⁸ By then they were already well aware that the easiest way to do this is to create the proud worker who will joyfully work in the factory.

147 Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (July 2010). We find similar thinking also in John Ruskin's texts.

148 *The Werkbund. Studies ...*, an article of Julius Posener “Between Art and Industry the Deutscher Werkbund”, pp. 8–10.

The transition from the nineteenth to twentieth century brings about the pact between the designer and industrial production. On its own initiative the design becomes the bridge that seemingly corks up the gap on which Morris built his theory and practice. This leads us to the third observation about Morris.

3. Pevsner, in fact, sees a discrepancy between Morris's thought and practice. His reasoning is that Morris went so far as to allow in his workshops only the application of skills and craftwork knowledge such as were typical of the Middle Ages. As a result Morris's products were extremely expensive. And, according to Pevsner, this is where Morris's theory of 'art for all' falls apart. It fell apart in practice that resulted in art for "the swinish luxury of the rich",¹⁴⁹ as Morris acknowledged disappointedly. Namely, only the elite could buy his objects. Although Morris was aware of that, in his lectures he persistently cried for return to a social condition before the industrialisation for he believed that the nineteenth century "is incurably vicious".¹⁵⁰ According to Pevsner, with his socialist propaganda Morris contributed to workers' riots that burst in London at the end of the nineteenth century. After violent riots he withdrew in his poetry world for – as Pevnsner writes – he was horrified by the idea of revolution.¹⁵¹ Pevsner consequently labels Morris's practice as creative, but his teaching as destructive.

But was Morris's thought really so destructive?

Given the activism that literally permeates his lectures and writings, we can say with justice that, despite the contempt he feels for his own age, Morris remained an optimist to the end of his days. Or, to use Agamben's terms, Morris preserves a particular relationship to his age: on the one hand, he accepts it; on the other, he distances himself from it. What is more, this distance allows him – like Ruskin – to see the darkness of his age, but this darkness does not stop him in his search for light, a search that is

149 Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern...*, p. 24.

150 *Ibid.*

151 *Ibid.* We have to add: Wilmer in his introduction warns that latter studies of Morris's work denied his withdrawal and resignation. In my work I refer to Morris's lectures that are predominantly radical and rational. See also: Thompson, *Persons and Polemics ...*, pp. 66–76, in <http://www.marxists.org/archive/thompson-ep/1959/william-morris.htm> (January 2011).

confirmed by his ceaseless fight for change. The ability to see darkness and light in the darkness of nineteenth century enables him to become and remain truly contemporary. Had he not believed that change was possible, he would have locked himself away in his workshop to preserve his 'dear peace' and spent whole days there designing, printing, and writing poetry. But because Morris found such immense satisfaction in his practice, he did all he could, to the end of his life, to make sure that all who work might also experience such satisfaction. And this was the basis of his desire to create better conditions for all. In the introduction of the lecture *The Lesser Arts* he writes: "When I think of what history has been, am inclined to lament the past, to despise the present, or despair of the future; that I believe all the change and stir about us is a sign of the world's life, and that it will lead – by ways, indeed, of which we have no guess – to the bettering of all mankind".¹⁵²

For Morris, the better society will not be divided into classes but will put into practice the motto of the French Revolution (liberty, equality, and fraternity).¹⁵³ In 1890, to make it easier to imagine what such a world might be, Morris put his dream of the future into words, in the romantic utopia *News from Nowhere, or, An Epoch of Rest*.¹⁵⁴ With his uto-

152 Morris, "The Lesser Arts", *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 233. Wilmer in the note and introduction warns that optimism gradually vanished because Morris became aware he won't see the changes.

153 *Ibid.*, p. 253.

154 It seems that Morris knew very well past and present utopias. In his workshops he reprinted Thomas More's *Utopia* (Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1958), he wrote an introduction and in 1893 he published it in his publishing house Kelmscott Press. Morris was undoubtedly inspired by Thomas More's *Utopia*. We find many More's ideas also in his theory. Let me mention some of them: he marks noblemen as lazy drones (p. 68); he wants to reduce the number of those who merely eat and do nothing (p. 74); he stands for abolition of private property for if everything is measured with money, the justice and progress fall; only by abolishing private property the hope for healing the society can be born (pp. 100–103); the progress and better management of society are based on a wish for improvement (p. 105); he draws a distinction between the necessary and good work and wasting time in bad work (p. 120).

Among utopias in Morris's time we can include also briefly very popular Edward Bellamy's story *Looking Backwards from 2000 to 1887*. In his utopia Morris indirectly refers to it. In Bellamy's story we follow the discovery of America in the year of 2000. The family of Dr. Leet is waking up Julian West from his more than one hundred years long hypnotic trance. They introduce him into a new, technologically developed world where the private property is abolished, and monopolistic capitalism, welfare and satisfaction of people are reigning. Everybody is employed, even more, the participation in the so-called industrial army of workers is obligatory. After their duty and at the age of 45 workers can devote to enjoyment and their real pleasures.

pia Morris takes his place in the context of socialist utopias, in an era that – according to Ranciere – is

“the age of hazardous subjectification, engendered by a pure opening of the unlimited, and constituted from places of speech that are not designatable localities but rather singular articulations between the order of speech and that of classification. Thus the places of speech from which the limitlessness of the working ‘class’ is projected are not factories or barracks, streets or cabarets. They are texts, phrases, names: reference texts – the Rights of Man or the Old Testament – that permit the articulation of an experience otherwise kept in silence by the separation of languages; phrases and arrangements of phrases that transform, into something visible and utterable, what had no place to be distinguished and was heard only as inarticulate noise, moving into common space new subjects, new legitimacies, and forms in which the former can argue from the latter”.¹⁵⁵

With his utopia Morris steps away from his time but this very deviation allows him to see the reality as it is, and consequently he is able to create a critique of it. In a way we can see Morris’s utopia also as an expression of his helplessness because of his practice, his awareness he didn’t reach an end he strived for in his lectures, but at the same time we can read it also as Ranciere’s phrase that becomes visible right through the text, starts to exist and create a basis for an argument. Stephan Coleman in the introduction of the book *William Morris and News from Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time* writes:

“The enemy of the dreamer of better times to come is the ideologist of the present, armed in defence of the existing miseries with the claim that the prevailing relationships of oppression are immutable. And yet [...] History can explode. And when it does it is ignited by those who have dared to dream, who have the courage to take on seemingly unbeatable odds, who are brave enough to demand the impossible”.¹⁵⁶

155 Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History. On the Poetics of Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London 1994, pp. 92–93.

156 Introduction in *William Morris and News from Nowhere. A Vision of Our Time* (ed. Stephen Coleman and Paddy O’Sullivan), Green Books, Bideford 1990, p. XXXIX.

The demand that seems impossible at first is in fact the demand we can formulate only when we are – in Agamben’s sense – contemporary.

In the introductory chapter of *News from Nowhere* we witness the vivid debate between William Guest, the protagonist of the story and member of *Socialist League*, and his adherents. The debate revolves around the question what will happen on the day of revolution and what kind of future will follow. Before he goes to sleep Guest, moved by the debate, mutters: “If I could but see a day of it, if I could but see it”.¹⁵⁷ Already in the next chapter Guest wakes up in a distant, idyllic future. He wakes up in 2102, long after the workers’ uprising, after the bloody proletarian revolution that happened in the middle of twentieth century. Through the story we learn that after the uprising the winners (workers who defeated capitalists) rejected technological progress and choose a way of life they knew before the industrial revolution.

With the return into the past condition Morris in his way revives medieval version of the Greek myth about the golden age – the age of peace, harmony and welfare. Even more, all private property is abolished, all politics is abolished (if the community wants to change, build, seed something, people organise a meeting – the parliament of all – where they examine majority opinion, thinking of course about the common good), the commerce is abolished and consequently the money is abolished too. All the work is done as they would “do it for themselves and not for the market we don’t know nothing about and where we don’t have a control”. Consequently in Morris’s utopia there is “merely insanity to make goods on the chance of their being wanted; for there is no longer any one who can be compelled to buy them. So that whatever is made is good, and thoroughly fit for its purpose”.¹⁵⁸

In his utopia, Morris brings into practice an idea he had presented five years earlier in *The Manifesto of the Socialist League*. Here, he describes the present state of manufacturing and commerce:

157 This is of course the day after the revolution, the beginning of a new era. Morris, “News from Nowhere”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 44.

158 *Ibid.* ..., p. 127.

“[G]oods are made primarily to sell, and only secondarily for use, labour is wasted on all hands; since the pursuit of profit compels the manufacturer competing with his fellows to force his wares on the markets by means of their cheapness, whether there is any real demand for them or not. [...] [T]he workers, although they produce all the wealth of society, have no control over its production or distribution: the people, who are the only really organic part of society, are treated as a mere appendage to capital – as a part of its machinery.”

His solution is as follows:

“This must be altered from the foundation: the land, the capital, the machinery, factories, [...] all means of production and distribution of wealth, must be declared and treated as the common property of all. Every man will then receive the full value of his labour, without deduction for the profit of a master.”¹⁵⁹

Morris takes this a step further in his utopia, where all labour is voluntary and based on the desire for the happiness one feels in working. Morris is well aware that the greater part of modern civilization tries as much as it can to avoid anything strenuous and, if possible, work itself. Namely, modern man is – according to Morris – striving to “get as many of the functions of your life as you can perform by others for you!”¹⁶⁰ Therefore he warns that such a shift of responsibility will have to end one day because there is always somebody that has to do the work. Morris sees the key to victory in the notion of good work (for which the condition is already mentioned a threefold hope) and in the notion that each person must strive to produce things in a way that is suitable to their abilities and that, if possible, to produce only as much as is consumed.¹⁶¹ But at the same time the members of society will take care for all who because of their incapacabilities cannot gain the benefits that the future society will offer.

159 William Morris, *The Manifesto of The Socialist League*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1885/manifst1.htm> (July, 2010). The original is published in the newspaper *Commonweal*, February 1885, pp. 1–2.

160 Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (July 2010).

161 Morris, “Useful Work versus Useless Toil”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 294.

In the nineteenth century society Morris's shift from the *obligatory* to voluntary work was probably extremely radical. The answer to such shift is undoubtedly hiding also in the reaction to Bellamy's utopia *Looking Backward from 2000 to 1887*,¹⁶² where the work is literally prescribed. Bellamy's text can be regarded as an announcement of American society after the New Deal reform, or, as Negri and Hardt mark it, when the disciplined society becomes the society/the factory.¹⁶³ Every citizen in Bellamy's utopia is a part of industrial army of workers and has a duty, from the age of 21 to 45, to do the work for the benefit of the whole society. Even more, the one who rejects that kind of work (in Bellamy's utopia everybody hardly waits to do this duty) is put in custody on bread and water until he changes his mind. Morris was probably horrified by that kind of forced work for it was one step closer to work a person does only to survive, and he – as we saw in the first half of the chapter – delineated that kind of work as slavery. In that sense his idea of voluntary work seems logical. The award for the work done is – as Morris writes – *the life* and the creation as a consequence. This principle works – on Guest's surprise and joy. He sees the society that lives in harmony with nature, without any class and national differences.

Morris's relation to formal education is also interesting. Namely, he abolishes it, as all other *bonds*. Children are being taught to read up to the age of four, all the rest is more or less left to the course of time. As a guide Dick assures to Guest, all children know how to swim, cook and take care for *a commerce* (commerce exists as a form where you can come and take what you need – without any compensation), and very quickly they are also introduced in the world of handicraft and trade. Morris in his way raises the knowledge and skills of manual work – in contrast to nineteenth century that despised them – above the formal learning of subjects as mathematics, history etc. Those who want to study languages, history, mathematics, are able to do it with the help of those in the knowledge and by books available to everybody. Nothing is prescribed as an obligation, but it is available to everybody with regard to their interest in the form of lifelong learning. It is no surprise then that an old antiquarian Richard Hammond who in the

162 See note 154.

163 Negri and Hardt, *Empire ...*, p. 203.

most part of the story tells Guest about the time he finds himself in jokes and finally asks: “What! Are we still civilized?”¹⁶⁴

The feeling of Morris’s vision of the future as being uncivilised takes us back to Pevsner’s assertion that Morris’s teaching is destructive. For it is on the basis of this assertion that Pevsner portrays and understands the greater part of Morris’s legacy,¹⁶⁵ namely, through Morris’s tragedy, through the discrepancy between what he taught and what he produced in his practice. But what happens if we alter our stance and accept Morris’s thought as homogeneous with his practice? Now Morris is no longer someone whose practice does not follow his theory, but rather it is the society and the age with which he is out of harmony. For Morris, the society and the age were *too* civilized, *too* blinded by the pursuit of progress, and his practice and thought worked to undermine both. To put it another way, in his practice and thought Morris intentionally did not follow the changes the age had brought to society. In an age filled with cheapness, Morris strived for honesty and happiness in (manual) labour. He perceived the latter as art, as well as the source of long-lost *poiesis*. As a result, like Ruskin, he found himself in conflict with the age in which he lived, and his rejection of the so-called ‘progress of modern society’ was deliberate – or, to use Agamben’s terms, he was contemporary. In my view, then, Morris was, in his practical work and in his theoretical thought, extraordinarily clear and undivided. His practice was the path; his theory, the goal. In order to achieve this goal, according to Morris, revolution was necessary – a revolution that would bring about the desired changes in society, so it would finally, and completely, realize that the right path for it was one that, fundamentally, resisted enslavement by the machine and found its essence and happiness in (manual) labour.

But on the path towards this goal we will have to go through a long series of social and political events, before we can freely choose how to live. That is why, in Morris’s view,

164 Morris, “News from Nowhere”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 96.

165 In spite of already-mentioned clear rejection of misinterpretations about Morris – especially by E. P. Thompson. See: *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (first edition Lawrence & Wishart, London 1955, revised edition Pantheon, New York, 1976).

“we should welcome even the feeble protest which is now being made against the vulgarization of all life: first because it is one token amongst others of the sickness of modern civilization; and next, because it may help to keep alive memories of the past which are necessary elements of the life of the future, and methods of work which no society could afford to lose”.¹⁶⁶

With this last sentence, we encounter, in Morris's words, the same idea we found in the quotation from Jameson at the beginning of this chapter. Like Jameson, Morris, at the end of the nineteenth century, draws attention to a loss of feeling for the past, the sense of being imprisoned in a society of the present, where 'progress' is the only mantra that counts. And like Jameson, Morris, too, reminds us that our task is to '*welcome even the feeble protest*', or, as Jameson urges today, to detect even the feeble '*utopian impulse*'.

Based on all that has been said, we see that the tragedy we ascribe to Morris is, in fact, our own. We are the ones who have failed to understand and accept his well-intended advice: Do not let yourself be ruled by the machine or by the exploitative system of capitalism. And that happened in spite of Morris's theoretical and practical thought that tried to show us clearly the *right* direction of development – the direction to *happy* and *independent* future. So I cannot agree with Pevsner when he writes that, because of Morris's backwards gaze, his conception of the future was never fully articulated. On the contrary, *News from Nowhere* and numerous lectures quite literally delineate one possible future (however naive it might seem at first glance). And in this future there is (in most cases) no place to build bridges, is no room for compromise. Compromise can only be a step on the path towards the realization that we must fight against a society in which “the cultivated middle class is a class of slave-holders, and its power of living according to its choice is limited by the necessity of finding constant livelihood and employment for the slaves who keep it alive”.¹⁶⁷

166 William Morris, *The Revival of Handicraft ...* (July 2010).

167 Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (July 2010).

That's why Morris rejects the social system of the nineteenth century and that's why he rejects the machine which he describes as the main protagonist of inhuman conditions. Through his rejection of the age and through his utopian alternative, Morris sought to tell us that in the future, when we will finally find rest, compromise will simply not be possible. Long before Wright, Morris talked about a necessity of taking control over the machine, but today we are well aware that the feeling of being in control over it is just fictive. And this will be the reality if we – as Morris warns us – will not start to question our role as being the ones that only take care for the machines. The feeling of control only supports our vain need to control whereas the machine already subordinated and enslaved us as soon as we agreed in the relation with it. In the second part of the movie *The Matrix*¹⁶⁸ the councillor Harmann has a feeling we are dependent on machines even when we are not directly *connected* to them. Our dominance over machines that it is manifested as a possibility to shut them off is merely fictional. Namely, when we shut them off, many questions arise: what happens with our lighting, our heating, with the civilisation as we know it? Consequently our fictive control over the machines is lost in our dependence on *the activity* of the most basic and non questionable functions. Vilém Flusser goes one step further but at the same time he in his own way repeats Morris's words: if we became with the transition from hand to tool alienated from the environment and at the same time both protected and imprisoned by culture, nevertheless in practice we managed to hold the position of the main figure in the workshop. With the transition from tool to machine the latter becomes the centre of the factory whereas the human becomes only its variable.¹⁶⁹ Or as Wajcman writes: today we have

“the biggest problems with imagining the author, hand of someone or simply any physical work as something that could accomplish a machinistic perfection of the serial object. Sometimes in the background of certain objects the very idea of ‘work’ seems re-

168 The movie *The Matrix Reloaded*, scenarists and directors: Andy and Larry Wachowski (2003).

169 Vilém Flusser, *The Shape of Things. A Philosophy of Design*, Reaktion Books, London 1999, p. 45. Morris describes this with words: The man – in contrast to the one that uses a tool only as a help – “becomes only a part of the machine and latter the one that only takes care for it”, until the machine totally replaces him. In: William Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (July 2010).

dundant. [...] It seems as if the big industry and modern science crave for removing and erasing every trace of the subject”.¹⁷⁰

Morris was painfully aware of that and tried to make us understand in all possible ways. He knew that by accepting the subordinate position we agreed with the position of the variable changeable in every moment – even more, we became the redundant cost. Or even worse, we agreed with eradication of traces of our own work and consequently of ourselves as authors. The idea of design as a bridge proved to be – as design entered in the industrial process – only one of the elements in the service of capital. After the cruelty and inhumanity of the nineteenth century, perverting Morris’s idea that industrial production will enable design to produce good products on low costs for all seems more naive than well-considered gesture of the twentieth century. Wajcman describes the presumptuousness of twentieth century with words:

“The man of 20th century thought his power is on the highest point. It was thought that that century will declare the triumph of progress and enlightenment and that the man will finally become the master of the world and his fate. But at the end that century will be the century of his most tragic helplessness. The master of nothing, not nature and not his own history, confronted with the worst he remains blind, helpless in front of his will to destroy, numb in front of his own ability to destroy himself”.¹⁷¹

Can we write the same for the relation of design and industrial production? Paraphrasing Negri and Hardt we came to the interesting conclusion: the capital could become an efficient commanding means over design if industrial production becomes integral, vital function that every designer voluntarily accepts and reactivates.¹⁷² In spite of opinion that designers follow and try to satisfy humans’ needs (and not the needs of capital), at the same time and because of our integration in the system we tend to “overlook” that

170 Gérard Wajcman, *Objekt stoletja [L’Objet du siècle]*, Analecta, Ljubljana 2007, p. 58.

171 Gérard Wajcman, *Univerzalno oko in svet brez meje [The universal eye and the borderless world]*, the lecture in Ljubljana, 20.1.2010.

172 In the original text authors talk about power that takes command over life and its vital functions. Negri and Hardt, *Empire ...*, p. 23.

the so-called needs are artificially generated right by industry. Even more, in the society of control – according to Negri and Hardt – we have come that far that the “power is now exercised through machines that directly organize the brains (in communication systems, monitored activities, etc.) toward a state of autonomous alienation from the sense of life and the desire for creativity”.¹⁷³ And in this view, the consequence of our consent is that Morris’s ideas on art and design for all, that he advocated all his life and carried out only in his utopia, still remain unrealised.

Although in one moment Morris became aware that all his efforts might remain only dreams he didn’t lose his optimism. In utopia, after days of travelling and debates his protagonist wakes up again in the nineteenth century, satisfied with what he saw for that vision can generate the hope and the will for further fight that will bring a better tomorrow. Morris concluded *News from Nowhere* with an optimistic statement: “If others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream”.¹⁷⁴ Dreams can also have the power for “the world is alive and afoot”. In the past many dreams have come true – dreams that are real and self-evident today even if before their realisation many “had to live without them, without even the hope of them”.¹⁷⁵

If Ruskin offered us a paradigm for conceiving an alternative, Morris’s key contribution to the design field lies in his ability to conceive an alternative. His is one of the first utopian visions conceived and created by a designer. With it, Morris brought about a rupture in how the role of the designer was considered and understood. For with Morris’s thought, the understanding of the designer’s place in society is changed: the designer assumes a new role as one of the builders of society. The trace of Morris’s effect comes fully to life with the advent of modernism in the first half of the twentieth century, for this is when design, through its desire to transform the world, actively enters the field of politics – a time when designers, filled with optimism, still believe they can build a better world. But there is a difference: if, with Morris, the answer for the future lay in the past, the modernists believed that the new world was yet to be constructed, it still

173 *Ibid.*

174 Morris, “News from Nowhere”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 228.

175 Morris, “The Lesser Arts”, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 254.

needed to be designed. To be designed on Morris's principles but with the maxim of industrial production.

Modernists translate Morris's demand that the essential meaning of everything is *to produce results that will be useful for fellow-men* into the production of goods based on humans' needs. In the twentieth century that becomes the principle of the most part of design. At the same time they accept Morris's idea of connecting art, design and trade as a way to achieve democratic aim, a good design for all, but reject Morris's relation to work. As regards design for all, they find a way in industrial production provided that the designer is the one who is taking a control – a control that at first seems to be possible and genuine.

Although it seems at a glance and maybe right because of the modernist principled rejection of Morris, that Ruskin and Morris are just discontinuation in design theory and practice, in fact they are an event, an alternative that changed and influenced further development of design in the twentieth century. Retrospectively, the understanding of Morris's rejection is necessary for it enables us to follow the continuous development of design in the twentieth century. In fact all of them, modernists and Morris, stand for the same thing and consequently create the continuous development of the discipline. Both Ruskin's and Morris's critiques lucidly analysed and rejected the existing state of affairs and offered a way to do things differently. Therefore, Morris and Ruskin, like modernists, build the future – with one difference: they both build it by looking into past, but considering the conscious experience of history. Today, in spite of modernist rejection of Morris's approach to work that was based on past, we still have to consider his basic task – how to find a moment of capability for a new mode of work. Or saying differently, according to Morris and Jameson in the nineteenth and twentieth century we forgot the lesson of history, but by this we got the possibility to perceive and generate the utopian impulse.

Loos's evolution

If Ruskin's and Morris's thoughts were anachronistic in their time, the thought of Adolf Loos¹⁷⁶ was anticipative in its essence. All of them examined the relation of design to work. They examined the triad: the product – the work as a problem solution – the contentment of needs. Morris's search for a dignity and meaning of life followed Ruskin's freedom of thinking in work whereas Loos in his theory on work examined the problem solution. It's interesting that in spite of the 20th century principle that commanded a connection of industrial production and art, Loos, like his predecessors, anachronistically propagated the meaning of craft. Nevertheless, the alternative he offered in exchange for a rejection of his time remains progressive. Indeed, it was Loos who, with an unsurpassed sense of provocation, struck the fatal blow against ornament at the height of the Secession and paved the way for the coming modernism. He discovered the idea of a *bare* building in the work of American architect Louis Sullivan who in the introduction of his essay *Ornament in Architecture* wrote:

“I take it as self-evident that a building, quite devoid of ornament, may convey a noble and dignified sentiment by virtue of mass and proportion”.

Further in the text Sullivan softened his for that time (1892) extremely piercing thought:

“[H]owever, the mass-composition and the decorative system of a structure such as I have hinted at should be separable from each other only in theory and for purposes of analytical study. I believe, as I have said, that an excellent and beautiful building may be designed that shall bear no ornament whatever; but I believe just as firmly that a decorated structure, harmoniously conceived, well considered, cannot be stripped of its system of ornament without destroying its individuality”¹⁷⁷

176 Adolf Loos, 1870–1933.

177 Louis H. Sullivan, *Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings*, Courthope Press, [S. l.] 2008, pp. 187–188. The text was first published in 1892 in *The Engineering Magazine*.

Loos derived his idea on *ultimate* redundancy of ornament from Sullivan's thought on ornament as a separated theoretical item. This reminds us of Morris's words in a text *Useful Work versus Useless Toil*: "The ornamental part of modern life is already rotten to the core, and must be utterly swept away before the new order of things is realized. There is nothing of it – there is nothing which could come of it that could satisfy the aspirations of men set free from the tyranny of commercialism".¹⁷⁸ In Loos's dictionary the tyranny of commercialism meant the tyranny of fashion, the tyranny of desire for a perpetual change, with an aim to create ever new formalism – which is the element that according to Agamben the reproduction brings about. The reproduction generates a condition of *perpetual possibility* that creates the prerequisite for a sham novelty. On this very basis Morris and Loos both rejected industrialisation. Because only with the handicraft mode of work we can reach finality, the perfect object we are looking for, and not just some fashion vagary in the form of decoration, of formalism.

Consequently, the formalism according to Loos causes "a waste of time and effort" and is "a completely superfluous piece of foolishness".¹⁷⁹ But there is a difference between Morris and Loos. Morris didn't advocate total erasure of ornament, only of degenerate one. With Loos, the building and the applied product that were bare only in theory became bare also in practice. The ornament becomes unnecessary waste of work that because of degenerate tradition obstructs evolution into modernity. We can find these topics – the evolution and modernity – in architecture already before design. Sullivan started the text *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered* with the statement that architects and generations found themselves in front of the novelty, "namely, that evolution and integration of social conditions [...] that result in a demand for the erection of tall office buildings. [...] the design of the tall office building must be recognized and confronted at the outset as a problem to be solved – a vital problem, pressing for a true solution".¹⁸⁰ After a short list of social conditions he concluded that they all call for "a

178 Morris, "Useful Work versus Useless Toil", *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 299.

179 Adolf Loos, "Josef Veillich (1929)", *On Architecture* (ed. Adolf and Daniel Opel), Ariadne Press, Riverside (CA) 2002, p. 186.

180 Louis H. Sullivan, *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered*, 1896, http://www.gwu.edu/~art/Temporary_SL/177/pdfs/Sullivan_Tall.pdf, (February 2011), p. 340.

modern office building”.¹⁸¹ Loos literally recapitulated all of this, but with the important difference. He placed Sullivan’s thought in totally different context – in the context, as we will see further in the text, of demand for a search of style for a new century. We can paraphrase Loos’s demand as: evolution and integration of social conditions result in a demand for a search of a new style for a new century. The search of a new style must be recognized and confronted at the outset as a problem to be solved – a vital problem, pressing for a true – modern – solution.

If the first Loos’s key idea was to connect the work in design, the economy and the problem solution, the second was that the new material demands a new language. Here we must remember that we are speaking of a time permeated by eclecticism, to which the only alternative seemed the holistic approach of the Secession movement.¹⁸² Both ideas established the foundation of design as we know today for they directed designer’s focus from decoration to contents. At the same time Loos like Ruskin and Morris rejected the then trends and dominant social norms. But with the establishment of distance he became aware of an alternative.

Loos’s theoretical discourse is composed for the most part of short lectures, popular articles and essays published in daily newspapers, art magazines and their supplements. In the time of his life two collections of his texts were published, *Whistling in the Wind* (*Ins Leere gesprochen*, selected essays written up to 1900) and *Nevertheless* (*Trotzdem*, selected articles and lectures from 1900 to 1930). Both titles eloquently bear witness to Loos’s bitterness¹⁸³ (which was shown especially in his old age) and his feeling that

181 *Ibid.*

182 In the Secessionist style it was *obligatory* that everything be designed, from buildings to minute details. Loos takes a cynical view toward this approach in “The Story of the Poor Little Rich Man,” in which the protagonist strives to have everything “complete”. In the end he succeeds, but this does not bring him happiness, since there is nothing more that can be added, nothing that can be altered in his house, which is finished *to perfection*. Loos cynically concludes: “He is complete”. In: Loos, “The Story of the Poor Little Rich Man (1900)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 52.

183 The facts that the first collection of his texts was published as late as 1921 in France (no German speaking publisher wasn’t prepared to risk) and that his best known essay *Ornament and Crime* wasn’t published until 1929 in *Frankfurter Zeitung* although Loos wrote it already in 1908, proved that he was right in his feelings. Nevertheless, because of their controversies (in theory and practice) and fervent wish to improve Austrian

his thoughts remained misunderstood. In one of his last published articles (in 1931) he wrote that Bauhaus also misinterpreted his doctrine for its members transferred his ideas into new art movement called “New Objectivity”, and that – according to Loos – in practice meant only a shift from Secessionist romanticism of ornament to Bauhaus’s constructivist romanticism.¹⁸⁴ “The day must come when all these gentlemen will get together to stop working according to slogans and, as I wanted in 1896 [...] work in the modern manner”.¹⁸⁵ From today’s point of view, Loos’s inexorable critique of Bauhaus seems wrong – if nothing else, in his texts he also uses slogans and manifestos. As it is possible to gather from his sparing rejection, he obviously didn’t agree with the move of Bauhaus from early expressionist period that was strictly based on the individual to a time when Bauhaus under the influence of Theo van Doesburg¹⁸⁶, the father of Dutch movement De Stijl, stepped on the way of connecting art and technology. This was a crucial deviation from the originally planned connection of art and craft.¹⁸⁷ In design history this deviation means one of the most important steps to professionalization of industrial design discipline.

taste, his ideas were well known in expert and lay public. If nothing else, the text was up to 1929 translated into many languages. The Japanese and Hebrew translations were mentioned in the first German publication. The text was translated in English in 1913.

184 Loos, “On Josef Hoffmann (1931)”, *On Architecture* ..., p. 197.

185 *Ibid.*

186 Van Doesburg visited Bauhaus in Weimar in 1920. In the school he recognised a big potential but he was totally disappointed with final products that were made there. In 1921 he moved in Weimar in a hope to get the position of a professor. That never happened so in 1922 he organised a course to teach Bauhaus’s students how to create an integral artwork on principles of De Stijl. Short Van Doesburg’s period in Weimar was extremely important for Bauhaus: the results of his workshop were so resounding that all later work in Bauhaus workshops was transferred on a new level. Before that, the knowledge that students received in an elementary, preparative seminar of Johannes Itten was simply transferred into workshops, but after Van Doesburg, Bauhaus entered into design and wanted to upgrade its skills. See: Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus: 1919–33*, Bauhaus Archive, Benedikt Taschen, 1993, p. 54 and 58.

187 According to Magdalena Droste, Theo van Doesburg with his critique of Bauhaus provokes a shift in theory. The members of De Stijl in its manifesto from 1918 advocated the principles “to overcome the ‘supremacy of the individual’ and create ‘collectivist solutions’” – also in the sense of industrial production that can bring about the democratisation of design. After the successful Van Doesburg’s workshop in Weimar, Gropius also accepts this and consequently changes the original combination from the Bauhaus manifesto. Namely, in 1919 he propagated a connection of art and craft that could create a new unity, but three years later he changes his mind and advocates a connection of “art and technology, a new unity”. Here we see a crucial shift in thinking – a shift that led to industrial design as we know it today. See: *Ibid.* also “De Stijl”: Manifesto 1, 1918, *Programs and Manifestoes* ..., p. 39. I discuss De Stijl movement in the next chapter.

Loos directed his critique right to this Bauhaus's *shift* from expressionism to De Stijl's formalism or before-mentioned The New Objectivity. He marked this change of direction of development as a trend-stalking and not a shift in contents. According to him, Bauhaus's decision for a *straight line of De Stijl* didn't have any substantial connection with his demand for a bare building. The geometry and linearity of De Stijl is symbolised by the straight line based on the encounter of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, architectural suggestions of the futurist Antonio Sant'Elia and the thinking of the painter Piet Mondrian who in the first issue of the magazine *De Stijl* writes: "The life of contemporary cultivated man is turning gradually away from nature; it becomes more and more an a-b-s-t-r-a-c-t life".¹⁸⁸ J. J. P. Oud in his text *Art and Machine* (1918) is even clearer – to achieve a style we have to use "the positive trend, and which tries to give aesthetic expression to the products of technical skill".¹⁸⁹ That way the modern artist will – according to Oud – fight against feelings.¹⁹⁰ As Loos warned, the problem of *new* straight line is that it became a new formalism. With the depreciation of contents the straight line becomes a new style that just stalks the fashionable. Fashionable and not modern that Loos advocated. What exactly did he think when he demanded to work in a modern way? For easier understanding we have to return to the beginning of his development.

Two important factors influenced Loos's development and way of thinking. In the time of his architecture study at a Technical university in Dresden, when he was twentythree, he went – with the money he received in exchange for his heritage – to his uncle to America and to see the World exhibition in Chicago. He stayed in America for three years and worked for survival as a mason, barber's assistant, the kitchen assistant and at the end architectural drawer. In those three years he succeeded to enjoy only the first part on the way to American dreams, therefore it's not surprising that in 1896 he returned to his Austro-Hungarian homeland. He went to Vienna, deeply determined to introduce the Western culture to his *uncultivated* fellow-citizens – the culture he met in America that

188 Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, The Mit Press, Cambridge MA, 1980, p. 150.

189 J. J. P. Oud, *Art and Machine*, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/j-j-p-oud's-art-and-machine/>-1918/ (January 2011).

190 *Ibid.*

was crucial for his further thinking. His thinking was marked by the encounter with the theory and practice of Louis Sullivan, the father of modernist architecture. He was overwhelmed with the modern architecture of skyscrapers, bureaus and supermarkets. This knowledge was crucial for his reaction that followed his arrival to Vienna.

The time of his arrival to Vienna is marked by the famed withdrawal of a group of artists (painters, sculptors and architects) from the Association of Austrian Artists (housed in Vienna Künstlerhaus) and the establishment of a new association named The Vienna Secession (1897). The group of artists rebelled against the ossification, the exaggerated conservatism, proneness to historicism and eclecticism that the professional association defended. Their main aim was to create their own style, that would correspond with time – a style that will not be based on familiar past forms. Their slogan summarises their wish: “To every age its art and to art its freedom”.¹⁹¹ Like in Ruskin’s text, in the program of Vienna Secession we can find a call for freedom in art. But their freedom is totally different. Ruskin’s freedom was related to freedom in work – he was looking for a freedom in work that becomes real only if accompanied by thinking and standard of living. But in Vienna Secession the before-mentioned break between art subjectivity and material is already well presented in their practice.¹⁹² Consequently, according to Agamben, the art becomes “absolute freedom that seeks its end and its foundation in itself, and does not need, substantially, any content, because it can only measure itself against the vertigo caused by its own abyss”.¹⁹³ Or as he writes elsewhere: “Art has left the sphere of interest to become merely interesting”.¹⁹⁴ Therefore the new slogan of association becomes only the hunt for a new style that slides to a level of *new* decoration whose aim is the embellishment in the mirror of the viewer’s taste.

At first Loos took part in a new group. In their magazine *Ver Sacrum* he even published some articles. The most prominent examples are *The Potemkin City* and *To Our Young*

191 This was written on a Secessionist building that was designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich and built in Vienna in 1897.

192 See chapter *Morris’s design for all*.

193 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 35.

194 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Architects. Both of them already indicated discordance of Secessionist ideals with his thoughts on the needlessness of *manic* search for an architectural style that would correspond with time.¹⁹⁵ In an article *The Potemkin City* he writes:

“Poverty is no disgrace. Not everyone can be born in a baronial hall. But to try and make others think so is ridiculous and immoral. We should stop feeling ashamed of living in the same building as many other people of the same social status. We should stop feeling ashamed of the fact that there are building materials we cannot afford. We should stop feeling ashamed that we are men of the nineteenth century and not ones who live in a house whose style comes from an earlier age. Then you would see how soon our modern age would have its very own architectural style. But we have one already, you will object. But I mean a style we can hand down to posterity with a clear conscience, a style people will still look on with pride, even in the distant future. That is the style Vienna has not found in this century”.¹⁹⁶

At first it seems that he directed his critique to architectural eclecticism that in the 19th century flourished in Europe and Vienna, but then in the last sentence we see he fired the sting toward new Secessionist association. He clearly showed that newly defined direction (we should not neglect that Loos wrote this article already in 1898, one year after the establishment of Secessionist association) is fundamentally wrong. This is a direction that – according to Loos – cannot last and cannot bring any results for further development of architecture. But at the same time this quotation is important also because we can see from it that Loos – in a spirit of time – set himself a task *to find a new style for our period*. This point is crucial for the continuation when Loos turned an already-mentioned hunt for a style for a new century upside down.

195 Later on Loos in his articles often argues that we already have a style of our time. Above all, he has in mind products like locomotive, bicycle, leather goods, or as he writes: “We already have the style of our times. We have it everywhere where artists, and that means the members of the association, have not yet managed to poke their noses in.” In: Loos, “Cultural Degeneration (1908)”, *Ornament and Crime. Selected Essays* (ed. Adolf Opel), Ariadne Press, Riverside (CA) 1998, p. 164.

196 Loos, “The Potemkin City (1898)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 28 (emphasis are mine).

Beside this critique of Secessionist movement, already in the same year Loos had a quarrel with one of the protagonists of Secessionist movement – Josef Hoffmann. The conflict arose when Hoffmann prevented Loos from designing the interior of a club room for meetings.¹⁹⁷ We can mark their conflict as the second most important factor in the development of Loos's theory and practice. Namely, it brings him to the point when he finally rejects new Secessionist style, and that brings him at the start of his own direction of development. Again – like in Ruskin's and Morris's theory – we are faced with the rejection of the established, the rejection of fashionable. And again, this rejection – in Agamben's sense of understanding the contemporary – gradually enabled him to understand his time and consequently to offer an alternative. At first Loos didn't know where the rejection will lead him. Here we can draw a parallel with his thinking about how to reach the modernity.

“People who want to produce the best things they can, within their limits, without being aware of what is modern. For it is awareness of it that precludes modernity. Here is the sharp dividing line between true human beings and those who just look human. Time separates the wheat from the chaff and only acknowledges the true human being”.¹⁹⁸

The first sentence offers us instructions how to be modern. If you want to act modern you have to proceed from your knowledge but without being aware of it. Or, saying differently, you have to act spontaneously, on the basis of knowledge from practice which you shouldn't *be aware* of or try to plan it. The intentional setting up the aim to do something modern fails already at the start because the intent itself leads on the field of fashion and away from the modern. Or as Agamben says, if you coincide too well with the epoch, you are not contemporary, and if you fit well in an epoch in every its moment, you are not contemporary, for this fitting in blocks you from understanding it.¹⁹⁹ As soon as we become aware we step into the field of conformation instead of try-

197 Fifteen years later Loos writes that “there is no greater misfortune than to be condemned to inactivity”. He marks the conflict with Hoffmann as the first rejection of possibility to work. In: Loos, “My School of Building (1913)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 119.

198 Loos, “Furniture and People (1929)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 192.

199 Agamben, *What is Apparatus?* ..., p. 41. I write more about this in the previous chapter *The return to Ruskin*.

ing to explore the problem or the practice that it is before us. Loos leant on Sullivan's thought at this point too. "It is my belief that it is of the very essence of every problem that it contains and suggests its own solution. This I believe to be natural law".²⁰⁰ The choice between to be modern or fashionable separates a *true human* from the one *who just look human*. If we read this in the sense of Sullivan's natural law, the *true human* is the one that solves problems whereas the other just deals with a *new decoration in the name of a new style*.

Sullivan's natural law suggests one more thing: every problem in fact offers the solution. Therefore our task is to find a problem and not to conceive a solution. Here we find Sullivan's and also Loos's idea of evolution as the only true continuum in design and architecture. We also find Loos's turn to craft because the craft supports his evolutionary development of the product. If we perceive the industrial revolution as the onset of design then we are starting from scratch; the break (or new beginning) deprives practice from all the knowledge that was accumulated in the past. But according to Sullivan and Loos, there is no real break. There are only new social circumstances, the evolution that demands we integrate changes into our own work. In Sullivan's natural law we find also the solution of Loos's rejection of Secession. Namely, Loos finds out that the rejection of Secession in fact "scrapes" the first stratum in the search for essence of a problem on the way to a new style for a new century.

To act in accordance with our own limitations but in the best way and without planning is Loos's recipe to achieve a goal – the modern alternative to the existent. A path led him into a rejection of novelty that Secessionist movement offered for its novelty was in his opinion the profanation of traditional qualities that we conquered through time in craftsman's workshops. All we have to do (until we reach the true novelty) is to repeat those conquered heights and not to create novelty that satisfies only the taste of public. If the time and its technical progress are not mature for improvement, we have to – according to Loos – "stick to things as they always have been",²⁰¹ stick to the foundations

200 Sullivan, *The Tall Office ...*, (February 2011), p. 341.

201 Loos, "Rules for Building in the Mountains (1913)", *On Architecture ...*, p. 123.

of Antiquity and enrich them with today's logic.²⁰² So, yes to tradition, but with an important addition: not just an imitation, not just a variation of tradition (as the school propagates), but the creativity that – when the demand arises – generates modernity. That kind of demand – if we follow Sullivan – can be raised only by evolution and integration of changed social conditions. In this context Loos recognises modernity in tradition. He recognises it in the base of every quality product, in an archetype we can recognise in things and which preserved itself through the history and remained modern (in spite of changeable fashions). Fashion changes wrapped in a package of modernity are – according to Loos – the result of wrong education.

In his opinion, “every person emerges from the womb with modern nerves. Transforming them into nerves that are not modern is what we call education.”²⁰³ The sting of critique was directed toward education of architects and designers (“serviceable” artists) in *modern* Secessionist style that was in Loos's opinion far away from the true modernity. We can recognise a *true* modernity in the knowledge that arises from practice. The craftsmen with their “integral” knowledge – knowledge that arises from mere practicality and craft tradition – are the ones who make *truly* modern products. Only that way we can – according to Loos – detain the conquered standards that don't need to be changed every three years in contrast to Secessionist products whose main essence is trend-stalking. Trend-stalking under the mask of progress (and with the help of academies) – according to Loos – is showing itself only in the even more artificial decoration of facades.

Loos is – with that kind of thinking – not only the critic of design from the turn of 19th to 20th century. His critique of Secession is still topical. The Secession in design never really ended. The style did change, but the change of something based on trend-stalking is more than welcome, all but necessary. Stylisation is in many cases just the obligatory component that changes the product on the surface only that much that in relation

202 Loos, “Glass and China (1898)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, pp. 68–69, also in Loos, “Architecture (1910)”, *On Architecture ...*, pp. 84–85.

203 Loos, “Furniture and People (1929)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 192. Here he leans on Sullivan's thought again. See: Sullivan, *The Tall Office ...*, (February 2011), p. 344.

to existing product encourages the feeling of limitation. As regards the accumulation of seemingly new products, Loos's critique remains topical. In the movie *Objectified* the designer Karim Rashid repeats it in his own way: "Seventy percent of the world is completely impractical. Seventy percent of the world is uncomfortable. You feel it. [...] And it's crazy. Imagine if you would design a millionth chair today or how many chairs has been design in the world, why on earth do we have an uncomfortable chair. There is no excuse what so ever".²⁰⁴ Thereby, we return to Loos's thought – if the time isn't mature for the improvement, insist on the highest quality level available at the moment. Today we have no excuses for everyday production of poorly designed chairs, and the same was true hundred years ago: Loos also didn't have excuses for badly designed, but *fashionable* products.

"The dining chair of the time of Thomas Chippendale was perfect. It was the solution. It could not be bettered. Like our forks, our sabers, our screwdrivers. People who cannot screw in a screw, people who cannot fence, find it easy to design new screwdrivers, new sabers and new forks. They do it with the help of what they call their artistic imagination. But my saddler says to the artist who brings him a design for a new saddle, 'But my dear professor, if I knew as little about horses, about riding, about my work and about leather as you, then I would have your imagination'".²⁰⁵

As Loos points to a tradition and its modernity in comparison with the fashionable, his understanding of the role and meaning of (applied) art causes a collision. On one side we follow a degraded role of art (according to Agamben, the art that moves away from the contents), but on the other side Loos believes that the art has a potential to revolutionise,²⁰⁶ to solve problems. On one side we have an artistic imagination that can be compensation for ignorance, and on the other side the knowledge that arises from practice. According to Loos, the practice – as I already mentioned – shows the way. Craftsmen in their work proceed from the function and when they encounter the potential problem they solve it by looking for a solution in the essence of a problem.

204 *Objectified*, A documentary film by Gary Hustwit, A Swiss Dots Production, 2009.

205 Loos, "Josef Veillich (1929)", *On Architecture ...*, p. 186.

206 See Loos's text "Architecture (1910)", in Loos, *On Architecture ...*, pp. 73–85.

The way to solve the problem is creativity. Not the *artistic creativity* that compensates its ignorance of practice with even new artificial samples, but the creativity that is generated by knowledge and derived from practice. In that sense Loos (as Morris before him) recognises craft as extremely hard but creative task that is for all that we have mentioned the only modern one.

Consequently Loos often declared himself as somebody who is closer to mason than architect.²⁰⁷ Namely, the mason is the one who – with his handicraft skill – creates what is truly modern whereas the architect is an ignorant priggish decorator who according to Loos deals more with decoration on building than architecture. “The one who receives the most commissions is not the one who can build best but the one whose work looks best on paper”.²⁰⁸ With declaring himself as a mason Loos in fact levels himself with the status to which Ruskin called in the middle of 19th century. He levels himself with Gothic artists, with the ones who stroking on stone manifest freedom of thinking and capability for (artistic) creativity. Above all, the parallel is interesting from the perspective of a question what is modern. We mark Ruskin’s and Morris’s look into the past as an anachronism. Their demand for a return into a period before industrialisation was in the 19th century marked as a call in conflict with logic of time, which is why their demand was *not modern*.

Loos in his way repeats their words in the beginning of the 20th century, but he marks handicraft approach as an example of true modern working where in Sullivan’s manner the form indisputable follows the function.²⁰⁹ This thought creates the second Sullivan’s natural law. According to Sullivan, right because it is grounded on nature – in spite of

207 He claims this in numerous articles, for example, in an already-discussed text “Furniture and People (1929)”, in: Loos, *On Architecture ...*, p. 192. He writes also: “Revolution always comes from below, and in this case, ‘below’ is the craftsman’s workshop”. In: Loos, “Our School of Applied Art (1897)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, pp. 15–16.

208 Loos, “Architecture (1910)”, *On Architecture ...*, pp. 76–77. Consequently Loos objected to take photos of interior for “the results [...] are always different from the original. [...] Photographs dematerialise reality, but precisely what I want is for people in my rooms to feel the material around them, I want it to have its effect on them, I want them to be aware of the enclosing room /.../”. In: Loos, “On Thrift (1924)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 178.

209 Sullivan, *The Tall Office ...*, (February 2011), p. 345.

a seeming limitation – it enables the individual who follows this maxim to look for and develop his own characteristic individuality. With this approach the architecture will, according to Sullivan, “soon become a fine art in the true, the best sense of the word, an art that will live because it will be of the people, for the people, and by the people”.²¹⁰ The return to connections between a viewer/user and a creator is a reminiscent of Greek understanding of poiesis to which Agamben shows.²¹¹ “The Greeks used the word poiesis to characterize technics, human production in its entirety, and designated with the same name of technics both the craftsman and the artist”.²¹² But beside craftsmen and artists, *users/clients* of art also take part in the process of creation.

Right because of this common desire for reunion that equates the status of craftsman, designer and artist, Loos thought that the sin even bigger than the education is that the true creators of a new style let themselves be *enslaved* by self-referential artists and that they reduced their work to just physical making by order of educated elite.²¹³ If in Morris’s time the machine enslaved craftsmen and turned them into variables, Loos points to *creators with artistic imagination*. This statement is quite a shock for designers and architects – especially if we understand designers from the point of view of Deutscher Werkbund as the ones that build bridge. But building the bridge is fruitless if you miss basic knowledge like contemporary creators do. With the lack of practice they lack knowledge. Designers and architects substitute their lack of knowledge with *artistic imagination*, but doing this they in fact move away from a true problem they should be solving. Now we know already: if we aren’t able to recognise a true problem, the suggested solution will be wrong from the very start.

In this sense, in hiding our ignorance behind *artistic imagination*, we can easier understand Loos’s aversion to connections between art and architecture, art and applied products, the basic postulate of new Secessionist association and numerous new movements. For that kind of connection is far from the role that art should have:

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

²¹¹ The topic was addressed partially in the previous chapter, *Morris’s design for all*.

²¹² Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 72.

²¹³ Loos, “The Old and the New Style in Architecture (1898)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 31.

“A building should please everyone, unlike a work of art, which does not have to please anyone. A work of art is a private matter for the artist, a building is not. A work of art is brought into the world without there being a need for it, a building meets a need. A work of art has no responsibility to anyone, a building to everyone. [...] A work of art is revolutionary a building conservative. A work of art is concerned with the future and directs us along new paths, a building is concerned with the present”.²¹⁴

This fragment clearly shows that Loos understood very soon where this collaboration of art and industry leads. It leads art to the market. At this point Loos agrees with Morris for in his opinion there is nothing worse than “art in the service of commerce”.²¹⁵ Consequently he draws a clear line between art and industry. Every intersection results only in the degenerate products that deserve nothing more than a scorn. The degradation of everyday products is determined by the submission to consumer’s changeable taste and fashion whereas artworks can never fall out of fashion. “For modern people, art is a divine goddess, and to employ it on objects of practical use is to prostitute her”.²¹⁶ He sees the solution for *true* applied products in the conservative or – as he marks it somewhere else – aristocratic understanding of handicraft skills and material. With this he in fact repeats Ruskin’s principles although in the text “On Thrift” he marks Ruskin as his big enemy. According to him because of Ruskin’s work it was no longer possible to measure the quality of work only on the basis of material and craftwork. Because of him we as the society are ashamed of measuring it that way.²¹⁷ The difference is therefore the economy of work. Both, Ruskin and Loos, advocated the topmost handicraft work. In a desire to be free from redundant work, Loos rejected decoration that in his opinion paralyses the true design of everyday products whose main task is – if I may use today’s words – sustainability. According to Loos the key to a good applied product is the choice of the best material that will last for centuries. Saying differently, the product has to – with its function, with its form that follows and with the material –

214 Loos, “Architecture (1910)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 82.

215 “Art in the service of commerce” was a title of a show of new products in München. Loos was very critical to what was shown there. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

216 Loos, “Surplus to Requirements (1908). (The German *Werkbund*)”, *Ornament and crime ...*, p. 154.

217 Loos, “On Thrift (1924)”, *On architecture ...*, p. 183.

exceed the moment of time, the moment of fashion. With the application of decor we, on the contrary, trap ourselves in the snare of time or, even worse, we overlook a true problem, we miss the base.

“Architects are there to get to the bottom of life, to think through people's needs to the very end, to help the disadvantaged in our society and to equip as large a number of households as possible with perfect objects of everyday use. Architects are not there to invent new forms”²¹⁸

Hence, Loos wants us to look for a solution in problem itself. He leads us to practice that will give us knowledge to see through the problem and on this basis find a solution. The solution is not to search a new form (for new form follows the function), but to solve a basic problem we are facing because of social changes. This proves that Loos wasn't opposed to progress and changes. At the beginning I mentioned that among Loos's important maxims we find also the principle: a new time demands a new approach.²¹⁹ But this change shouldn't arise on every cost, but only when we witness a *true* improvement. “Changes in form are not mere changes for change's sake, but come from desire to perfect the best. We should not be trying to create a new chair for our age, but the best chair”²²⁰ It's important to stress that Loos was absolutely against changing the products only because of the need for the new ones. The critique is once more directed toward Secessionist search for a contemporary style and the need to change everything according to *new* style. For when we manage to make an absolutely perfect product, its change in design can only be justified by “some great cataclysm that brings about a complete change in values”²²¹ At first we are surprised that Loos didn't recognise the industrial production as a cataclysm that undoubtedly brought about the change in

218 *Ibid.*

219 In the text “The Potemkin City” (1921) Adolf Loos writes: “*The artist's task should be to find a new language for the new material. Anything else is imitation*”. In: Loos, *On architecture ...*, p. 27.

220 Loos, “A Review of Applied Arts I (1898)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 135.

221 Loos, “The Old and The New Style in Architecture (1898)”, *On Architecture, op. cit.*, p. 34. This is in fact in contrast with the statement that Loos wrote in an article “Surplus to Requirements” (in: *Ornament and crime*) when he wanted to show the difference between art and applied products. Namely, he claimed that everyday products are subjected to changeable taste and fashion whereas artworks can never fall out of fashion.

values. But we have to recollect Loos's thought that industrial revolution in fact didn't cause a break, a new counting but it provoked only one of the changes that enabled the next evolutionary step in the development of new products. With an important note – new products that are the results of changes need a new approach in design.

“For the form of new phenomena in our culture (railway carriages, telephones, typewriters, etc.) solutions must be found that do not consciously echo a past style. Changing old objects to adopt them to modern needs is not permissible. We must either copy or create something completely new. By that, however, I do not mean the new must be the opposite of what went before”.²²²

Loos therefore doesn't reject the progress and industrial production as a potentially new mode of work. Even more, if development (in our case industrial revolution) brings about the novelty, we will need a new approach in design of new products. We can see the rejection only in the standpoint that industrial production – even more than a craft dictated by the *artist* – helps in prostituting applied products. The main aim becomes the contentment of market and the creation of consumers with *taste*. That's why – if we return to before-mentioned thought – the incorporation of art into the field of applied products was according to Loos the worst form of fashion that caused the degradation of craft, design and art. That's why the before-mentioned bridge shouldn't have a place in design for this way we voluntary agree to be in the service of commerce, in the service of capital, away from the essence of our profession: the solution of problems. In that sense Loos takes a side of craft and rejects new design he incorporates in the field of changeable fashion subjected to fashion vagaries in the market. This is a critique that is still topical in design today.

We have to read Loos's turn to craft as an instruction how to approach design regardless the type of production. In that sense Loos moves away from the anachronism we saw in the turn to craft in Ruskin's and Morris's texts. In craft he recognises knowledge

222 Loos, “The New Style (1878)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 46.

that can help design to solve true problems, and *finally* transfers it from the groundless stylisation. For:

“What is that 'style' anyway? It is hard to define. In my opinion the best answer was given by the worthy lady who said that if you have a lion's head on the nightstand, and the same lion's head is on the sofa, on the wardrobe, on the beds, on the chairs, on the washstand, in a word, on every object in the room, then that is style. Word of honour, craftsmen of Vienna, have you not done your best to encourage the spread of such ridiculous opinions among the public? It didn't have to be a lion's head, but there always had to be something moulded onto the future, be it a column, a boss, a balustrade, sometimes elongated, sometimes shortened, sometimes thickened sometimes slenderized. These rooms tyrannized their poor owners”.²²³

According to Loos, the capability of deviation hides itself in evolution. In contrast to John Ruskin and Hannah Arendt, Loos has a positive opinion on changing opinions for he believes that kind of changing leads to changes of habits and at the end to changes of culture.²²⁴ This is, according to Loos, the reflection of evolutionary step into positive direction. Loos grounds the thesis on cultural evolution on a statement of German architect and critic Gottfried Semper: “Show the pots a people have produced, and in general you can tell what kind of people they were and their level of culture”.²²⁵ So, from the design of applied products we can tell the level of evolutionary, “cultural” development of society. From this Loos concludes that the opulence of ornament means only added, unnecessary work that is no longer accordant with the level of culture that mankind reached at the turn from the 19th to 20th century. “To waste art on objects of practical use demonstrates a lack of culture. [...] The sadism of the eighteenth century, burdening one's fellows with superfluous work, is alien to modern man”.²²⁶ And in that sense Loos understands the relation of ornament and crime. It's important to stress that

223 Loos, “The Interiors in the Rotunda (1898)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 57.

224 Loos, “Cultural Degeneration (1908)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 163.

225 Loos, “Glass and China (1898)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 68. Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) had undoubtedly a strong influence on Loos's thinking. Apart from this quotation Loos leant also on his love to Antique architecture to which he often returned in his texts.

226 Loos, “Ornament and Education (1924)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 186.

he never marked ornament as such as a crime. The title of renowned essay is *Ornament and Crime*, not *Ornament is Crime* – this is a difference Loos spoke of several times. In the text *Ornament and Education* he wrote that the usage of ornament on products will disappear because of practicality. By this he didn't demand the systematic abolition of ornament but only wanted to call our attention to the fact that where the development reaches the level when the decoration is redundant, the ornament is impossible to revive.²²⁷

The time when we *artificially* look for our own style, expression, the type of decoration, therefore shows that the evolution brought us to the point where our expression hides itself in the fact that there is – from the point of view of ornament – no expression at all.

“I made the following discovery, which I passed on to the world: the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornamentation from objects of everyday use. I thought by doing so I would bring joy to the world: it has not thanked me for it. People were sad and downcast. What depressed them was the realization we could no longer create new ornament. [...] And we made our way sadly around the showcases, ashamed of our impotence. Every epoch had its own style, and ours alone should be denied one!? By the style people meant ornamentation. But I said, 'Do not weep. Do you not see the greatness of our age resides in our very inability to create new ornament? We have gone beyond ornament, we have achieved plain undecorated simplicity. Behold, the time is at hand, fulfilment awaits us. Soon the streets of the cities will shine like white walls! Like Zion, the Holy City, Heaven's capital. Then fulfilment will be ours’²²⁸

If in 1898 Loos already knew that Secession and Biedermeier²²⁹ are not the right answers in architecture at the turn of the century, he still thought that the new style still has to be found. Later he changes this opinion and concludes that the answer was present before

227 *Ibid.*, p. 187.

228 Loos, “Ornament and Crime (1908)”, *Ornament and Crime ...*, pp. 167–168.

229 “It is ten years ago now that I wrote a series of articles warning against these two styles [Biedermeier and Vienna Secession]. [...] Then I was in a minority, a very small minority indeed. A minority of one”. In: Loos, “Guided Tours of Apartments (1907)”, *On Architecture ...*, p. 53.

our eyes all the time. Our lack of success is actually the key to our success. Success shows itself in failure; it shows itself in a style of which the primary virtue is the lack of decoration. “The object whose form shows emptiness that exposes its essence of object. [...] The essence as ‘the essence without’”.²³⁰ Only when we take off the redundant we come to the essence we couldn’t see before. Only then we can see that if we want to come to the essence, if we want to see through it, the absence is necessary. The absence of the redundant. And this very “object of absence” (according to Wajcman) becomes the bearer itself.²³¹ The crucial shift occurs. All until then the value was measured by the richness of decoration on building, on the bearer. With the removal of *redundant* upper stratum the bearer of value becomes the object itself. And when Loos became aware of this – in Sullivan’s manner he saw the solution in a problem – in a way similar to Badiou’s *Saint Paul*, he no longer *demand*s anything, no longer *seeks* anything; rather, he *declares*.

“If one demands signs, he who performs them in abundance becomes a master for him who demands them. If one questions philosophically, he who can reply becomes a master for the perplexed subject. But he who declares without prophetic or miraculous guarantees, without arguments or proofs, does not enter into the logic of the master. Declaration, in effect, is not affected by the emptiness (of the demand) wherein the master installs himself. He who declares does not attest to any lack and remains withdrawn from its fulfilment by the figure of the master. This is why it is possible for him to occupy the place of the son. [...] The son is he for whom nothing is lacking, for he is nothing but beginning”.²³²

And this is just what Loos did through his declaration of a culture that is no longer connected with ornament. A decoration is unnecessary for the problem hides itself in a solution therefore we have to turn to logic of craft thinking in design. The solution is in front of us; if we can’t see it, we must be blind. And in that sense Loos created a new beginning in how work is done in architecture and design. And it is here, too – as well as

230 Wajcman, *Objekt stoletja ...*, pp. 70–72.

231 *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.

232 Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2003, p. 59.

in their ability to revolutionise the age just arriving – that we see reflected the primary difference between Ruskin and Loos. According to Badiou, in revolutionary politics the question arises: “Can one conceive of the event as a function, as mediation?”²³³ Using Badiou’s notion to paraphrase both thinkers, we can conclude that Ruskin had to happen so we could arrive at something different, while Loos, in his theory and practice, interrupted the preceding regime and is himself, in himself that which happened to us. What happened was the fall of ornament as a law in architecture and design. What happened was a period that is still crucial in design today: namely, modernism – a period when designers and architects believed they could build a new and better world through their work.

Today the revived actuality of Ruskin’s theory confronts with the question what is Gothic for us. Or, as Loos would ask in his provocative manner, what is today regarded as a next evolutionary step? What is modern today? What is a true novelty?

233 *Ibid.*, 48.

De Stijl's machine

The 20th century design – if I return to Loos's thought from previous chapter – is based on failure that, as Loos demonstrates, proves successful. The success shows itself in a fact we didn't manage to create an ornament for a new century. The failure brings to the fore *a new style* of the 20th century: the function. Out of a certain tension, or, to use Kant's term, out of one of the drives [*Triebfedern*] – in our example is defined by “the force of circumstances”²³⁴ – action is born. With Loos's declaration, the failure of architects and designers at the turn of the 19th to 20th century becomes an event that represents a key to the change – to the change that generates the novelty. The novelty that couldn't be imagine before. And that way the turnabout happens. Something that is read at first as negative becomes – looking retrospectively – a positive alternative. It becomes an affirmative event that offers a new paradigm.

According to Badiou, an event can only happen if we recognise something “that is subtracted from identitarian predicates”, in which it works and “proceeds via those predicates”.²³⁵ Namely, a deduction, the separation creates a hole in knowledge:

“But if a singularity can lay claim to the universal by subtraction, it is because the play of identitarian predicates, or the logic of those forms of knowledge that describe particularity, precludes any possibility of foreseeing or conceiving it. Consequently, a universal singularity is not of the order of being but of the order of a sudden emergence. [...] *Every universal originates in an event, and the event is intransitive to the particularity of the situation.*”²³⁶

234 More in: Alenka Zupančič, “Etika realnega: Kant, Lacan”, *Problemi, Razprave*, volume 31, number 6, Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, Ljubljana 1993.

235 Alain Badiou, *Eight Theses on the Universal*, <http://www.lacan.com/badeight.htm> (June 2011). Rado Riha in the text “Kako je mogoče misliti singularno univerzalno” [“How to think the universal singularity”] recognises similar in Althusser's texts, in so-called “necessary paradox”. He writes: “This paradox lies, as it is known, in the fact that philosophy that doesn't have its object and works only in the immanence of its thought, exactly with its internal philosophical acting interferes with its outward.” *Ibid.*, p. 193. Badiou shows that we can find this trajectory also in other places, not only in philosophy that doesn't have its object.

236 *Eight Theses ...*, (June 2011).

Therefore, the already-mentioned turnabout happens and it changes the logic of working and thinking in design. At the same time Loos offers an answer to the question if it is possible to recognise a *true* novelty on work. The answer is, as it seems, at hand. If novelty is really true, we cannot recognise it until it happens. As we saw in Badiou's quote a true novelty belongs to "the order of a sudden emergence". If we recognise a novelty, or even more, predict it then it is a novelty which is not. It is a novelty for its own sake, the novelty that creates only a fictive feeling of new, it is – if we speak about design only – there just to accelerate the sale.²³⁷ That is why Loos recognises a searched new style in *the force of circumstances* retrospectively. And in declaring at the glance impotent situation he in fact finds a searched result. *The force of circumstances* forces him to identify the problem. It forces him to change paradigm, to think about the style, or better, about the lack of it. He answers with the key element – with the thought that according to Badiou creates a base for the universal:²³⁸ something that was without any value (a bare building) receives, with Loos's act, a value. Newly defined value as a consequence gradually changes the logic of situation. And this in fact is a key moment. A true novelty has the power not only to break the existing situation but bears a demand for change. And that change is demonstrated in a changed relation, in a changed working in design.

Parallel with Badiou's discontinuity, in design we also find the so-called *Creative Evolution*. This reminds us of Bergson's case on water and sugar that Gilles Deleuze describes in his book *The Movement Image*:

"Putting some sugar in a glass of water, he says that 'I must, willy-nilly until the sugar melts'. [...] But what is his main point? That the movement of translation which detaches the sugar particles and suspends them in the water itself expresses a change in the whole, that is, in the content of the glass; a qualitative transition from water which contains a

237 Or as Gui Bonsiepe describes: "the capitalist concept of design, which aims to style products for maximum profitability and market distribution". (In: Gui Bonsiepe, "Design and Democracy", *Civic City Cahier 2*, Bedford Press, London 2010, p. 6.) The novelty as market defines it is most often – as it is quickly shown in numerous cases – just a novelty for its own sake, a make-up for the acceleration of sale and for increasing market share.

238 Badiou, *Eight Theses ...*, (June 2011).

sugar lump to the state of sugared water. [From this Bergson concludes:] if the whole is not giveable, it is because it is the Open, and because its nature is to change constantly, or to give rise to something new, in short to endure.”²³⁹

With an important addition: “The essence of a thing”, Deleuze writes, “never appears at the outset, but in the middle, in the course of its development, when its strength is assured.”²⁴⁰ And these cuts, after they appear in the middle – as sugar that melts in the water – change the further development of profession. This slow melting of effects of an event that cut into the established creates a fictive feeling that *true* changes happen gradually, only as modifications of the previous. A change in the whole becomes possible right because of the true novelty.

This case offers a possibility of understanding how should we follow the evolutionary continuity in design and at the same time recognise discontinuity in the development of a discipline. Loos bases the evolutionary development on – at the glance – a *simple* fact: “We just have to think and feel in the style of our times, and the rest will follow as a matter of course.”²⁴¹ With this he doesn’t deny a tradition (on which Ruskin and Morris based their thoughts), even more, for him the base of everything is antiquity – but it retracts immediately when faced with novelty, when the time is mature for its improvement. It is therefore a logical step in development that needs to be – in Sullivan’s manner – *just* recognised and used, in an extreme case even surrendered to the course of progress. Italian designer and theorist Enzo Mari goes even further, for according to him everything is based on just few archetypal works. “If the first hundred archetypal works had never been created, there would have been no models for the successive thousand – we would not have the same concept of aesthetics. And since we are speaking about design, this graft would not exist.”²⁴² This is summarised also by a

239 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1. The Movement-Image*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1997, p. 9.

240 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

241 Adolf Loos, “Cultural Degeneration (1908)”, *Ornament and crime ...*, p. 165. This thought from an article *Ornament and Crime* (1908) is also very noted: “The evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornamentation from objects of everyday use.” *Ibid.*, p.167.

242 Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Enzo Mari – The Conversation Series*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln 2008, p. 8.

Greek theorist Artemis Yagou who further develops David Pye's thought: "Design may be regarded as a gradual, step-by-step process of adaptation of formerly existing solutions; it is more often modification than innovation."²⁴³

On the other hand Loos with his declaration of new *bare* style, but also Ruskin and Morris before him, prove that – in Badiou's manner – main changes in profession are brought about by cuts that transverse an established thought. When we speak about cuts, we don't speak about evolutionary continuity – like it was according to Sullivan represented in building of skyscrapers – but discontinuity where we don't just become used to changes or accept them gradually, but the very changes suddenly force us to reflection. Niko Kralj marked these leaps in design as mutations.

"We live in a time characterized by an explosion in creativity and the impermanence of long-term planning; we live in a time of modern technological civilization, which, in our country, we would like to transform through self-managed social changes into a technological culture. This is a time when new technological discoveries are replacing yesterday's solutions; this is a time of oppositions, of a labile equilibrium, of lagging behind and overtaking.

Design and invention are two ends of the same chain of innovation. It is difficult to demarcate where one begins and the other ends. To make a comparison with the living world, design is merely evolutionary change in a product and the adaptation to new demands, whereas invention – the mutation – is a qualitative leap and, usually, a completely new artistic solution."²⁴⁴

Beside evolution, Kralj introduces in design another biological term – *mutation*. He uses the word *mutation* – which for him means, in nature, a genetic change – in design to refer to inventions, such as the sewing needle, the wheel, or the light bulb. We are talking, then, about an event, a breakthrough, a leap. A change that drastically alters

243 Artemis Yagou, *Rewriting Design History from an Evolutionary Perspective: Background and Implications*, http://ead.verhaag.net/fullpapers/eado6_id186_2.pdf (August 2010).

244 Niko Kralj, *Oblikovanje in znanstveno tehnična ustvarjalnost [Design and scientific-technical creativity]*, typescript, 1971, [p. 2], Niko Kralj Archive, Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana.

not only design but society as a whole. A breakthrough with an enduring influence that changes how things are done, how things are understood. An event that transforms our needs.

Loos accomplishes such cut – or, in Kralj's term, mutation – with an act that declares a novelty from the incapacity to create a new style. Similarly Jelica Šumič Riha recognises this in Adorno's thesis where the utopian hope is composed of what couldn't become or be created. It is based on a failure of things but this failure enables it to become a thing.²⁴⁵ Totally different, but still very eloquent example of a negative starting-position from design practice comes from Victor Papanek's book *Design for the Real World*. In America, products whose design base Papanek defines as “the manipulated visual excitement”,²⁴⁶ were prevalent until the 2nd World War. The beginning of the 2nd World War brings radical change. As Papanek describes, car and other consumer industries were forced to redirect their production to supply the army. Consequently industrial designers had to accept

“new (though temporary) sense of responsibility. [...] Design staffs encountered real requirements of performance in the function complex, imposed by combat conditions. The necessity for honest design (design-in-use versus design-in-sales) imposed a healthier discipline than that of the marketplace. Critical material shortages forced those designers who remained in the consumer field to a much keener realization of performance, materials and other war imposed limitations. A three-quart casserole, made of plasticized cardboards able to sustain temperatures of 475 degrees for several hours, washable and infinitely reusable, *retailing* for 45 cents, is an excellent example and seems curiously to have disappeared from the market by 1945.”²⁴⁷

245 Jelica Šumič Riha, “A Matter Of Resistance”, in: *Filozofski vestnik*, št. 2, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 1997, p. 136.

246 Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World, Human Ecology and Social Change*, Academy Chicago Press, Chicago 1992, p. 33. Among designers who filled the market with such products, Papanek mentions Harold van Doren, Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy, Russel Wright, Henry Dreyfuss, Donald Deskey and Walter Dorwin Teague. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

247 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

After the end of war – when we return to *positive* starting-position – the market is flooded not with utilitarian casseroles but with products that were according to Papanek more often than not marked as a bad copy of Reynolds’s chemical pen. This speculative salesman enraptured consumers with his enthusiastic *promise* that with new chemical pen they can write under water.²⁴⁸ Chemical pen in spite of absurdity of its potential use (How often do we want to write under water?) became over night the symbol of war winners and consequently it was sold for “scanty” 25 American dollars for a piece. According to Papanek, “marked the end of one era, the Reynolds pen leaking in his breast pocket marked the beginning of a new”²⁴⁹ – of a new era when design-in-use mostly ousted design-in-sales from the market.²⁵⁰

As we see from both Papanek’s examples, the change of starting-position more than obviously changes the way of problem-solving. Christopher Alexander in his *Synthesis of form* describes a design problem as “an effort to achieve fitness between two entities: the form in question and its context; the form is the solution to the problem; the context defines the problem.”²⁵¹ He further explains: “The form is a part of the world over which we have control, and which we decide to shape while leaving the rest of the world as it is. The context is that part of the world which puts demands on this form; anything in the world that makes demands of the form is context.”²⁵² Therefore, these examples respond to a changed context – the context that we, in our case, described as a (*negative*) starting-position. But Papanek’s examples also try to explain that designers are able to develop a sense for responsibility, but only if they are before they start to design forced into a negative starting-position. Only when they are forced to solve problems in which they are pushed by these or those lacks and limitations (or before-mentioned *the force of circumstances*), they become able to use their full potential and design simple

248 Papanek adds: “With a Reynolds pen you could write under water but practically nowhere else.” *Ibid.*

249 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

250 An era when in spite of the fact that the consumers often believe just the opposite of what it is marketed, they are still under the strong influence of dazzling ads and are succumbed to a more and more violent branding. An era that consciously builds on the artificial outdateding of products – that it is even more sophisticated as before the 2nd World War – and whose only relevant index seems to be the constant increase of sale.

251 Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the synthesis of form*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1964, p. 15.

252 *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

and usable products. *True* products – as Papanek describes them with Ruskin’s words – that means products whose main goal is not the satisfaction of consumption but usage.

Alexander’s explanation offers another perspective on a problem of responsibility in design. The context, the starting-position forces us to make something from scratch. And here we can find the answer. To recognise and solve a problem already imply a responsibility. Therefore, the responsibility in design is connected to a problem solution. This returns us to Sullivan and his thesis that the main task of design is the recognition of a *true* problem. By solving it – Sullivan thinks that recognising the problem automatically suggests its solution – in fact we solve the question of responsibility in design. Gerrit Rietveld offers similar answer:

“In my opinion, there is no reason why anyone should provide a justification for making something; on the contrary, the need for concrete expression is removed if one has been able to express that need in words first. And there is no need to explain work which has already been carried out.”²⁵³

If we want for design to happen, we need – according to Rietveld – an expressed need,²⁵⁴ a need to solve something. This means we need a problem if we want to start to design. This leads us to the possibility to distinguish between true and false need. A true need is the one that leads us to the problem solution. With solving the problem we enter into design field. With this thought we return to Alexander who extends Rietveld’s answer with the statement that cultures where problems are rare don’t even know true designers.²⁵⁵ Or, as on the question: “What are the boundaries of Design?” Charles Eames answers: “What are the boundaries of problems?”²⁵⁶ This means that the existence of designers is dependent on existence of problems – dependent on a search for problem solutions. Or saying differently, if you think, you solve, from which we can conclude: if

253 Gerrit Rietveld, *Utility, Construction: (Beauty, Art)*, 1927, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/gerrit-rietveld-“utility-construction-beauty-art”-1927> (August 2011).

254 I write more about relation between the need and desire in the next chapter.

255 Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis ...*, p. 6.

256 “Design Q&A”, *The Films of Charles & Ray Eames*, vol. 4, Image Entertainment, Chatsworth 2000.

you think, you design. In this act we find the very essence of design process. In decision to recognise problems and try to find solutions, behind the – as Alexander describes – gradual “process of error-reduction”²⁵⁷ we can find a base of designer’s responsibility. And this in spite of – as Alexander continues – the fact, that the weight of meaning of a certain demand of problem varies from designer to designer, whereas the relevance of demand (is demand really a demand or maybe not?) is most often independent from personal opinion of designer.²⁵⁸ This is crucial. According to Rietveld, putting something into words is already sufficient. The recognition is sufficient, a reason something needs to be solved is sufficient. Consequently all moralising and questioning which answer, which form, which solution is *truer* is redundant – similarly as the question on mode of production seems redundant today. But at the beginning of the 20th century, this very question on mode of production predominantly dictated the thinking in design discipline and product making. For the decision for change of tool brings the redefinition of design field.

At this point, the avant-garde movement De Stijl enters into design.²⁵⁹ In the long run, De Stijl – with its thought that *the machine is the one that works, not a craftsman* – manages to revalue design field. In the theory of De Stijl the machine takes the position of tool and gives a form to the 20th century content. With De Stijl, the machine that was rejected by all three discussed predecessors, from Ruskin to Loos, gets its position in design and consequently changes its starting-point.

257 Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis ...*, p. 102.

258 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

259 The movement De Stijl undoubtedly belongs to those who believed in industrial production and at the same time built the rules how to introduce machine production into design. In spite of Loos’s idea that the new style of the 20th century is that there is no style, De Stijl – as a name already suggests – strengthened Loos’s theory with the thought of Frank Lloyd Wright and futuristic ideology and built a base for a *new style*, for a new art language. Language based on a search for a different relation between particular and universal influences the development of modern painting (the crucial actor of movement was painter Piet Mondrian), architecture and design (with main protagonists Theo van Doesburg and Gerrit Rietveld). The main reason why Dutchmen suddenly took over the helm in development of design theory lies according to Reyner Banham also in the fact that the Netherlands managed, with its position of neutrality, to avoid the 1st World War. According to Banham, other nations would come to similar conclusions if the war wouldn’t stop their development. See: Banham, *Theory and Design ...*, p. 139.

As I already pointed out in chapter *Morris's design for all*, tendencies on machine behalf and connections between design and industrial production are not new. Henry van de Velde – also the fervent advocate of Morris's ideas – in his text *A Chapter on the Design and Construction of Modern Furniture* from 1897 wrote:

“We must endeavour to work out the foundations on which to build a new style and in my opinion the origin clearly lies in never creating anything which has no valid reason for existing, even with the almighty sanction of industry and the manifold consequences of its powerful machines.

But I could be prouder of the certainly far more individual principle of systematically avoiding designing anything that cannot be *mass-produced*. My ideal would be to have my projects executed a thousand times, though obviously not without strict supervision [...]. I can thus only hope to make my influence felt when more widespread industrial activity will allow me to live up to the maxim which has guided my social beliefs, namely that a man's worth can be measured by the number of people who have derived use and benefit from his life's work.”²⁶⁰

With his migration to German Weimar, Henry van de Velde soon became one of the most important members of already mentioned German organisation Deutscher Werkbund that pledged for introduction of machine production in design and at the same time the introduction of the highest standards in design of mass-produced objects. Deutscher Werkbund – as I have already explained – turned out as crucial for recognizing design as a bridge between those who innovate and those who make.²⁶¹ The one that invents and stands as one of the banks, now becomes a bridge and reconnects what division of work – according to Ruskin and Morris – violently separated. But at the same time Van de Velde revives Morris's idea about design for all. Or, as Van de Velde marks, it is about *design that has maximal social benefits*. With an important difference in means of production: craft production is replaced by mass production, machine

260 Henry van de Velde, “A Chapter on the Design and Construction of Modern Furniture”, in: *Form and Function. A Source Book for the History of Architecture and Design 1890–1939* (ed. Tim and Charlotte Benton and Dennis Sharp), Granada Publishing, London 1980, p. 18.

261 *The Werkbund. Studies ...*, pp. 7–8.

production, but the latter bears a doubt in itself. If we read in Morris's tendency for art, design for all a desire for universality, with mass production we – already in the 19th century (and in the 20th even more) – entered on a consumer market that merely presents (propagates) as universal. This thought will – as we will see – deeply occupy the members of De Stijl movement.

Beside all mentioned, the thought of Sullivan's scholar Frank Lloyd Wright is also very important for the thinking of protagonists of De Stijl movement. Wright saw a machine as a tool that works on our instructions. If we are not satisfied with the result of work, we (simply) have to change the instructions:

“Every age has done its work, produced its art with the best tools or contrivances it knew, the tools most successful in saving the most precious thing in the world – human effort. Greece used the chattel slave as the essential tool of its art and civilization. This tool we have discarded and we would refuse the return of Greek art upon the terms or its restoration, because we insist now upon a basis of Democracy.

Is it not more likely that the medium of artistic expression itself has broadened and changed until a new definition, and new direction must be given the art activity of the future, and that the Machine has finally made for the artist, whether he will yet own it or not, a splendid distinction between the Art of old and the Art to come? A distinction made by the tool which frees human labour, lengthens and broadens the life of the simplest man, thereby the basis of the Democracy upon which we insist.”²⁶²

The machine – according to Wright – is not our enemy anymore, it is not just a potential, but it creates a base for democratic social system. Therefore, at the turn of the 19th to 20th century we witness the re-evaluation of machine. Even more, the machine is literally politically reformed it becomes an actor that will (on our instructions) make possible a better tomorrow. But the social system on which we insist opens another important question of the then period – the altruism of individual in society. Dutch architect and theorist Hendrik Petrus Berlage introduces a question of meaning of so-

262 Wright, “The Art and Craft of the Machine”, v: *The Industrial Design ...*, pp. 57–58. The capitals are Author's.

cial welfare in comparison with the happiness of individual. His thought – beside those mentioned – plays an important role²⁶³ in further theoretical thinking of the group:

“Christianity is dead, and only the preliminary stirrings can yet be felt of a new world-concept based upon the consequences of scientific progress. We need an ethical settlement, and in that connection there comes to the surface of the ferment of our times the question of Altruism. It comes to this – the individual or the Community. With the denial of traditional morality shall the individual alone be served, or, given the principle of equality, shall all?”²⁶⁴

From mentioned theories and practices we can gather the elements that constitute the thought of the 20th century, and this thought is in its way personified in the group De Stijl. First, mass production is a tool for reaching masses which will benefit from good design. The influence is measured with number of people that benefit from our work. Secondly the bridge between new tool – a machine and masses is built by design. And thirdly, the machine is a tool that frees us from unnecessary work and constitutes a base for a newly defined democratic art of the 20th century – design.

A machine as a tool for the future and mass production as its result constitute a base for a newly defined discipline, design. We witness the change of values, as Walter Benjamin states in the text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, a change of authority of objects:

“The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. [...]

263 See in: Banham, *Theory and Design ...*, pp. 139–149.

264 Berlage's quote is taken from: *ibid.*, p. 144. The meaning of Berlage's thought is stressed also by Gerrit Rietveld in the text *New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture*, 1932, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/gerrit-rietveld-“new-functionalism-in-dutch-architecture”-1932> (August 2011).

One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind.”²⁶⁵

The shattering of tradition in design means the shattering of Morris’s and Ruskin’s dogmas that *true* design is the one where we clearly see that tradition directs the trace of a hand. In this trace we can see all mistakes and the freedom of thinking that craftsman’s act imprints on the form of product. With the removal of tradition and trace of a hand, of freedom of thinking, the question arises: what is still left to the product? In the field of product design Benjamin’s shattering of tradition means a destruction of bases of historical testimony. And that is why Wright’s call for a re-definition of profession at the beginning of the 20th century to members of De Stijl looks totally justified. Theo van Doesburg describes it as “the double function which every innovation, be it in the sciences, culture, the arts or architecture, has to fulfil, consists on the one hand of building up piece by piece a new image of the world, while on the other hand an old world image is being broken down piece by piece. The former is usually the result of the latter.”²⁶⁶ And this is where De Stijl succeeds. They systematically deconstruct and compose from scratch a new definition of design.

From the rich collection of De Stijl’s texts and manifestos I will focus on three chapters that are in my opinion crucial for understanding changes that happened in design in the first half of the 20th century. As I already mentioned: because De Stijl steps on the side of machine, causes the re-evaluation in design and in understanding the profession of a designer. This is demonstrated in next overlapping topics:

265 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm> (January 2012).

266 Theo van Doesburg, *Architecture and Revolution – Revolutionary Architecture? Utopian Designs by Tatlin, Lissitzky, and Others*, 1928, <http://rosswolfe.wordpress.com/2010/10/03/theo-van-doesburgs-“architecture-and-revolution—-revolutionary-architecture-utopian-designs-by-tatlin-lissitzky-and-others”-1928> (January 2011).

First, as members of De Stijl decide for a machine, they consciously enter into the field of – as they say – universality. In their opinion a demand for universality means a demand to work for the benefit of community and forms a clear opposition to particularity – narcissism of the author. A designer now doesn't solve his own problems, but the problems of community. Saying differently, the problems of community become designer's problems.

Secondly, a decision for a machine erases a narcissistic author. The emotions are erased the trace of a hand is erased. Designer becomes a thoughtful subject who runs a machine and solves the problems of community by designing functional products.

These two points bring us to the third, to two questions: what is this *new, true* product that responds to the needs of the new century? And what happens when mass produced product in the eyes of designer becomes a positive product, the universal element?

With the first statement, with a decision for a machine, design enters in the field of universal and the problem of community becomes the problem of designer. According to Matei Calinescu²⁶⁷ and Victor Margolin,²⁶⁸ Comte Henri de Saint-Simon was the first philosopher that (already around 1820) recognized a social visionary in the artist. According to Saint-Simon, artists, scholars and industrialists create the select holy trinity that – if ideal state would exist – would rule in such a state. The task of artists is to conceive a future of society, the task of scholars is to check the solidness of ideas, and the industrials will be the ones that will put feasible ideas into practice.

“[I]n this great undertake the artists, the men of imagination will open the march: they will take the Golden Age from the past and offer it as a gift to future generations; they will make society pursue passionately the rise of its well-being, and they will do this by presenting the picture of new prosperity, by making each member of society aware that

267 Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadance, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, Duke University Press, Durham 1987, pp. 102–103.

268 Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917–1946*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago in London 1997, pp. 1–2.

everyone will soon have a share in enjoyments which up to now have been the privilege of an extremely small class; they will sing the blessing of civilization, and for the attainment of their goal they will use all the means of the arts, eloquence, poetry, painting, music; in a word, they will develop the poetic aspect of the new system.”²⁶⁹

Common goal of artists, scholars and industrialists is welfare of society, welfare of community. With this we automatically give power to art which now becomes capable to influence the community and also change it. The power that art once already had and – according to Agamben – lost in the middle of the 17th century when – as I already mentioned – “a man of taste” appears in European society.²⁷⁰ Until then – especially in antique Greece – art was believed to possess such a power that can subvert the basis of city and for that reason it is dangerous for society.²⁷¹ Today we are in situation when we – according to Agamben – cannot even understand that art can have such a power. But at the beginning of the 20th century designers and architects become aware of this potential. For designers, already in the 19th century the elitism of art and taste are not sufficient anymore. William Morris also calls attention to this with his demand that art must be accessible for all – for the whole society. Or as Van de Velde defines it: what matters is the number of people that benefit from our work.

Search for benefits for all, search for the maximum benefit for society, brings to De Stijl's decision for community. With De Stijl the meaning of community for the first time steps to the fore of designer's task. And with the meaning of community the machine steps to the fore as a means that will enable De Stijl to achieve a desired community and bring to an end individualism that in production is identified with individual craftsman. With it they will achieve a searched form for the 20th century. In the first De Stijl's manifesto from 1918 the members of this movement write:

269 Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* ..., pp. 102–103.

270 Agamben, *The Man without* ..., p. 13.

271 *Ibid.*, pp. 4–7.

- “1. There is an old and a new consciousness of time. / The old is connected with the individual. / The new is connected with the universal. The struggle of the individual against the universal is revealing itself in the world war as well as in the art of present day.
2. The war is destroying the old world and its contents: individual domination in every state.”²⁷²

In the lecture *The Will to Style* Theo van Doesburg further explains:

“In politics, as in art, only collective solutions can have decisive significance. [...] Where these two lines of development (the technical and the artistic) meet in our age the application of the machine to the new style is a matter of course. The machine is the purest example of balance between the static and the dynamic, between intellect and instinct. If culture in the broadest sense really means independence of nature, it is no wonder that the machine takes pride of place in the concept of cultural style. The machine is the supreme example of intellectual discipline. Materialism, as a philosophy of life and art, considered hand craftsmanship to be the purest expression of the soul.

The new spiritual philosophy of art not only saw at once its limitless potentialities for artistic expression. For a style which is no longer concerned with the production of individual pictures, ornaments or private houses, but makes a collective assault on whole districts of cities, skyscraper blocks and airports, with due consideration of the economic circumstances – for such a style there can be no question of employing hand craftsmanship. The machine is all-important here: hand craftsmanship is appropriate to an individualistic view of life which has been overtaken by progress.”²⁷³

Questions that arise at this point are: why community equated with the universal steps to the fore of designer’s awareness? Why the universal becomes basic value? Why only collective solutions have a decisive meaning? Is this just an answer to Morris’s demand for art for all? The answer in a manner – what the 19th century thought, the 20th century made? Is this an answer in the form of democratisation of design that Morris and

272 Theo van Doesburg et. al., “De Stijl: ‘Manifesto 1’”, 1918, in: *Art in Theory: 1900–2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, (ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood), Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2005, p. 281.

273 Theo van Doesburg, “The will to Style”, in: *The Industrial Design ...*, p. 102.

Wright demanded? Democratisation in the form of good product for all? The machine as a means that enables all that? All these are important. But still, why are so important for further development of design?

Mart Stam contradicts individualism²⁷⁴ because it “drawn [...] away from society. [...] The individual’s isolation has led him to be dominated by his emotions. But the modern outlook – to some extent already unconsciously accepted – sees life as the **single** reaching-out of a **single** force. This means that what is special or individual must yield to what is common to all.”²⁷⁵ If we – according to Stam – acknowledge that we are primarily a part of community, then problems of community become problems of individual. When we write that the thought of De Stijl brings the re-evaluation in design, this re-evaluation rests on this very thought. Instead of solving problems of individual they consciously put to the fore problems of community. We are all part of community and by solving problems of community we as designers help to solve the particular problems too. This move in relation and understanding of problems is – according to J. J. P. Oud – a sign of the then social striving. We can recognise it “in the need to organize individual elements into groups, associations, confederations, companies, trusts, monopolies, etc. This parallelism of intellectual and social striving which is a necessity for culture forms the basis for style.”²⁷⁶ It represents a base of design that denounces the personal, particular acting on the basis of impulse.²⁷⁷

274 Mart Stam, *Collective Design*, 1925, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/22/mart-stam's-collective-design>-1925. Mart Stam was not a part of De Stijl. He was Dutch architect who was very active in the same period and who in his texts personifies the spirit of modernism. Banham also refers to him in the chapter about De Stijl (Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, The MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1980, p. 149.) We can find resistance to individualism in many De Stijl's texts, for example in the text of the main architect of the group J. J. P. Oud, *Art and Machine*, 1918, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/j-j-p-oud's-art-and-machine>-1918 (both January 2011).

275 Stam, *Collective Design* ..., (January 2011). I recapitulated emphasis in the text according to author.

276 Oud, *Art and Machine* ..., (January 2011).

277 Theo van Doesburg also writes about this in the text *Elementarism*, 1930, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/19/theo-van-doesburg's-elementarism>-1930 (August 2011).

In the second half of the 20th century we find similar thinking in visionary R. Buckminster Fuller who marks the Earth as a spaceship where all its inhabitants are members of the crew and therefore responsible for a condition and solutions of its problems. Like members of De Stijl, Fuller in the advance of technology sees a means to achieve this goal – where an individual in exchange for his particular interests puts to the fore collective solutions for community that we all belong to. Fuller discusses this topic in numerous lectures

But De Stijl's decision for community is crucial in one more moment. Although its members use the term art, for design this means a clear deviation from art. Decision that design will work for society, for community, with a means such as industrial production, brings to the fore the meaning of utilitarian products – products that surround us every day and literally build our environment, our lives. And designers recognized this environment as a place where they can intervene with their knowledge, reformulate it and consequently build a better community for all. Even more, according to Van Doesburg, non-artistic, practical objects show the way to art of the 20th century. “In these objects, which derive from the needs of daily life, the contemporary artist sees that an end has come to impulsive and speculative procedures.”²⁷⁸ From art, Van Doesburg demands explicitness “and this demand can never be fulfilled if artists make use of individualized means. Explicitness can result only from discipline of means, and this discipline leads to the generalization of means. Generalization of means leads to elemental, monumental formation.”²⁷⁹

This returns us to already discussed meaning of responsibility in design, to awareness where do you as a designer take your duties – in the sphere of particular or collective. The key lies in the capability of recognising *true* problems. And *true* problems are – according to De Stijl – only the problems of community. De Stijl therefore manages to recognise the problems of the community. The movement regards them – for the very first time – as the priority of the design discipline. However, De Stijl doesn't understand community only as a crowd of potential, senseless consumers but as an equal partner. They recognise community as a society whose part is until then sublime artist too. A designer descends from his pedestal and gives himself a task to solve common problems – problems we are all part of, the community and a designer who belongs to this community and at the same time solves its problems, and by this he automatically solves also

and works. One of the most important is: R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, Lars Müller Publishers, Baden 2008 (first published in 1969).

278 Theo van Doesburg, *Elemental Formation*, 1923, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/theo-van-doesburg's-“elemental-formation”-1923> (January 2011).

279 *Ibid.*

his own. With an emphasis, he solves these problems for all. In this way design gets the potential to become universal discipline that De Stijl demanded in their texts.

This very demand returns us again to machine as a means to execute a demand. A decision for a machine brings new demands: a demand for new *instructions* in design, a demand for erasure of feelings, of trace of a hand. Oud in the text *Art and Machine* stresses that “the modern artist strives to attain the universal, while feeling (the subjective) leads to the particular”.²⁸⁰ In the field of products that correspond to a need, feelings are expressed in the form of trace of a hand, in tradition, in craftsmanship. Consequently every trace of a hand shows itself as a mistake, as unnecessary feeling that moves us away from the pure form that at the same time – if we reach it – ensures aesthetic result. This is a total opposition to Ruskin’s and Morris’s thought because they ground true product and dignity of designer – craftsman exactly on mistakes and traces of a hand. De Stijl, on the contrary, doubt in sincerity of feelings and in the trace of a hand recognise unnecessary feelings, an expression of old times, even more, they recognise an obstacle that moves us away from solving true problems. For them, feelings are just something learned, archaic; something that brings ambiguity into objects instead of a searched clearness. This is why Benjamin’s shattering of tradition is inevitable. Oud writes:

“In each period, the universal element in art has its own outward form, which is a reflection of three factors: spirit (seen as a unity of intuition and consciousness), material and method of production.

Much has been written about the spirit of the modern work of art, but we shall have to give equal weight to the two other factors, material and method of production, for in order to *give* determinate plastic expression to the spirit, the means must first of all be made determinate and what means is more determinate and more of this age than the machine? Must the spirit be realized in this age by the hand or the machine? For the modern artist the future line of development must lead inevitably to the machine, although at first the tendency will be to regard this as heresy. Not only because the ma-

280 Oud, *Art and Machine* ..., (January 2011).

chine can give more determinate plastic expression than the hand, but also from the social point of view, from the economic standpoint, the machine is the best means of manufacturing products which will be of more benefit to the community than the art products of the present time, which reach only the wealthy individual.”²⁸¹

Oud goes even that far that he concludes the text *Art and Machine* with a statement that in the future “the unique article, as we know it, will no longer exist”,²⁸² and with this he confirms the second thought; the thought that De Stijl brings the reformulation of values. Until then the unique article had much bigger weight than mass-produced one. Now the role of mass produced product radically rises. Even more, according to Oud the mass-produced product will totally replace the unique one. The power of mass-produced product is confirmed by number of people who benefit from it. A decision for community therefore means also a new power of mass-produced product.

Beside this new value of mass-produced product, a demand to erase a hand brings one more radical demand – a demand to erase an author, a demand to erase a designer as an author. Here we have to stress that by this we don't mean the erasure of designer as a thoughtful subject, but his authorial position loses its position in the process. According to Wajcman, this is “as if the big industry and modern science would share a striving to remove and erase every trace of a subject (but there are only thoughtful subjects who can even think that they erased traces, their own traces)”.²⁸³ According to Wajcman, we cannot erase a thoughtful subject, even if we try. And even De Stijl with their demand to erase the trace of a hand cannot erase him. With erasure of designer as an author in fact they redefine the role of designer. A designer positions himself behind the machine, solves the problems of community, but with withdrawal of signature or trace of a hand his position in the process becomes anonymous.

With the lost trace of author the product in community becomes the result of machine. The elimination of the old therefore generates the new. A designer is eliminated as an

281 *Ibid.*

282 *Ibid.*

283 Wajcman, *Objekt stoletja ...*, pp. 58–59.

author and replaced with industrial design. What this means for design? In Ruskin's and Morris's period a designer – craftsman appeared as a singular figure, but with De Stijl's redefinition of designer he enters into the field of collective, into the field of anonymity. Now the profession doesn't have an individual who would prove his presence with mistakes in work. Now we have much more refined thoughtful subject but still not individualised. Namely, a designer remains in the background. Even more, less mistakes he makes more invisible he stays better the result. He acts simply and that way successfully simplifies our life, the life of community, the life of individual in society we are all part of.

We may suspect that the erasure of author is compensated with the final user of product, with knowledge that the product is being used and that it satisfies its primary function, the satisfaction of human's need. Giorgio Agamben in the text *Author as a gesture* bases his starting-point on Foucault's thought: "The mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence."²⁸⁴ And this – as Agamben calls it – very gesture that "deprives the identity of the author of all relevance nevertheless affirms his irreducible necessity."²⁸⁵ Author's input in fact begins to live on the basis of his absence under the condition the interaction with the reader is established. Author retracts, makes a place for reader who only through reading recognises author's input. In design we replace a reader with the user, hence: author's input begins to live on the basis of his absence under the condition the interaction with the user is established. With the interaction between product and user or – as Clive Dilnot explains – with the change of mode of work in design, with the transition from craftsmanship to industrial era, we can start to talk about the "symbiosis between persons and artefacts".²⁸⁶

With the erasure of an author (but not also a thoughtful subject positioned behind a machine) we have come to the third turning-point: if there is a good planner behind

284 Michel Foucault, *What Is an Author?*, 1969, pp. 102-103, source: <http://www.mediafire.com/?bbing1k419l> (July 2008).

285 Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, Zone Books, New York 2007, p. 62.

286 Clive Dilnot, *Ethics? Design?*, The Archeworks Papers, Volume 1, Number Two, Archeworks, Chicago 2005, p. 43.

the machine we can – also with the machine – make a good mass-produced product. With this De Stijl in fact steps on the side of all already-mentioned theorists and practitioners. De Stijl – like Ruskin, Morris and Loos – also strives for a final result in the form of an *honest* product. The only question is how is this final *true* product of De Stijl distinguished from those already discussed. Oud defines a mass-produced product with the help of two principles:

“The one is a technical and industrial trend, which may be called the positive trend, and which tries to give aesthetic expression to the products of technical skill.

The second trend which for purposes of comparison may be called negative (although its manifestations are equally positive) is art, which tries by means of reduction (abstraction) to arrive at functionalism.

The unity of these two trends is the essence of the new style.”²⁸⁷

Therefore, on the one hand we have a technical look of product that we achieve with the erasure of a hand. If I in the chapters on Ruskin and Morris tried to prove that the very trace of a hand is a trace of thought mirrored in particular, unique craft made object, this opens a question how is a trace of thoughtful subject expressed in a product where a trace of a hand is totally erased. Namely, an object made with mass-produced logic of machine is something totally different as if made manually. It becomes a product that already from the start ignores the particular and focuses on community which gives it a value. A thoughtful subject therefore consciously focuses on a search for solution that will solve problems of community. Members of De Stijl explain this in the first manifesto: “The new art has brought forward what the new consciousness of time contains: a balance between the universal and the individual.”²⁸⁸ A balance is created by designer, a thoughtful subject who with the help of machine searches for solutions and conceives products that will be as much universal as possible and consequently useful for as many people as possible. It is about a balance between designer and community, between designer and his changed role in community, an effect he creates in community. All these

287 Oud, *Art and Machine ...*, (January 2011).

288 van Doesburg et. al., “De Stijl: ‘Manifesto 1’”, 1918, in: *Art in Theory ...*, p. 281.

must be expressed also in the final product. It must express precision, unambiguousness and perfection – all the values that we in the 20th century – with De Stijl – ascribe to machine work. It must express the highest point of technical skill and the fact that it is made with the best possible tool.²⁸⁹

Beside technical look De Stijl also demands bare, functional object. Already in Ruskin's, Morris's and Loos's texts we find that one of the main tasks of designer is to avoid the production of unnecessary products. From Sullivan on the function in design takes crucial position in the field of product design. The function dictates form; consequently all unnecessary becomes redundant. With this primary idea the modernist logic, as it seems, very well corresponds with demand for economic justification. After all, Loos also wrote about it, on it he grounded the lack of decoration and at the same time advocated for function. But between *bare* economic efficiency and search for *new* functionalism there is – according to De Stijl – a gap. Gerrit Rietveld warns about it in the text *New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture*.

“The attempt to achieve a new functionalism is not an attempt to attain a predetermined goal; it is not, in fact, an ‘ism’ or an ideal; it is simply architecture sticking to its own function.

The new functionalism in architecture is something quite different from the current notion of business efficiency. [...] It is businesslike to demand value for money, and the term ‘new functionalism’ does include a notion of efficiency; but the term on the whole denotes a quite different value. It comes down to whether one is giving more room to one's life or less.”²⁹⁰

289 This reminds us of Le Corbusier's idea of a house as a machine for living, the house – the machine that will refute all old concepts and respond to needs and demands of time, mass-made houses. Le Corbusier goes even that far that he gives us a choice: the architecture or the revolution. This means, the contemporary architecture that will use advantages of contemporary time and as a result create standardised house – the machine. Le Corbusier writes about this in the book *Towards a New Architecture* [1927], BN Publishing, Thousand Oaks 2008.

290 Rietveld, *New Functionalism ...*, (January 2011). The period of De Stijl is connected with the homonymous magazine that was published from 1917 to 1931. The magazine was founded by Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg.

We can see from the last sentence that functionality for De Stijl didn't mean just a bare utility. The functionality can be – according to Van Doesburg – achieved only if designer and architect satisfy utilitarian demands and consider also psychological, tactile and optical needs. According to Van Doesburg, a bare utility without considering all the rest is condemned to an early end.²⁹¹ According to Rietveld, an extreme result of utility is sterility.²⁹² But nevertheless, he acknowledges the concept of “purification” in the form of concept of “emptiness” that was until then marked as a sign of poverty. But the main problem is that interventions “instead of making life easier, [...] have got rid of everything that reminded us of life”²⁹³ Consequently the individual and the community were both disregarded.

This thought leads us to the question what human needs should we as designers satisfy or solve. Rietveld in the text *Utility, Construction: (Beauty, Art)* explains:

“Art makes visible the individual characteristics of each object as they are perceived by the various senses; it takes the idea of beauty to a more general level. Art is creative, by its very nature, because it makes reality and recognizes it.

Tagore says: ‘By the limitation of the limitless the truth becomes reality.’ When construction goes against physical and chemical laws, it becomes unacceptable; but does it follow from this, that construction must become entirely ‘natural’? After all, it is essentially anti-natural in the sense that it implies the willing of things into existence.”²⁹⁴

In design, when we consider needs we always think what needs are more *crucial, urgent, natural*, and what are those other, artificially motivated²⁹⁵ and therefore less ur-

291 Walter Dexel, *Theo van Doesburg*, 1931, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/21/walter-dexel's-“theo-van-doesburg”-1931> (January 2011).

292 With this statement Rietveld criticises Van Doesburg's idea that we can learn a lot more in medical laboratory than in art studios which are like cages of stinking ill monkeys. Only this way we can achieve perfection that will not express manual work. In: van Doesburg, *Elementarism ...*, (January 2011).

293 Rietveld, *New Functionalism ...*, (January 2011).

294 Rietveld, *Utility, Construction ...*, (August 2011).

295 Adrian Forty in the chapter “Electricity – the fuel of the future” gives an excellent and clear explanation of artificially motivated needs, see in: *Objects of Desire. Design and society since 1750*, Thames and Hudson, London 1986, pp. 182–206.

gent; the ones that may under the pretence of satisfying one of the needs in fact satisfy just desires and/or capital. But – and this is what Rietveld’s quote suggests – in fact, there are no natural needs. As soon as a need appears and we solve it, the solution becomes artificial. Even more, according to Rietveld, a very hint to strive for existence of things is already anti-natural. For – as we saw at the beginning of this chapter – for a design to happen, we need according to Rietveld only an expressed need. Therefore with an expression of a need we already step into the field of culture, the field of anti-natural. This is illustratively shown in an anecdote of Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope who in his wish to satisfy only natural needs threw away a cup when he saw a child drinking water from his palms. He said: “A child has beaten me in plainness of living.”²⁹⁶ Diogenes’s cup, no matter how simple it is, is a step that according to Flusser alienates us from natural environment and leads us into the field of culture.²⁹⁷ As soon as a bone in our hands becomes a tool (or a weapon) we step on the side of artificial. Everything we do is a matter of artificial. Agamben recognises this move in a moment when a move from animal to man happens. According to him the language separates man from animal, “but this is not a natural given already inherent in the psychophysical structure of man; it is rather, a historical production which, as such, can be properly assigned neither to man nor to animal.”²⁹⁸ Agamben marks this with a term anthropological machine that works in our culture.

“Insofar as the production of man through the opposition man/animal, human/inhuman, is at stake here, the machine necessarily functions by means of inclusion (which is also always already a capturing) and an inclusion (which is also always already presupposed every time, the machine actually produces a kind of state of exception, a zone of indeterminacy in which the outside is nothing but the exclusion of an inside and the inside is in turn only the inclusion of an outside.”²⁹⁹

296 Diogenes the Cynic, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/greece/hetairai/diogenes.html (February 2011).

297 Flusser, *The Shape of ...*, p. 45.

298 Giorgio Agamben, *The Open. Man and Animal*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2004, p. 36.

299 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

We lean on the artificial and we are a product of artificial. In this sense we easier understand De Stijl's demand for machine that will give form to content of the 20th century. We easier understand their conscious decision that "the new consciousness is prepared to realize the internal life as well as the external life".³⁰⁰ But to achieve a goal they have to eliminate a dominance of the individual. This is a statement that creates cut in design discipline. We as designers, architects, scientists and artists build our environment. Consequently – as De Stijl warns – it is high time to build an environment in a way that will satisfy the needs of community that we are all part of. We build environment to be functional, but at the same time it will give enough space to people who live in this artificial world. Rietveld concludes the text from 1932 with words: "The fact that in our better moments we are more comfortable sitting on a table than in a chair, or the fact that we don't need a house, table, or chair at all, means that the house of the future (the house for the new generation) cannot and must not aim to conform to the notion of 'living' that is now prevalent."³⁰¹

300 van Doesburg et. al., "De Stijl: 'Manifesto 1'", 1918, in: *Art in Theory ...*, p. 281.

301 Rietveld, *New Functionalism ...*, (August 2011).

The revolt of Anti-Design

Despite the ambitious desires of De Stijl who by forming a demand for the universal places the problems of community on the topmost position and a machine as a tool that will make this possible, this brings a turnaround in design practice. As it eventually turns out, De Stijl's machine as a tool in the service of community turns into a tool in the service of market. The principle of universality degenerates to the level of satisfying the particular interests of producers and marketers. The machine and also a design replace the problems of community with production of increasing quantities of products whose main aim becomes more or less the stimulation of consumption. In this process design assumes a desired major role since it proves to be an effective means. It turns out as the many times mentioned bridge between a society which in principle doesn't like changes, and rapidly growing industrial production which fills the market in many cases only with seeming novelties. Or as Adrian Forty writes: "Among the ways in which this acceptance is won, design, through its capacity to make things seem other than they are, has been most important."³⁰²

In the second half of the 20th century primarily Italian designers critically respond to this degenerated situation. Due to the consent of design to the role of catalyst in the process of consumption, they turn a critical eye to themselves, therefore, to design profession. With this self-criticism they wish to subvert the foundations of uncritical, toothless design, which doesn't recognise (as well as not look for) alternative outside the given (and seemingly immutable) frames of formed market logic. With their criticism they wish to pursue the possibility for an event – as some of their predecessors, as we tried to demonstrate in the previous chapters, succeeded with their own critiques (the ability to recognise present themes).

On the way to this critique two approaches in understanding the importance of design in society play an important role. Both firmly relate to an attitude towards the environ-

302 Forty, "Image of Progress", *Objects of Desire ...*, p. 11.

ment as a whole³⁰³ and the processes that are part of the whole. In the first approach the user takes over the central position in design process.³⁰⁴ If we claim that Morris democratised a design in a long run with his idea of *design for all*,³⁰⁵ De Stijl with its search for function also shows that the advantage is on the side of that product which gives a man more space for living. An important contribution to this shift of focus from the client to the user is found in the second Bauhaus director, Hannes Meyer. On the basis of studying the functional and biological interpretations of architecture he in his inaugural speech³⁰⁶ after taking up his directorial role at the Bauhaus sets the functional diagram as a base of design and architecture. Diagram which systematically investigated Rietveld's *idea of life*. It followed the daily routine of an individual in the household, his relationship to the house, garden, animals, all the way to people with whom he finds himself in the interaction – the postman, chimney-sweep, doctor, burglar, gas inspector, etc. When architect and designer recognise all of the above their roles change. According to Meyer, before that the architect or designer is just “an artist and now becomes a specialist in organization”³⁰⁷. And right with the latter when in

303 The idea of a total design approach entered in design already in the late 19th century. Henry van de Velde summarized the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk from German composer Richard Wagner who wrote about it in his essay *Art and Revolution*. Van de Velde shifted the idea of so-called integrated artwork to applied art and that was – from today's point of view – manifested in architecture and design as a desire for absolute control. Each and every detail which formed the interior and exterior of the building during the Art Nouveau was designed in accordance with a planned whole.

Later a direction developed in architecture and design which operated on the principles of total design. According to Mark Wigley the purpose of total design was to exceed the limits of its working. It was about the implosion of design (a design of the smallest detail) and “the expansion of design out to touch every possible point in the world. In either case, the architect is in control, centralizing, orchestrating, dominating.” And as Wigley adds: “Total design is a fantasy about control, about architecture as control.” (In: Mark Wigley, *Whatever Happened to Total Design?*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, Summer 1998, no. 5, p. 1.) This again reminds of Wright who in the cradle of modern design places the idea of control – the idea of the machine that follows our instructions. And this not only applies to mass produced products but the desire to control switches to all that builds our (artificial) environment. As I already mentioned, we can find the first critiques of this almost obsessive desire to control every detail already in the time of Secession. In the chapter *Loos's evolution*, Loos cynically presents the critique of integrated approach in *The Story of the Poor Little Rich Man*. (In: Adolf Loos, *On Architecture ...*, p. 52.)

304 Similarly as in approach to total design, we can trace the focus on user already from the dawn of professionalization of discipline.

305 See chapter *Morris's design for all*.

306 Hannes Meyer, “Building”, in: *Programs and Manifestoes ...*, pp. 117–120.

307 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

design process we deliberately place a user in the central position, we at the same time extend the understanding of the role of designer. Meyer defines the latter as the “deliberate organization of the process of life”.³⁰⁸

By extending the understanding of the role of designer we get to the next key approach. This is based on De Stijl’s recognition of the importance of environment and their call that it is high time that we start to build an environment much more systematically (of course in a way in which we satisfy the needs of the community we are all part of). From the latter is even more obvious that anything and everything around us is in its own way designed, no matter who is behind the machine. Moreover, as Semper already points out the remains of our past design form the material culture by which we assess the level of civilisation. In other words, the material culture demonstrates our existence.³⁰⁹ So if we recognise the environment as something that we gradually built and remodelled, it may be regarded as *just* another result of human material culture. At the same time, this view allows us to look at the environment from the outside. Similarly as in cinema or theatre where we look from the auditorium at the development, which is embedded in the scenery (environment) on stage, we look at the environment in which we live. Or as Agamben marks it, when we find ourselves in the role of spectator, we realise that the environment is mediated through aesthetic representation too.

With this view from the outside the environment becomes a place from which we can exit. Or more precisely, in the moment when we direct our gaze on it we are actually already outside. The distance is established. And with it we become aware of our own ability of intervening into environment, ability of changing, of transforming the whole. The whole which until then seemed a given, unchanging context. With this view from the outside the environment is no longer something just given, it is not something we cannot interfere with, but becomes just another one in a series of designed elements that should be adjusted to us, and not vice versa. The environment then becomes the element that must put the user in the previously described central position. The result

308 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

309 Vilém Flusser also writes about this in: *The Shape of Things. A Philosophy of Design*, Reaktion Books, London 1999.

of the latter is – at least as the design profession alludes in the 20th century – that if the environment is fully designed, then the system of building the environment is best to leave to designers and architects. Designers are those who can transform the environment to fit the person, or as members of De Stijl would say, to fit the society.

The reconstruction of cities to which many countries were forced due to devastation of the World War II was a designers' and architects' test in practice. German designer Dieter Rams undeniably belongs to those who establish a unique approach to environment in which they create. He is one of the main figures of industrial design in the second half of the 20th century. His new approach to design of technical products could be – in the manner of De Stijl – marked as the realisation of full technical appearance of technical apparatuses. At the time when Rams began to design radio sets and record players the makers and designers had a habit to frame technical apparatuses in the wooden boxes, and on speakers they installed carpets. But for him this was not the main problem. He *simply* designed new products as he had envisioned and wished himself, with the logic of “less, but better”. What was according to Rams during the formation of his highly sophisticated, technically advanced and highly designed apparatuses a real problem was the environment itself. “The ‘surrounding’ didn’t fit with the objects. So we had to design the surroundings that would fit the designed products.”³¹⁰ At first sight, extremely vain statement. Surrounding will adapt to my products and not my products to surrounding. But what Rams accomplished in practice was a previously described exit from the environment in which he operated. He distanced himself from the existent. He recognised an environment as just one more form that needs to be and in his case should be transformed.

In this case the environment also in practice loses the position of a so-called given context in which we cannot intervene. It becomes just an element that we as designers can transform. In other words, Rams managed to recreate a new environment. And with this he actually further developed the idea of a total design approach, and in practice

310 Barbara Predan, *Dieter Rams interview: Luck plays an important roll in our life*, <http://www.pekinpah.com/said/interview-Rams.htm> (August 2011).

accomplished Wright's idea of taking control. According to him the environment (and consequently the society) lagged behind his vision of a technically sophisticated society. And this particular situation forced him to re-define a role of a designer. He defines it as the role of the one who creates not only products but also the environment and consequently our relationships in it. Therefore – and much more sophisticated than the Futurists but in principle with the same goal – he undertook the construction of the new environment of contemporary society. Namely, Rams believed (and still does) that if the environment changes, people change too. Consequently, they change their habits, their taste. And in this way he was able to create a space for his products. He designed technical and household products for Braun but he also designed spaces, environments that fit with his own products, and not vice versa. In a quite radically futuristic way he managed to create a true novelty. For changes in society really occur in accordance with true novelty. Technical devices that resemble furniture completely disappeared from the market. Cupboards and heavy commodes were replaced by simple, light and in many cases folding furniture. The environment adapted or even more it took the designer's vision of the world. Meyer's from the designer's part-encouraged *deliberate organization of the process of life* occurred in practice. And this brings us to the next step to the establishment of a new understanding of the role of design: the designer's task is to develop a society with his work. An approach that entered firmly in the wider European space.

Similarly as German design with Deutscher Werkbund and Bauhaus, Italian design also establishes its position in society before the World War II. With the group, named the Rationalists, it steps on the way of so-called modern movement in the middle of 1920s. The representatives of the group “proposed a new man able to establish an international culture based on reason and technology”.³¹¹ Like all avant-garde and many other movements in the first half of the 20th century Rationalists also have set themselves the goal to change a man and to create a new society. Although they at first clearly flirted with official policy – Fascism – they were not able to penetrate into official *Italian style*. In Italy the demand for rational design entered into practice as late as immediately after

311 Andrea Branzi, *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*, Thames and Hudson, London 1984, p. 33.

the World War II. At that time policy makers invited designers and architects to participate in the construction of the new society. Jonathan M. Woodham wrote:

“Immediately after the war in post-Fascist Italy, for example, following the 1946 elections and the establishment of the Republic of Italy in 1947, the ministerial roles played by representatives of the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties led many progressive architects and designers to believe they had an unprecedented opportunity to construct a new democratic society. They anticipated that millions of homes would be constructed and equipped with well-designed products and that their task would involve the design of everything, from ‘the object to the city’. This potentially radical alliance between material culture and political prioritization was dashed by the outcome of the 1948 elections, in which, fearful of the possibility that the incoming Italian government might align itself with the Soviet Union in the emerging Cold War climate, the Americans played a highly influential part in ensuring the victory of the Christian Democratic right and the further development of a consumer society.”³¹²

Italian designers – after their just obtained opportunity to participate in the reconstruction of the country – once again find themselves in opposition. Consequently – as they become aware – the possibilities “to establish direct contact with the social masses evaporate”.³¹³ According to Italian designers the country – as Branzi continues – finds itself on the wrong track. It finds itself on the way, which European design in the time of avant-garde movements before the World War II mainly managed to avoid. According to Woodham, a precipice opened up between progressive designers, theorists and organisations for renewal regarding the reality of mass consumption.³¹⁴ The main tendencies of research work were directed into a search for “a particular notion of the *Zeitgeist*,

312 Jonathan M. Woodham, *Post-1945 Industrial Design Perspectives: Slovenia and Iskra in a Changing World, Iskra, Non-Aligned Design 1946–1990* (ed. Barbara Predan and Cvetka Požar), AML and the Pekinpah Association, Ljubljana 2009, pp. 21–22.

313 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 39.

314 According to Suga Yasuko, the idea of consumption enters in design already in Victorian England. With the establishment of so-called Chamber of Horrors – one more result of Great Exhibition in London – we were supposed to witness “the first attempt to control the consumption of commodities not by any written law, but through display and discourse on the morality of consumption. [...] [with this we mark] the turning point in the discussion of taste from a production view to a consumption-oriented view.” In: Yasuko, “De-

or 'spirit of the age'. Which looked to abstract forms and their symbolic, rather than functional, relationship with modernity together with the economic implications of standardization and mass-production technology."³¹⁵ Americans, who in addition to successful political disqualification of the Italian Left also exported in Italy their model of modern consumer society, took the prominent role.

Despite the political interruption of the Italian Left the Italian design manages to keep an important and active position in society. Its role becomes much more visible since the new Italian products are regularly present in magazines and shop-windows. But the result of the new popularity is the loss of sharpness. Italian design loses its radical charge, which can be traced from the Futurists onwards. Rather than sharpness an American model of a *new man* enters in Italy (and in most of Western Europe) – a man who is “simpler and more brutal but clearly winning ideology, an ideology in which immediate happiness was seen as the only possible foundation for human society, but a real society in which industry was expected to provide health, abundance, surplus and consumer goods.”³¹⁶

After elections in 1948, Italian design under the American influence steps on the path of commercialisation, the path which is based on encouraging consumption. Moreover, Italian designers in a relatively short period of time succeed to build unique national identity, enabling them to penetrate foreign markets under a common brand *Italian design*. Instead of material and cultural reconstruction, design relatively quickly and successfully “produced other myths in its turn: mass-production, flexibility, unit assembly, modularity, the synthesis of the arts, and so on.”³¹⁷ Notwithstanding ideological change designers manage to keep the past collective idea of design, but this time the result is subordinated to logic of capital and not the welfare of community to which De Stijl called for. Inclination to consumerism in Italy shows itself a lot earlier than in

signing the Morality of Consumption: 'Chamber of Horrors' at the Museum of Ornamental Art, 1852–53”, *Design Issues* ..., p. 44.

315 Woodham, *Twentieth-Century* ..., p. 65.

316 Branzi, *The Hot House* ..., p. 37.

317 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

mentioned German case where designers try to educate (develop) the consumer in the first place. According to Rams workers in Braun during the production didn't believe at all that anyone would want to buy appliances he designed.³¹⁸ They were simply too different from everything they knew and that was available on the market. But despite the aforementioned tendency to education, in Germany and also elsewhere in Europe the consumption plays and gradually (similarly as we've already saw in the 19th century³¹⁹) takes the leading role in dictate of what shall be designed and produced – in dictate which Victor Papanek in the 1970s describes with words: “buy more, consume more, waste more throw away more”.³²⁰ This is a mantra with which we march into design world after the World War II. Design which until then in Europe had a vision to take control over the construction of environment, under the dictate of consumerism and capital eventually begins to lose control and a position of the one who conceives instructions. Therefore among many thoughtful designers a feeling of involvement in the wheels of consumer-oriented “machinery” soon appears as the main sentence of design. This reminds of Ruskin. Ruskin already in the middle of the 19th century warned of punishment that awaits design because of the separation between the planner and the maker. This led to the rise of the gentleman who, through his intellect, directs the manual work of the worker (maker). As a final result we will confront “the mass of society [...] made up of morbid thinkers, and miserable workers. Now it is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity.”³²¹ What is eventually emerging is that a *gentleman designer*, therefore Ruskin's *morbid thinker*, becomes only a virtual leader. In the process of industrial production he turns out to be just another element in the mass of *miserable workers*. The *gentleman designer* – in spite of indispensable bridge he builds – becomes just a part of the huge mass of the proletariat. The concept of “the proletariat” can offer us a reality check, for this group “includes all those whose labour is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production

318 But Erwin Braun believed in him. In: Predan, *Dieter Rams interview ...*, (avgust 2011).

319 Already-mentioned William Morris's quote warns about this in his political manifesto from 1885. In: Morris, *The Manifesto ...*, (July, 2010).

320 Papanek, *Design for the Real ...*, p. 252.

321 Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *The Stones of ...*, p. 169.

and reproduction”.³²² What is more, as Negri and Hardt write, “This fact of being within capital and sustaining capital is what defines the proletariat as a class.”³²³

The latter is crucial for understanding the role of post-war and today’s – post-industrial – design in a production system. It is crucial because even if we are aware of this mentioned position, the attempts of separation in design profession are rare. Rather than recognise the turnabout of De Stijl’s concept of problem of community and the machine that allows the latter, a greater part of the profession understands an emerging situation (a shift to consumerism) as the next developmental stage in design. Many designers perceive a *new* position of design as only one of the constraints. They perceive it as a challenge, as something that can be surpassed, as something that makes possible the creation of something new. While such achievements are constantly at work, it is also true that they are always in line with the market system – in line with the principle of change for the sake of change, the new for the sake of the new – and serve more or less to increase sales.³²⁴ And this is happening in spite of the continuously expressed desire of a designer to elevate above the system and finally take control. Adrian Forty describes such “uncomfortable position” by words:

“On the one hand, design is determined by ideas and material conditions over which designers have no control, yet, on the other hand, designs are the result of designers exercising their creative autonomy and originality. To put the paradox in the most extreme terms, how can designers be said to be in command of what they do, but at the same time merely be the agents of ideology, with no more power to determine the outcome of their work than the ant or worker bee. There is no answer to this question: it is a fact that both conditions invariably co-exist, however uncomfortably, in the work of design. [...] For most designers, however, the solution to the problem lies not in theory, but in collu-

322 Negri and Hardt, *Empire ...*, p. 52.

323 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

324 As Jelica Šumič Riha writes, even the critique doesn’t play its role for it consolidates the system instead of surpass it. Šumič Riha, “A Matter of Resistance”, *Filozofski ...*, p. 128.

sion with the myth of their own omnipotence and in wholly ignoring their role as agents of ideology.”³²⁵

What Forty thinks with the agents of ideology? According to him, “no design works unless it embodies ideas that are held in common by the people whom the object is intended”.³²⁶ Consequently, as he adds, designer’s work cannot be separated from the society in which originates. Design with its desire to elevate in fact (seemingly) separates from the society and presents itself as unique design thinking. That kind of position – in Forty’s opinion – ultimately impoverishes the essence of design product. It is about as he adds the coexistence that cannot be avoided. The design is part of a society which determines it, but at the same time it is created by it, and this in fact is nothing new. But it shows – in spite of mentioned creative autonomy which in Forty’s opinion coexists in design – that by taking a position of agents of ideology we at the same time more or less accept the submissive role, without the capacity to influence, let alone change.

Norman Potter offers less submissive role of a designer-agent. He recognises the role of a designer-agent “in a process which (viewed in retrospect) may appear to have discovered itself over an extended period of time; questioning takes place across the flux of decision-making in a variety of situations. Early on, personal observation will involve self-questioning.”³²⁷ Unlike Forty who maintains that design (if we want that it plays the role it should have in society) is an impersonation of existing ideas (in spite of exclusive but coexistent creative autonomy), Potter encourages self-questioning. He encourages self-criticism among designers if we attach to the introductory thought of the chapter. He encourages doubt about given ideologies, about *unquestioned, determined* from the side of society, expected decisions.

Criticism is therefore one condition which can cut the seemingly impossible as it opens space for the event. All the previously discussed examples from design theory – from Ruskin and Morris to Loos and De Stijl – in their own way form the critique of the

325 Forty, “Design, Designers and the Literature of Design”, *Objects of Desire ...*, p. 242.

326 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

327 Potter, *What is a designer ...*, p. 135.

actual situation in the field of design. With their work they proved in practice that it is possible to transgress something which originally could not be even thought about. The critique has proved to be a crucial incision in the discipline of design. The incision which created the condition for the event whose effects influenced on changes in the further development of the design profession. The question that arises here is: what happens to the critiques in design after World War II, especially in regard to the expansion of consumption? And most of all: did any critique manage to transverse the knowledge in the discipline of design, to create condition of possibility for the event and achieve the effect, which can be followed today?

In the years after World War II, the manifestos and critiques died down, since designers were actively involved in building a new and better society for all. But by the end of the 1950s and, especially, in the early 1960s, the critiques emerge again. Jonathan M. Woodham notes that one of the first post-war critical works to have a wide response was Vance Packard's book *The Hidden Persuaders*. Packard's study exposed the way advertisers used psychological techniques to get into our subconscious, stir up desires, and convince us to buy their always-new products.³²⁸ In 1963, the British graphic designer Ken Garland warned of the problem of subordinating design to marketing methods in his famous manifesto "First Things First"³²⁹:

"We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as: cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer [etc.] [...] In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which

328 Woodham, *Twentieth-Century ...*, p. 227.

329 Written in 1963 and published in 1964 by Ken Garland along with 21 other designers, photographers and students. The influence of the manifesto was quick to reach a wide audience and was picked up by *The Guardian*. It was revisited and republished by a group of new authors in the year 2000 and labeled as the *First Things First Manifesto 2000*. See: <http://www.designishistory.com/1960/first-things-first/> (May 2010).

the high pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. [...] we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication.”³³⁰

The main objective of the call was a desire for re-radicalisation of design, which according to Garland and others undersigned became lazy and uncritical. Like most of manifestos of the early 20th century this also advocated for a change of values, change of priorities. But at the same time the undersigned wished to emphasise that the modernist understanding of design as a neutral intermediary is only a theory on paper for it is mainly – until discipline accepts such condition – just a puppet controlled by capital. Instead of looking for the humanistic note designers spend their knowledge with dealing with consumption and with the question of how to further encourage it, increase it. In 1999 they partly reconstruct and re-released the manifesto under the title *First Things First 2000 – a design manifesto*.³³¹ Like in the original from 1964 the undersigned also in the new version called for an end of exploitation of design for pointless consumerism for the main task of design is to help people understand more and more complex and fragile world.

Both the original and revised version of the manifesto provoked great debate in design and advertising circles, but no major upheavals in design practices followed. This shows a schizophrenic situation we are witnessing. There are numerous petitions and disagrees with the situation on the one hand and lack of real effect on the situation on the other. Garland himself admitted that, after his manifesto’s publication, things “continued to work in exactly the same way”.³³² In the short text with the title *Responsible to Whom, I’d Like to Know? Consorting with Clients to Con Shareholders*³³³ Garland ironi-

330 Ken Garland, *First Things First*, <http://www.xs4all.nl/~maxb/ftf1964.htm> (May 2010).

331 *First Things First 2000 – a design manifesto*, <http://www.xs4all.nl/~maxb/ftf2000.htm> (May 2010). Renewed manifesto was signed by 33 adherents. It was published in *Adbusters*, *AIGA journal*, *Blueprint*, *Emigre*, *Eye*, *Form* and *Items* in the autumn 1999 and spring 2000.

332 Ken Garland, “Responsible to Whom, I’d Like to Know?: Consorting with Clients to Con Shareholders”, in Steven Heller and Véronique Vienne, eds., *Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility*, Allworth Press, New York 2003, p. 190.

333 *Ibid.*, pp. 188–190.

cally summed up the logic of the typical resistance in design: when things that bother us in our day-to-day work with clients, producers, users, and others get to a certain point, we “vent” by grouching in public, staging actions, and collecting signatures. The Big Bosses patronizingly overlook all this, since they understand that as artists we’re allowed to take a little more freedom and that it’s all just an act anyway. They know that, when it comes to real issues, to serious matters, we’ll forget all our grouching and do what we’re told. In Garland’s opinion, the Bosses are not so different from politicians: “I’d heard politicians say much the same about voters and elections and was reminded of someone’s definition of democracy as ‘a form of government in which you say what you like and do what you’re told.’”³³⁴

Garland in his own words repeats Forty’s idea of the designer as a diligent worker-bee. But in the second half of the 20th century the Italian design steps out from the toothless design criticism. Emilio Ambasz in the foreword of the catalogue *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* writes that Italian design managed to question the main criticism of the modern movement because it then became clear that “although good design is a necessary condition, it is not by itself sufficient to ensure the automatic solution of all the problems that precede its creation and of those that may arise from it”.³³⁵ If not before, at least at the time of the activities of De Stijl designers realised that every product, no matter how small it is, is part of the wider social system and as such solves some problems while – as Sigmund Freud already pointed out – also creates new ones.

In the text *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud highlights the consequences of so-called *progress in culture*. Each progress brings the elimination of problems that the same progress generates. Freud describes this with an example: “if travelling across the ocean by ship had not been introduced, my friend would not have embarked on his sea-voyage and I should not need a cable to relieve my anxiety about him.”³³⁶ From

334 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

335 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. Achievements and Problems of Italian Design* (ed. Emilio Ambasz), The Museum of Modern Art in Centro Di, New York in Firenze 1972, p. 11. In the Museum of Modern Art in New York from 26th of May until 11th of September 1972 there was an exhibition under the same name.

336 Sigmund Freud, *Nelagodje v kulturi*, Gyrus, Ljubljana 2001, p. 37.

which follows: although by progress in culture we look for content, according to Freud this doesn't bring happiness to people.³³⁷ Or as he already says with the title, by capturing the content in the development of culture we at the same time generate also a new discontent. By building a culture we find ourselves in a situation, which according to Freud serves a dual purpose. On the one hand the culture protects a man against nature, but also regulates relations between people.³³⁸ By building we create an artificial environment that protects community, but by building the environment we generate also additional tensions in society. Following this, De Stijl's goal, design for the benefit of community, suddenly no longer seems such a simple task. So how to avoid the creation of new problems while solving one of them? For – as Freud points out – we generate new problems exactly by our *advanced* and *creative* culture.

Freud's statement sheds new light on in the previous chapter mentioned Alexander's argument that a society where there are no problems doesn't need designers, whereas in a complex society the need for designers increases. The need is based on the fact that they solve problems generated on the one hand by the progress but on the other hand in many cases designers generate them each time they solve the existing problems. Alexander defines the latter as misfit – misfit or discontent which is as a side effect unexpectedly generated during the solution of the original problem. According to Alexander the optimal goal is to create a *perfect* fit between form – i.e. what we design/control – and context which is given, but not entirely. *Perfect* fit doesn't create any new unforeseen discontent. It is a design whose variability creates the value 0, so when we solve the problem no additional discord of form with the context arises.³³⁹ For what is actually given to us most of the time before going to design is exactly the discord of existing form and context, the discord that manifests itself as a problem that needs to be eliminated.

The discord and discontent are also the most appropriate description of the situation which smouldered between the Italian designers and intellectuals already from the lost elections in 1948 – so from the moment when the state according to their opinion came

337 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

338 *Ibid.*

339 Alexander, *Notes on the synthesis ...*, p. 27.

to the wrong path, the path of submission to consumerism. Consequently the Italian designers according to Branzi didn't recognise a design

“as a positive response to a functional requirement, but as creation of the demand itself, i.e. as active intervention in the modification of behaviour, creating new functions and new freedoms. As early as 1954 Ettore Sottsass Jr. wrote: ‘When Charles Eames designed his chair, he was not designing a chair, but a way of sitting; that is to say he was not designing for a function, but designing a function.’³⁴⁰

In this short quotation Branzi offers three cues. In the first place he throws gauntlet to modernist degradation of Sullivan's natural law according to which the design strictly follows the function, but at the same time he offers correction to Sullivan's second law. According to Sullivan designers focus on the search for the original problem since it automatically suggests the solution. Branzi, by contrast, confronts us with the challenging logic that the task of design is to design an original problem as such. A positive answer is no longer a searched solution but – as the above quote suggests – the *creation of the demand itself*. So we do not design a problem solution but a searched and detected problem. And in this context we can understand what Branzi thinks when he writes that it is necessary to create just a demand. It is not about the artificially created needs but about the transformation of the problem found which leads to the creation of a new mode of use.

We can find this thought also in Giorgio Agamben's texts. In his short essay *In praise of Profanation* he focuses on a special relation between use and profanation. He writes: “The passage from the sacred to the profane can [...] come about by means of an entirely inappropriate use (or, rather, reuse) of the sacred, namely, play.”³⁴¹ For a special relation between use and profanation to occur, Agamben introduces in the formula the third element, a play. As an example he mentions a child's play because a child in a play in a simple way manages to modify at first glance totally useless thing. In other words,

340 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 49.

341 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, p. 75.

a child with a play manages to create a toy in a new way. The key is in a play allowing him to open, create a new use. This is important also because according to Agamben the ability to create a new use offers a response to consumer capitalism, which forms

“the pure form of separation, to the point that there is nothing left to separate. [...] In the commodity, separation inheres in the very form of the object, which splits into use-value and exchange value and is transformed into an ungraspable fetish. The same is true for everything that is done, produced, or experienced – even the human body, even sexuality, even language. They are now divided from themselves and placed in a separate sphere that no longer defines any substantial division and where all use becomes and remains impossible. This sphere is consumption.”³⁴²

If we want to return the usefulness to such product, we are – according to Agamben – forced to deactivate the old use and thus create the possibility for the new use.³⁴³ In short, it is not enough just to erase the separations, which make object unusable, but we have to – by play – create a new use. In fact we find out that Branzi and Agamben talk about the same thing. They talk about *the play*, design, which will allow new functions, new freedom and the ability of active intervention in the modification of behaviour.

Although Branzi’s position is initially understood as a negative answer to the positive answer of functionalism, the designers actually – precisely in recognising that even in the time of consumerism they can create with their work a new way of use and consequently modify the behaviour – think they are able to resume the searched power, the searched control. And on this idea the radical Italian design movement Anti-Design is formed in 1960s and 1970s as an alternative to the aforementioned Italian post-war critique.³⁴⁴

342 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

343 *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.

344 Anti-Design is a newly coined word, which was given to Italian radical architecture and design later. Andrea Branzi, one of the protagonists of the movement and member of the radical group Archizoom, in his book *The Hot House* doesn’t use this term. He uses the term *radical architecture*. The term Anti-Design (which most scholars use today) most likely results from a joint initiative of radical groups when in 1974 in Florence opened so-called anti-school of architecture and design. As Branzi writes, more than about anti-school they

The members of the movement devote their critiques to researches of socio-cultural implications of design of products and their impact on people's behaviour and in doing this they question the current and future role of design.³⁴⁵ In a number of art actions (influenced by Pop art) the members of Anti-Design movement question the design, which is fitted into the market system, they question the system of unusable fetishism. They refuse the self-degeneration of design that rather than community raises the consumption on a pedestal. They refuse the context of consumption in which the design is suddenly completely integrated. Moreover, they reject by the market system ordered place of design. Consequently the members of Anti-Design movement set themselves the task to rip the design from a given (at first glance unchangeable) context of consumption. Similarly as Loos members of Anti-Design don't refuse only the existing context in which the design is integrated, but they want to find a new one. Or to put it in Sullivan's manner, the context of consumption in which the design is integrated, is recognised as a problem that needs to be solved.

“The naturalistic and dialectical concept of the market had now been replaced by that of its total artificiality, as the mechanism for the inducement of false needs proved able to substitute for any spontaneous demand of the market. The entire industrial system was developing along wholly artificial channels of consumption, according to a programme that seemed to ensure false but stimulating competition, according to a programme that seemed to ensure false but stimulating competition in the social market; [...] Imperialism was the hidden factor underlying this worldwide prosperity; it had to be defeated by its own weapons and not by the reformist morality of the bourgeoisie.”³⁴⁶

From Wright's side promised democracy of industrial production in the short-term turns into a very narrow space of consumption. Instead of industrialisation that opens a space, it again and again – under the pressure of consumption – solves only the dis-

talked about non-school, and their first action was directed at making some kind of *yellow pages* where to get the contacts and advices that would help in the liberation of man from the culture. In: Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 83.

345 For examples, see: *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*

346 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 55.

content, which is generated by this very industrialisation. With their critique the designers of Anti-Design movement therefore reject the position of design, which doesn't create new functions but only exercises the tasks dictated by the market. Consequently the design – similarly as in Morris's era, at that time still dictated by the masters, but this time by the market – *creates* useless products, intangible fetish, all in order to satisfy a false need. Designers therefore question the development, which brought us from the civilisation of the machine to the civilisation of consumption. They reject a man – a consumer who (only) in the consumption realises “his highest potential for cultural creativity in the civilization of prosperity”.³⁴⁷ For the critique to be effective they use *their own weapon* of the market and in response they prepare two exhibitions (in 1966 and 1967) entitled *Superarchitettura*. Designers mainly members of the groups Archizoom and Superstudio³⁴⁸ write at that occasion: “Superarchitecture is the architecture of superproduction, of superconsumption, of superinducement to consumption, of the supermarket, of Superman, of super-high-test gasoline. Superarchitecture accepts the logic of production and consumption and makes an effort to demystify it.”³⁴⁹

From this quote we can see a new task of design: demystification of reality, the disclosure of the real. Or as a currently topical ICSID's definition of design says, one of the tasks of design is that it “seeks to discover and assess structural, organisational, functional, expressive and economic relationships”.³⁵⁰ Designer as an active participant in the process has the ability to recognise relationships that rule and one of his tasks is to reveal the latter to the community for the benefit of society. This is, therefore, the move from Forty's description of design which in many cases *makes things different from what they are*. In understanding the disclosure we can lean on Althusser's thinking about the relationship of art to the knowledge and ideology.

347 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 54.

348 Designers in the group Archizoom were Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Dario Bartolini, Lucia Bartolini and Massimo Morozzi. Designers in the group Superstudio were Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Adolfo Natalini, Alessandro Poli and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia.

349 Andrea Branzi, *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*, Thames and Hudson, London 1984, p. 54.

350 *Definition of Design*, <http://www.icsid.org/about/about/articles31> (August 2004). Unlike, for example, in the 18th century, when according to Forty it was considered that the task of industrial design is easier overcoming – on the basis of archaic models – the resistance to innovations that are happening in society. In: Forty, *Objects of Desire ...*, p. 12.

“Art [...] does not give us a knowledge in the strict sense, it therefore does not replace knowledge (in the modern sense: scientific knowledge), but what it gives us does nevertheless maintains a certain specific relationship with knowledge. This relationship is not one of identity but one of difference. Let me explain. I believe that the peculiarity of art is to ‘make us see’ (nous donner à voir), ‘make us perceive’, ‘make us feel’ something which alludes to reality. ... What art makes us see, and therefore gives to us in the form of ‘seeing’, ‘perceiving’ and ‘feeling’ (which is not the form of knowing), is the ideology from which it is born, in which it bathes, from which it detaches itself as art, and to which it alludes.”³⁵¹

If one of design’s duties is to reveal something, then the fact that it ‘makes us see’ is a key point here. But the difference from art (as Althusser views it) is that design should not merely allude to reality; rather it should ‘make us see’ something that is real. It should reveal reality such as it is. In this sense the design is closer to Greek understanding of art which is according to Agamben not understood “as a practical and voluntary process but its being a mode of truth understood as unveiling”.³⁵² And right this direct proximity of truth is the key to understanding the elevation of art above the practical work.³⁵³ Archizoom and Superstudio with mentioned exhibitions demystify the artificially established social relations. They disclose them by pushing to extremes everything we know and everything that surround us every day. Everything is great everything is grandiose everything is there for us to be even more awesome. But only by excessive potentiating we see and recognise what surrounds us daily and what right because of commonness we uncritically accept. Or as Branzi writes in order to overcome the situation, we will have to use their weapon. Only in this way the political content will as a Trojan horse re-enter in the culture of design.³⁵⁴ It will enter through the idea that designers with their work create for all, have the ability to create new uses

351 Althusser, Balibar, Macherey, Pêcheux, *Ideologija in estetski učinek*, an anthology (ed. Zoja Skušek - Močnik), Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1980, p. 323. [A Letter on Art, <http://courses.essex.ac.uk/LT/LT204/althusser.htm>]

352 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 69.

353 *Ibid.*

354 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 54.

which allow them an active intervention in the field of politics. In other words, acts of designers become political.

In the practice of Italian design the active intervention occurs in 1968. According to Jaša Denegri, in that with protests electrified year Enzo Mari and a group of like-minded artists and students occupied the Milan Triennale and transformed it into a place of revolt. They posed the following questions to both the general public and the art profession: *What is an artist supposed to do in a market society? What is an artist supposed to do in a society of ideological polarization?* Again they point at the untenable condition where the designer stands as a puppet on a string without the possibility of solving real problems. All that is expected from a designer is to be a machine which again and again produces well-designed products that the society doesn't really need, but it wants them – at least the system claims so.³⁵⁵ All these wishes to possess these seemingly new things are just – as members of Anti-Design movement emphasise again and again – artificially induced by the market system of production. Mari would later develop this idea, calling on artists and critics to give more thought to the relationship between political involvement and their vocation; he believed it was important to fight against the institutionalized system of production – this was how one did politics as an artist³⁵⁶ – so when you don't consent to at first glance given and unchangeable situations or in our case to given contexts. What Anti-Design movement stresses is that all situations are artificially generated and therefore changeable. And in this regard the engaging in politics in design is unavoidable. Even more, the 20th century actually shows us that design and politics are inseparable.

Indivisibility of design and politics is reflected in the common desire to transform the world which follows the logic of “what we do today we do for tomorrow” – the logic based on Agamben's play, on the necessity of creating a new use, because this is the only

355 Jaša Denegri in interview with Branko Ćurčić, »Design and Ideology – Discussion on Consumer Society, Media and the Extension of the Autonomous Art into the Productive Practice«, in ID: Ideology of Design, (ed. Branka Ćurčić), Autonomedia in Centar za nove medije_kida.org, New York and Novi Sad 2009, pp. 64–65.

356 Luisa Perlo, “Intervista ad Alessandra Pioselli”, Artkey, 7 March 2005, http://www.teknemedia.net/magazine_detail.html?mId=574 (August 2010).

way for us to draw from a given context. Newly emerging contexts require new rules of working in design – rules that are not imposed by the context determined by the other. Politics in design is therefore necessary because each time it contextualises, regulates the relations between new use and context which is given in advance but it changes each time with the new use.

The opportunity to write (or not write) our own rules – after all Wright already suggested this – may be what led to the state of affairs that Mari and the others protested against in Milan. They created the opportunity for revolt against the condition in which the design is found. They acknowledge that since 1948 the design is at a crossroads – at the crossroads between Bartleby-like belief that the integration of design into the wheels of the market system, which dictates the demand for mass products, cannot be changed, and the feeling that as actors in the design field we didn't do enough to change, revolutionise such a position of powerlessness.

In this regard we return again to Morris and his utopian rebellion for Italian Anti-Design movement in its own way re-activated his questions. Like Morris, Italian designers also see design in terms of its socio-political context and they resist relativism of mere satisfaction of the market. With their practical and theoretical work they point to the previously mentioned degeneration of design which wastes its potential to build a consumer society. The difference is that members of Anti-Design movement access the utopia of a better life from the opposite side.

“In contrast to the unwitting utopia of modern architecture and town-planning, which proposed an impossible order for the world, avant-garde architecture turned the process on its head: it assumed utopia as the given basis of the work and developed it realistically. Once the process was completed, nothing was left out; everything was accomplished in an act that was perfectly executed in itself, as pure creative energy transformed, without loss, into constructive energy. The utopia was not the end but the reality of the situation;

there was no allegory in it, just purely natural phenomena. Paraphrasing Flaubert, we were able to say: ‘L’architecture c’est moi.’³⁵⁷

In society, which offers only one culture without the way out, the members of Anti-Design decide to create the opposition to the existent. They place the starting-point on the utopian – on something that is clear of all artificially added values, that don’t exist in the official culture, it seems impossible, it is only a hypothesis. Or as Agamben would say, they build the utopia on potentiality.³⁵⁸ Potentiality, because as designers – the constructors of our environment – we already carry knowledge, the potential which allows us to change the environment, change the context we are not satisfied with. The decision whether these potentials will be carried out in practice remains on the shoulders of bearers of knowledge, of those who can – therefore, designers, simply said. Each designer is every day faced with the dilemma: “You have the knowledge. So what are you going to do?” Not “what could be done”. For the knowledge you have already puts you in position of ability, potentiality. Therefore the question “what could you do?” changes to “what are you going to do?”

In this sense it is easier to understand the work of Anti-Design movement. By choosing to disclose the real in the manner of extreme potentiality, they find the utopian, unreal, potential and then on this they build new reality. Simultaneously with this, like Morris before them, they create a distance to their own time and this distance offers them a view from outside. This allows them to think about new solutions, new functionalities. Designers of Anti-Design initially set themselves a task to transverse the existent by potentiality, but in the next step by creating the maximal opposition to the existent. If the official culture advocated quality, they advocated quantity. Artificially induced values were set against the sheer, neutral products, products without allegories. They give a *home* to everything that civilisation through progress left out and discredited as un-

357 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 60.

358 When in the continuation of the text I lean on the understanding of potentiality in design, I lean on Agamben’s thought on potentiality. He explains it in the text “On Potentiality”, in: Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities. Collected Essays in Philosophy*, Daniel Heller-Roazen (ed.), Stanford University Press, Stanford 1999, pp. 177–184.

civilised – to the “contrived banality, intentional vulgarity, urban fittings, biting dogs”.³⁵⁹ They identified themselves with the residues, with garbage. Similarly to Flusser’s³⁶⁰ thought, the members of Anti-Design movement realise that people are not surrounded only by two worlds, the natural and cultural, but three. In addition to the first two there is another world that remains *overlooked*, deliberately excluded, and this is the world of waste. Flusser designates the sequence nature – culture – waste, as a degenerated circle from which is possible to escape only by culture with no produced things.³⁶¹

Before Flusser also the designers of Anti-Design come to a similar conclusion. They realise that they can achieve their goals only with declaration of death of architecture.³⁶² With declaration, or rather, elimination of all ordinary, everything that defines us. Or as we will see in the continuation of the text, designers gradually impose the demands for elimination of cities, elimination of labour and at last elimination of objects. Such elimination allows them to start over without rigid shackles of tradition. With this act their word will in practice becomes architecture. Therefore, as a result, on the exhibition³⁶³ at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1972 members of Archizoom build an alternative on that “the least physical thing in the world, namely, words”.³⁶⁴ The word allows them to build – instead of one visualisation of potential utopia – as many utopias as there are readers and listeners. Instead of one culture they create one for everyone. Thus they create a tool without forced precedent. The creation of models that show just one way is according to Archizoom outdated. In their opinion we should discontinue the practice in which some intellectuals interpret and organise the world

359 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 55.

360 The text “The Non-Thing 2”, in: Flusser, *The Shape of things ...*, p. 90.

361 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

362 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 58.

363 Beside the selection of Italian design, the author of an exhibition – Emilio Ambasz – invited also applications for a design competition in environmental design. Designers approached the issue in two ways, by “a commitment to design as a problem-solving activity, capable of formulating, in physical terms, solutions to problems encountering in the natural and sociocultural milieu. The opposite attitude, which we may call one of counterdesign, chooses instead to emphasize the need for a renewal of philosophical discourse and for social and political involvement as a way of bringing about structural changes in our society.” In: *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 137.

364 *Ibid.*, p. 234. The complete description of project is based on the text, on Archizoom’s proposal of environment, pp. 232–239.

and the shape of our environment. “The right to go against reality that lacks ‘meaning’ (because it is a reality produced by a system that is ‘meaningless’ in itself) is the right to act, modify, form, and destroy the surrounding environment. This is an inalienable right, and a capability each one of us possesses.”³⁶⁵ With this last sentence we side again with Agamben’s potentiality, the difference being that with the said statement we realise that the potential which allows us to change the environment, is in possession of everybody – so not only the designer. Victor Papanek or Norman Potter would mark the latter by saying that we are all designers. And if we are all designers, we all have a knowledge which puts us in a position of someone who can.

But for this we need a space. Designers of Anti-Design lay the void before us. They lay before us “only” a word whose idea is realised only by individual who recognises the ability in himself. An interaction is established or as members of Anti-Design mark it, the self-production of culture occurs. Only with this we create the ability of liberation from the repressive system that the official culture builds around us – the culture that wove around us an endless network of values and meanings and thereby deprive us of freedom to change the environment according to our own will. “Our task, then, is to reduce to zero the moral weight of things, methodically questioning all the patterns of religious, aesthetic cultural and even environmental behaviour.”³⁶⁶

With interaction and releasing people to declare for something given, but especially that in the final stage self-produce, encourage the potential for acting, they encourage a process of emancipation in relation to a given system in which we operate and which is accepted uncritically. Emancipation establishes the instruments that allow us the rejection, or more, allow us the elimination of cities, labour and objects. Members of Anti-Design movement recognise all three elements as those key clamps which artificially determine us and consequently restrict us in our potentiality. Let me briefly explain why.

365 *Ibid.*, p. 234.

366 *Ibid.*, pp. 234–235.

The main product of the network that official culture weaves is the city. It is an everyday product of human labour. A city in the ideology of the middle class builds a bridge between man and nature and between man and society. Core problem is the city of middle class. According to Archizoom it forms spontaneous mechanism in which goods circulate freely and obtain a value while production remains hidden on the outskirts, without the possibility of recognition of functions. As a result, avant-garde architecture is no longer working on a field of building a better city, but “it challenges the ideology of the middle-class city, denouncing its fraudulent role, and establishes city planning anew as a system to be put to a different use, other than an instrument for social manifestation and induced values”.³⁶⁷ They find a base in theory, in Engels’s texts according to which “the problem of a different city did not arise for the worker; if anything his problem was the ownership of the present city. This meant that there was no such thing as a workers’ metropolis, only workers’ opposition to the one already in existence.”³⁶⁸ Consequently we have to understand architecture “as a neutral system, available for undifferentiated use, and not as an instrumentality for the organization of society; [we have to understand it] as a free, equipped area in which it may be possible to perform spontaneous actions of experimentation in individual or collective dwelling”.³⁶⁹ If we want to come to such neutral system of architecture, we must, according to Superstudio, eliminate cities. Only this leads to the removal of past structural forces that have been accumulated over time in the cities. “[T]he elimination of the city as hierarchy and social model, in search of a new free egalitarian state in which everyone can reach different levels in the development of his possibilities, beginning from equal starting point.”³⁷⁰

The next phase of the elimination of the city is a demand for the elimination of labour. If we want to become masters of our own life we have to – in Archizoom’s alternative – in the first place “*free ourselves from work*. This is the only way in which to recover all untapped creative faculty that man has available within himself, which has become atro-

367 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

368 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 58.

369 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape...*, p. 239.

370 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

phied throughout the centuries because of frustrating work.”³⁷¹ According to Branzi, the businessman responded to the liberation from labour, which for all exploited workers constituted a utopia, with an automated assembly line. “By getting rid of human labour, capitalism was laying the foundation for a society transformed into pure consumer force. And in industrial society, consumption is a creative activity in that it is a producer of values and models.”³⁷² Similar to Archizoom’s proposal members of Superstudio for a condition of their alternative also *require* a society that is not based on labour, for this is associated with power and violence. For an alternative to work it must be based on a society of non-alienated human relations. Nomadism becomes a permanent condition in which the movement of one part affects the whole. Highly sophisticated (miniaturised) techniques satisfy our basic demands. By satisfying basic needs we come to a better ability to think and to integrated use of our physical potential, potential for spontaneous actions and creating new use. The listed set the foundation for the life of man, liberated from desires – desires (or needs) that are as members of Anti-Design movement point out since the beginning, artificially stimulated. Therefore the call for the liberation from labour – or as they also say, a demand for a society of leisure or even death of labour³⁷³ – basically looked for a way “to give man the kind of freedom that will enable him to obtain it for himself”.³⁷⁴

This last demand reminds of Ruskin’s thought and his search for freedom of thought in the work. Ruskin, as we know, recognises it in the swing of the hammer. In this swing the craftsman’s/designer’s thought was expressed and exactly this freedom was according to Ruskin and Morris taken away from us by the industrial production through mechanisation. Later De Stijl turns the machine into one of the tools by which we can – as in the times to which Ruskin strives – *swing* on a material, except that this is performed even more efficiently and thus we achieve a better design for all. But this time, as it eventually turns out, in contrast to industrial production which at the time of Ruskin and Morris deprived us of freedom of thought, a free swinging of hammer

371 *Ibid.*, p. 235. Italics follow the original.

372 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 81.

373 *Ibid.*

374 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 235.

is taken away from us by the official culture that in the 20th century degrades us into consumers. If we want to break free from the grip of the proletariat or rather from the grip of capital maintained by the proletariat,³⁷⁵ we will – according to Archizoom – actually return to the key idea of Morris’s utopia. Each individual *does* what he needs, using freely available global tools³⁷⁶ and knowledge. In the construction of global tools and knowledge there is a place for a designer too – for a designer who in the neutral network establishes and opens up possibilities for further self-use, for the ability to create new functions, or as Morris (following Marx) writes, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”.³⁷⁷ Therefore if we want to come to realisation, we need in the first phase the withdrawal from labour.

“[T]he leisure society was [...] a society in which a new mass-production for the intellect was beginning. What is called leisure of free time today is based on the need to re-establish a temporary psychophysical equilibrium that allows recovery of one’s own possibilities of production.”³⁷⁸ Therefore, according to Archizoom the key is in the leisure, because only this allows us freedom of deciding, freedom of choice. It frees us from artificially induced desire and it liberates us from the slavish relationship that labour inevitably creates. By rejecting the existing system, with the emancipation from labour, the basis for construction of a neutral network is established and this enables us to move to spontaneous self-production.

Before spontaneous self-production however we have to – according to the proposal of Superstudio for a New York’s exhibition – imagine another alternative of life – life *without* objects. After the death of architecture, city and labour, designers demand a death of production. Because everything we produce, no matter how urgent it is, is integrated into the consumerist circle. Only by breaking this cycle we can – according to members of Anti-Design – get rid of the control of capital. With this approach we will reassess

375 Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 56.

376 On this idea in 1973 they establish the anti-school for architecture and design with the title *Global Tools*.

377 William Morris, *How We Live and How We Might Live*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/hwl/hwl.htm>, (August 2010) also in: Karl Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme, 1975, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/cho1.htm> (January 2012).

378 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 81.

“the relations between the process of design and the environment through an alternative model of existence rendered visible by a series of symbolic images”.³⁷⁹

Members of Superstudio came to the final elimination of objects – in their wish to escape the pitfalls of production – by the process of reduction of all artificially established values. With the destruction of objects they want to achieve “the destruction of their attributes of ‘status’ and the connotations imposed by those in power, so that we live *with* objects (reduced to the condition of neutral and disposable elements) and not *for* objects.”³⁸⁰ At this point we return to Agamben’s thought on profanation, to observation that consumption deprives a product of all its usability, even more, it completely deprives any consumerist product of any use in exchange for a “spectacular exhibition”.³⁸¹ In exchange for all artificially constructed and added attributes of status and connotations to which – with reference to Marx – members of Superstudio point out. Marx describes objects as those delicate things, full of metaphysical tricks and theological vagaries.³⁸² He points out to the distinction between use value of the product and its exchange value. The product obtains the latter as soon as it becomes a commodity. And as soon as it becomes a commodity, even up to that point *just* a useful piece of wood suddenly becomes full of different *ideas* about how important (valuable) suddenly is. Consequently designers challenge artificially induced value which accompanies every trade in goods. They challenge the transformation from the usable product to unusable and intangible fetish, as Agamben describes consumer products.

379 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 242. The complete description of project is based on the text, on Superstudio’s proposal of environment, pp. 240–251.

380 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

381 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, p. 82.

382 Marx writes: “It is absolutely clear that, by his activity, man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than ‘table-turning’ ever was.” (p. 72), In: Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of the Commodity and its secret”, *Capital*, volume I, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1986, pp. 71–82.

At the same time it should be noted that members of Anti-Design are not satisfied merely with the removal of exchange value, but they also require the removal of (old) use value. As Agamben reminds us, the deactivation of the old use, the recognition of its non-functionality is a precondition for the new use.³⁸³ The gradual reduction of all values and deactivation of use bring members of Anti-Design movement through thinking to total removal of the object itself. The principle of reduction in design is of course nothing new. We met it already in Sullivan who in one of the natural laws recognises the need for a reduction of apparent problems so that we can approach the right one. This thought is then found also in Loos and De Stijl who transfer the reduction to the level of searching for an object, stripped of decoration. But it happens for the first time that designers go in the process of reduction to its end – almost to its end. Namely, they stop at idea, at thought, at word. This leads members of Superstudio to a new definition of design: now they understand it as a “philosophical speculation, as a means to knowledge, as critical existence”.³⁸⁴ And this leads an individual with the potential to self-production.

Superstudio and Agamben are in accordance in one more point of thinking. In both we find an expressed doubt about the need to possess products. As members of Superstudio write, the life with objects must step forward, and not for objects. Because the life with objects that we use, always force us to create new uses. It is necessary to deviate from the possession to which we are constantly directed by the consumption.

“Consumption, which necessarily destroys the thing, is nothing but the impossibility or the negation of use, which presupposes that the substance of the thing remains intact (*salva rei substantia*). That is not all: a simple de facto use, distinct from property, does not exist in nature; it is in no way something that one can 'have'. [...]

This is to say, use is always a relationship with something that cannot be appropriated; it refers to things insofar as they cannot become objects of possession.”³⁸⁵

383 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, p. 86.

384 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 242.

385 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, pp. 82–83.

With the deviation from objects of possession, or more precisely, with the elimination of object as such the path leads Superstudio to the aforementioned definition of design – a philosophical speculation, a means to knowledge – it leads them to the so-called mental state of concentration and knowledge, the state which is in their opinion a base for a true human existence. In that way

“objects [...] cease to be the vehicles of social communication to become a form of reality and the direct experience of reality. [...] When design as an inducement to consume ceases to exist, an empty area is created, in which, slowly, as on the surface of a mirror, such things as the need to act, mold, transform, give, conserve, modify, come to light. [...] Design becomes perfect and rational, proceeds to synthesize different realities by syncretism and finally transforms itself, in its final essence of natural philosophy. Thus designing coincides more and more with existence: no longer existence under the protection of design objects, but existence as design. The times being over when utensils generated ideas, and when ideas generated utensils, now ideas are utensils. It is with these new utensils that life forms freely in a cosmic consciousness. [...] Thus beyond convulsions of overproduction a state can be born of calm in which a world takes shape without products and refuse, a zone in which the mind is energy and raw material and is also the final product, the only intangible object for consumption. The designing of a religion free from the pollution of design is very similar to a design for a terrestrial paradise ... This is the definitive product – this is only one of the projects for a marvellous metamorphosis.”³⁸⁶

Is previously searched design which already mentioned variability according to Alexander creates a value of 0 actually a design that denounces the physical materiality and remains only the content, an idea? Is this Agamben-like category of *poiesis*,³⁸⁷ which unlike the *praxis* doesn't seek an immediate expression in act, but it is satisfied with surpassing from the non-existent to the existent? Is the existence of an idea enough? Or as Artemis Yagou points out in the text *Rewriting Design History from an*

386 Italy: *The New Domestic Landscape ...*, pp. 246–251.

387 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, pp. 68–93. Agamben discusses about both categories in a chapter § 8 *Poiesis and Praxis*. He opens up a topic already in a chapter before, § 7 *Privation Is Like a Face*.

Evolutionary Perspective,³⁸⁸ the objective of design is a shift of academic focus: from creating products to generating ideas. This means that according to Yagou we are not really faced with a history of products, but we face the history of ideas that forms the history of culture, while the products are merely a manifestation of these ideas. This means, away from the obsession with the material into the world of culture of ideas. Away from consumption that turns the product into a useless object of desire.

Therefore, Anti-Design recognises the solution in the radical rejection of material production, in desire to find a possibility of production, which is not integrated into the market system. They recognise a solution in the production of ideas. The question that inevitably arises is how to protect ideas from the marketing system. How to protect ideas not to become a commodity? Anti-Design stakes a fuse on a void, it stakes it on a user of a void. The individual's task is to find a unique answer to a given void, to a given neutral network. His task is to create a new use. And his task is to become an active participant in the process of creating and subsequently to reject by the other defined role of the consumer. Only in this way, when the individual will be the one who will be free to decide, free from all shackles of cities, labour and production, we will according to Anti-Design achieve a terrestrial paradise, free from the pollution of design.

The solution is therefore in the thinking of individual – in the only intangible thing that consumption cannot degrade into useless fetishism. When we acknowledge this, we acknowledge the meaning of design, which consists not in creating products but in creating new uses, in encouraging new thinking.

In this respect, despite all discussed examples, Anti-Design puts its position to design in the most radical light. With its critique of design, architecture and society as a whole it looks for the opposition to official culture in which we are embedded. It looks for an alternative and seeks to build it on everything that the official culture is not. It searches for a point of impossibility in an environment that at first glance seems like Alexander's given context, therefore a field into which it cannot be intervened, but it should be understood

388 Yagou, *Rewriting Design ...*, (August 2010).

as good as possible. In this environment we should adjust – as successfully as possible – a form over which we have control. Already Rams’s approach to design shows that the environment is also only a result of human labour, thus the result that it can be changed, corrected, re-defined. And with this objective the members of Anti-Design movement enter in design. All around us is artificially generated, from objects and cities all the way to relationships between people and what surrounds them. Exactly the latter, the relationship between man and object and man and city is the most problematic for Anti-Design. All the established relationships, moral, aesthetic or religious are there only to take freedom from us. Under the guise of progress in culture they restrict us, determine and at the same time degrade into *creative* consumer. Therefore the degradation of the established level of culture is all the more necessary. Only the *lower* level of culture will allow the different relationships, which will still remain artificially created, but, as members of Anti-Design imagine, will be based on neutrality. The consequence of neutrality will be the crisis of values, the crisis of the existing relationships and from this crisis it will be possible to build a new (neutral) social system. It will create a void, which will be filled by every individual without predefined rules and relationships. Their object of design is therefore a void, which is there to encourage the potential in us that is already there, with the aim of filling a given void. Branzi writes: “The theory that the void provided the greatest degree of flexibility and liberty was a sort of *tabula rasa* our generation had made, or was trying to make, of all previous experiences, in an attempt to build a new foundation for design and architecture by putting them to a different, alternative use.”³⁸⁹

If we want to attain this end we must reject all that constitutes our culture, from objects, architecture and cities all the way to labour. By rejecting the labour the members of Anti-Design movement overtake the inevitably. The machine that does not complain and does not set requirements will sooner or later replace redundant human labour. Elimination of labour seems self-evident, with the knowledge that at the same time it allows us to return to the development of intellect. It allows us to revive the freedom of thought to which design strives all the way from Ruskin on. It makes us think about a different idea of life to which we were more than fifty years earlier directed by Gerrit Rietveld.

389 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 80.

Conclusion: the Conditions for a New Politics of Design Emancipation

The relation between design and work and design and production marks all selected critiques. They show us that Ruskin's critique in the middle of the 19th century opened a problem, which in the emerging design discipline considerably defined the future development and the way of thinking. But most of all Ruskin managed – and this is more than obvious today – to raise the questions still topical today. Together with Morris they managed in the newly emerging design discipline to implement a need for constant questioning our own role and position in society. They are offering not just the critique but also the alternative to the existent. In all critiques we discussed up to Anti-Design we recognised effects also in design discipline. Consequently the question arises what happens to the most radical critique of them and, above all, what effects are perceived in profession.

Similarly as Italian design that in 1948 finds itself on the crossroads this passes also for a time that follows the discussed Italian radical actions and calls. Up to the middle of 1970s the main actors of movement gradually and disappointedly find out that design in practice is obviously not capable to play the subversive role they stood for. Some of them leave off the work in design and architecture, others continue with practice of purified modernism and the third ones at the end of 1970s offer in practice their own characteristic continuation of Anti-Design ideology. They offer a complete opposition to modernist dogma – a postmodernist group Memphis. The effects of actions are the most tangible in practice for Memphis manages to shake the modernist basis in design profession. In spite of the well-considered action the market succeeds to manipulate its results and changes them – as Agamben asserts – into fetish and uses the work of Memphis for its own profit.

Even more, instead of design that would satisfy the so-called *pure need*, or better, create a *pure idea* which would be based *only* on *thought* and manifested through emptiness the result of all mentioned postmodernist actions (which include Anti-Design too) in the last instance brings forth a designer as an author – an author turned into a status

symbol by capital. It happens, therefore, all the things against which the designers from Morris to members of Anti-Design fought in their texts. Today the design even more than in the past accepts the role of one of the main catalyst of consumption even more today design openly passes as a factor that creates so celebrated value-added product. Consequently designers daily and uncritically create artificially induced value of objects.

In this respect we can understand the resignation of still active Italian industrial designer Enzo Mari much better. He, in a lecture at Studio ArtAvangarde in Belgrade at the end of the 1980s, acknowledged as much: “The utopia of industrial design has lost the battle. [...] It lost the battle because it tried to realize utopia by means of the system of commerce. [...] Just like other people, we too work on an assembly line. There is no other alternative.”³⁹⁰

But what is really involved with *a mere thought* of Anti-Design? Why does the proposal both in the profession and the public seem too radical, too unrealistic? What happens is that the designers and the public collide with the problem of understanding the ability of thought, idea, as something that actually is. From the perspective of the profession and the public what is missing the act: the processing of idea into something tangible. The mere thought remains something totally intangible and incomplete. The idea of Anti-Design that each individual is the one that fills an offered emptiness collides with the rooted perception (of the profession and the public) that if we design then in reality we already produce. In practice we produce a trace of our own thought. Offered emptiness, offered *tabula rasa* is the antipode of everything that design from the first worked stone all the way to Ford’s assembly line was and still is. The meaning of design is its materialisation, its production. The result of the designer’s thought was always, in whatever the form – drawing, plan, product, service – real, tangible. But – as members of Anti-Design movement point out very clearly – any, even the most urgent thing we produce immediately falls in the range of consumption. Or, as William Morris described the latter already in 1884, because of market logic we all take part in the pro-

390 Jerko Denegri, “Dvomi sodobnega oblikovalca: med zavrcajem in povezovanjem. Enzo Mari v beograjskem Studiu ArtAvangarde” [“The doubts of a contemporary designer: between rejection and connection: Enzo Mari at Belgrade’s Studio Artavangarde”], *Sinteza* (Ljubljana) 83–86 (1990): pp. 191–192.

duction of waste, in the production of things that are completely unnecessary, in many cases useless, and therefore such work is entirely unproductive. Consequently, even today a topical question remains: how to design and at the same time remain outside the range of consumption? And of course even more crucial: is design which remains outside still perceived as a design? Is this the point of impossibility we are looking for?

This brings us back to questions from the Introduction: how in an age when all seems possible to find the point of impossibility?³⁹¹ What in design is impossible?

The answer seems plain as day, since it has been hounding us throughout the entire text: the impossible thing is for design to escape its entrenchment (imprisonment) in the system of production. When industrialization established the basis for the professionalization of the discipline, it also subordinated design to itself. It dosed a place to design discipline. The fears are well known. If design is not part of the production system, can we even speak about design as a discipline? As Anti-Design already tried to tell us is not necessarily so. Although their proposal for the elimination of cities, labour, production and objects sounds too radical in practice, it offers an alternative that forces us to further criticism of the system, to further shattering of design thought, separated from the material implementation. While it may be true that we cannot speak about the kind of discipline we know today, this does not mean that we cannot speak about a design that sets such a demand. How, then, can we practice – how can we think – a design that exists outside the system. How do we undertake this demand?

According to Jelica Šumič Riha, we must distinguish between “two structurally different demands: *the demand ‘to have’* and *the demand ‘to be’*”. In the demand “to have”, we express our lack, and at the same time we address our demand to the Other as a whole. The demand “to have”, however, “requires of the Other nothing that the Other would have and, therefore, could give us, nothing that would fall under the category of having,

391 “Impossibility is the condition of the possibility of the act, or to put it more precisely, the act is that which shows, which reveals, what is real/impossible in a given situation. If no boundary is defined, or rather, if it is indefinable, then the act, too, is not possible.” – Šumič Riha, “Jetnik Drugega, ki ne obstaja” [“The prisoner of the Other that does not exist”], *Filozofski ...*, p. 88.

but only the fact that you are, that you exist; it demands space where you can be, where you can exist”.³⁹² If, in the case of design, the demand is “to have”, this raises the question: to whom do we address this demand? Who, in our case, is the Other as a whole? Is this market-production system? Without design this system survives without severe scratches. Designers usually want to hear slogans such as: “Only one company can be the cheapest. All the others must use design.”³⁹³ The other extreme is presented by Croatian theorist Goroslav Keller who in the time of Canadian designers’ announced strike asks: “Can you imagine that all the designers in the world begin to strike for an indefinite period of time: what would be the result and who would be harmed? (Cynics are even wondering whether or not this would be good for a society.)”³⁹⁴ The successful sale of numerous poorly³⁹⁵ designed products favours Keller’s statement. But if the production system is not the Other we seek, then the question arises as to whether this Other might not be designers – the design profession itself. According to Šumič Riha, this is not possible, for “there is no demand that would not include an Other”.³⁹⁶ Even if this Other is, in fact, non-existent. But the non-existent Other is typical of the present age. As Šumič Riha goes on to say: “The politics of emancipation in the era of the non-existent Other faces the task of converting the structural impossibility of the closure of capitalist discourse into a condition for the possibility of the productional new, a condition for the possibility of inventing a new social order.”³⁹⁷ Here she adds that, if you want to realize the impossible, it is not enough to simply make a statement and at the same time discover circumstances do not permit the impossible. Rather, it is necessary “also to invent, to literally produce, create, the means for ‘processing’ this impossible”.³⁹⁸

How do we apply this idea to design? How do we begin the impossible? How do we separate design from the existing system of industrialization so that we can address our demand to the non-existent Other? Perhaps the answer is to stop dealing with the

392 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

393 Rodney Fitch, *Insights*, Design Council, London 1998.

394 Goroslav Keller, “Oblikovanje za izvoz”, *Sinteza*, št. 36–37, 1976, pp. 132–134.

395 Everything is designed, in a good or a bad way, so we cannot even talk about the non-design.

396 Šumič Riha, *Jetnik drugega ...*, p. 91.

397 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

398 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

demand “to have” and direct our focus to the demand “to be”. In this case the role of the Other – which is impossible to avoid – is marginalized. The aim of the struggle also changes: with the demand “to be”, what we demand is a space for existence. But here we suddenly encounter a dilemma: Does this mean that with our demand for existence we are in fact saying that, as an independent discipline, we do not exist? For most design theorists and practitioners there is probably no more heretical statement than the answer that now suggests itself. Which is: design’s problem is that it does not exist as an independent discipline because it does not have its own space outside the system of production.

With this statement we in fact repeat Morris’s and Anti-Design’s question – how should design work in the field of the market? And if we transfer this in the field of our thinking: what would happen to design if the market (free or state-regulated) wouldn’t exist? Would we fall into the world of *Mad Max*? Or we might get closer to a possibility of a search for a problem-solution that we had already set: *design’s problem is that it does not exist as an independent discipline because it does not have its own space outside the system of production.*

For easier confrontation with the unprecedented proposal we can look for a help in a theory of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. As Rancière writes we can choose between two methods: the old method and the method of emancipation.³⁹⁹ According to old method the teacher tells us what to learn and how to understand it. Somebody else makes the selection for us, then we conquer it and on the basis of this we seemingly make progress. The knowledge remains fragmentary for we always remain in a hold of somebody who leads us and portions out the knowledge we have yet to conquer. When we learn what is portioned we get to the point where we can quickly forget. By forgetting

399 The term *old method* is introduced already by Rancière while he names the method of ignorant schoolmaster with the term “universal teaching”. For easier distinction between the two I introduce the term *the method of emancipation* based on the idea, which Rancière explains in his book. “Whoever teaches without emancipating stultifies. And whoever emancipates doesn’t have to worry about what the emancipated person learns. He will learn what he wants, nothing maybe. He will know he can learn because the same intelligence is at work in all the productions of the human mind, and a man can always understand another man’s words.” In: Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster ...*, p. 18.

we – according to old method – stop to unnecessarily burden the memory. And here lies according to Rancière “the genius of the explicators: they attach the creature they have rendered inferior with the strongest chains in the land of stultification – the child’s consciousness of his own superiority.”⁴⁰⁰ This is the comfortable position of immaturity⁴⁰¹ for it is much *easier* to walk the beaten path and follow somebody else.

According to method of emancipation all we learn we relate to everything else. “The student must see everything for himself, compare and compare, and always respond to a three-part question: what do you see? What do you think about it? What do you make of it? And so on, to infinity.”⁴⁰²

Why do I find Rancière’s universal teaching interesting starting-point for design? Design is now completely integrated into the old method. Production system and capital are the ones that perform for us a selection and assume the role of the teacher, the role of one who explains. They portion out the fragments of knowledge whereas a whole because of the apparent complexity remains fragmented among a number of specialists, each of which takes care of his own garden. Capital is also unsurpassable in persuading every specialist that is irreplaceable, a key element of the whole, and thus each element accepts without much doubt (or with resignation) a given situation. Moreover, the system creates virtual options just to satisfy our need for choice and creates a false sense of authorship. It transfers authors’ decisions into a state where we constantly choose between many options which differ only seemingly. Whatever we choose will be the same; whatever we choose, the teacher will agree. Listed fetters of system represent the handicap of the potential of discipline because the system adapts most of design services to its own image. All *inconsistencies*, all *discomforts* are adapted already from the starting-point or latter integrated – as a new trend – into the world of marketing.

On the other hand the method of emancipation allows us to think about alternative – about alternative in design discipline, about design, which will as an independent dis-

400 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

401 Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” ..., p. 9.

402 Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* ..., p. 23.

cipline meet the requirement to *be* outside the market-production system. It returns us to the recognition of potentiality profession has. It is not the question whether we can do it as a profession, but whether we as a profession will undertake this transition. Ruskin did warn us about this when he put before us the words of the artist Mulready, you should know what to do, and do. If one of the tasks of design is disclosure of reality, then the question arises whether we see the reality in which design is integrated. Namely, beside the possibility of disclosing the reality you have to be first and foremost able to see – to see what it is. In the case of design a designer sees a discrepancy, uneasiness, a certain problem. And all these constantly direct us to reconsideration. Only on the basis of two steps – to see something and to consider it – we get to the third Rancière's question. We come to the step that allows us to make a decision. In other words, with the knowledge we have, every individual realises he has the potential to do something or not do. Therefore, before all of us again and again the question arises: what will you do?

UNIVERZA V NOVI GORICI
FAKULTETA ZA PODIPLOMSKI ŠTUDIJ

**KRITIKA V OBLIKOVANJU
ALI ISKANJE POGOJEV ZA NOVO POLITIKO
OBLIKOVALSKE EMANCIPACIJE**

DISERTACIJA

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Nova Gorica, 2012

Izjavljam, da je pričujoča disertacija rezultat samostojnega dela in temelji na lastnih spoznanjih ob pomoči navedene literature in virov.

Barbara Predan

Izveček

Cilj pričujoče disertacije je pokazati, da so kritike, ki so se v disciplini oblikovanja zvrstile od snovanja profesionalizacije, odigrale ključno vlogo pri formiranju stroke, kakršno poznamo danes. Prav izbrane kritike so s tem, ko so prečile ustaljeno, ustvarile luknje v vednosti, ustvarile diskontinuiteto, katere posledica je bilo ustvarjanje zmožnosti za spremenjen način delovanja. Posledično je to, kar disciplini oblikovanja manjka danes, prav tovrstna kritika, ki se bo postavila po robu stanju, v katerem se oblikovanje nekritično podreja zahtevam trga in sprejema vsesplošni relativizem družbenega konsenza. Prvič v zgodovini oblikovanja se zdi, da profesionalizacijo discipline vse bolj določa tisto, kar naj bi jo (kot stranski produkt v času industrijske revolucije in delitve dela) v prvi vrsti proizvedlo. Prav tako pa smo prvič do takšne situacije v stroki indiferentni.

Ključne besede:

oblikovanje, kritika, emancipacija, Ruskin, Morris, Loos, De Stijl, antidizajn

Zahvaljujem se svojim mentorjema prof. dr. Jelici Šumič Riha in prof. dr. Jonathanu M. Woodhamu za izkazano dosledno strokovno in institucionalno podporo. Prav tako gre zahvala Katji Paladin za jezikovni pregled in Nataši Velikonja, ki mi je s prevodi poglavij omogočila redno komunikacijo s prof. Woodhamom. Iskrena hvala tudi Borisu Benku in vsem ostalim bralcem tega besedila za dobronamerne pripombe.

Kritika v oblikovanju

ali iskanje pogojev za novo politiko oblikovalske emancipacije

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**Kritika v oblikovanju
ali iskanje pogojev za novo politiko
oblikovalske emancipacije**

Uvod: Formulacija vprašanj

Norman Potter v knjigi *What is a designer* zapiše: »Najboljše oblikovanje ima spoštovanja vredno zgodovino; afirmativno, vprašujočo, družbeno in osebno zavzeto, takšno, ki skuša stvari sestaviti v najboljšem smislu. Velik del tega napora se je izrodil v menedžerski pesek v oči.«¹

Z izjemno kritično, toda nadvse lucidno izjavo Potter zareže v disciplino oblikovanja, ki je v 20. stoletju postala lena, nekritična, samozadostna, samovšečna. Disciplina oblikovanja je izgubila naboj upora, ki sta ji ga v zibko položila glavna kritika naraščajoče industrializacije 19. stoletja, John Ruskin in William Morris, prav tako pa je izgubila zanesenost avantgardnih gibanj, ki so v oblikovanju iskala odgovor, orodje za izgradnjo boljšega jutri. Potter s kritiko stanja duha v disciplini stremi k ponovni aktivaciji sposobnosti, ki je dana vsakemu oblikovalcu: zmožnost nekaj narediti. V mislih imam znanje, potencial, ki ga kot oblikovalci imamo. Omenjeni potencial nam v agambenovskem smislu omogoča v teoriji in praksi spremeniti okolje, spremeniti kontekst, s katerim nismo zadovoljni.

Ob branju Potterjeve kritike ne smemo spregledati podvprašanj, ki se nam ponujajo: od kod takšna sprememba; kaj je privedlo do takšne situacije v oblikovanju; zakaj tolikšna resignacija med oblikovalci in oblikovalkami? Odgovor se zdi znan, saj ga redno slišimo iz ust številnih oblikovalcev in oblikovalk: smo le eden od členov na tekočem traku proizvodnje. Izjemno pomemben člen, če smo natančni; oblikovanje je namreč tista interdisciplinarna panoga, ki se zna poosebiti z uporabnikom, zna prevesti želje naročnika, zna izkoristiti tehnološke danosti razvoja in ima ob prgišču naštetega znanja sposobnost ustvariti funkcionalen, likovno skladen in po možnosti k trajnosti orientiran izdelek. Po eni strani torej soustvarjamo, po drugi pa smo le kolesce v stroju. Ob tem je pomembno izpostaviti, da je bil proces razvrednotenja oblikovanja (na stopnjo zgolj enega od kolesc) postopen. Številne pomembne figure s področja oblikovanja so skozi formiranje in razvoj discipline kljubovale latentno prisotni želji industrije, da bi obliko-

¹ Norman Potter, *What is a designer: thing, places, messages*, Hypen Press, London 2002 [izvirnik iz leta 1969], p. 162.

vanje reducirala na zgolj eno od panog v njeni službi. Ne nazadnje bi lahko oblikovanje – ozko gledano – opredelili kot stranski produkt delitve dela, kot eno od posledic industrializacije. Z zapisanim se številni niso strinjali že v času nastanka discipline, številni trditev zavračajo tudi danes. Protagonisti bodoče discipline so oblikovanje umeščali v širši družbeni kontekst, prepoznali so ga kot tisti element, ki gradi našo materialno kulturo in posledično ne vpliva le na naše vsakdanje bivanje, temveč hkrati v praksi manifestira stopnjo razvoja, ki jo kot civilizacija dosegamo. Dejstvo je, da je do stanja, ki ga opisuje Potter, pripeljal skupek situacij, sil in sprememb v družbi. V kontekstu vsebine omenjeno tranzicijo posredno obravnavam tudi v pričujočem besedilu. Opisano pa nas vodi k veliko pomembnejšemu vprašanju, ki ga je moč slutiti v Potterjevi kritiki: kaj mora disciplina oblikovanja storiti, da se izkoplje iz opisane indiferentne, brezzobe situacije, v kateri se je znašla?

Odgovor na zadnje vprašanje gradim skozi pet poglavij v pričujočem besedilu. Gradim ga na kritikah, ki so se zvrstile od snovanja profesionalizacije discipline oblikovanja, išoč predvsem tiste učinke izbranih zapisov, katerih sled je mogoče prepoznati v pregovorno pragmatični praksi oblikovanja. Skozi besedilo bom pokazala, kako so izbrane kritike s tem, ko so prečile ustaljeno, ustvarile luknje v vednosti, ustvarile diskontinuiteto, katere posledica je bilo ustvarjanje zmožnosti za spremenjen način delovanja.

Michel Foucault v besedilu *Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?* za kritiko zapiše: »Trebaja si jo je predstavljati kot držo, etos, filozofsko življenje, kjer je kritika tega, kar smo, istočasno zgodovinska analiza meja, ki so nam naložene, in eksperiment glede možnosti njihove prekoračitve.«² Zadnje, iskanje mej in možnosti njihove prekoračitve, je skupno vsem obravnavanim kritikam. Pojavlja se tako v kritikah Johna Ruskina, Williama Morrisa in Adolfa Loosa kot tudi v zapisih gibanja De Stijl in italijanskega antidizajna. Pri zadnjem gre za zadnjo *pravo* kritiko v oblikovanju in od nje nas loči več kot štirideset let. Posledično se zdi, da današnji disciplini manjka prav radikalen, kritičen poseg v stanje, ki smo mu priča. Kritika je bila namreč v oblikovanju prisotna od formiranja discipline pa vse do kasnejše profesionalizacije. Posamezniki, ki so bili sposobni vzpo-

2 Michel Foucault, »Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?«, *Vestnik IMŠ*, št. 1, Ljubljana 1987, p. 49.

staviti distanco do lastnega časa, so se – gledano nazaj – izkazali za ključne katalizatorje sprememb v disciplini. Ključni pa so bili tudi zato, ker so poleg zavrnitve svojega časa ponudili alternativo obstoječemu. Disciplini oblikovanja danes manjka prav tovrstna kritika; kritika, ki se bo postavila po robu stanju, v katerem se oblikovanje nekritično podreja zahtevam trga in sprejema vsesplošni relativizem družbenega konsenza. Prvič v zgodovini oblikovanja se zdi, da profesionalizacijo discipline vse bolj določa tisto, kar naj bi jo (kot stranski produkt v času industrijske revolucije in delitve dela) v prvi vrsti proizvedlo. Prav tako pa smo prvič do takšne situacije v stroki indiferentni.

Fredric Jameson zapiše, da smo v času modernizma še stremeli k ustvarjanju novih svetov, v času postmodernizma pa iščemo prelome.³ Pogoj za samo zmožnost preloma pa je vzpostavitev distance do obstoječega; nujen je torej obstoj kritike. Slednja ustvari zmožnost za drugačno delovanje in pogoje za dogodek, za iskani prelom. Po Radu Rihi sta za to, da revolucijo lahko vidimo, nujna dva koraka: »na eni strani akt brezpogojnega odpora, na drugi pa konkretne zahteve konkretnih emancipacijskih bojev«, kajti šele s takšno povezavo bo »na delu želja videti«.⁴ Prav želja videti – »hočemo to, kar želimo«⁵ – je po Rihi pogoj za to, da sploh začnemo misliti o prekinitvi z dano situacijo. Ob Rihi- vi misli se ne moremo izogniti vprašanju: kaj je tisto, kar pravzaprav želimo videti na področju oblikovanja? Katere so konkretne zahteve konkretnih emancipacijskih bojev? Pri vsem tem večji del discipline prekinitve z dano situacijo pravzaprav niti ne zahteva. Še več, o dani situaciji v večji meri niti ne dvomi. Situacijo sprejema kot danost, kot nekaj samoumevnega. Utopično stremljenje v smeri gradnje novega sveta je zamenjal iz- ziv v obliki tržnega interesa, nenehnega izboljševanja obstoječega sveta. Posledično se v poplavi vsega navidezno novega definiranje *pravega* problema v Sullivanovi maniri zdi toliko težja, malodane nemogoča naloga. Prav definiranje nemogočega v oblikovanju pa je cilj pričujoče naloge. Namen naloge je, da v dobi, ko se zdi vse možno, najdemo točko nemožnosti. Povedano drugače, iskala bom odgovor na vprašanje: kaj je danes v oblikovanju nemogoče?

3 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, Durham 1991, p. IX.

4 Rado Riha, »Kako lahko vidim revolucijo?«, *Filozofski vestnik*, XXVII, št. 1, Ljubljana 2006, p. 46.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Vrnitev k Ruskinu

V profesionalizaciji stroke oblikovanja za mejnik velja industrijska revolucija. Povzroči prelom v delovanju, ki ne vpliva le na vznik nove discipline, temveč korenito poseže v razvoj družbe nasploh. Gre za prelom s preteklostjo, ki v nastanek izdelkov sčasoma vnese dokončno ločitev poklicev.⁶ Tisti, ki izdelek zasnuje, se loči od tistega, ki izdelek izdelava. Novonastali poklic (*zasnovalec izdelkov*) je zametek oblikovalske discipline, kakršno poznamo danes. Drugi ključni prelom za oblikovanje se zgodi z ločitvijo naročnika in uporabnika. Vse dokler je bil oblikovalec obrtnik (in v številnih primerih tudi trgovec), je večinoma poznal svoje končne uporabnike, saj so bili ti največkrat tudi naročniki izdelka. Manufakture, sploh kasnejši porast vedno bolj avtomatizirane proizvodnje, s seboj nosijo nove tehnike in materiale⁷ in v primerjavi s človeškim (ročnim) delom⁸ začnejo dobesedno bruhati industrijsko narejene izdelke. Posledično se zniža cena izdelkov, ki tako postanejo veliko bolj dostopni množicam. Uporabnik ni več soudeležen v procesu, temveč prevzame vlogo arbitra pri tem, kar je narejeno in ponujeno na trgu. Zaradi porasta izdelkov se poveča izbira in uporabnik – zavestno ali ne – s svojo izbiro soodloča, v katero smer bo krenil nadaljnji razvoj (ali pa zgolj množenje kopij) izbranega izdelka. Dokončni razkorak v poklicu se torej zgodi s prihodom mehanizacije, ali kot slednjo označi Walter Benjamin, z razvojem tehnične reprodukcije.⁹

6 Po Johnu Heskettu naj bi do specializacije prvič prišlo z razvojem trgovine v srednjem veku. Za oprijemljiv dokaz navede čas renesanse (začetek 16. stoletja). Takrat se namreč pojavijo prve knjige vzorcev, ki vsebujejo različne oblike, ki jih je mogoče repetitivno nanašati na različne vsebine. Prav na tej točki naj bi se prvič ločila oblikovalec vzorcev in tisti, ki je dane vzorce uporabljal, nanašal na izdelke. V: John Heskett, *Industrial Design*, Thames and Hudson, London 1980, p. 11. Dokončno ločitev pa večinoma pripisujemo času po industrijski revoluciji.

7 Več o tem glej: Jonathan M. Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1997, p. II.

8 David Pye loči dva tipa obrtne veščine [*workmanship*]. Pri prvem je kakovost izdelka odvisna od tveganja, ki smo ga pripravljene prevzeti med postopkom izdelave; druga obrtna veščina pa temelji na kar se da visoki stopnji zanesljivosti izdelave. Bolj ko se proizvodnja avtomatizira, manjša je stopnja tveganja; posledično sta kakovost in končni videz izdelka že vnaprej predvidljiva. David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, The Herbert Press, London 2010 [izvirnik iz leta 1968], pp. 20–24. Omenjeni razkorak je eden od temeljev, ki nam daje osnovo za razumevanje Ruskinove misli in zavrnitve avtomatizirane proizvodnje. Hkrati pa nam ponuja drugačno razumevanje razmerja med oblikovanjem in obrtno izdelavo.

9 Walter Benjamin, »Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«, *Izbrani spisi*, Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 1998 [izvirnik iz leta 1940], pp. 145–176.

Čas vstopa v tehnično reprodukcijo označujemo s prehodom iz ročne v strojno proizvodnjo, katere posledica je industrializacija družbe. Pot prehodu tlakuje obdobje razsvetljenstva. Gibanje se postavi po robu cehovskemu monopolu, zavzema se za progresivno družbo, s poudarkom na razumu in znanosti. Kantov spis *Odgovor na vprašanje: Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?* (1783) sovpade s časom, ki ga v zgodovinskih učbenikih označujejo za začetek industrijske revolucije (1780). V njem Kant zapiše: »Nobeno obdobje se ne more zediniti in se zarotiti, da bo naslednje spravilo v stanje, v katerem mu mora postati nemogoče, da bi svoja [...] spoznanja razširilo, očistilo zmot ter sploh napredovalo v razsvetljenstvu. Bil bi to zločin proti človeški naravi, katere izvirni namen je prav napredek.«¹⁰ Kant ob pisanju besedila sicer ni imel v mislih prihajajoče industrijske revolucije in vseh njenih vplivov na nadaljnji razvoj družbe, pa vendar se njegove besede, gledano nazaj, danes zdijo skorajda preroške. Preroške v smislu napredka, zmot in kritik¹¹, ki jih industrijska revolucija spodbudi predvsem v 19. stoletju, pa tudi očiščenja zmot, ki se vsaj iz perspektive oblikovanja v kontekstu sprave z industrijsko revolucijo zgodi na prelomu iz 19. v 20. stoletje. Do sprave pride s prvimi predstavniki inženirske linije, organizacije, kot je bila v času nastanka Deutscher Werkbund, futurizma in gibanja De Stijl, šole Bauhaus, seveda pa tudi s predstavniki internacionalnega stila, če naštejemo le najbolj očitne.

Toda pot do omenjenih gibanj in organizacij je vodila skozi čas viktorijanske Anglije. Skozi čas izrojenih oblik, ki se razbohotijo v vsej svoji kričavosti. Začetke *razgradnje* prinese hibridna proizvodnja¹² 18. stoletja, za katero je značilna delna mehanizacija z dobršno mero ročne (največkrat končne) obdelave. Vlogo oblikovalcev nadomešča-

10 Immanuel Kant, »Odgovor na vprašanje: Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?«, *Vestnik IMŠ*, 1987/1, p. 11.

11 Zmote zgovorno opiše Nikolaus Pevsner: »tako rekoč prav vsi industrijski izdelki [so] bili grobi, prostaški in preobloženi z okrasjem. Tako stanje sta povzročila industrijska revolucija in – manj znana, pa prav tako pomembna – estetska teorija, nastala po letu 1800.« (V: Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pionirji moderne oblikovanja*, Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana 1965, p. 10.) Na nastalo stanje so se kritično odzvali Pugin, Ruskin, Morris in številni drugi. Ruskinovo in Morrisovo misel podrobneje obravnavam v naslednjem poglavju.

12 Primer podjetij: Boulton, Wedgwood idr. Več v: Heskett, *Industrial Design*. Začetki variirajo glede na raziskavo, cf. David Pye (v *The Nature and ...*) npr. prve zametke oblik in tehnik prepozna že v srednjem veku, do prevlade pa pride šele, ko pomembno vlogo začne igrati ekonomski faktor proizvodnje. (V: Pye, *The Nature and ...*, pp. 20–21.) Glej tudi: Herwin Schaefer, *The Roots of Modern Design. Functional Tradition in the 19th Century*, Studio Vista, London 1970.

jo umetniki, ki se posvečajo ustvarjanju raznovrstnih vzorcev v neoklasičnem stilu in v številnih primerih mejijo na eklekticizem. Vzorce, ki so še do nedavnega veljali za vrhunec obrtniške tradicije, izdelane iz vrhunskih materialov, hitro vzpenjajoči se podjetniki bolj ali manj le prekopirajo na mehansko proizvedene cenene industrijske izdelke iz novih cenениh materialov. Inventivnost po besedah Jonathana M. Woodhama manufakturisti 19. stoletja preusmerijo v »neumorno izkoriščanje novih tehnik in materialov, kar potrošnikom srednjega razreda omogoči dostop do ogromnega števila izdelkov z bogatimi in zamotanimi dekorativnimi detajli v enciklopedičnih variantah historičnih stilov.«¹³ In prav v omogočenem dostopu, ki generira vedno večje povpraševanje hitro rastočega srednjega (delavskega) razreda, lahko najdemo glavni razlog za tako nenaden porast proizvodnje na »tisoče cenениh predmetov[, ki so nastali] v enakem času in z enakimi stroški, kot jih je prej terjala izdelava enega samega dobro narejenega predmeta«.¹⁴ Da novi srednji razred zadovolji svojo potrebo po izdelkih, ki spominjajo na drage predmete visokega razreda, s povečanim povpraševanjem ustvari podlago izdelkom, ki so za razvijajočo se industrijsko proizvodnjo – kot to opišejo takratni kritiki – povsem neiskreni.¹⁵ Priča smo torej družbeni spremembi, ki s spremembo proizvodnje kaže na preusmeritev k množicam. Nanjo opozori že Walter Benjamin, saj po njegovem s tehnično reprodukcijo vstopimo v čas, ko »množično reprodukcijo spremlja reprodukcija množic«.¹⁶ Izkoriščane in večinoma neizobražene množice si končno lahko privoščijo industrijsko izdelane imitacije dragih izdelkov. In hitro razvijajoči se kapitalisti, navdušeni nad novo kupno močjo, hitijo zadovoljevati naraščajoče povpraševanje.

O množicah je v omenjenem spisu pisal tudi Kant. Po Kantu pojav množic ni nekaj slabega, saj ima množica ljudi več možnosti, da samo sebe razsvetli, kot posameznik. Za to, da do razsvetljenstva množice neogibno pride, pa je nujno zgolj to, da je tej mno-

13 Woodham, *Twentieth-Century ...*, p. 11.

14 Pevsner, *Pionirji moderne ...*, p. 10.

15 Med prve teoretike in praktike, ki se javno odzovejo na neprimernost situacije, sodita Augustus N. W. Pugin z delom *Contrasts* (1836) in Thomas Carlyle z družbenokritičnim delom *Past and Present* (1843). Obema glasno sledi John Ruskin. Označevanje izdelkov z izrazom »neiskren« je Ruskinov opis izdelkov, ki so nastajali kot rezultat manufakturne proizvodnje 19. stoletja.

16 Benjamin, »Umetnina v času ...*, p. 175.*

žici »puščena svoboda«. Kajti »za razsvetljenstvo [...] ni treba drugega kot *svobode* in to najbolj neškodljive od vsega, kar se lahko imenuje svoboda, namreč tole: uveljavitev vsestranske *javne uporabe lastnega uma*«. ¹⁷ Kot nam kaže zgodovina, pa so vsaj v oblikovanju za uveljavitev vsestranske *javne uporabe lastnega uma* ključni predvsem posamezniki, lahko bi jih poimenovali tudi katalizatorji. Torej tisti, ki so do lastnega časa sposobni ustvariti distanco. Medtem ko se pri množicah, pri katerih prepogosto zaznavamo le modne spremembe okusa – in še te pogosto spodbujene s pomočjo javnih občil¹⁸ – misel o napredku iz stanja nedoletnosti v času potrošništva zdi že skoraj utopija.

Vrhunec slavljenja »novih« industrijskih izdelkov se zgodi leta 1851 v Londonu, v Kristalni palači¹⁹, na prvi veliki svetovni razstavi industrijskih izdelkov vseh nacij. Glavni organizator²⁰ razstave sir Henry Cole v svojem tekstu iz leta 1852 *On the International Results of the Exhibition of 1851*²¹ izpostavi, da je bila razstava – poleg tega, da je predstavila vse vrhunce industrijske proizvodnje – pomembna tudi kot mejnik, saj je v družbi generirala številne spremembe. Po Coleu med ključne za nadaljnji razvoj nedvomno sodi začetek tako imenovanega prostega pretoka blaga, saj spodbudi neomejeno konkurenco in je še danes temelj kapitalističnega sistema. Pred tem je namreč veljalo, da je bilo domače blago zaščiteno pred tujo konkurenco; posledično proizvajalci v večini primerov niso poznali razvoja in izdelkov, ki so nastajali drugje po svetu, in so zato – največkrat zmotno – gojili prepričanje o lastni superiornosti. Druga po Coleu izredno pomembna točka pa je bila ta, da so predstavniki umetnosti, znanosti in trgovine prvič

17 Kant, »Odgovor na vprašanje ...«, p. 10.

18 Ob tem je treba opozoriti, da je tehnična reprodukcija s seboj prinesla tudi številne nove veje umetnosti (npr. fotografijo in film), ki so odigrale pomembno vlogo pri »moderniziranju« javnosti.

19 Glavni namen svetovne razstave je bil svetu na simboličen način prikazati industrijsko, vojaško in ekonomsko premoč Velike Britanije. Da je šlo za resnično veliko razstavo, potrjujejo podatki, da je palača (zgrajena po načrtih Josepha Paxtona) pokrivala prek 80.000 kvadratnih metrov površine, na razstavi so prikazali več kot 13.000 izdelkov, ogledalo pa si jih je več kot 6.200.000 obiskovalcev. John Ruskin je zgradbo opisal kot veliko kumarično zgradbo med dvema dimnikoma. Glej v: John F. Pile, *A history of interior design*, Laurence King Publishing, London 2005, p. 243.

20 Spodbuda in sponzorska sredstva za razstavo so prišla s strani princa Alberta, moža takratne kraljice Viktorije. Poleg princa Alberta je bil glavni financer razstave Royal Society of Arts. V: *The Industrial Design Reader* (ed. Carma Gorman), Allworth Press, New York 2003, p. 3. Kristalno palačo so zgradili v Hyde Parku v Londonu.

21 Odlomek besedila je ponatisnjen v: *Ibid.*, pp. 3–11.

v zgodovini prav zaradi omenjene razstave v parlamentu pridobili enakovreden glas poleg predstavnikov politike, prava in vojne. Kot še doda, je takšna sprememba ključna »za napredek človeštva«²², saj lahko končno spoznamo, da zadnje spremembe v znanosti in industriji dokazujejo, da nacionalno bogastvo temelji na nacionalni industriji, ne pa na vojnah, ki dolgoročno pomenijo zgolj enormne stroške.²³

Poleg naštetih učinkov razstave sir Henry Cole ne pozabi na pomen izobraževanja. Predvsem izobraževanja na področju oblikovanja uporabnih izdelkov. Med izdelki, razstavljenimi na veliki razstavi, je pripravil izbor, ki je po razstavi tvoril temelj zbirke, ki jo je danes moč videti v londonskem muzeju Viktorije in Alberta v South Kensingtonu. Glavni namen osnovanja omenjenega muzeja je bil študentom oblikovanja in proizvajalcem ponuditi primere dobrega oblikovanja in dekorativnih motivov.²⁴

Kljub vsem dobrim namenom in daljnosežnim učinkom pa ob novonastalih spremembah niso vsi čutili navdušenja. Med vplivnejše umetnostne in družbene kritike 19. stoletja, ki omenjeni prelom – razvijajočo se mehanizacijo in na začetku omenjeni vznik nove discipline – zavrnejo že v izhodišču, sodi Britanec John Ruskin.²⁵ Kot eden redkih je bil v času navdušenja nad vsem mehaniziranim sposoben zavrniti obstoječo

22 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

23 Poleg omenjenih dveh sprememb je razstava vplivala tudi na področje poštnih komunikacij. V času razstave so namreč osnovali poštno združenje z namenom omogočiti vsem ljudem na svetu, da s pomočjo pisanja izmenjujejo mnenja. Prej je vsaka nacionalna pošta imela svoja pravila in pošiljanje iz ene države v drugo je pomenilo velik birokratski problem. Po veliki razstavi pa si je omenjeno združenje zadalo nalogo ustvariti mednarodni poštni sistem, katerega glavni cilj bo svoboda komunikacije. Kot četrto točko pa sir Cole izpostavi spremembo na področju patentne zaščite. Z veliko razstavo se zgodi prepoznavanje pravic iz naslova intelektualne lastnine. Kajti z željo po razstavljanju se je porodil tudi strah pred krajo idej, inovacij. Takrat je država razstavljavcem zagotovila, da jih bo zaščitila pred krajo. Za zaščito so izdali certifikate, ki so ščitili lastnike pred krajo ideje. Sprva je zaščita veljala le nekaj mesecev, kmalu pa je bil sprejet zakon, ki je izdelke zaščitil dolgoročno.

24 Kot zanimivost lahko omenim, da je sir Henry Cole organiziral tudi tako imenovani »Chamber of Horrors« v Marlborough House, kjer je pokazal zbirko »slabega« oblikovanja. Več glej v: Suga Yasuko, »Designing the Morality of Consumption: 'Chamber of Horrors' at the Museum of Ornamental Art, 1852–53«, *Design Issues*, vol. 20, št. 4, jesen 2004, pp. 43–56.

25 John Ruskin (1819–1900), znan kot umetniški in družbeni kritik. Njegovi eseji s področja umetnosti in arhitekture so bili v svojem času izredno vplivni. Gre za obdobje v času kraljice Viktorije (čas, ki ga označujejo za vrhunec britanske industrijske revolucije in britanskega imperija) in njenega naslednika kralja Edvarda VII. (1901–1910).

smer razvoja, in čeprav se tega verjetno sprva ni zavedal, je s svojo zavrnitvijo dejansko vplival na nadaljnji razvoj discipline oblikovanja. Novonastali surplus izdelkov – posledico tehnične reprodukcije – prepozna kot ključni problem, ki je v svojem bistvu povsem neumestljiv na področje umetnosti. Prepozna konflikt med visoko (tradicionalno) umetnostjo in (največkrat ceneni) tehnično reproduciranimi, prekopiranimi in neinventivnimi izdelki. In v tem kontekstu se je Ruskinu zavrnitev zdela edina možna rešitev. Pri tem se ne zadovolji zgolj s pozicijo zavrnitve. V svojem teoretiziranju se namreč poleg kategorične zavrnitve²⁶ industrializacije postavi na stran obrti in posledično predlaga svojo – sicer anahronistično – smer razvoja. Ponudi možnost, ki je sprta z vso logiko časa, ki mu pripada, in prav ta distanca, ki jo je do časa, v katerem deluje, sposoben ustvariti, mu omogoči, da predlaga način, kako misliti alternativo.

Za razumevanje Ruskinove vloge za nadaljnji razvoj oblikovanja nam je lahko v veliko pomoč spis Giorgia Agambena *Kaj je sodobno?*. Kajti po Agambenu šele takrat, ko smo *sodobni*, lahko pravzaprav mislimo alternativo. Biti sodoben pomeni, da se ne ujemamo s časom, ki mu pripadamo, se z zahtevami časa ne izenačujemo in smo zato posledično neprimerni. In prav ta tako imenovana neprimernost lastnemu času, ta odklon, ta anahronizem nam pravzaprav omogoči, da dojamemo, zaznamo čas, v katerem živimo. Ali kot to v nadaljevanju še dodatno razloži Agamben:

»Sodobnost je torej poseben odnos do lastnega časa, ki čas sprejema in se obenem od njega distancira; še natančneje – *je tisti odnos do časa, ki čas sprejema prek faznega zamika in anahronizma*. Tisti, ki se preveč popolno ujemajo z dobo, ki se ji povsem prilegajo v vsaki točki, niso sodobni, ker jim ravno zato ne uspe, da bi jo uzrli, ne uspejo upirati pogleda vanjo.«²⁷

Če kaj, si je Ruskin upal upreti pogled v svojo dobo. Gledano z današnje pozicije se je prav njegova zavrnitev sčasoma izkazala za ključno. Glavna dediščina njegovega razmišljanja oblikovalce namreč pripelje do temeljnega preobrata v delovanju, do zmo-

26 Z izjemo vlaka.

27 Giorgio Agamben, »Kaj je sodobno?«, *Likovne besede*, št. 87–88, 2009, p. 2.

žnosti razumeti, da nov način proizvodnje zahteva spremenjen pristop v oblikovanju izdelkov. Posledično Ruskinovo delovanje dokazuje, da nekaj, kar se zdi anahronistično za svoj čas, lahko revolucionira čas, ki šele prihaja. Označimo ga lahko za upornika, in prav zato je z današnjega stališča v svojem razmišljanju zanimiv. Ponuja namreč paradigmo v iskanju alternative in posledično – gledano za nazaj – Ruskin postane dogodek.

Po Kantu je zgodovinski znak »nekakšna izkušnja, ki kot dogodek kaže na njegovo [človeškega rodu] lastnost in zmožnost, da je *vzrok* za svoje napredovanje k boljšemu in (ker naj gre za dejanje svobodnega bitja) njegov *stvarnik*. Iz danega vzroka lahko napovemo neki dogodek kot učinek, če nastopijo okoliščine, ki pri tem sodelujejo.«²⁸ V primeru oblikovanja je *vzrok* Ruskinova zmožnost iztrgati se iz prevladujočega toka razvoja s kritičnim in lucidnim prepoznavanjem negativnih vidikov, ki jih sistem pospešene industrializacije prinaša. *Dogodek kot učinek* pa je začetek sprememb v delovanju oblikovalske discipline. Podobno kot je Kant po Michelu Foucaultu z vprašanjem *Kaj je razsvetljenje?* sprožil filozofsko vprašanje današnjega dne²⁹, Ruskin s svojo kritiko – kot bomo videli v nadaljevanju – ustvari konvergenco učinka v sodobnem času. Učinke zasledimo v delu Williama Morrisa in njegovega gibanja *Arts and Crafts*, kaže se v misli Franka Lloyda Wrighta, v nemškem združenju Deutscher Werkbund ter v temeljih morda najvplivnejše oblikovalske šole na svetu, Bauhausa.

Če pa na *dogodek* pogledamo skozi Badioujeva očala, potem je Ruskin tisti, ki postane iskani *dogodek*, iskani *vzrok* v zgodovini oblikovanja, saj s svojo zavrnitvijo in predlaga-
no alternativo vzpostavi zgodovino nastajajoče discipline. Sled njegovega razmišljanja se jasno kaže v prej naštetih temeljih sodobnega oblikovanja. V tem pogledu Morris, Deutscher Werkbund, Bauhaus in številni drugi postanejo učinek, postanejo *znak*, v Ruskinu prepoznajo tisti iskani več, ki jih vodi pri nadaljnjem delu in jih hkrati sili, da se nenehno vračajo k njegovi misli. To, kar nam Ruskin pravzaprav na zelo ilustrativen način pokaže, je, da je razvoj discipline oblikovanja vpet v zelo jasno korelacijo posa-

28 Immanuel Kant, *Zgodovinsko-politični spisi*, Philosophica Classica, Filozofski inštitut ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2006, p. 207.

29 Foucault, »Kaj je razsvetljenje?« ..., p. 39.

meznikov in gibanj. Ne gre za osamljene primere, ki nimajo zveze s preteklim, temveč vse temelji na vzroku in učinku. In ključni *vzrok*, ključni *dogodek* se v oblikovanju zgodi prav z mislijo Johna Ruskina. Sicer protagonisti Ruskinovo misel skozi razvoj prilagajajo novim situacijam, dejstvo pa je, da je sled njegovega razmišljanja še leta 1919 v manifestu Bauhausa zelo živa. V njem namreč idejni oče Walter Gropius nakaže na ideološko povezavo med obrtni in idejo po združitvi vseh umetnosti. Med drugim zapiše: »Arhitekti, slikarji, kiparji, vsi mi se moramo vrniti k obrti! Kajti nič takšnega ni, kot je 'profesionalna umetnost'. Ni bistvene razlike med umetnikom in obrtnikom. Umetnik je vzvišen obrtnik.«³⁰ Besede, ki bi jih lahko v celoti pripisali Johnu Ruskinu.

Ruskinovo misel – grobo gledano – v temelju zaznamuje zavrnitev obstoječega in obrat v preteklost, ki sledi zavrnitvi. Leta 1853 v eseju *The Nature of Gothic* razloži, zakaj je obrat v preteklost potreben. Po Ruskinu (tesno sledeč Puginu³¹) nam odgovor razkri- vajo »grdi škrti in brezoblične pošasti«, ki jih lahko zasledimo na gotških cerkvah. Ti škrti so »znaki življenja in svobode vsakega delavca, ki je udaril po kamnu; gre za svobodo razmišljanja in stopnjo bivanja, stopnjo, ki je ne more zagotoviti noben zakon, nobena listina, nobena miloščina; in zato mora biti prvi cilj vse Evrope, da to ponovno doseže za vse svoje otroke«.³² Če torej povzamemo Ruskinov odgovor na novonastalo situacijo, se ta glasi: treba se je vrniti h gotiki.³³ Ali če beremo s stališča oblikovalske discipline – treba se je vrniti k obrtnemu načinu dela in proizvodnje. Ključ do razumevanja Ruskinovega obrata h gotiki je v njegovem odnosu do dela. V gotiki namreč prepozna prej omenjeno Kantovo *svobodo razmišljanja*. Svobodo pri uveljavitvi lastne-

30 Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Manifesto, <http://www.bauhaus.de/english/bauhaus1919/manifest1919.htm> (januar 2009). Kasneje svojo misel popravi in namesto v obrti nadaljnji razvoj prepozna v industriji. Na začetni obrat k obrti vpliva predvsem prva svetovna vojna. Številni člani Deutscher Werkbunda (član je bil tudi Gropius) v industrializaciji prepoznajo glavnega krivca za prvo svetovno vojno. Posledično Gropius pri ustanavljanju nove šole zaledje poišče v obrti. Ko se stanje ekonomije v Nemčiji v začetku dvajsetih let 20. st. izboljša, se sčasoma spremeni tudi orientacija šole. Obrat pospeši tudi Theo van Doesburg, ki v Weimarju vodi tečaj De Stijl. Več v nadaljevanju.

31 V. A. W. N. Pugin, *Contrasts and The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, Spire Books Ltd. In Pugin Society, Reading 2003, pp. 5–6.

32 John Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *The Stones of Venice, Volume II: The Sea Stories*, Cosimo Classics, New York 2007 [izvirnik iz leta 1853], p. 163.

33 Ob tem je treba vedeti, da zanj gotika pomeni nasprotno od klasičnega, s čimer označuje moderni razvoj.

ga uma, ki se manifestira med snovanjem in izdelovanjem izdelka. Torej tisto svobodo, ki jo tehnična reprodukcija delu vzame, jo iz produkcije izključi. Gre za tisto iskano svobodo razmišljanja in izražanja kot glavno komponento človekovega ustvarjanja, ki smo jo po Ruskinu nazadnje poznali prav v času gotike, medtem ko nam vse ostale novodobne proizvodne alternative svobodo razmišljanja odvzamejo.

Ali, če si še enkrat pomagamo s Foucaultovo razlago Kantovega spisa *Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?*, kjer za očitno posledico kritike označi »praktično kritiko, ki privzema obliko možnega prestopa«³⁴, še več:

»Ta kritika bo genealoška v tem pomenu, da iz tega, kar smo, ne bo deducirala, kaj nam je moč narediti in vedeti, ampak bo iz naključnosti, ki nas je naredila to, kar smo, izluščila možnost, da prenehamo biti, delati ali misliti, kar smo, delamo ali mislimo. Ne poskuša narediti možno metafiziko, ki je končno postala znanost, marveč poskuša dati, tako daleč kot je to mogoče, nov zagon neomejenemu delu svobode.«³⁵

Če izrojene industrijsko proizvedene oblike označimo za kontingenco, potem nam to omogoča, da način dela ali mišljenja spremenimo. In v tem smislu Ruskinova kritika dela industrijske proizvodnje odpira možnosti za nov pristop k delu. Pravzaprav k oblikovanju, če smo natančnejši. Skuša nam (podobno kot Kant) pokazati izhod, pot iz nedoletnosti, pot k ponovni vzpostavitvi svobode razmišljanja. Izhod po Kantu »označuje razsvetljenstvo, proces, ki nas odvezuje statusa 'nezrelosti'«. ³⁶ Po Ruskinu torej z industrijsko proizvodnjo namesto propagiranega napredka v razmerju do dela pravzaprav nazadujemo. Z industrijsko proizvodnjo smo se namreč odpovedali³⁷ že posedovani svobodi v *prid* nezrelosti in nesposobnosti svobodnega razmišljanja. In v tem kontekstu Ruskinov poziv k vrnitvi h gotiki ostaja aktualen še danes, saj še vedno ostaja

34 Foucault, »Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?« ..., p. 46.

35 *Ibid.*

36 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

37 Odpoved ni bila samoumevna. Znana so odporniška gibanja, med njimi je bil najbolj razvpit ludizem. Pripadniki so se proti strojem borili tako, da so jih razbijali z macolami.

odprto vprašanje, kako v delu v (post)industrijskem času poiskati *nov zagon neomejenemu delu svobode*.

Z Ruskinovim obratom h gotiki pa se ne zgodi *zgolj* kritika dela, saj Ruskin slednjo razširi na kritiko družbe in hkrati odpre razpravo o pogojih za vpeljavo preteklega v prakso delovanja. V viktorijanskem obdobju, ki velja za vrhunec britanskega razvoja, poleg razcveta proizvodnje Ruskin podobno kot Friedrich Engels prepozna – »surovo ravnodušnost«, ki je za dosego napredka morala »žrtvovati boljši del svojega človečanstva«³⁸. Ali, če povzamem Ruskinove besede, spremembe, ki jih je prinesla industrijska proizvodnja prvič v zgodovini, so do temeljev pretresle družbeni ustroj.³⁹ Posledično je glavni problem družbe, ki hlepi *zgolj* po napredku z željo po vedno večjem dobičku, ta, da človeka dojema *zgolj* kot okostje. Na tej predpostavki je osnovana

»okostenela teorija napredka, ki negira dušo; in s tem ko smo učinkovito dokazali, kaj vse je mogoče izdelati iz kosti, in ko smo skonstruirali številne zanimive geometrijske podobe s pomočjo mrtvih glav in nadlahtnic, smo uspešno dokazali, kakšna nadloga bi bil ponovni pojav duše med vsemi atomskimi strukturami. Ne zanikam resnice te teorije: preprosto zanikam njeno aplikabilnost v današnji razvojni stopnji sveta.«⁴⁰

Ruskin je v iskanju življenja pri delu – v družbi, ki se je hvalila z vrhunci znanosti in tehnologije – videl industrijsko proizvodnjo, ki je v gonji za dobičkom pozabila na človeka ter ga mimogrede še oropala veselja pri delu.⁴¹ V industrijski proizvodnji, ki je bila v tistem času še daleč od Fordovega tekočega traku, je Ruskin prepoznal posledice, ki jih je s seboj nosila obljuba napredka. Videl je smrt človeka na tekočem traku, vse na račun triumfirajočega kapitala. Hlepenje po napredku nas je po Ruskinu razčloveči-

38 Friedrich Engels, *Položaj delavskega razreda v Angliji*, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1948, pp. 49–50.

39 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *The Stones ...*, p. 86.

40 John Ruskin, »Unto this Last«, *Unto This Last and Other Writings*, (ed. Clive Wilmer), Penguin Books, London 1997, p. 168.

41 Misel o izgubi veselja pri delu (kot bomo videli v naslednjem poglavju) kasneje nadgradi William Morris. V: Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 86.

lo⁴², podobno kot je strojna obdelava na več manjših delov razbila postopek izdelave. Mehanizacija je človeka »razcepila na zgolj delce človeka – na razbitine, na drobtinice življenja«. ⁴³ Na nekoga, ki ni več sposoben samostojno izdelati niti bucike. Če je bil človek prej del narave, po novem postane le podaljšek stroja.

Kako se v vse našteto vključuje oblikovanje? Z razumevanjem pogojev, v katerih se je osnovala disciplina oblikovanja, nam omogoči lažje razumevanje nadaljnjih korakov in učinkov, ki se v oblikovanju zgodijo skozi profesionalizacijo discipline. Ruskin na nekem mestu zapiše, da danes »proizvajamo vse, le človeka ne«. ⁴⁴ In v tem pogledu svojo pozornost in kritiko že takrat usmeri v stvari, ki jih proizvajamo. Ne zgolj v način in pogoje izdelave, temveč se osredotoča tudi na to, kaj proizvajamo, kako slednje vrednotimo in kakšne učinke zaznavamo v družbi. ⁴⁵ Skratka, Ruskin že takrat načne ključna vprašanja hitro razvijajoče se materialne družbe in pravzaprav postavi temelj teoriji oblikovanja.

Slednjega pa se loti zelo sistematično. Načne razpravo o delovanju in se posveti iskanju najboljšega načina urejanja nastale situacije. Pri tem zavrne pridiganje – s tem namreč zgolj zasmehujemo – in se opredeli za poučevanje. Kajti s poučevanjem po Ruskinu lahko dosežemo pravo mero razumevanja in zmožnost prepoznavanja dobrega dela, ki bo ljudi osrečilo. ⁴⁶ V skladu s svojim prepričanjem v že omenjenem eseju *The Nature of Gothic* poda osnovna načela delovanja. Ta zasnuje na treh »splošnih in preprostih pravilih«⁴⁷:

42 Na neobzrdano širjenje revščine in izkoriščanje novonastalega delavskega razreda se Ruskin odzove v esejih z naslovom *Unto this Last*, kjer načrtno napade razvoj politične ekonomije. »Nisem tisti, ki bi dvomil ali zavračal napredek tega stoletja, ki je v mnogih pogledih uporaben za človeštvo. Toda zdi se mi izredno temno znamenje glede na to, da od nas pričakuje brezbriznost na osnovi nepoštenosti in krutosti v gonji po bogastvu.« V: *Ibid.*, p. 129.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Temo načne že Pugin v: Pugin, *Contrasts and The ...*, p. 87.

46 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 87.

47 Tudi predhodna pravila delovanja za področji oblikovanja in arhitekture najdemo pri Augustusu Welbyju Northmoreu Puginu. Osnuje ju na dveh načelih: 1. Na stavbi ne sme biti nobenih posebnosti, ki niso koristne ter nimajo nobenega pomena za konstrukcijo ali posest. 2. Ornament se mora skladati z osnovno kon-

- Nikoli ne spodbujaj k proizvodnji kakršnegakoli izdelka, ki ni absolutno nujen in pri katerem *Inovacija*⁴⁸ nima nobenega deleža.
- Nikoli ne zahtevaj natančne obdelave zavoljo nje same, temveč le zaradi praktičnega ali plemenitega razloga.
- Nikoli ne spodbujaj kakršnekoli imitacije ali kopiranja, razen v primeru ohranitve pomembnih del.⁴⁹

Ruskin sredi 19. stoletja zasnuje pravila, ki so v oblikovanju – sploh če jih beremo z današnjimi očali – še vedno aktualna. Še več, prav z aktualiziranjem pravil nam ponuja trajnostno orientiran kodeks oblikovanja. Zakaj? Če se osredotočimo že zgolj na prvo polovico stavka v prvi točki, vidimo, da Ruskin od nas zahteva, da izdelujemo zgolj tiste izdelke, ki jih potrebujemo.⁵⁰ Tako odpre eno od še danes pomembnejših vprašanj oblikovanja, saj razvoj discipline v naslednjih dveh stoletjih v precejšnji meri zaznamuje definiranje in razumevanje vloge potrebe v oblikovanju. Po Ruskinu je bil glavni problem v zvezi s produkcijo nepotrebnih izdelkov v tem, da z angažiranjem delavca za izdelavo nepotrebne izdelka (ali pa s tem, da tak izdelek kupimo) zgolj podpiramo sodobno suženjstvo. Z Ruskinovim prvim pravilom odpadejo tudi vse variacije enega in istega izdelka, ki se med seboj razlikujejo le v inkrustaciji.⁵¹ Pri proizvodnji absolutno potrebnega izdelka pa je, kot še zapiše v nadaljevanju, nujna tudi inovacija. Ruskin inovacijo razume kot tisti del, ki delavcu/oblikovalcu omogoči uporabo lastnega uma. In zato je ta postavka – v skladu s prej omenjeno Ruskinovo kritiko dela – ključno vodilo pri snovanju/izdelovanju izdelka.⁵²

strukcijo stavbe. Vir: <http://lifeloom.com/263HistArch1.htm#Pugin> (februar 2009). Kot je znano, je Pugin močno vplival na Ruskinovo razmišljanje. Pugin prav tako velja za velikega zagovornika gotike v arhitekturi.

48 Veliko začetnico in kurzivo povzemam po Ruskinovem navajanju.

49 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 88.

50 Ruskin kot primer nepotrebne izdelka navede steklene kroglice. Problem potrebe (in želje) v oblikovanju obravnavam v naslednjih poglavjih.

51 Ruskin namreč zagovarja trditev, da mora tudi dekoracija zadovoljevati svoj namen. Če ji to ne uspe in je nanesena brez prave dekorativne moči, potem govorimo le o inkrustaciji, ki poleg tega, da ne zadovolji svojega namena, skriva v sebi še ure odvečnega dela. Do zadovoljitve namena po Ruskinu pride takrat, ko imamo med delom nenehno pred sabo namen arhitekture ali izdelka, za katerega dekoracija nastaja. V: John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1989 [prvič izdano leta 1849], pp. 26–27.

52 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 89.

Trditev, da gre pri Ruskinu za veliko bolj trajnostno zahtevo od današnjih, utemeljujem na tem, da danes v kodeksih ne zasledimo postavke, ki bi oblikovalcu jasno narekovala presojo, ali je naročeni izdelek sploh potreben. Današnji kodeksi se zadovoljijo z napotki, naj oblikovalci pri svojem delu v vseh pogledih minimalizirajo škodo, ki bi jo z izdelkom lahko v kakršnemkoli pogledu povzročili okolju.⁵³ V večini se današnja pravila uklanjajo kapitalistični logiki nenehne potrebe po rasti proizvodnje, pa čeprav za ceno proizvodnje izdelkov, ki po nepotrebnem polnijo trg in smetišča. Oblikovalčeva naloga v tej verigi se orientira na zmanjševanje škode, ki neizpodbitno nastaja pri proizvodnji nepotrebnih izdelkov. Zato Ruskin s pozivom k antiprodukciji ostaja radikalen in hkrati aktualen. Oživitev Ruskinove misli zasledimo v drugi polovici 20. stoletja, v manifestu Kena Garlanda, v misli Victorja Papaneka in pri radikalnem italijanskem gibanju *antidizajn*.⁵⁴ Člani italijanskega gibanja, podobno kot Ruskin nezadovoljni s situacijo na področju oblikovanja, podrejenega industrijski proizvodnji, pozovejo k prekinitvi, k antiprodukciji, v želji po redifiniranju oblikovalske discipline. Gre torej za nekakšen poziv h kolektivni zavrnitvi dela. In prav s tem, ko protagonisti gibanja *antidizajn* (in ostali) ponovijo Ruskinovo zahtevo, potrjujejo, da se Ruskinove zahteve – ne glede na čas – vsakič znova aktualizirajo. Aktualnost potrди tudi Dieter Rams s svojimi desetimi pravili za dobro oblikovanje, saj se pri njem prvo in drugo pravilo glasita kot odmev Ruskinovih besed: dobro oblikovanje je inovativno⁵⁵ in dobro oblikovanje ustvarja uporaben izdelek⁵⁶.

S tem ko Ruskinova pravila beremo skozi očala sedanjosti, pa moramo hkrati ves čas vedeti, da jih beremo vpeta v današnjo logiko industrijske proizvodnje. Zaradi dana-

53 Profesionalni kodeks, na katerega se naslanjam, je ICSID-ov kodeks profesionalne etike iz leta 2001. V tretji točki z naslovom *Zaščiti ekosistem* so nanizane točke, ki oblikovalcem podajajo pravila delovanja pri zaščiti okolja. Kodeks je dosegljiv na www.icsid.org (julij 2004).

54 Delovanje gibanja *antidizajn* podrobneje obravnavam v poglavju *Upor antidizajna*.

55 Pravilo se v nadaljevanju glasi: »Ne posnema obstoječih oblik izdelkov in ne ustvarja novosti zaradi njih samih. Bistvo inovacije mora biti jasno razvidno v vseh funkcijah izdelka. Tovrstne možnosti nikakor niso izčrpane. Tehnološki razvoj vseskozi ponuja nove možnosti za inovativne rešitve.« V: *Trajnostne alternative v oblikovanju: skrajni čas, da začnemo izgubljati čas*, Barbara Predan in Cvetka Požar (ed.), Muzej za arhitekturo in oblikovanje in Društvo Pekinpah, Ljubljana 2009, p. 29.

56 »Izdelek je narejen zato, da bi se ga uporabljalo. Služiti mora določenemu namenu – tako glede primarne kot dodatnih funkcij. Najpomembnejša naloga oblikovanja je optimizirati uporabnost izdelka.« *Ibid.*

šnjega, na trenutke že kar patološkega stremljenja k najboljšemu je zanimivo brati drugo pravilo: »Nikoli ne zahtevaj natančne obdelave zavoljo nje same, temveč le zaradi praktičnega ali plemenitega razloga.« Za Ruskina sta pri pojmu *delati najboljše* značilna dva pristopa. Oba pa je treba razumeti skozi njegovo kritiko dela. Po eni strani stremjenje k najboljšemu zavrača, saj je delo »[...] lahko izgubljeno tudi s tem, da je predobro za svoj material ali preveč občutljivo, da bi preneslo izpostavitve. Slednje na splošno velja za današnji čas, še posebej pa za renesanso, katere delo je najhujša napaka vsega.«⁵⁷ Zakaj renesansa? Viktorijanski čas, ki mu je Ruskin pripadal, je enačil z materialno pokvarjenostjo visoke renesanse, saj naj bi se v času renesanse prvič pokazal razkorak med obrtjo in umetnostjo. Razkorak med tistim, ki si zamišlja (arhitekt), in tistim, ki zgolj izdeluje (obrtnik). Upre se torej zato, ker se v času renesanse zgodi novo pojmovanje umetnosti, in to pojmovanje Ruskin opiše z besedami plemstva: »grandiozno, veličastno in simetrično«. Slednje pa Ruskin označi za tipično »vulgarno ozkoglednost«.⁵⁸ Po njegovem se s tem premikom zgodi odtujitev od preprostega človeka v želji po zadovoljitvi plemstva. V tem pogledu laže razumemo Ruskinovo zavrnitev novonastalega poklica oblikovalca. Ta se je po njegovem mnenju nedvomno le pridružil tistim, ki že od renesanse dalje skrbijo za odtujitev, za sublimacijo vsakdanjih predmetov.

Po drugi strani pa rdečo nit Ruskinovega razmišljanja vodi prav sublimacija materiala in dela; »[...] v duhu žrtvovanja bi, prvič, morali vsako stvar narediti kar najbolje, in drugič, porast dela bi morali sprejeti kot porast lepote na stavbi. [...] Vprašanje ni, kako narediti več, temveč kako narediti bolje.«⁵⁹ Ob natančnem branju lahko iz napisanega razberemo, da je to, čemur Ruskin glasno nasprotuje, falzifikacija materiala in dela (tipičen primer lažnosti dela je npr. mehanizacija). Dajati vtis nečesa, kar stvar v resnici ni. Medtem ko je stremljenje k najboljšemu vsekakor vrlina, dokler je najboljše v spoštljivem odnosu do materiala in vloženega (po možnosti ročnega) dela. Ruskin torej pri stremljenju k najboljšemu postavi distinkcijo. Doseganje najboljšega pogojuje z ohranitvijo spoštovanja. Spoštovanja, ki ga Ruskin povezuje z ročnim delom, izgubo

57 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 26.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21. Še ena misel, ki je vedno bolj aktualna tudi danes. Dieter Rams je na primer marca 2008 v Ljubljani pripravil predavanje z naslovom *Manj, toda bolje*.

le-tega pa s preusmeritvijo v industrijsko proizvodnjo. Na tem mestu se torej ponovno vračamo k Ruskinovemu razumevanju koncepta dela. Delo je namreč tisto, ki izdelku podeljuje vrednost in ustvari razliko med tistim *pravim* izdelkom in izdelkom, ki *to ni*.

Prav zadnje, ustvarjanje razlike med *pravim* izdelkom in izdelkom, ki *to ni*, pa je tisto, kar nam omogoči, da navadni objekt iztrgamo iz vsakdanjosti. Vsakdanjosti, ki je v Ruskinovem času postala industrijska proizvodnja. In v tem smislu lažje razumemo iskano Ruskinovo sublimacijo. Podobno kot Lacan zapiše za umetnost:

»Umetniška dela resda posnemajo predmete, ki jih predstavljajo, toda njihov cilj prav zato ni predstavljanje predmetov. Z izdelavo predmetovega posnetka naredijo iz tega predmeta nekaj drugega. Tako posnemanje le hlinijo. Predmet je postavljen v neko razmerje s Stvarjo, razmerje, ki je tu zato, da hkrati obkroža, naredi prisotno in odsotno.«⁶⁰

tudi Ruskin opozori na potrebo po prepoznavanju razlike. V Ruskinovem pomenu predmet za nekaj drugega naredi prej omenjena uporaba lastnega uma oblikovalca/delavca in pa njegova zmožnost izdelati najboljše glede na lastne sposobnosti. Industrijska proizvodnja nas oropa vsega naštetega, hkrati pa njeno posnemanje ni več hlinjeno, temveč postane paradigma v množenju prej zgolj enega originala. Posnemanje, ki ga industrijska proizvodnja 19. stoletja hlini, so vrhunske oblike in postopki obrtniške, ročne izdelave. Takšno oblikovanje je nesprejemljivo za Ruskinovo stremljenje k obrtniški logiki in nesprejemljivo bo – tudi na podlagi Ruskinove in Morrisove zavrnitve – postalo tudi za prihajajočo industrijsko proizvodnjo 20. stoletja.

V razlikovanju *pravih* od *nepravih* izdelkov pa se skriva tudi ključ do razumevanja Ruskinovega pomena izraza *najboljše*. Zanj najboljše ne pomeni popolnosti na primer izraza, izdelka, dela, temveč išče veselje do dela⁶¹, se upira *vsiljeni* delitvi dela in gradi – kot že rečeno – najboljše v okvirih naravne zmožnosti posameznika. Kajti »sijajnejša ko je narava, več pomanjkljivosti se bo pokazalo. Zakon veselja je, da bodo najboljše

60 Jacques Lacan, *Etika psihoanalize*, Delavska enotnost, Ljubljana 1988, p. 141.

61 Iskanje veselja pri delu podrobneje obravnavam v poglavju *Morrisovo oblikovanje za vse*.

stvari redko videne v svoji najboljši obliki.«⁶² Zato zagovarja trditev, da zahteva po popolni obliki, popolnem delu, pravzaprav pomeni zaslužjenje človeka, pomeni ustvariti »stroj, živo orodje«.⁶³ V tem pogledu Ruskin pred nas postavlja izbiro, ali želimo iz delavca ustvariti stroj ali človeka. Če se odločimo za človeka, se moramo že vnaprej zavedati, da zahtevati perfekcijo pomeni zahtevati nehumanost. To, da se odločimo za človeka, namreč pomeni, da mu omogočimo, da razmišlja, razvija domišljijo, ustvarja po lastni pameti in znanju. V izdelku, ki ga bo ustvaril, se bodo izrisale »vsa njegova grobost, vsa njegova dolgočasnost, vse njegove nezmožnosti; sramota za sramoto, neuspeh za neuspehom, pomislek za pomislekom: toda to, kar bomo s tem še dosegli, je celotno njegovo dostojanstvo«.⁶⁴ In prav slednje z mehanizacijo, ki temelji na tem, da ustvari kar se da popolne izdelke, pri kateri morajo biti vsi izdelki povsem enaki, brez napak,⁶⁵ pravzaprav ubijemo. Ti »popolni«, z mehanizacijo narejeni izdelki po Ruskinu torej sodijo v kategorijo izdelkov, ki *to niso*, medtem ko izdelke, v katerih se zrcali celotno delavčevo dostojanstvo, označi za tiste *prave* izdelke.

Še več, umanjkanje ročnega dela po Ruskinu prinese ničvredne stvari, nespoštovanje materiala pa celo izenači s kaznivim dejanjem:

»Oskrunitve resnice, ki sramotijo poezijo in slikarstvo, so torej večinoma omejene na obravnavo njihovih vsebin. Toda v arhitekturi je mogoča še ena, manj subtilna, veliko bolj zaničljiva oskrunitev resnice: lažna zagotovitev o spoštovanju narave materiala ali kvantitete dela. In to je v polnem pomenu besede napačno. Zasluži si neodobravanje tako kot katerokoli hudodelstvo.«⁶⁶

62 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 83.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

65 Le Corbusier v dvajsetih letih dvajsetega stoletja opozori na nasprotni problem. Številni industrijsko proizvedeni izdelki so namesto perfekcije imeli številne napake. Slednje so proizvajalci zakrivali z ornamentiranjem. Glej: Le Corbusier, *Towards a new Architecture*, BN Publishing, Thousand Oaks 2008 [izvirnik iz leta 1923].

66 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 34. K spoštovanju narave materiala se Ruskin v svojih spisih pogosto vrača. V besedilu *The Work of Iron* opozori, da »bo umetnost manjvredna, če za delo uporabimo material, pri katerem ne izpostavimo njegovih posebnih kvalitete«. Slednje pomeni, da moramo, preden izberemo material, natančno vedeti, kaj želimo doseči, in želenemu primerno izbrati material, ki bo ustrezal danim lastnostim

Tony Fry v besedilu *Sacred Design I* izpostavi zanimivo dilemo. Z Ruskinom se strinja, da je problem mehanizacije v potencialni dehumanizaciji postopka, po drugi strani pa prav v tem, da Ruskin in kasneje William Morris z gibanjem *Arts and Crafts* mehanizacijo označita za sovražnika obrti, zazna glavni problem, ki je v oblikovanju prisoten še danes.⁶⁷ S prevlado industrijske proizvodnje namreč redkokateri oblikovalec z veseljem sprejme oznako obrtnik. V številnih primerih jo razumejo celo kot žaljivko, v smislu ne povsem opravljenega dela ali celo ne dovolj kakovostnega dela. Torej dela, ki je ostalo na ravni ročne, maloserijske izdelave in ni ugledalo luč industrijske proizvodnje. Kot obrtne označujejo izdelke, ki (pogosto ljubiteljsko) temeljijo na tradicionalnem izročilu in zato ne vsebujejo iskanega presežka, ki ga oblikovalci tako radi poudarjajo pri svojem delu. Dodaten pomen, ki v oblikovalskih krogih rad spremlja izraz »obrtno«, je tudi ta, da s tem označujemo delo, ki ga opravljaš po nareku drugega. Gre sicer za večščino, ki jo obvladaš, toda brez vloženega intelektualnega potenciala, torej ravno tistega dela, ki je po Ruskinu osnova za kakršenkoli *pravi* izdelek. Vse to pa so zgolj pomeni, ki so se s pomočjo predsodkov preselili v oblikovalsko mišljenje in največkrat stojijo na trhlih temeljih. Sploh če ohranimo pogled na obrt skozi Ruskinovo misel: kot smo doslej že lahko videli, namreč Ruskin obrt enači s konceptom dela in uporabo intelekta. Podobno definicijo obrtnega zapiše tudi David Pye: »Če že moram pripisati pomen besedi obrt, bom kot prvi približek rekel, da preprosto pomeni večščino pri uporabi kakršnekoli tehnike ali opreme, pri kateri kvaliteta rezultata ni vnaprej določena, temveč je odvisna od presoje, spretnosti in skrbi, ki jih izdelovalec uporablja med delom.«⁶⁸

Prav našete tri točke: sposobnost presoje, obvladanje večščine in dobršna mera skrbi, največkrat umanjajo v sodobnem oblikovanju. Podobno tudi Fry v eseju misel glede na oblikovalske predsodke spreobrne in opozori na nujnost ponovne vpeljave obrtni-

gradiva. S tem izkoristimo *prave* lastnosti materiala in posledično ustvarimo podlago za umetniško delo. To je pravzaprav ključno, saj z napačno, ali še huje, z namerno nepravilno uporabo materiala že v izhodišču oskrunimo potencialni izdelek, umetniško delo, in ne nazadnje sam material.

67 Tony Fry, »Sacred Design I«, *Discovering Design. Explorations in Design Studies* (ed. Richard Buchanan in Victor Margolin), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago in London 1995, p. 208. Ob tem naj opozorim, da Morris ni bil a priori proti stroju. To temo podrobneje obravnavam v naslednjem poglavju.

Zavračanje obrti v oblikovanju pa vendar ni tako vsesplošno, kot se morda zdi. Odličen primer integriranja obrti v oblikovanje – ali še bolje, sinergije obeh polj – najdemo v skandinavskem in italijanskem oblikovanju.

68 Pye, *The Nature and ...*, p. 20.

škega razmišljanja v oblikovanje in mehanizirano proizvodnjo. V obrti namreč prepoznana ključni element, ki manjka tako oblikovalcem kot proizvodnji: skrb. Skrb za material, kakovost in izdelek na celotni njegovi poti.⁶⁹ S tem argumentom pa na svoj način pravzaprav ponovi Ruskinove besede, ki kličejo k nujnosti izkazovanja spoštovanja do materiala, dela in izdelka, ki nastaja. Ker je danes nepredstavljivo razmišljati o zgolj ročni, obrtni proizvodnji, hkrati pa se nehumane razmere v industrijski proizvodnji približujejo tistim iz 19. stoletja, se logičen korak zdi v iskanju kakovosti v hibridni, obrtno-industrijski proizvodnji. Ruskin tega koraka sicer ni predvidel, kljub temu pa je s svojim vztrajanjem pri nujnosti obrata k obrtnemu pristopu tlakoval pot kasnejšim gibanjem, ki so hibridizacijo prepoznala in v začetni fazi tudi v praksi izvajala.⁷⁰

Ruskinovo nasprotovanje tehnični reprodukciji pa je treba brati tudi v luči odnosa do narave in naše spremenljivosti v odnosu do zakonov. Kajti tako imenovana Ruskinova oskrnitev resnice⁷¹, torej lažno spoštovanje dela in materiala, je pravzaprav glavni vzrok za propad gotike, pa tudi vzrok njene nezmožnosti za ponovni vzpon. V nasprotju z renesanso (in vsemu, kar je sledilo) gotika – v času vzpona in na vrhuncu – plemenito združuje domišljijo in zakon.⁷² Slednje nas pripelje do točke, ki v Ruskinovem razmišljanju igra ključno vlogo v razumevanju našega delovanja: zakon in njegova narava. V času gotike smo po Ruskinu priča *pravilni* rabi znanja – v nasprotju z 19. stoletjem, ko je glavni vzrok za prevlado grdih izdelkov v *nepravilni* uporabi znanja. Slednje kaže na možno spreminjajočo se naravo zakona in posledično na nezanesljiva pravila delovanja.

Zavedajoč se pasti in potencialnih sprememb, ki jih prinaša razvoj – kot manka pravil, ki uravnavajo subjektivno delovanje – Ruskin poleg že omenjenih treh pravil predlaga

69 Fry, »Sacred Design I«, *Discovering Design ...*, pp. 203–215.

70 V mislih imam združenje Deutscher Werkbund (predvsem obdobje po prvi svetovni vojni), prva leta Bauhausa in številne primere skandinavskega oblikovanja. Prav pri zadnjem je hibridizacija proizvodnje še danes najbolj živa.

71 Po Ruskinu se je ta začela v nemški in švicarski gotiki, saj se je zatekala k varljivim sistemom imitacije. Slednje se je nato sčasoma prikradlo tudi v francosko gotiko, kar je botrovalo še številnejšim zlorabam. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 67.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

še dodatna merila za lažjo presojo pri delu. Kajti ne zadovolji se s tem, da je vsakomur dana možnost, da se odloči, kaj je prav. V nasprotju z modernim kantovskim moralnim zakonom⁷³, pri katerem smo po Foucaultu sami odgovorni za nezrel status in takšnemu stanju lahko ubežimo le s spremembo, ki jo bomo sami povzročili v sebi, in to na način, da bomo sledili razsvetljenskemu geslu »drzni si vedeti«⁷⁴, nam Ruskin ponuja pomoč. S pomočjo napotkov nam na način klasične etike osvetli pot in posledično odpravlja dilemo med pravilnim in nepravilnim. V klasični etiki »subjekt [...] izvorno ne ve, kaj mu je storiti, zato išče modrost«.⁷⁵ Toda pri vsem skupaj pride do že omenjenega ključnega razkoraka s predpisi in spremenljivo naravo zakona, kar meče senco dvoma na trditev, da je zakon tisti, ki nam bo *povedal*, kaj je prav in kaj narobe. Slednje poraja vprašanja. Zakaj se, kljub spreminjajoči se naravi zakona in posledično nezanesljivim pravilom za delovanje, Ruskin odloči predlagati lastna pravila? Kako torej nekdo, ki zavrača zakon na podlagi spremenljivosti, sploh lahko zasnuje pravila? Kako ustvari zakon, po katerem naj bi delovali?

Ruskin rešitev poišče v človekovi naravi, saj svoja načela osnuje na podlagi vrlin človekove narave. Narava je namreč tista, ki se po Ruskinovem mnenju lahko zoperstavi znanju. Slednje spet kaže na dvojnost, ki je pri Ruskinu nenehno prisotna. Z anahronističnim obratom k naravi hkrati prakticira moderen odnos do znanja. Ruskinu torej na svojstven način uspe povezati klasični moralni zakon z modernim, kantovskim. Išočiči subjekt, ki odgovora ne pozna, lahko tega najde tako, da vselej deluje z vnaprej danimi načeli, ki temeljijo na (neusmiljenih) vrlih človekove narave. Slednje spomni na načelo resnicoljubnosti, ki ga je v *Nevednem učitelju* razložil Jacques Rancière:

»Motimo se vedno iz hudobije, se pravi iz lenobe, iz želje, da ne bi več slišali, kaj je umno bitje dolžno samemu sebi. Načelo zla ni zmotno poznavanje dobrega, ki je cilj dejanja. Načelo zla je nezvestoba sebi. *Spoznaj samega sebe* ne pomeni več po platonsko: vedi, kaj

73 V mislih imam moralni zakon, ki ga po besedah Jelice Šumič Riha zaznamujeta enigmatičnost in »strukturna nedoločnost, [...] ki reče samo Deluj!, ne pa tudi, kako, [kar] postavi subjekta v položaj, da se mora sam odločiti, kaj je tisto, kar zahteva zakon. Ni zakon tisti, ki odloča, pač pa subjekt.« Jelica Šumič Riha, *Mutacije etike. Od utopije sreče do neozdravljive resnice*, Založba ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2002, p. 14.

74 Foucault, »Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?« ..., p. 40.

75 Šumič Riha, *Mutacije etike* ..., p. 14.

je dobro zate. Pomeni: vrni se k sebi, k tistemu v tebi, ki se ne more motiti. [...] To načelo *resnicoljubnosti* je v jedru emancipirajoče izkušnje. Ni ključ za nobeno učenost, ampak je prednostni odnos vsakogar do resnice, odnos, ki ga postavlja na njegovo pot, v njegovo orbito iskanja. Je moralni temelj zmožnosti spoznanja.«⁷⁶

Z vrnitvijo k sebi ukinemo možnost napake, ali kot bi slednje označil Ruskin, preprečimo nepravilno rabo znanja. In v tem smislu pravzaprav ponovi moderno Kantovo načelo, da je vsak sam tisti, ki s tem, da si drzne vedeti, povzroči spremembo v sebi. Ob tem Ruskin vztraja pri ključnem poudarku v zasnovi, torej tem, da napotkov ne zasnuje na znanju (to je vendar krivo za situacijo, v kateri smo se znašli), temveč na človekovi naravi. Na naravi, ki ga po Rancièrju postavlja na pot emancipacije. Ker smo po Ruskinu izgubili stik z lastno naravo, nam za to, da ponovno najdemo pot k samemu sebi, ponudi sedem svetilk. Te so: žrtvovanje, resnica, moč, lepota, življenje, spomin in pokorščina. Ponudi merila, ki naj bi nam omogočila vrnitev k sebi in nam hkrati omogočila ponovno ločitev *dobrega* od *zla*. Kljub zapisanemu Ruskinova stališča z današnjega gledišča zvenijo nedorečena, saj se zdi, da ni bolj izmuzljive stvari, kot je človekova narava. Še več, vsako naše spogledovanje z naravo je zgolj naša interpretacija narave, saj v resnici ne moremo vedeti, kaj narava »zares« hoče. In šele ko se v neki situaciji znajdemo, lahko glede na odziv skušamo ugotoviti, kaj je bilo tisto, kar nas je vodilo. Kaj torej Ruskin misli, ko zasnuje pravila na človekovi naravi? Na kakšen način razsoja?

V prvem eseju zbirke *Unto This Last* zapiše, da verjame, da »vsak človek lahko ve in večina nas ve, kaj je pravično in nepravilno dejanje«. Nadaljuje: »Vsi tudi lahko vemo, da bodo na koncu posledice pravičnega dejanja najboljše možno, tako za druge kot za nas same, čeprav ne moremo reči, kaj je najboljše ali kako bo do tega prišlo.«⁷⁷ V Kantovi maniri misel dodatno dopolni: »Vedno je moč vedeti, kaj je prav, ne pa tudi, kaj je mogoče.«⁷⁸ Slednje naveže na odgovor umetnika Williama Mulreadyja, ki je na Ruskinovo vprašanje, kako mu uspe združiti perfekcijo risbe s sijajnimi barvami, odgovoril: »Vedeti moraš, kaj moraš narediti, in to narediti.« In v tem odgovoru se po Ruskinu

76 Jacques Rancière, *Nevedni učitelj. Pet lekcij o intelektualni emancipaciji*, En-Knap, Ljubljana 2005, p. 59.

77 Ruskin, »The Roots of Honour«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 169.

78 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 2.

skriva temeljni princip vsega človekovega truda. Zapiše namreč še: »Verjamem, da napako manjkrat pripišemo pomanjkanju sredstev ali jezi pri delu kot pa zmedenemu razumevanju, kaj je pravzaprav treba narediti.«⁷⁹

Če torej sledimo Ruskinovi misli, vidimo, da nimamo ideala, po katerem delujemo, toda ko nekaj naredimo, vemo, ali je to, kar smo naredili, *pravično dejanje*. Vodi nas znanje iz prakse. Podobno kot pri Rancièrju tudi pri Ruskinu velja, da imamo vsi možnost prakticiranja, ni pa nujno, da se za to tudi odločimo. Še vedno se lahko odločimo za *lažjo* pot, pot lenobe, ki jo po Rancièrju determinira stavek *Ne morem*. Ko se odločimo za delo, pa smo po Ruskinu pred vsakim dejanjem na razpotju. Odločimo se lahko za argument, ki temelji na »reprezentaciji preračunljivosti in inherentni vrednosti dela, ki je največkrat majhna in jo je možno ovreči; drugi argument pa temelji na razmerju [našega dejanja] z višjimi sloji človekove kreposti«.⁸⁰ Če slednje prevedemo v današnji jezik, Ruskin oblikovalce postavi na (danes znano) razpotje, ki se odloča med (bolj razširjenim) zadovoljevanjem kapitala ali – na drugi strani – iskanjem, oblikovanjem v korist družbe. Na tej točki se torej Ruskin ponovno izkaže za aktualnega za današnjo teorijo oblikovanja. Oblikovalec se dnevno odloča med dobro in boljšo odločitvijo, pri čemer – kot bomo videli v nadaljevanju – praksa v Ruskinovi maniri sproti piše kodeks delovanja. Vprašanje, ki ostaja odprto, je, kako na način, da slediš *zgolj* znanju iz prakse, prideš do novega spoznanja.

S tem ko postavimo tezo, da imamo vsi možnost prakticirati *pravično dejanje*, se približamo postavki, ki temelji na aksiomu, da vsi ljudje mislijo. Aksiom je blizu, kot to označi Jelica Šumič Riha, spontani interpretaciji, ki temelji na trditvi, da če ljudje mislijo, potem verjamemo, da ljudje že vedo.⁸¹ In prav na tem vedenju, ki naj bi bilo dano večini, Ruskin osnuje sedež trajnosti človeške narave, v nasprotju s spreminjajočo se naravo zakona. Zato zmožnost sklicevanja na lastnosti človekove narave Ruskin ute-

79 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

80 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, pp. 5–6. Ruskin v nadaljevanju stavka za izvir kreposti označi Boga.

81 Jelica Šumič Riha, »Jetnik Drugega, ki ne obstaja«, *Filozofski vestnik*, letnik XXVIII, št. 1, Filozofski inštitut ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2007, p. 83. Poleg omenjene interpretacije je pomembna tudi nevedoča vednost: simptoma, ki se jima bom posvetila v poglavjih, ki sledijo.

melji na univerzalnosti in nespremenljivosti. Prav slednje pa za zakone, temelječe na znanju, ne velja:

»Nobenega zakona in principa ni, ki bi temeljil na pretekli praksi in ga ne bi bilo mogoče v trenutku strmoglaviti z vzponom nove okoliščine ali z iznajdbo novega materiala. [...] Zato si je treba prizadevati za določitev smernic, ki bodo vsak napor vodile z nekimi trajnimi, splošnimi in neovrgljivimi zakoni. Zakoni, ki bodo osnovani na človekovi naravi, in ne na njegovem znanju. Ob tem morajo vsebovati neusmiljenost človekove narave, saj se le na tak način lahko izognejo razveljavitvi, ki jo prinaša pravilna ali nepravilna rast znanja.«⁸²

Podobno kot pri Ruskinu konstantnost spreminjajočih se misli najdemo tudi pri Hannah Arendt, ki več kot sto let kasneje potrди zapisano: »Za območje človeških zadev, v katerem se običajno gibljejo smrtniki, je značilno, da je v stalnem pretoku. Tem spreminjajočim se razmeram pa ustrezajo tekoča mnenja ljudi, ki so prav tako podvržena stalnemu spreminjanju.«⁸³ Podobno Herbert W. Kapitzki slednje prepozna na področju oblikovanja:

»Vizualno oblikovanje je produkcija znakov. Znaki niso vedno nedvoumni, saj jih lahko interpretiramo na več načinov. Produkcija znakov je podvržena družbenim spremembam. Spremembe so odvisne od *Zeitgeista*. Kar pomeni, da etične in moralne vrednote niso nespremenljive.«⁸⁴

Ob zapisanem trčimo ob razmerje med resnico in vednostjo. Če je resnica stalna, se naša vednost o njej zdi spremenljiva. Spremenljiva glede na okoliščine. Ali pa, kot smo že videli pri Rancièrju, je prav resnica – tudi ena od Ruskinovih svetilk – temelj, ki ponuja zmožnost spoznanja. »Resnica obstaja sama po sebi: je to, kar je, in ne to, kar je

82 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 3.

83 Hannah Arendt, *Resnica in laž v politiki*, Društvo Apokalipsa, Zbirka Aut, Ljubljana 2003, p. 60.

84 Herbert W. Kapitzki, »Ethics and commitment in design«, *Essays on Design 1*, AGI's Designers of Influence, Booth-Clibborn Editions, London 1997, p. 138.

rečeno. Izrekanje je odvisno od človeka: resnica pa ni odvisna od njega.«⁸⁵In prav zaradi naše (ne)vednosti, našega izrekanja se naš pogled na resnico in naše razumevanje resnice posledično (lahko) spreminjata. Tako kot se lahko spreminjata naše vedenje in razumevanje sveta. To, kar se, sodeč po Ruskinu, ne spreminja, je človekova narava. Ob tem ne smemo pozabiti na stavek, ki ga Rancière še doda zgornjemu citatu: »Vendar pa nam zato [resnica] ni tuja in nismo izgnani iz njene dežele.« Resnica ni odvisna od človeka in njegovega izrekanja, kar pa ne pomeni, da je ni moč poznati. S tem lažje razumemo Ruskinovo trditev, da je vedno moč vedeti, kaj je prav. Seveda vse dokler se ne opiramo na spreminjajočo se naravo znanja. Tej se je Ruskin skušal izogniti z osnovanjem moralnih univerzalnih načel in se skozi naravo stvari približati vnaprej *predpisanim* dolžnostim. Kajti Ruskin se je med pisanjem dobro zavedal, da za pravila – podobno kot za znanje – velja, da se skozi čas spreminjajo, in v tem smislu je vpeljal naravo.

Ob vsem zapisanem Ruskin deluje kot kritik znanja. V predgovoru k esejem *Unto this Last* pa opozori prav na nasprotno, na pomen znanja. Zasnuje namreč (socialistični⁸⁶) politični program, v katerem med drugim izpostavi potrebo, da se po vsej državi – na državne stroške – ustanovijo poklicne šole za mladino. Ob razčlenitvi prve točke Ruskin znanje razume tudi kot sredstvo za dosego »nagnjenja k blagosti in pravičnosti«.⁸⁷ Gre za znanje, ki bo dolgoročno omogočilo *pravilno* usmeritev mladih. *Usmeritev* k drugačnim vrednotam, ne pa zgolj k stremljenju po bogastvu. Z ureditvijo družbe pa se bosta uredili tudi področji oblikovanja in arhitekture, saj Ruskin verjame: »Kar velja za člove-

85 Rancière, *Nevedni učitelj ...*, p. 60.

86 Ruskin se je besedi socialistično v velikem loku izogibal, vsebinsko pa je bil nedvomno veliko bližje socializmu kot pa prevladujočemu kapitalizmu. Poleg omenjene prve točke je Ruskin v programu zapisal še: 2. V povezavi s poklicnimi šolami bi na podlagi vladnih regulacij morali ustanoviti državne manufakture in delavnice, ki bi izdelovale vse, kar je potrebno za življenje. (S to točko Ruskin ne ukinja privatne proizvodnje, ponuja zgolj alternativo obstoječim. Hkrati pa verjame, da s tem zagotovi konkurenco in pa potrebno kakovostno raven dela in končnih izdelkov – za pošteno ceno.) 3. V primeru brezposelnosti bi, glede na sposobnost, brezposelnega vključili v poklicno šolo in mu, poklicu primerno, priskrbeli delo. (Če se brezposelnemu ne ljubi delati, se ga podučiti in motivirati, če ne more delati zaradi bolezni, je zanj treba skrbeti.) 4. Starim, onemoglim in obubožanim je treba zagotoviti dom in udobje. V: Ruskin, »Unto This Last«, *Unto This Last ...*, pp. 163–164.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

ško ureditev družbe, velja v enaki meri za izrazito politično umetnost arhitekture.«⁸⁸ To pa je pravzaprav ključni stavek, saj se s to izjavo zavemo, da je oblikovanje od ureditve družbe (so)odvisno. Iskanje tanke meje med soodvisnostjo in golo odvisnostjo je še danes ključno za oblikovanje. In ob iskanju meje nas lahko še danes vodi pretanjeno Ruskinovo opažanje, da »prav vsa arhitektura vpliva na človekovega duha, in ne zgolj na človekovo telo«.⁸⁹ William Morris Ruskinovo misel kasneje nadgradi in v kontekst soodvisnosti postavi teorijo o oblikovanju kot gradniku družbe. Obe misli pa tvorita temelj današnjega razumevanja vloge oblikovanja kot discipline, ki se z željo po preoblikovanju sveta postavlja v polje politike. Želja, ki nas vrne na začetek besedila in k Ruskinovemu ciničnemu odnosu do napredka.

Kljub zavračanju sedanjosti in obračanju v preteklost pa Ruskin ne pozabi na neizogibno prihodnost. Walter Benjamin v besedilu *O pojmu zgodovine* napredek označi s prisposodbo viharja, ki nas kljub upiranju potiska v prihodnost. Zoperstavljanje prihajajočemu izzveni v prazno, saj se prihodnosti ni mogoče izogniti. Ali – kot še zapiše Benjamin: »Samo *tistemu* zgodovinarju, ki je sam prežet s preteklostjo, je dan dar, da v njej razvname iskro upanja.«⁹⁰ V nadaljevanju še doda:

»Historični materialist se loti zgodovinskega predmeta edinole tedaj, kadar stopi predenj kot monada. V tej strukturi prepozna znamenje mesijanske pomiritve v dogajanju ali, z drugimi besedami, revolucionirano priložnost v boju za zatirano preteklost. Zazna jo in iz homogenega toka zgodovine iztrga določeno epoho; tako iztrga iz epohe določeno življenje kot tudi določeno delo iz življenjskega dela. Izkupiček njegovega postopka je ta, da je v delu ohranjeno in shranjeno življenjsko delo, v življenjskem delu epoha in v epohi celoten zgodovinski tok. Hranljivi sadež tega, kar pojmujeemo historično, skriva v svoji *notranjosti* čas kot dragoceno seme, ki pa je izgubilo okus.«⁹¹

88 Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps ...*, p. 2.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

90 Benjamin, »O pojmu zgodovine«, *Izbrani spisi ...*, p. 217.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

Ruskin je iskro nedvomno videl v gotiki, ki jo je iztrgal iz toka zgodovine. Izgubljeni okus pa so njegovi misli vrnilo nasledniki, v katerih je moč prepoznati Ruskinovo sled. Kajti ključno pri Ruskinu je, da se ni zadovoljil zgolj z zavrnitvijo obstoječega stanja, temveč je skozi vsa svoja besedila iskal in tudi ponudil rešitev. Svoj čas je z agambenovskimi besedami sprejemal prek faznega zamika in anahronizma. In prav zato mu je sploh uspelo uzreti svoj čas, saj (kot zapiše Agamben): »Sodoben je tisti, ki zaznava temò svojega časa kot nekaj, kar ga zadeva in nenehno nagovarja, nekaj, kar se bolj kot katerakoli luč neposredno obrača posebej nanj. Sodoben je tisti, ki dobi naravnost v obraz snop temote, ki izhaja iz njegovega časa.«⁹²

Snop teme sodobnega je Ruskina nenehno opozarjal na prihajajoče novo, ki je s seboj nosilo zahtevo po destrukciji preteklega. Kljub načelnemu zagovarjanju anahronističnega načina dela pa Ruskin hkrati verjame v spremembo (spomnimo se le prvega pravila o nujnosti inovacije). Kajti talent se po njegovem ne kaže v monotoniji, temveč prav v sposobnosti spreminjanja. Dopušča variacije, toda verjame, da se šele »v novi priredbi ali iznajdbi kaže intelekt, in ne v monotoniji, ki ga siromaši«.⁹³ S tem se približa ideji, da je iskanje novega smiselno ne glede na tradicijo, ki ji pripadamo, in hkrati da še jasneje vedeti tole: čeprav nam gotiko ponuja za zgled, posledično ne pričakuje golega posnetka le-te. Še več, zelo jasno govori o konkretni spremembi (torej ne zgolj kozmetični spremembi zaradi spremembe). Podobno kot futuristični arhitekt Sant'Elia, ki zapiše:

»V teku zgodovine so spremembe v modi pogoste. Določajo jih predelave verskih prepričanj in političnih nagnjenj. Toda katalizatorji temeljitih sprememb v razmerah do okolja so ekstremno redki. Gre za spremembe, ki nas vržejo iz ravnotežja, se prerodijo, kot v primeru odkritja naravnega zakona. Dovršenost mehničnega pomeni racionalno in znanstveno rabo materiala.«⁹⁴

92 Agamben, »Kaj je sodobno?«, *Likovne besede ...*, p. 3.

93 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 96.

94 Antonio Sant'Elia, *Futurist Manifesto of Architecture*, manifest je v celoti ponatisnjen kot del članka avtorja Lebbeusa Woodsa, *Sant'Elia's Words*, <http://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/2009/11/02/santelias-words/> (julij 2011).

Prav z zadnjim stavkom – pa naj se sliši še tako heretično in neverjetno – se z Ruskinom pravzaprav znajdeti na isti strani. Če kdo, je Ruskin zagovarjal racionalno in seveda *pravilno* rabo materiala. Seveda v nasprotju s futuristi Ruskin kot pobudnik varstva kulturne dediščine ne bi nikoli privolil v ekstremnost futurističnih zahtev po rušenju vsega starega, vseeno pa prav z zaznavanjem Ruskinovega odmeva celo v tako ekstremističnem gibanju, kot je futurizem, pravzaprav spoznamo moč njegove misli. Prepoznamo Ruskina kot katalizatorja sprememb v disciplini. S tem ko se nekako nenehno ozira nazaj, nam v agambenovskem smislu sodobnosti hkrati osvetljuje pot naprej.

Iz zapisanega sledi, da je to, kar Ruskin od nas zahteva in k temu tudi sam brezpogojno stremi, vrnitev k pragu ponovne izbire. Ruskina iskanje te točke pripelje v gotiko. Slednje še dodatno napotuje k razumevanju, da je Ruskinovo vrnitev h gotiki treba brati v najširšem možnem pomenu. Zanj je gotika neomejeno bogastvo zapisa. Ne gre za pogoj, gre zgolj za ilustracijo nečesa, kar lahko nastane, če seveda upoštevamo pravila. Dokler delaš v skladu s pravili, delaš v skladu z resnico in naravo. In to je temelj, h kateremu Ruskin stremi. Vrnitev v zgodovino je torej zgolj primer, kako smo že znali delovati in kako bi morali nadaljevati v prihodnje. Njegovo obračanje nazaj v tem smislu ne pomeni nostalgije, temveč zgolj prag, na katerem smo izbrali napačno smer razvoja. In kot sem napisala na začetku, nam s sposobnostjo vzpostavitve distance do lastnega časa Ruskin ponudi paradigmo koncipiranja alternative.

S kritiko nesmiselne mehanizacije obrti je Ruskin tlakoval pot izčiščenemu modernizmu 20. stoletja in s tem pravzaprav postavil na laž lastni aforizem, da ni mogoče vedeti, kaj je mogoče. S svojim delovanjem in pisanjem mu je uspelo lucidno anticipirati obstoječe in ponuditi način, kako delati drugače. Je pa njegovo oziranje nazaj mogoče brati tudi kot napotek za raziskovanje danes. Kajti vprašanja, ki si jih je Ruskin zastavljal v 19. stoletju, pravzaprav ostajajo aktualna še danes. Tako kot je Ruskin iskal svobodo razmišljanja pri delu, se lahko tudi mi še vedno sprašujemo, kako danes odkriti prostor, kjer je še mogoča svoboda. In v tem smislu se aktualnost Ruskina vedno znova potrjuje.

Morrisovo oblikovanje za vse

Fredric Jameson predavanje *Future of Culture, Future of Utopia*⁹⁵ začne s stavkom: »Vsako govorjenje o prihodnosti se mora v izhodišču soočiti z globalizacijo kot njenim absolutnim horizontom.« Kajti globalizacija je redefinirala vsa družbena razmerja, ki – če se osredotočimo na globalizacijo kulture – s seboj prinašajo strah pred univerzalno standardizacijo, ali kot je slednje poimenoval Rem Koolhaas: generično kulturo. In prav ta tako imenovana generična kultura po Jamesonu s seboj nosi občutek »o oslabljenih političnih ideologijah in mrku strastnih političnih vrednot ter vizijah o radikalno drugačni prihodnosti«. Kljub pesimističnemu pogledu na potencialno aktualnost današnjih »uradnih« utopij pa Jameson v nadaljevanju opozori na – kot to poimenuje sam – »utopični impulz«. Po Jamesonu gre pri »utopičnem impulzu« za

»hlepenje po utopičnih spremembah. Slednje se kaže v izkrivljenih in nezavednih formah v našem vsakdanjem življenju, v naših zavestnih željah, družbenih, političnih in estetskih ekspresijah. Ta impulz je mogoče najti v tistih delih družbe, kjer smo pozabili na nauke zgodovine, na zavestne izkušnje preteklosti ter imamo občutek, da smo zaprti, ujeti v kletko sedanjosti. Sedanjosti, ki se ne more spremeniti, sedanjosti, v kateri ni nobene alternative, saj če že pride do spremembe, je to zgolj sprememba na slabše. Ali povedano drugače: danes si je lažje predstavljati konec sveta kot pa konec kapitalizma.«⁹⁶

In kot še nadaljuje, je prav zato naloga današnjih sociologov in kulturnih teoretikov detektiranje utopičnih impulzov. William Morris⁹⁷ – glavna figura britanskega oblikovanja 19. stoletja – je, gledano z današnjega stališča, nedvomno eden od ključnih utopičnih impulzov na področju oblikovanja. Hkrati pa med branjem Morrisovih besedil Jamesonove besede postanejo odmev. Kajti prav ustvarjanje in detektiranje utopičnih impulzov je bilo ena od glavnih Morrisovih nalog, ki si jo je zadal v iskanju in ustvarjanju umetnosti in posledično tudi boljšega sveta za vse. Spodbujen s prakso in na podla-

95 Fredric Jameson, predavanje *Future of Culture, Future of Utopia* z otvoritve ustanove Jackman Humanities Institute na Univerzi Toronto, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxtUgTLqMAk> (november 2010).

96 *Ibid.*

97 William Morris (1834–1896), oblikovalec, pesnik, teoretik, obrtnik in socialist (če naštejemo le najočitnejše).

gi Ruskinove teorije je iskal rešitev za umetnost, ki bo ponovno povezala v enovito celoto vse tisto, kar je napredek v obliki industrializacije z delitvijo dela razdelil. V svojem iskanju idealnega sveta rešitve, ki mu jih ne uspe realizirati v praksi, prenese v teorijo, v utopijo, kjer razreši tisto, kar ga v njegovem času muči na področju oblikovanja. Morris v svoji utopiji ustvari svet, ki po Jamesonu »združuje tisto, česar še ni v prihodnosti, s tekstualnim obstojem v sedanjosti«.98

Ustvariti nekaj v smislu prenosa v obstoj pa po Agambenu – sledeč mislecem iz stare Grčije – pomeni delovati na področju *poiesis*. Kategorija *poiesis* se je v Grčiji jasno ločila od *praxis*, saj je, kot razloži Agamben, slednja vezana na ukrepanje v smislu akcije.99 Razlika je torej v tem, da je bila »v *praxis* ideja volje centralna in ta je takoj našla svoj izraz v dejanju, medtem ko je v nasprotju, pri *poiesis*, bila centralna izkušnja ustvarjanja v prezenco dejstvo, da je nekaj prešlo iz neobstoja v obstoj, iz prikritega v osvetlitev celotnega dela«.100 Prav slednje, centralna izkušnja ustvarjanja v obstoj nečesa, česar prej ni bilo, pa je temelj za razumevanje misli Williama Morrisa. Morris si namreč v času, prežetem z napredkom industrializacije, zada nalogo, kako v svetu, kjer delo postane golo izvajanje, ponovno najti moment zmožnosti za nov način dela. Torej dela, ki naredi, da obstaja [*bringing into being*] tisto, česar prej ni bilo. Delo, ki je vir novih idej. Antipod industrijski reproducirani novosti zaradi novosti, saj gre za resnično novost v smislu tistega, česar prej ni bilo. Da lahko razumemo Morrisov odnos do dela, pa se je treba vrniti k njegovi praksi.

Gledano nazaj, se Morris zdi logična, predvsem pa praktična nadstavba Ruskinove teoretične misli. Po pričevanju zgodovinarjev oblikovanja¹⁰¹ se je Morris namesto slikar-

98 Fredric Jameson, *Archeologies of the Future. The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, Verso, London in New York 2005, p. XVI.

99 Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1999, pp. 68–93. Agamben obema kategorijama posveti poglavje z naslovom § 8 *Poiesis and Praxis*. Temo pa načne že v poglavju prej, § 7 *Privation Is Like a Face*.

100 *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69.

101 Tu se naslanjam na delo Nikolausa Pevsnerja *Pionirji modernega oblikovanja* (Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana 1965), na knjigo *William Morris* (ed. Linda Parry, Victoria and Albert Museum, London 1996) in pa na uvodno besedilo Clivea Wilmerja v delu *William Morris. News from Nowhere and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics, London 2004).

stvu posvetil oblikovanju ali – kot je to razumel sam – obrtni izdelavi vsakdanjih, uporabnih predmetov takrat, ko je želel opremiti svoj studio. Ker med poplavo industrijsko narejenih izdelkov ni našel ničesar, kar bi zadostilo njegovim kriterijem¹⁰², se je odločil, da bo opremo studia in družinske hiše oblikoval ter izdelal sam.¹⁰³

Posledično je v industrializaciji prepoznal krivca za proizvodnjo neuporabnih, grdih izdelkov, in to spoznanje je botrovalo osrednji misli njegove prakse: za dosego kakovosti in veselja je treba težiti k ponovni združitvi oblikovalca in izdelovalca. S tem je neposredno sledil Ruskinovim besedam, ki je za največjo napako označil prav ločitev, ki jo prinese industrializacija, torej – ločitev tistega, ki izdelek zasnuje, od tistega, ki ga izdelava. Posledično sta nezadovoljna oba, tako – če uporabim Ruskinove besede – morbidni mislec kot nesrečni delavec¹⁰⁴, ki izdeluje zgolj po nareku prvega. Ali, kot zapiše Morris: »Umetnik je izšel iz obrtnikov, jih jih pustil tam brez upanja na oplemenitenje, medtem ko je on sam ostal brez inteligentnega, delovnega sočutja.«¹⁰⁵ Če je torej Ruskin v delu iskal svobodo razmišljanja, pa je Morris v ponovni združitvi oblikovalca in obrtnika videl ključ za ohranitev človeštva zato, ker bomo z združitvijo v delu ponovno našli veselje. Kajti prav veselje pri delu in sam odnos do dela sta ključna za to, da obdržimo dostojanstvo in smisel življenja. S pohodom industrijske proizvodnje pa je bilo

102 Na Morrisove kriterije je do takrat že dodobra vplivala Ruskinova misel iz besedila *The Nature of Gothic*. Besedilo obravnavam v poglavju *Nazaj k Ruskinu*.

103 Kot zapiše Nikolaus Pevsner, Morris kmalu ugotovi, »da se more človek mirno predati slikanju povzdignjenih podob šele potem, ko ima spodobno hišo, spodobne stole in mize«. Pri opremljanju se še toliko bolj zave pomanjkljivosti izdelkov na trgu, zato se odloči, da bo skupaj s prijatelji zasnoval in izdelal trdno, iskreno pohištvo. Morris o tem prvič razmišlja že v času opremljanja studia. Kot se je kasneje spominjal Rossetti, so si pri oblikovanju opreme za cilj izdali izdelati »stole, 'takšne, da bi mogel sedeti na njih Barbarossa', in mizo, 'težko kot skala'«. Kot rezultat nastane znamenita Rdeča hiša v Bexleyheathu. Z ukvarjanjem z opremo Morris dokončno spozna, kaj ga pri ustvarjanju najbolj veseli, in hkrati prepozna številne možnosti v ustvarjanju opreme in izdelkov za vsakdan. V praksi mu posledično uspe izvesti tisto, kar je Ruskin zgolj predaval: uporabne izdelke na visoki ravni obrtne izdelave, z vrhunsko estetiko in domiselnim načrtovanjem. Morris, navdušen nad potencialom novih izdelkov, leta 1861 ustanovi podjetje Morris, Marshall & Faulkner, umetni obrtniki za slikarstvo, rezbarstvo, pohištvo in kovine. V podjetju se posvetijo izključno ročni, na srednjeveških veččinah temelječi izdelavi cerkvene in hišne opreme. Pevsner, *Pionirji modernega ...*, p. 12.

104 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *Unto This Last ...*, p. 90.

105 William Morris, »The Lesser Arts«, *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, (ed. Stephen Coleman in Paddy O'Sullivan), Penguin Books, London 2004, p. 238.

veselje pri delu načeto, saj je industrializacija s seboj prinesla nehumane razmere za novonastali delavski razred.

Na dodaten pomen ločitve oblikovalca/umetnika od materiala in proizvodnje opozori tudi Agamben.¹⁰⁶

»Ko se ustvarjalna subjektivnost umetnika postavi nad material in proizvodnjo – podobno kot scenarist, ki svobodno postavlja like po sceni – tisti skupni, konkretni prostor umetnosti [prostor umetnosti, ki si ga delijo vsi, umetniki in neumetniki] razpade in to, kar gledalec po novem vidi, ni več tisto, kar lahko najde tudi v svoji zavesti kot višjo resnico. Vse, kar gledalec še vedno lahko najde v umetniškem delu, je posredovano prek estetske reprezentacije, torej prek nečesa, kar je samozadostno, osamosvojeno vsake vsebine, je vrhovna vrednost in najbolj intimna resnica, ki razgrne svojo moč v samem umetniškem izdelku in pravzaprav izvira iz same umetnine. Osvobojeni umetniški princip umetnika se med gledalcem in resnico vzdigne kot dragocena skrivnostna tančica Majev. Resnica, ki jo gledalec v umetniškem delu lahko doseže, je le ta tančica, ki je ne bo nikoli zares imel, temveč jo bo dosegel zgolj skozi refleksijo v čarobnem ogledalu svojega okusa.«¹⁰⁷

Po novem s prelomom torej na eni strani dobimo »estetsko sodbo«, na drugi strani pa »umetniško subjektivnost brez vsebine, zgolj čisti ustvarjalni princip«.¹⁰⁸ Opisana situacija je še danes eden od glavnih problemov discipline oblikovanja, ki se zadnjih sto petdeset let bori z estetskim okusom posameznika in hkrati vsakič znova vzpostavlja izgubljeno vez z uporabnikom.¹⁰⁹ Moč okusa javnosti je bila v 19. stoletju glavni arbiter odločanja pri snovanju *neokusnih* industrijsko proizvedenih izdelkov, in v tem kontekstu še toliko bolj razumemo Ruskinovo in Morrisovo zavrnitev novonastale delitve dela in stremljenje k stanju, kjer je bil prostor umetnosti skupen tako umetniku kot

106 Agamben se v delu *The Man without Content* osredotoča na polje umetnosti. Vse povezave z oblikovanjem so moje.

107 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, pp. 36–37.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

109 V mislih imam t. i. »human centered design« (oblikovanje, ki v središče postavlja človeka), ki v zadnjem obdobju temeljito spreminja metodologijo in prakso oblikovanja.

neumetniku. In ta prostor Ruskin prepozna v gotiki, Morris¹¹⁰ pa se v mislih vrača v svoje otroštvo.

Morrisovo otroštvo je tesno povezano z ruralno Anglijo, krajino, ki se je šele skozi čas njegovega odraščanja počasi industrializirala. Prav spomini na neokrnjeno krajino v njem zaznamujejo podobo na idealizirano preteklost. Spomin na tisto, kar je bilo, kasneje pravzaprav postane tisto, kar bi (ponovno) lahko bilo, če bi se vrnili k preteklemu načinu delovanja. Slednje je ključno za razumevanje njegovega doslednega stremjenja nazaj. Ali, kot bi to nedvomno označil Morris, edinega pravega stremjenja za naprej. Kajti kljub vsemu napredku, ki ga viktorijanska doba prinese, Morris ne spregleda posledic, ki jih industrializacija povzroči v razmerju do ljudi in okolja. Posledic, ki jih zagovorniki portretirajo zgolj kot nepomembne stranske učinke, kot kolateralno škodo na poti k najbolj naprednemu času. Morrisa videno ne prepriča, zato v teoriji in praksi išče alternativo.

Nikolaus Pevsner¹¹¹, eden od pionirjev na področju teorije oblikovanja, v delu *Pionirji modernega oblikovanja* Morrisovo prakso¹¹² označi za dogodek, ki napove »pričetek novega obdobja v zahodnoevropski umetnosti«. ¹¹³ Slednje Pevsner utemelji v dveh¹¹⁴ točkah, ki ju pripiše Morrisu, njegovemu delu in misli¹¹⁵:

1. Morris je resnični prerok 20. stoletja, saj smo njemu dolžni zahvalo, da je stanovanjska hiša navadnega človeka spet postala vredna arhitektove misli. Pevsner iz bogate Morrisove zbirke besedil izlušči naslednja stavka: »Ne želimo si umetnosti za malo ljudi, tako kot ne maram vzgoje ali svobode za nekaj izbrancev,«¹¹⁶ in »Kaj se nas umetnost

110 Biografske podatke v skrajšani obliki nizam na podlagi že omenjenih knjig Pevsnerja in Wilmerja. William Morris (1834–1896).

111 Pevsner kot pionir med teoretiki zgodovine oblikovanja nedvomno zareže in vpliva na našo (oblikovalsko) percepcijo Morrisa kot takega, saj delo velja za prvi učbenik na področju oblikovanja.

112 Pevsner ima v mislih ustanovitev Morrisovega podjetja Morris, Marshall & Faulkner.

113 Pevsner, *Pionirji modernega ...*, p. 12.

114 Pevsner v delu omenja dve polovici Morrisovega nauka, sama v nadaljevanju dodajam še tretjo Pevsnerjevo misel o Morrisu, saj se mi zdi ključna za odnos sodobnega oblikovanja do Morrisovega dela.

115 Pevsner, *Pionirji modernega ...*, pp. 12–14.

116 Morris, »The Lesser Arts«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 253.

sploh tiče, če je ne morejo biti deležni vsi?«¹¹⁷ Prav zadnji stavek Pevsner označi za tisto veliko vprašanje, ki bo odločilo o usodi umetnosti v našem [20.] stoletju.

Prvi stavek Pevsner izlušči iz Morrisovega besedila *The Lesser Arts*. Drugega pa povzame po J. W. Mackailu, ki v svojem delu *The Life of William Morris* osvetli ozadje omenjenih preroških misli. Morris slednje spiše kot odgovor na polemike, ki jih je sprožil s svojim predavanjem *Art, Wealth, and Riches*¹¹⁸ marca 1883 v Manchester Royal Institution. Po pisanju J. W. Mackaila je javnost z navdušenjem sprejela Morrisove napotke o umetnosti in dekoraciji, povsem pa zavrnila njegovo kritiko njihovega načina življenja. Vprašali so ga, ali s svojim razmišljanjem morda ne prestopa meje umetnosti. Morris jim je na očitke odgovoril v pismih bralcev:

»Namen mojega predavanja je bil, da zastavim vprašanje, ki se ne dotika zgolj umetnosti. Še posebej sem namreč želel izpostaviti, da je vprašanje popularne umetnosti družbeno vprašanje, saj vključuje veselje in bedo večjega dela skupnosti. Umanjkanje popularne umetnosti iz modernih časov je vznemirjujoče in izgubo težko prebolimo, saj kaže na usodne delitve med ljudmi, na tiste kultivirane in na degradirane razrede in te, ki konkurenčno poslovanje gojijo ter spodbujajo. Popularna umetnost zato nima možnosti za zdravo življenje ali življenje nasploh, vse dokler bomo polnili ta grozni zaliv med bogatimi in revnimi. Nedvomno bo veliko stvari uporabljenih za polnilo, in če je umetnost ena izmed teh stvari, potem naj gre. Kaj se nas umetnost sploh tiče, če je ne morejo biti deležni vsi? Ne bojim se, da umetnost ne bi vstala od mrtvih, ali iz česarkoli, kar bo ležalo tam. Kajti, konec koncev, kaj je resnični konec in cilj vseh politik in vse trgovine? Ali ni morda doseči stanje stvari, kjer bodo vsi živeli v miru, osvobojeni preobremenjujoče anksioznosti, imeli delo, ki bo prijetno, in proizvajali rezultate, ki bodo uporabni za njihove sosede?«¹¹⁹

117 Glej naslednjo opombo.

118 Morris je predavanje *Art, Wealth, and Riches* javnosti predstavil 6. marca 1883 v Manchester Royal Institution, aprila 1883 pa je časnik *Manchester Quarterly* besedilo ponatisnil (pp. 153–75). Več glej v: J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, prvič objavljeno leta 1899, eden od številnih ponatisov: Schuyler Press, New York, 2008, pp. 98–99.

119 *Ibid.*

Popularna umetnost, dekorativna umetnost ali pa oblikovanje uporabnih izdelkov, kakorkoli že to imenujemo, to je tisto, kar po Morrisu v 19. stoletju – kljub dobesedni poplavi izdelkov – v družbi umanjka. Izdelki, ki nastajajo, so namreč po Morrisu takšni, ki jih v resnici ne potrebujemo. Proizvaja se jih zgolj zaradi proizvodnje samega. Kajti bolj ali manj vse, kar šteje, je ustvarjanje konkurenčne presežne vrednosti s ciljem zadovoljevanja ali ustvarjanja ustreznega trga.¹²⁰ Pa čeprav to pomeni enormno proizvodnjo neuporabnih izdelkov. Pred nastopom industrializacije, delitve dela in navlake izdelkov, ki jih je industrializacija naplavila, je po Morrisu prav vsakdo pri lokalnem obrtniku lahko dobil vrhunski, umetniški, rokodelski izdelek. Orodje, ki ga je delavec uporabljal, je bilo tam zgolj v službi obrtnika. Z nastopom industrializacije, sploh po nastopu obdobja avtomatizacije (slednje smo že dodobra spoznali pri Ruskinu), pa umetnost – kakršno smo poznali do takrat – v celoti pade. Pade z avtomatizacijo reprodukcije. Klasično umetniško delo namreč temelji na svoji neponovljivosti in posledično na – kot to označi Agamben – svoji končnosti oblike. Reprodukcijski izdelek pa izdelek pusti na stopnji »nenehne možnosti«, in kot še nadaljuje Agamben, »zato industrijski izdelek ni 'delo', temveč natančno 'izdelek'«. ¹²¹ V tem smislu Morris vrhunsko obrtniško (ročno) delo izenačuje z umetnostjo, hkrati pa zavrne tiste, ki jih izdelujejo industrijsko. Zavrne z industrijsko proizvodnjo generirano *nenehno možnost*. Slednja sovpade z duhom časa, ki hlepi po novosti, ki to ni. Gre za navidezno novost, ki se kot modna muha prilagaja okusu ali neokusu javnosti.

Morris v odgovoru opozori še na eno delitev, pravzaprav na usodno delitev ljudi, na »tiste kultivirane« in na drugi strani preostale »degradirane razrede«. Točno o tej delitvi govori tudi Agamben, ki temeljni preobrat v razumevanju umetnosti prepozna v *pojavi figure človeka z okusom* v sredini 17. stoletja. Ta figura se iz uporabnika prelevi v zgolj opazovalca, ki pa sodbe utemeljuje na svojem dobrem okusu, na svojem občutku za estetiko, na svoji zmožnosti prepoznavanja prave perfekcije.¹²² S to delitvijo, torej tistega, ki ustvarja, od tistega, ki na podlagi neoprijemljivosti okusa presoja, pa se po

120 Več o tem: Antonio Negri in Michael Hardt, *Imperij*, Študentska založba, Ljubljana 2002, pp. 188–190.

121 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 65.

122 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

Agambenu zgodi načelo sprevrženja¹²³ na področju umetnosti. »Zato se zdi, da nadarjenost [*genius*] in dober okus ne moreta sobivati v istih možganih, in umetnik, če to želi biti, se mora najprej ločiti od sebe, človeka z okusom.«¹²⁴ Zgolj na ta način bo sploh lahko ustvarjal prej omenjeni *konkretni prostor umetnosti*, ki bo presegel golo estetsko reprezentacijo in bo v maniri Morrisovega poziva ustvarjal umetnost, ki bo ponovno dostopna vsem.

Da bomo umetnost, ki bo dostopna vsem, dosegli, pa mora umetnost po Morrisu postati tisti povezovalni element v družbi, ki obstoječe (in prihajajoče) meje ruši, ne pa zgolj polni vrzel med enim in drugim bregom. V tem kontekstu se vrnemo k Morrisovemu razrednemu boju. Morris v industrijski proizvodnji prepozna še dodatnega krivca za poglobljanje vrzeli med privilegirano kultiviranim razredom, po novem v vlogi proizvajalcev-kapitalistov (kot jih označita Antonio Negri in Michael Hardt v delu *Imperij*), ter na drugi strani deprivilegiranim razredom proletarcev, torej tistih, ki v procesu nastanka izdelka postanejo zgolj »produkcijsko sredstvo«.¹²⁵ Pred nami se torej izriše še ena ločitev, ki jo industrijska proizvodnja prinese v družbo, ločitev proizvajalcev od produkcijskih sredstev. Že to, da delavski razred sprevržemo zgolj na stopnjo produkcijskega sredstva, ki z *razvojem* in povečanjem proizvodnje zavzema vedno manjši delež v končni vrednosti proizvoda, je bilo v popolnem nasprotju z Morrisovim razumevanjem dela in umetnosti kot posledice tega.

V viktorijanski angleški družbi je Morris prepoznal tri razrede: razred bogatašev – tisti, ki ne delajo nič in so zato za družbo breme, saj le »veliko trošijo in nič ne ustvarijo«; drugi razred je srednji razred – tega po Morrisu tvorijo tisti, ki se pretvarjajo, da delajo, toda v resnici ne ustvarijo ničesar; in tretji, delavski razred – edini razred, ki dela, toda zgolj po nalogu prvih dveh, zato je vse, kar proizvede, neuporabno. Zaradi omenjenega sistema »civilizacija troši lastne vire in tako bo, dokler bo takšen sistem v veljavi«.¹²⁶ Ni čudno, da si je Morris v pregovorno tradicionalni Angliji nakopal jezo sodržavljanov.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

124 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

125 Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 213.

126 Morris, »Useful Work versus Useless Toil«, *News from Nowhere ...*, pp. 289–293.

Toda kljub ogorčenju je pri rušenju razrednih razlik vztrajal. Verjel je namreč, da se bo šele s padcem razrednih razlik ponovno ustvaril prostor za umetnost, in ta bo takrat končno dosegljiva vsem. V tem pogledu Morris razume umetnost kot veliko širši problem družbe in njeno vlogo v dostopnosti vsem. Še več, »tako kot vse ceste vodijo v Rim, tudi življenje, navade in težnje vseh skupin in razredov skupnosti temeljijo na ekonomskih razmerah, v katerih živi masa prebivalstva. In zato je nemogoče izključiti družbenopolitično vprašanje pri obravnavanju estetike.«¹²⁷ S premikom umetnosti v družbenopolitično polje se zgodi že omenjena nadgradnja Ruskinove misli, saj z razumevanjem oblikovanja, ki je vpeto v družbene sponse, Morris še danes ostaja aktualen. In to je pravzaprav izredno pomemben temelj, na katerem se zgodi profesionalizacija discipline oblikovanja v 20. stoletju.¹²⁸

Je pa na tem mestu treba poudariti, da oblikovalci 20. stoletja Morrisovo misel – gledano zelo posplošeno – v večji meri *prilagodijo*. Odgovor na vprašanje *Kaj se nas umetnost sploh tiče, če je ne morejo biti deležni vsi?* v nasprotju z Morrisom najdejo v industrijski proizvodnji. Pri svojem delu prevzamejo Morrisov napotek, da je glavni problem industrializacije proizvodnja neuporabnih izdelkov, in slednje skozi razvoj *popravijo*. Jasno ponazoritev prenosa Morrisove misli v 20. stoletje že na prelomu stoletja najdemo v predavanju ameriškega arhitekta Franka Lloyda Wrighta. Wright leta 1901 v besedilu *The Art and Craft of the Machine* z vsem spoštovanjem do Ruskinovega in Morrisovega dela zapiše:

»V stroju se skriva edina prihodnost za umetnost in obrt – po mojem mnenju sijajna prihodnost. Stroj je pravzaprav metamorfoza antične umetnosti in obrti. Ko se končno znajdemo pred strojem – moderno sfingo – uganko, ki jo mora umetnik razrešiti, če želi, da ta umetnost živi; ključ do rešitve pa se skriva v njegovi naravi. [...] To, da je [William Morris] izgubil upanje v vsako novo umetnost, dokazuje prav vsak njegov esej. To, da je napačno precenil stroj, pravzaprav ne šteje. Vzvišeno delo je opravil s tem, da je tako do-

127 William Morris, *The Revival of Handicraft*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1888/handcraft.htm> (julij 2010). Podobno razmišljanje zasledimo tudi pri Johnu Ruskinu.

128 Slednje velja predvsem za evropsko oblikovanje. Ameriško oblikovanje v nasprotju z evropskim svojo temeljitev v večji meri zgradi na potrošnji in spodbujanju le-te.

bro zagovarjal proces eliminacije; da se je boril proti prirojeni vulgarnosti teokratičnega impulza v umetnosti in se zazvzemal za demokratičnega; ter da je pridigal o preprostosti kot sveti resnici. [...] To, kar je William Morris, sijajni demokrat, spregledal, je, da je stroj znanilec demokracije. Temelji so zdaj tolikšni, da umetnikovo delo ni več upor: talent [*genius*] mora progresivno nadvladati napravo, ki jo je ustvaril. Vse zato, da ponudi pomoč pri novi gradnji 'poštenosti zemlje'.¹²⁹

Z Wrightovo mislijo se jasno pokaže razkorak med miselnostjo 19. in logiko 20. stoletja. Morrisove ideje se jasno preslikajo v naslednje stoletje, toda s pomembno distinkcijo, prenesejo se v polje industrijske proizvodnje. Ključni razkorak je pravzaprav v odnosu; če je pri Morrisu upor nekaj, brez česar si njegove prakse in teorije sploh ne moremo predstavljati in ju razumeti, pa 20. stoletje prinaša željo po nadvladi. Badiou za 20. stoletje zapiše: »Zgodovina je ogromna in močna zver, ki se dviga nad nas, a vendarle je treba vzdržati njen svinčeni pogled ter jo prisiliti, da nam služi.«¹³⁰ Podobno lahko beremo Wrightov napotek v odnosu do stroja. Napravo, ki smo jo z lastnim intelektom sestavili, moramo nadvladati, si jo podrediti, naša naloga je, da jo *prisilimo*, da bo delala po naših navodilih, v prid našim ciljem. Še več, to, kar si Morris v 19. stoletju zada, pa mu zaradi upiranja stroju ne uspe izpeljati, nam bo po Wrightu uspelo prav s tem, da v stroju prepoznamo ključ v ustvarjanju izgubljenega skupnega prostora umetnosti za vse. S tem Wright za 20. stoletje predvidi eno od Badioujevih možnih vezi med preteklim in prihajajočim stoletjem: »20. stoletje izpolni obljube 19. stoletja. Kar je 19. stoletje mislilo, je 20. stoletje realiziralo.«¹³¹ Z odločitvijo za stroj, za industrijsko proizvodnjo, oblikovalcem 20. stoletja uspe pridobiti in v večji meri obdržati množice, hkrati pa ne pozabijo na enega od ciljev, ki si jih je zadal Morris: dobro oblikovanje za vse.

Je pa tu treba poudariti, da Morris stroja v svojih besedilih pravzaprav ne zavrne povsem. Radikalno zavrnitev mu pravzaprav pripišejo drugi. Med njimi Wright in kasneje

129 Frank Lloyd Wright, »The Art and Craft of the Machine«, v *The Industrial Design ...*, pp. 55–56.

130 Alain Badiou, *Dvajseto stoletje*, Analecta, Ljubljana 2005, p. 29.

131 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

tudi Pevsner, ki eno od njegovih misli vzame iz konteksta.¹³² V *Pionirjih modernega oblikovanja* zapiše: »Stroj je bil poglavitni Morrisov sovražnik.«¹³³ Za potrditev misli citira Morrisov stavek: »Kot življenjska okoliščina je čisto vsa strojna proizvodnja zlo«, toda stavek se pri Morrisu nadaljuje: »kot instrument, ki nam vsiljuje boljše pogoje življenja, pa je bila in bo še kar nekaj časa nepogrešljiva.«¹³⁴ Skratka, Morris stroja ne zavrne povsem, temveč ga sprejme kot neko vmesno stopnjo na poti k boljšim časom. In v teh boljših časih bo spet čas za ročno delo, saj destrukcija obrti pomeni zgolj eno »degradacijo življenja.«¹³⁵ Dopustiti, da stroji prevzamejo nadzor nad našimi življenji, bi pomenilo, da smo se pustili zaslužniti stroju, namesto da bi si prizadevali za družbo enakih, ki bo vsakomur omogočala življenje po lastni izbiri. Iz zapisanega je že mogoče razbrati, da Morris v nadzor nad stroji, ki ga napove 20. stoletje, v resnici ne verjame, zato kljub morebitni dopustitvi izkoriščanja stroja nenehno poziva k uporabi proti njemu.

S tem ko se oblikovanje uporabi odpove (umetnikovo delo ni več upor, temveč nadvlada), jasno stopi na stran industrijske proizvodnje, in pravzaprav stopi tudi na stran kapitala. Posledično vzporedna in kasnejša pozivanja k revolucionarnim spremembam (družbenega) sistema v večji meri postanejo benigna. Boj za oblikovanje ali umetnost, ki je bodo deležni vsi, sčasoma postane le še dober tržni slogan. Pri tem spremembam na prehodu v 20. stoletje ne podleže zgolj oblikovanje, temveč jih lahko zasledimo v celotni družbi.

»Procesi modernizacije in industrializacije so spremenili in redefinirali vse elemente družbene ravni. [...] Družba je sama postopoma postala industrializirana, celo do točke, ko so bili spremenjeni človeški odnosi in človeška narava. Družba je postala tovarna.«¹³⁶

132 Na tem mestu napotujem tudi na branje E. P. Thompson, ki že leta 1959 v predavanju o Williamu Morrisu na Williams Morris Society opozori na napačne interpretacije Morrisove teorije. Med drugim tudi na napačne interpretacije Morrisa v odnosu do stroja. Glej v: E. P. Thompson, *Persons and Polemics, Historical Essays*, Merlin Press 1994, pp. 66–76. Tudi na: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/thompson-ep/1959/william-morris.htm> (januar 2011).

133 Pevsner, *Pionirji modernega ...*, p. 14. Pevsner sicer v nadaljevanju omeni tudi drugo stran Morrisovega razmišljanja o stroju, a ga označi za previdnost in nedoslednost (p. 15).

134 Morris, *The Revival of Handicraft ...* (julij 2010).

135 *Ibid.*

136 Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 234.

In oblikovanje, ki se je kot disciplina šele komaj zares osamosvojilo, je družbenim spremembam sledilo in se pravzaprav tudi izjemno dobro prilagodilo. Ali povedano drugače, izbrilo si je svoje mesto v procesu nastajanja novega izdelka. Kljub omenjenemu Morrisov duh v oblikovanju 20. stoletja ostaja več kot prisoten. Sledimo mu lahko prek gibanj in pozivov k spremembam v odnosu do oblikovanja in njegove vloge. Med zanimivejše sodijo že omenjeno italijansko gibanje *antidizajn*, misel in praksa Buckminsterja Fullerja ter prizadevanje Victorja Papaneka za odgovorno oblikovanje.¹³⁷ Kljub vsem pozivom pa v svojih zahtevah nihče ni bil tako politično angažiran kot Morris, ki je skoraj v vsakem besedilu pisal o revoluciji in o nujnosti spremembe družbenega sistema. Družbene sisteme, v katerih oblikovalci 20. stoletja delujejo, naštetih sicer glasno kritizirajo¹³⁸, toda hkrati ostajajo – z izjemo teorije antidizajna – vpeti v industrijsko proizvodnjo, in slednje že v izhodišču izničuje radikalnost njihove akcije.

Posledično oblikovalci 20. stoletja spregledajo dve ključni Morrisovi poanti. Do prve nas pripelje že naslednja Pevsnerjeva trditev:

2. Kot je bilo že iz prve trditve mogoče predvideti, z zastavljeno demokratizacijo umetnosti Morrisu uspe (ob tesni navezavi na Ruskinovo misel) problem umetnosti premakniti iz estetskega v širše področje družbenih znanosti. Slednje Pevsner izpelje iz Morrisove opredelitve umetnosti, ki naj bi bila »izraz veselja nad delom«¹³⁹. In prav slednje je prva od poant, ki jo oblikovalska gibanja v začetku 20. stoletja v večini primerov spregledajo. V začetku – predvsem zaradi enormnega vpliva Morrisa in gibanja *Arts and Crafts* – protagonisti profesionalizacije oblikovalske discipline svoje delovanje zastavijo širše in poleg iskanja lastnega veselja razmišljajo tudi o veselju do dela tega, ki bo oblikovane izdelke izdeloval. Zanimiv primer slednjega je združenje *Deutscher Werkbund*, ki si je ob ustanovitvi za cilj zadalo vpeljati najvišje standarde v oblikovanje množično proizvedenih izdelkov. In to kljub (ali pa prav zato) večletnemu študiju Morrisovega dela in gibanja *Arts and Crafts* s strani glavnega protagonista združenja,

137 K vsem trem – predvsem italijanskemu gibanju antidizajn – se bom še vrnila.

138 V tem pogledu je zanimiv Victor Papanek, ki zavrne vse obstoječe družbene sisteme, saj vsi težijo k potrošnji. Posledično revolucionarnost poišče v ekološki, odgovorni noti oblikovanja.

139 Pevsner, *Pionirji modernega ...*, p. 13.

Hermann Muthesiusa. Muthesius po Morrisu sicer prevzame navdušenje do povezovanja umetnosti z obrtjo in idejo uspešno integrira v večino nemških šol s področja uporabne umetnosti, pri združenju pa že od samega začetka, podobno kot šest let prej Wright, rešitev vidi v povezovanju umetnosti z industrijo, ne pa v ločitvi od nje. Še več, do Morrisovega dela vzpostavi distanco¹⁴⁰, saj v besedilu *Cilji Werkbunda* zapiše:

»Da bomo lahko obliki pomagali pri obnovi, moramo njene pravice postaviti za temelj našega obdobja; še posebej mora biti vsebina vsakega dela umetniške reforme, ki se je danes lotevamo. Srečni napredek gibanja *Arts and Crafts*, ki je dalo novo obliko notranji dekoraciji naših sob in je vdihnilo sveže življenje obrti ter nas vodilo k plodoviti inspiraciji v arhitekturi, je danes zgolj preludij za vse tisto, kar še mora slediti. Kljub vsemu doseženemu smo namreč še vedno do kolen pogreznjeni v močvirje, zaradi vse brutalizacije oblik.«¹⁴¹

Iz danih ciljev je razvidno, da je problem, ki ga rešuje oblikovanje 20. stoletja, pravzaprav vsaj v grobem enak tistemu pri Morrisu. In ta je – boj proti brutalizaciji oblik. V skladu z maksimo novega stoletja moramo po Muthesiusu *pravice oblike postaviti za temelj našega obdobja*. Kakšni so ti temelji, na katere se sklicuje? Z odgovorom nam na otvoritvenem govoru združenja postreže Fritz Schumacher. Po njegovem je industrijska proizvodnja tista oblika proizvodnje, ki jo je treba sprejeti. Cilj Werkbunda pa bo »preseganje odtujitve, ki je nastala med temi, ki inovirajo, in tistimi, ki izvajajo, in to tako, da se ustvari most med obema poloma«.¹⁴² Misel nas vrne na začetek poglavja, kjer sem izpostavila, da o nastanku poklica oblikovalca začnemo govoriti z ločitvijo tistega, ki si izdelek zamisli, in tistega, ki ga izdelava. To ločitev Ruskin označi za prepad, Morris za nenasitni zaliv razrednih razlik, medtem ko Deutscher Werkbund nastalo vrzel sprejme kot stvar napredka in začne razmišljati o načinih za njeno premostitev. Kar je še bolj ključno – most za premostitev globeli najdejo v hitro razvijajoči se disciplini,

140 Muthesius ironično označi člane gibanja *Arts and Crafts* za *Sozialkunstgewerbler*. V: *The Werkbund. Studies in the history and ideology of the Deutscher Werkbund 1907–1933* (ed. Lucius Burckardt), The Design Council, London 1980, p. 7.

141 Hermann Muthesius, »Aims of the Werkbund«, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (ed. Ulrich Conrads), The MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1971, p. 26.

142 *The Werkbund. Studies ...*, pp. 7–8.

industrijskem oblikovanju. Slednje je izredno zanimivo predvsem zato, ker vse do prepoznanja oblikovanja kot potencialnega mostu pravzaprav velja, da je ena od nastalih vrzeli tista, ki nastane po razdelitvi obrtnika na tistega, ki snuje, in tistega, ki izdelava. Oblikovalec je torej zgolj eden od bregov. Pakt oblikovanja z industrijsko proizvodnjo pa oblikovanju omogoči, da svojo pozicijo spremeni in preraste v most. V tej vlogi več ali manj vztraja še danes.

Morris bi jim verjetno odgovoril: gradnja mostu ni dovolj. Tako kot ni verjel v umetnost, ki naj bi pomenila most med družbenimi razredi, tudi v most v obliki oblikovanja ne bi privolil. Kajti most ni popotnica, ki bi generirala veselje. Premostitev ločitve je zgolj navidezna, v resnici imamo še vedno dva bregova in prepad. Skozi prakso je Morris prišel do dveh tipov dela: dobrega in slabega. Razlika je bila po Morrisu v tem, da je v prvem upanje, medtem ko ga v drugem ni. Naravo upanja v *dobrem* delu je razdelil na tri dele: »upanje na počitek, upanje na izdelek in upanje na zadovoljstvo ob delu samem«. Upanje na počitek je po Morrisu najbolj preprosto in samoumevno upanje. Naj bo delo še tako prijetno, prav v vsakem je nekaj bolečine, in zato je kompenzacija v obliki počitka nujna. V upanje na izdelek nas po Morrisu sili narava. Smisel našega dela je namreč v tem, da »resnično proizvedemo nekaj, in ne nič, ali vsaj nič takega, kar si želimo ali nam je dovoljeno uporabljati. Če to sprejmemo in sledimo naši volji, bomo nedvomno boljši od strojev.«¹⁴³ Zadnje upanje pa je tisto, ki delavcu povrne dostojanstvo in mu omogoči, da se počuti kot človek, in ne zgolj kot del stroja, ali kot je to postalo tipično v 20. stoletju, zgolj kot del tekočega traku. Delo, v katerem upanja ni, je po Morrisu »brezpredmetno, suženjsko delo – zgolj trdo življenje, zato da lahko živimo in trdo delamo.«¹⁴⁴ In takšno delo bi kot družba morali zavriniti.

Morrisova razlaga dobrega dela nas vrne k že opisani Agambenovi razmejitvi dela med *poiesis* in *praxis*. Agamben se zaveda, da z današnjega gledišča težko zares razumemo pojem *poiesis*, saj danes prav vse, kar počnemo, od umetnosti, obrti do politike, označujemo za »prakso – manifestacijo volje, ki proizvaja oprijemljive učinke. Ko rečemo,

143 Morris, »Useful Work versus Useless Toil«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 288.

144 *Ibid.*, p. 289.

da ima človek na zemlji produkcijski status, potem imamo v mislih, da je njegov status bivanja na zemlji praktičen.«¹⁴⁵ Ključna razlika med poiesis in praxis je, poleg tega, da je naloga prve »narediti, da obstaja« [*bringing into being*], tudi ta, da je poiesis »metoda resnice, kar razumemo kot razkrivanje«. ¹⁴⁶ Ali če ponovim Morrisove besede: dobro delo je tisto, ki resnično proizvede nekaj, in ne nič. In v tem smislu se tako grški poiesis kot Morrisovo dobro delo dvigneta nad praxis. Nad delo, ki ga Grki definirajo kot delo iz potrebe, ki ga ne opravlja svoboden človek. Besede, ki jih ponovi tudi Morris, saj slabo delo opredeli kot delo, ki ga opravljamo zgolj zato, da živimo – in takšno delo je suženjsko. Ali povedano drugače, to je delo, ki ga napredek vsili ljudem z industrijsko revolucijo. In takšno delo je treba zavriniti.

Kljub jasni distinkciji, na katero opozori Morris, pa kapitalizem Morrisovo dobro delo sprevrže v že omenjeni most združenja *Deutscher Werkbund*. Člani industrije – vsaj ti, ki so bili soustanovitelji združenja – prizadevanje oblikovalcev v želji po humaniziranju obstoječih delavskih razmer z veseljem podprejo. Ob tem se zelo dobro zavedajo, da gradnja mostu stanja ne bo spremenila. Zavedajo se, da z mostom zgolj ustvarijo iskani element za premostitev vrzeli. Cilj premostitve pa je zadovoljen delavec. Industrialci oblikovalcem naročijo, naj naredijo vse, da bodo delavci po novem navdušeni nad tem, da delajo v tovarni. V skrbi za njihovo dobro počutje so industrialci po načrtih oblikovalcev in arhitektov zgradili nove delavske domove in prostorne tovarne ter upali, da bodo s tem zadovoljili upanje na zadovoljstvo ob delu. Še več. Oblikovalci so poskrbeli tudi za to, da so izdelki, ki so jih v novih prostornih tovarnah izdelovali, postali uporabni in lepi¹⁴⁷, s čimer so zadovoljili Morrisovo zahtevo po upanju na izdelek. Odličen primer vsega naštetega je bila nemška tovarna AEG z oblikovalcem in arhitektom Petrom Behrensom. Behrens je namreč oblikoval vse, od tovarne, stanovanj, celostne podobe pa vse do zadnjega izdelka, ki so ga v tovarni izdelovali.

Kljub izkazani navdušujoči skrbi industrialcev za delavce pa je bil nezanemarljiv razlog za vse nenadno razumevanje industrialcev po besedah Juliusa Posenerja. »Kapitani in-

145 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 68.

146 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

147 Danes bi to poimenovali likovno skladno.

dustrije, ki so delavcu vzeli vse zadovoljstvo ob delu«¹⁴⁸, so si pod krinko nenadne skrbi za delavca zadali zgolj en cilj: ustaviti naraščajočo moč levice, moč socialnih demokratov – subverzivno stranko, kot naj bi jo takrat imenovali. Ta je namreč po besedah Posenerja (po zgledu angleških socialistov) pridobivala svoje člane s tem, da je opozarjala na nehumane razmere v industrijskih obratih. Ustvarjanje prijetnih in kakovostnih pogojev za delo je bilo – po besedah sina ustanovitelja AEG Walterja Rathenaua – v resnici zgolj želja »zadeti doktrinirani socializem direktno v srce«¹⁴⁹. Do takrat so se namreč že naučili, da to najlaže dosežejo tako, da ustvarijo ponosnega delavca, delavca, ki po novem z veseljem hodi na delo v tovarno.

Prehod iz 19. v 20. stoletje prinese sklenitev pakta oblikovalca z industrijsko proizvodnjo. Na lastno pobudo oblikovanje postane most, ki navidezno zamaši razkol, na katerem Morris zgradi svojo teorijo in prakso. Slednje nas pripelje še do tretje Pevsnerjeve observacije o Morrisu.

3. Pevsner namreč v Morrisovi misli in praksi zazna diskrepanco. Ker je v svojih delavnicah dovolil uporabo zgolj veččin in obrtnih znanj, ki so bila značilna za srednji vek, so bili njegovi izdelki, v nasprotju z vsemi ostalimi na trgu, neizmerno dragi. In prav na tem mestu po Pevsnerju pade Morrisova teorija umetnosti za vse. Padla naj bi v praksi, katere rezultat je bila umetnost za »svinjsko razkošje bogatašev«¹⁵⁰, kot naj bi Morris na nekem mestu resignirano ugotovil. Njegove izdelke si je namreč lahko privoščila zgolj elita. Čeprav se je Morris slednjega zavedal, je v svojih predavanjih še naprej pozival k povrnitvi družbenega stanja pred industrializacijo, saj je verjel, da je čas 19. stoletja »neozdravljivo izprijen«¹⁵¹. Po besedah Pevsnerja je s svojo socialistično propagando pripomogel k nemiro, ki so se v Londonu konec 19. stoletja razširili med delavci. Ob nastopu nasilnih nemirov pa naj bi se Morris umaknil v svoj svet poezije, saj se je, kot

148 Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (julij 2010). Podobno razmišljanje zasledimo tudi pri Johnu Ruskinu.

149 *The Werkbund. Studies ...*, članek Juliusa Posenerja »Between Art and Industry, the Deutscher Werkbund«, pp. 8–10.

150 Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern ...*, p. 14.

151 *Ibid.*

zapiše Pevsner, zgrozil ob misli na revolucijo.¹⁵² Pevsner posledično Morrisovo prakso označi za ustvarjalno, njegov nauk pa za razdiralen.

Pa je bila njegova misel res tako razdiralna?

Glede na ves aktivizem, ki veje skozi njegova predavanja in članke, lahko upravičeno sklepamo, da je Morris kljub vsemu preziru, ki ga čuti do lastnega časa, nedvomno optimist. Ali – če na tem mestu, podobno kot pri Ruskinu, uporabimo Agambenove besede – Morris ohranja poseben odnos do lastnega časa, saj ga po eni strani sprejema, hkrati pa se od njega distancira. Še več, prav ta distanca mu omogoča, da uvidi temo svojega časa, hkrati pa ga ta tema ne ustavi v iskanju svetlobe. Sposobnost zaznavanja teme in svetlobe v temi 19. stoletja Morrisu omogoči, da postane in ostane resnično sodoben. Kljub zmožnosti stremljenja v temo optimizma ne izgubi. Slednje potrjuje tudi njegova borba za spremembe. Če ne bi verjel, da so spremembe mogoče, bi se za ohranitev *ljubega miru* zaprl v delavnico in v njej cele dneve oblikoval, brusil in žagal. Ker pa Morrisu njegova praksa pomeni neizmerno zadovoljstvo, si do konca svojega življenja prizadeva za to, da bi takšno zadovoljstvo občutili vsi, ki delajo. In na tem temelji njegova želja po ustvarjanju boljših pogojev za vse. V uvodu predavanja *The Lesser Arts* zapiše: »Ko pomislim, kakšna je bila zgodovina, se nagnem k preteklosti, preziram sedanost in obupujem nad prihodnostjo; kljub temu pa verjamem, da so spremembe in premiki znak življenja v svetu, in ti nas bodo vodili – po poteh, ki jih ne moremo uganiti – k boljšemu človeštvu za vse.«¹⁵³

Boljša družba po Morrisu ne bo razredno razdeljena, temveč bo v praksi osvojila parolo francoske revolucije: svoboda, enakost in bratstvo.¹⁵⁴ Za lažjo predstavo, kako bi lahko

152 *Ibid.* Ob tem je potrebno dodati: Wilmer v svojem uvodniku opozarja, da so kasnejše študije Morrisovega dela njegov umik in resignacijo ovrgle. V svojem delu se naslanjam na Morrisova predavanja, katerih glavni misli ostaja radikalna in trdna na tleh. Glej tudi: Thompson, *Persons and Polemics ...*, pp. 66–76, in <http://www.marxists.org/archive/thompson-ep/1959/william-morris.htm> (januar 2011).

153 Morris, »The Lesser Arts«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 233. Sicer v opombi in v uvodniku urednik Wilmer opozori, da sčasoma optimizem pojenja, saj naj bi se Morris počasi zavedel, da sprememb sam ne bo dočakal.

154 *Ibid.*, p. 253.

bilo, Morris leta 1890 zapiše svoje sanje o prihodnosti, in sicer v obliki romantične utopije *Novice od nikoder ali obdobje počitka*.¹⁵⁵ Z utopijo se Morris umesti v kontekst socialističnih utopij, v čas, ki je po Rancièru

»obdobje tvegane subjektifikacije, spodbujene z jasno špranjo brezmejnega in določene s prostori govorov, prostori, ki niso določeni, temveč prej singularne artikulacije med razvrstitvijo govora in njegovo klasifikacijo. Posledično prostori govorov, ki projicirajo brezmejnost delavskega razreda, niso tovarne ali barake, ulice ali kabareji. So besedila, fraze, imena: referenčna besedila – človekove pravice in stari testament – omogočajo artikulacijo izkušenj, ki so drugače zamolčane z razpustitvijo jezikov; fraze in priredbe fraz, ki se transformirajo v nekaj vidnega in izgovorljivega, fraze, ki prej niso imele svojega mesta in so se slišale zgolj kot hrup, se premaknejo v vsakdanji prostor kot novi subjekti, nove legitimnosti, in formirajo tisto, iz česar lahko ustvarimo argument.«¹⁵⁶

Morris se z utopijo sicer odmakne od svojega časa, hkrati pa mu prav ta odmik omogoči, da realnost vidi takšno, kot je, in ustvari kritiko videnega. Morrisovo utopijo lahko na neki način vidimo tudi kot izraz njegove nemoči nad lastno prakso, zavedanje, da

155 Morris naj bi zelo dobro poznal pretekle in sodobne utopije. *Utopijo* Thomasa Mora (Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1958) je v svojih delavnicah ponovno natisnil, zanjo spisal uvodno besedilo in jo leta 1893 izdal pri svoji založbi Kelmscott Press. Pri utopiji Thomasa Mora se je Morris nedvomno tudi navdihoval. Kar nekaj Morovih idej namreč najdemo tudi pri Morrisu (naštevam le prgišče): številne plemenitaše označi za lene trote (p. 68); kliče po zmanjšanju števila teh, ki samo jejo in nič ne delajo (p. 74); opredeli se za ukinitve zasebne lastnine, saj tam, kjer vsi merijo z denarjem, ne moreta nikdar vladati pravica in napredek; samo z ukinitvijo zasebne lastnine se bo rodilo upanje za ozdravitev družbe, na poti k dobri družbi (pp. 100–103); njihov napredek in boljše upravljanje družbe temeljita na želji po izpopolnjevanju (p. 105); pokaže na razlikovanje med potrebnim in koristnim delom v nasprotju z zapravljanjem časa v opravljanju nekoristnega dela (p. 120).

Med sodobne utopije Morrisovega časa sodi tudi kratek čas izredno priljubljena zgodba *Looking Backwards from 2000 to 1887* avtorja Edwarda Bellamyja (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/624/624-h/624-h.htm>, julij 2009), katere komentar posredno poda tudi Morris v svoji utopiji. V Bellamyjevi zgodbi sledimo odkrivanju Amerike leta 2000. Po več kot stotih letih družina dr. Leeta iz hipnotičnega transa prebudi Juliana Westa. Vpeljejo ga v novi, tehnološko razviti svet, kjer je ukinjena zasebna lastnina, vladajo pa monopolni kapitalizem, blagostanje in zadovoljstvo prebivalcev. Vsi so zaposleni, še več, delo v tako imenovani industrijski vojski delavcev je obvezno. Po opravljeni dolžnosti se s petinštiridesetim letom delavci lahko posvetijo uživanju in ukvarjanju s tistim, kar jih resnično veseli.

156 Jacques Rancièr, *The Names of History. On the Poetics of Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis in London 1994, pp. 92–93.

mu ni uspelo doseči tistega, kar si je zadal v predavanjih, hkrati pa jo lahko beremo kot Rancièrjevo frazo, ki prav skozi besedilo postane vidna, začne obstajati, ustvarjati podlago za argument. Stephan Coleman v uvodniku knjige *William Morris and News from Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time* zapiše: »Sovražnik sanjača, ki sanja o boljših časih, je ideolog sedanjosti, oborožen z obrambo obstoječe nesreče in trditvijo, da so obstoječi odnosi sicer nepravilni – toda nespremenljivi. [...] Toda ... zgodovina lahko eksplodira. In ko se to zgodi, je spodbujena s strani tistih, ki so si upali sanjati, tistih, ki so imeli pogum iskati navidezno nepremagljive možnosti, tistih, ki so si upali zahtevati nemogoče.«¹⁵⁷ Zahteva, ki se v času nastanka zdi nemogoča, pa je pravzaprav zahteva, ki jo lahko postavimo zgolj takrat, ko smo v agambenovskem pomenu sodobni.

V uvodnem poglavju *Novic od nikoder* spremljamo živahno debato med Williamom Guestom, protagonistom zgodbe in članom organizacije *Socialist League*, in somišljeniki. Pogovor se vrti okoli vprašanja, kaj se bo zgodilo, ko bo prišel dan revolucije, pa tudi okoli tega, kakšna prihodnost bo sledila revoluciji. Pred spanjem si Guest, prevzet od debate, zamrmra: »Ko bi le doživel ta dan, ko bi ga le lahko videl.«¹⁵⁸ Že v naslednjem poglavju se Guest zbudi v daljni, idilični prihodnosti. Zbudi se v letu 2102, davno po delavski vstaji, po krvavi delavski revoluciji, ki se zgodi v sredini 20. stoletja. Kot skozi pripovedovanje izvemo, zmagovalci (delavci, ki premagajo kapitaliste) po vstaji zavrnejo tehnološki razvoj in se odločijo za čas, ki so ga poznali pred nastopom industrijske revolucije.

Z vrnitvijo v stanje iz preteklosti Morris na svoj način oživi srednjeveško verzijo grškega mita o zlati dobi – času, kjer vladajo mir, harmonija in blaginja. Še več, po novem je ukinjena vsa zasebna lastnina, ukinjena je vsa politika (v primeru, da skupnost želi nekaj spremeniti, zgraditi, posejati, organizirajo srečanje – parlament vseh – na katerem preverijo mnenje večine, seveda z mislijo na skupno dobro), ukinjena je trgovina in posledično tudi denarja ne poznajo več. Po novem vse delo opravijo tako, kot bi »delali

157 Uvodnik v *William Morris and News from Nowhere. A Vision of Our Time* (ed. Stephen Coleman in Paddy O'Sullivan), Green Books, Bideford 1990, p. XXXIX.

158 Gre seveda za dan, ko bo nastopilo novo obdobje, po revoluciji. Morris, »News from Nowhere«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 44.

zase, ne pa za trg, o katerem ne vemo nič in nad katerim nimamo nadzora«. Posledično v Morrisovi utopiji postane »norost še naprej izdelovati blago, ki bi temeljilo na možnosti biti želeno, saj preprosto ni več nikogar, ki bi ga lahko *prisilili* v nakup. Zato je vse, kar je narejeno, dobro in v celoti prilagojeno svojemu namenu.«¹⁵⁹

Na svoj način Morris v *prakso* vpelje idejo, ki jo je že leta 1885 predstavil v političnem manifestu:

»Blago danes primarno izdelujemo z namenom prodaje in šele na drugem mestu začnemo razmišljati o uporabi. Posledično je delo v celoti zapravljeno. Ker ustvarjanje dobička proizvajalce sili k tekmovanju s svojimi kolegi, trg zasipajo s poceni izdelki, ne glede na to, ali po teh izdelkih sploh obstaja povpraševanje.

[...]

Doslej nam je že uspelo dokazati, da delavci proizvedejo vse družbeno bogastvo, kljub temu pa nimajo nobene kontrole nad njegovo proizvodnjo ali distribucijo: ljudi, ki so edini resnični organski del družbe, obravnavamo zgolj kot privesek kapitala, kot del stroja. To je treba v temelju spremeniti: zemlja, kapital, stroji, tovarne, delavnice, trgovine, prevozna sredstva, rudnine, banke, vsa sredstva proizvodnje in distribucije bogastva moramo razglasiti in obravnavati kot skupno lastnino vseh. Vsak posameznik bo tako dobil celotno vrednost vloženega dela, brez odbitka gospodarjevega profita. Ker bomo prav vsi morali delati, se bo trenutno potratno lovljenje dobička končalo, število ur, porabljenih za temeljno delo, pa se bo za vsakega posameznika zmanjšalo na dve do tri ure dnevno; in tako bomo prav vsi lahko uživali v obilici prostega časa, ki ga bomo namenili intelektualnim ali preostalim prijetnim obveznostim.«¹⁶⁰

V utopiji gre še korak dlje, saj vse delo temelji na prostovoljstvu in hrepenenju po veselju, ki ga ob tem občutiš. Nikakor ne gre za naivnost, saj se je Morris dobro zavedal, da večji del moderne civilizacije (19. stoletja) teži k temu, da bi se čim bolj izogibal vsakršnim težavam. Moderni človek si namreč – po Morrisovih besedah – prizadeva, da

159 *Ibid.* ..., p. 127.

160 William Morris, *The Manifesto of The Socialist League*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1885/manifest1.htm> (julij 2010). Original objavljen v časopisu *Commonweal*, februar 1885, pp. 1–2.

»bi čim več funkcij njegovega življenja izvedel drugi«. ¹⁶¹ Zato opozori, da se bo moralo takšno prelaganje odgovornosti enkrat končati, saj je na koncu vsakega prelaganja nekdo, ki mora delo opraviti. Ključ do zmage nad lenobo Morris vidi v že večkrat omenjeni postavki: *dobrem delu* (pogoj zanj so že omenjena tri upanja). Hkrati pa opozori, da bi si moral vsak prizadevati za to, da bi proizvajal svojim zmožnostim primerno, kar naj bi bilo po možnosti toliko, kolikor porabi. ¹⁶² Hkrati pa bi člani družbe poskrbeli tudi za vse tiste, ki zaradi lastne nezmožnosti ne bi mogli doseči vseh prednosti, ki jih bo družba prihodnosti ponujala.

Družbi 19. stoletja se je Morrisov preskok od *obveznega* dela do takega, ki temelji zgolj na prostovoljstvu, moral zdeti izjemno radikalen. Odgovor na takšen preskok se nedvomno skriva tudi v reakciji na Bellamyjevo utopijo *Looking Backward from 2000 to 1887* ¹⁶³, v kateri je delo dobesedno predpisano. Pri Bellamyju gre za eno od predhodnih napovedi družbe, ki se v Ameriki zgodi po sprejemu reforme *New Deal*, ali kot to označita Negri in Hardt, disciplinirana družba postane družba-tovarna ¹⁶⁴. Vsak državljan je v Bellamyjevi utopiji del industrijske vojske delavcev in je zato dolžan od enaindvajsetega do petinštiridesetega leta opravljati delo v korist celotne skupnosti. Še več, tistega, ki takšen način zavrne (v Bellamyjevi utopiji sicer vsi komaj čakajo, da opravijo svojo dolžnost), čaka zaporna kazen ob kruhu in vodi, vse dokler si ne premisli. Morris se je ob takšni prisili k delu najverjetneje zgrozil, saj je pomenila še korak bliže delu, ki ga opravljaš zato, da preživiš, in že to je Morris – kot smo videli v prvi polovici poglavja – označil za suženjsko. In v tem pogledu se Morrisova ideja o prostovoljnem delu zdi logična. Nagrada za opravljeno delo pa je, kot zapiše Morris, *življenje* in stvaritev kot posledica. Omenjeni princip na Guestovo presenečenje in veselje funkcionira. Pred njim se razkrije družba, ki živi v sožitju z naravo, brez razrednih in nacionalnih razlik.

Zanimiv je tudi Morrisov odnos do formalnega izobraževanja. Tako kot vse ostale našete *sponse* ga namreč ukine. Otroke do četrtega leta sicer naučijo brati, vse ostalo pa

161 Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (julij 2010).

162 Morris, »Useful Work versus Useless Toil«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 294.

163 Glej opombo 155.

164 Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 203.

bolj kot ne prepustijo toku časa. Ali kot vodnik Dick zagotovi Guestu, vsi otroci znajo plavati, kuhati, skrbeti za *trgovino* (trgovina obstaja kot forma, v katero prideš in odneseš, kar potrebuješ – brez kakršnegakoli nadomestila za izbrano), zelo hitro pa jih vpeljejo tudi v svet rokodelskih veščin in obrti. Morris znanje in delo rok v nasprotju z 19. stoletjem, ki slednje zaničuje, na svoj način povzdigne nad formalno poučevanje predmetov, kot so matematika, zgodovina ipd. Pri tem je vsem tistim, ki se želijo učiti jezike, zgodovino, matematiko, to omogočeno s pomočjo teh, ki imajo vednost, in prek knjig, ki so vsem dostopne. Toda nič od naštetega ni predpisano kot obveza, temveč je glede na interes vsem na doseg v obliki vseživljenjskega učenja. Zato ni čudno, da se stari starinar Richard Hammond, ki večji del zgodbe Guestu pripoveduje o času, v katerem se je znašel, po vsem povedanem pošali in vpraša: »Kako? Ali res hočete reči, da smo še vedno civilizirani?«¹⁶⁵

Občutek neciviliziranosti v Morrisovi viziji prihodnosti nas vrne k prej zastavljeni Pevsnerjevi trditvi, da je njegov nauk razdiralen. Prav na podlagi te trditve še danes številni¹⁶⁶ Morrisovo dediščino portretirajo in razumejo skozi njegovo tragiko, skozi diskrepanco med tem, kar je predaval, in tistim, kar je v praksi proizvajal. Toda kaj se zgodi, če to pozicijo spremenimo in njegovo misel skupaj s prakso sprejmemo kot homogeno? V tem primeru ni več Morris tisti, ki s prakso ne sledi teoriji, temveč sta družba in čas tista, s katerima ni v sozvočju. Družba in čas sta bila za Morrisa *preveč* civilizirana, *preveč* zaslepljena z lovljenjem napredka, in njegova praksa in misel sta delovala v spodkopavanju obeh. Povedano drugače, Morris s svojo prakso in mislijo namerno ni sledil spremembam v družbi, ki jih je prinesel čas. V času, prežetem s cenenostjo, se je zavzemal za iskrenost in veselje do (ročnega) dela. V delu, ki je bilo zanj umetnost, je iskal davno izgubljeni *poiesis*. Posledično je bil, podobno kot Ruskin, v konfliktu s časom, ki mu je pripadal, in posledično je bila njegova zavrnitev tako imenovanega »napredka sodobne družbe« zavestna, ali če uporabim Agambenove besede: bil je sodoben. Zato je bil po mojem mnenju Morris s svojim praktičnim delom in s svojo teoretično mislijo

165 Morris, »News from Nowhere«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 96.

166 Kljub že omenjeni jasni zavrnitvi napačnih tez o Morrisu. Predvsem s strani E. P. Thompsona. Glej delo: *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (prva izdaja Lawrence & Wishart, London 1955, revidirana izdaja Pantheon, New York, 1976).

izredno jasen in enovit. Praksa je bila pot, teorija cilj. Da bi dosegli ta cilj, pa bi bila po Morrisu potrebna revolucija. Revolucija, ki bo prinesla zelene spremembe v družbi, in ta bo (do)končno spoznala, da je prava pot tista, ki se v izhodišču upre zaslužnjenju stroja ter najde bistvo in veselje v (ročnem) delu.

Na poti do – lahko bi jih imenovali tudi Morrisovih – sanj pa bomo

»moralo skozi dolgo serijo družbenih in političnih dogodkov, preden bomo lahko svobodno izbirali, kako bomo živeli. Zato moramo izreči dobrodošlico tudi najšibkejšemu protestu, ki se zdaj izvaja proti vulgarizaciji življenja: prvič zato, ker gre za enega od bolezenskih znakov moderne civilizacije; ter zato, ker nam pomaga obdržati pri življenju spomin na preteklost, in vse to so obvezni elementi za življenje v prihodnosti.«¹⁶⁷

S temi besedami pa je pravzaprav Morris prehitel na začetku navedeni Jamesonov citat. Tako kot Jameson nas Morris že konec 19. stoletja opozori na problem izgube občutka za preteklo, na problem občutka vklenjenosti v družbo sedanjosti, kjer velja zgolj ena mantra: napredek. Podobno kot Jameson je tudi Morris opozoril, da je naša naloga zaznavati še tako šibek protest, ali kot to danes poimenuje Jameson, naša naloga je, da smo sposobni zaznati še tako šibek utopični impulz.

Zato je tragika, ki jo danes pripisujemo Morrisu, če se seveda postavimo na njegovo stran, pravzaprav naša. Mi smo tisti, ki nismo razumeli in sprejeli dobronamernega nasveta: ne pustite se podjarmiti stroju in kapitalističnemu izkoriščevalskemu sistemu. In to kljub Morrisovi teoretični in praktični misli, ki nam je nazorno skušala pokazati *pravo* smer razvoja. Smer za *srečno* in *neodvisno* prihodnost. Zato se ne strinjam s Pevsnerjem, ko zapiše, da je zaradi Morrisovega pogleda nazaj njegova predstava o prihodnosti ostala nedorečena. Prav nasprotno, *Novice od nikoder* in številna predavanja dobesedno izrišejo eno od možnih (pa čeprav na prvi pogled naivnih) prihodnosti. In v tej prihodnosti (največkrat) ni prostora za gradnjo mostov, ni prostora za kompromis. Kompromis je lahko zgolj ena od stopnic na poti do spoznanja, da se je treba boriti

167 Morris, *The Revival of...* (julij 2010).

proti družbi, v kateri je »kultivirani srednji razred imetnik suženjskega razreda, njegova moč, da še naprej živi po lastni izbiri, pa je pogojena z nujnostjo nenehnega iskanja preživetja in zaposlovanja sužnjev, ki ga držijo pri življenju«. ¹⁶⁸

Zato Morris zavrne družbeni sistem 19. stoletja in zato zavrne stroj, v katerem prepозна glavnega protagonista nehumanih razmer. S svojo zavrnitvijo nam je želel povedati, da kompromis v prihodnosti, ko si bomo končno lahko privoščili počitek, preprosto ne bo mogoč. Morris sicer že pred Wrightom govori tudi o nujnosti prevzema nadzora nad strojem, toda zdaj že vemo, da je današnji občutek nadzora nad strojem zgolj navidezen. In tako bo, kot opozori Morris, vse dokler bomo sprejemali vlogo tistega, ki za stroj zgolj skrbi. Občutek nadzora zgolj podpira človekovo nečimrno potrebo po nadzoru, medtem ko si nas je stroj, takoj ko smo privolili v razmerje z njim, v resnici podredil, nas zaslužnil. V drugem delu filma *Matrica*¹⁶⁹ ima svetnik Harmann občutek, da smo od strojev odvisni, tudi če nismo neposredno *priključeni* nanje. Naša oblast nad stroji, ki se navzven manifestira z možnostjo izklopa stroja, je zgolj navidezna. Ko stroj izključimo, se namreč odprejo številna vprašanja: kaj se po izklopu zgodi z našimi lučmi, našim ogrevanjem, s civilizacijo, kot jo poznamo? Posledično se naš navidezni nadzor nad stroji izgubi v odvisnosti od *delovanja* najbolj bazičnih in samoumevnih funkcij. Vilém Flusser gre še korak dlje, hkrati pa na svoj način ponovi Morrisove besede: če smo s prehodom od roke do orodja postali zaščiteni in hkrati ujetniki kulture, nam je v praksi vseeno uspelo zadržati položaj osrednje figure v delavnici. S prehodom od orodja k stroju pa stroj postane središče tovarne, človek pa njegova spremenljivka.¹⁷⁰ Ali, kot zapiše Gérard Wajcman, danes imamo

»kar največje težave s tem, da bi si za mahinistično perfekcijo serijskega objekta predstavljali ne le avtorja, ki bi ga zasnoval, temveč roko nekoga ali preprosto kakršnokoli fizično delo. Sama ideja 'dela' [*travail*] v ozadju določenih objektov se zdi včasih odveč.

168 Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (julij 2010).

169 Celovečerni film *Matrica Reloaded*, scenarij in režija: Andy in Larry Wachowski (2003).

170 Vilém Flusser, *The Shape of Things. A Philosophy of Design*, Reaktion Books, London 1999, p. 45. Morris slednje opiše z besedami: Človek se iz nekoga, ki je orodje uporabljal zgolj kot pomagalo, »spremeni v enega od delov stroja, kasneje pa v tistega, ki za stroje le še skrbi« – vse dokler ne bo stroj povsem nadomestil človeka. V: William Morris, *The Revival of ...*, (julij 2010).

[...] Kot da bi si velika industrija z moderno znanostjo delila prizadevanje, da odstrani in izbriše vsako sled subjekta.«¹⁷¹

Morris se je tega boleče zavedal in to nam je na vse možne načine skušal dopovedati. Vedel je, da smo s tem, ko smo se odločili sprejeti podrejeni položaj, privolili v položaj spremenljivke, ki je v vsakem trenutku zamenljiva – še več, zgolj odvečen strošek. Ali še huje, privolili smo v izbris sledi lastnega dela in s tem posledično sebe kot avtorja. Omenjena ideja oblikovanja kot mostu se z vstopom v industrijski proces izkaže za enega od procesov v službi kapitala. Sprevrčanje Morrisove ideje, da bo prav industrijska proizvodnja tista, ki bo oblikovanju omogočila po nizki ceni proizvesti dobre izdelke za vse, se po krutosti in nehumanosti 19. stoletja zdi prej naivna kot preišljena poteza 20. stoletja. Wajcman nadutost 20. stoletja pospremi z besedami:

»Človek 20. stoletja je zase mislil, da je na vrhuncu svoje moči. Mislilo se je, da bo to stoletje oznanilo zmagoslavje napredka in razsvetljenstva, da bo človek končno postal gospodar sveta in svoje usode. Na koncu pa se izkaže, da bo to stoletje najprej stoletje njegove najbolj tragične nemoči. Gospodar ničesar, ne narave ne svoje zgodovine, soočen z najslabšim ostaja slep, nemočen je pred svojo voljo po uničenju, odrevenel pred tistim, kar je njemu lastna sposobnost, da samega sebe uniči.«¹⁷²

Lahko enako zapišemo za razmerje oblikovanja z industrijsko proizvodnjo? S parafrazo misli Negrija in Hardta pridemo do zanimivega zaključka, in ta je, da kapital lahko postane učinkovito komandno sredstvo nad oblikovanjem šele takrat, ko industrijska proizvodnja postane integralna, vitalna funkcija, ki jo vsak oblikovalec prostovoljno sprejme in reaktivira.¹⁷³ Kljub nasprotnemu mnenju, da oblikovalci sledimo in skušamo s svojim delom zadovoljiti človekove potrebe (in ne primarno želja kapitala), pa hkrati prav zaradi vpetosti v sistem radi »spregledamo«, da so tako imenovane potrebe umetno spodbujene prav s strani industrije. Še več, v družbi kontrole po Negriju in

171 Gérard Wajcman, *Objekt stoletja*, Analecta, Ljubljana 2007, p. 58.

172 Gérard Wajcman, *Univerzalno oko in svet brez meje*, predavanje, ki ga je imel v Ljubljani 20. 1. 2010.

173 V originalu avtorja govorita o oblasti, ki prevzema poveljstvo nad življenjem in njegovimi vitalnimi funkcijami. Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 32.

Hardtu smo prišli tako daleč, da se oblast »izvaja prek strojev, ki neposredno organizirajo možgane (komunikacijski sistemi, informacijske mreže itd.) in telesa (sistemi blaginje, nadzorovane aktivnosti itd.) v smeri avtonomne odtujitve od občutka življenja in želje po kreativnosti«. ¹⁷⁴ In v tem pogledu smo s svojo privolitvijo pravzaprav povzročili, da Morrisova ideja o umetnosti, o oblikovanju za vse (še) ni padla na plodna tla, za katera si je vse življenje prizadeval in jih ne nazadnje v svoji utopiji tudi izsanjal.

Čeprav se Morris v nekem trenutku zave, da bo morda vse njegovo prizadevanje ostalo zgolj na ravni sanj, ne izgubi optimizma. V utopiji se njegov protagonist po nekaj dneh potovanja in pogovorov ponovno zbudi v 19. stoletju, zadovoljen s tem, kar je videl, saj takšno videnje ustvarja upanje in voljo za nadaljnji boj, ki bo prinesel boljši jutri. Morris *Novice od nikoder* zaključí z optimističnim stavkom: »Če lahko vidijo drugi, tako kot sem videl jaz, potem lahko to imenujemo vizija, in ne več zgolj sanje.« ¹⁷⁵ Tudi zgolj sanjati ni premalo, saj je »svet živ in v gibanju«. V preteklosti so namreč številne sanje že prišle do uresničitve. Sanje, ki so danes stvarnost in se zdijo povsem samoumevne, medtem ko so številni pred njihovo uresničitvijo »morali živeti brez njih, celo brez upanja nanje«. ¹⁷⁶

Če nam je Ruskin ponudil paradigmo koncipiranja alternative, je Morrisov ključni prispevek k področju oblikovanja v njegovi zmožnosti koncipiranja alternative. Gre za eno prvih utopičnih vizij, zamišljenih in ustvarjenih s strani oblikovalca. S tem je Morris ustvaril zarezo v razmišljanju in dojemanju vloge oblikovalca. Kajti z Morrisovo mislijo se spremeni dojemanje vloge oblikovalca v družbi, ki po novem prevzame vlogo enega od gradnikov družbe. Sled Morrisovega učinka dodobra zaživi z nastopom modernizma v prvi polovici 20. stoletja, saj takrat, z željo po preoblikovanju sveta, oblikovanje aktivno vstopi v polje politike, v čas, ko oblikovalci polni optimizma še verjamejo, da lahko zgradijo boljši svet. S to razliko: če pri Morrisu še velja, da je preteklost tista, ki bo dala odgovor za prihodnost, modernisti verjamejo, da je novi svet šele treba

174 *Ibid.*

175 Morris, »News from Nowhere«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 228.

176 Morris, »The Lesser Arts«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 254.

zgraditi, oblikovati. Oblikovati na Morrisovih temeljih, toda z maksimo industrijske proizvodnje.

Modernisti Morrisovo zahtevo, da je osnovni smisel vsega *proizvajati rezultate, ki bodo uporabni za njihove bližnje*, prevedejo v snovanje izdelkov, katerih temelj je zadovoljevanje človekove potrebe – misel, ki v 20. stoletju postane mantra večjega dela oblikovanja. Hkrati sprejmejo Morrisovo idejo povezovanja umetnosti, oblikovanja in tudi obrti za dosego demokratičnega cilja – dobrega oblikovanja za vse, toda ob tem zavrnejo Morrisov odnos do dela. Da bi realizirali cilj v ustvarjanju oblikovanja za vse, pot poiščejo v industrijski proizvodnji s ciljem, da bo oblikovalec tisti, ki bo prevzel nadzor. Nadzor, ki se sprva še zdi mogoč in pristen.

Čeprav se morda ravno zaradi modernistične načelne zavrnitve Morrisa na prvi pogled zdi, da sta Ruskin in Morris le navidezni diskontinuiteti na polju teorije in prakse oblikovanja, pa sta v resnici dogodka, ki s svojo zavrnitvijo in s svojo alternativo spremenita in vplivata na nadaljnji razvoj oblikovanja v 20. stoletju. Gledano nazaj je torej razumevanje Morrisove zavrnitve nujno zato, da lahko sledimo kontinuiranemu razvoju na področju oblikovanja v 20. stoletju. Pravzaprav se vsi, tako modernisti kot Morris, zavzemajo za isto stvar in posledično tvorijo kontinuiran razvoj discipline. Tako kot Ruskin tudi Morris z zavrnitvijo obstoječega hkrati ponudi način, kako delati drugače v času, ki šele prihaja. Torej, podobno kot modernisti tudi Ruskin in Morris gradita prihodnost, s to razliko, da jo gradila zazrta v preteklost, na zavestni izkušnji zgodovine. Kljub modernistični zavrnitvi Morrisovega v preteklost zazrtega pristopa k delu danes pred nami še vedno ostaja temeljna Morrisova naloga, kako najti moment zmožnosti za nov način dela. Ali povedano drugače, če smo po Morrisu in Jamesonu v 19. in 20. stoletju pozabili na nauke zgodovine, se nam hkrati s tem odpira možnost, da zaznamo in generiramo utopični impulz.

Loosova evolucija

Če je bila Ruskinova in Morrisova misel za svoj čas anahronistična, je misel Adolfa Loosa¹⁷⁷ v svojem bistvu anticipacijska. Vsem trem je skupno raziskovanje oblikovanja v odnosu do dela. Raziskovanje triade: izdelek – delo kot reševanje problema – zadovoljevanje potrebe. Ruskinovo svobodo razmišljanja v delu nasledi Morrisovo iskanje dostojanstva in smisla življenja, Loos pa v svojem razmišljanju o delu eksploatira reševanje problemov. Zanimivo je, da kljub mantri 20. stoletja, ki smisel najde v povezovanju industrijske proizvodnje in umetnosti, Loos, tako kot predhodnika, anahronistično propagira pomen obrti. Kljub omenjenemu njegova alternativa, ki jo ponudi v zameno za zavrnitev časa, v katerem deluje, ostaja progresivna. Loos je bil namreč tisti, ki je z nenadkriljivo provokativnostjo v času razcveta secesije ornamentu zadal usodni udarec in posledično tlakoval pot prihajajočemu modernizmu. Misel o *goli* stavbi Loos povzame po ameriškem arhitektu Louisu Sullivanu, ki v uvodu spisa *Ornament in Architecture* zapiše:

»Zdi se mi samoumevno, da stavba, povsem ločena od ornamenta, lahko pripelje do plemenitega in ponosnega občutka, ki svoje vrline zgradi na lastni gmoti in proporcih.«

Za tisti čas (1892) izredno pronicljivo misel Sullivan nekaj stavkov kasneje omili:

»[K]akorkoli, ločitev kompozicijske gmote in dekorativnega sistema strukture, na katero sem namignil, naj bi bila ločena zgolj v teoriji in pri razlogih, kot je analitični študij. Še vedno sicer verjamem, da bi lahko oblikovali odlično in lepo stavbo brez kakršnegakoli ornamenta, toda enako trdno verjamem, da dekorativna struktura, skladno načrtovana in dobro zamišljena, ne more sleči sistema ornamenta brez uničenja lastne individualnosti.«¹⁷⁸

177 Adolf Loos, 1870–1933.

178 Louis H. Sullivan, *Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings*, Courthope Press [S. l.] 2008, pp. 187–188. Besedilo je bilo prvič objavljeno leta 1892 v *The Engineering Magazine*.

Sullivanovo začetno misel o ornamentu kot ločeni teoretični postavki Loos izpelje v misel o *dokončni* odvečnosti ornamenta. Slednje spomni tudi na Morrisovo razmišljanje v besedilu *Useful Work versus Useless Toil*: »Ornament kot del modernega življenja je povsem gnil in kot takega ga je treba v celoti izbrisati, preden bo prišlo do realizacije novega reda stvari. V njem ni nič, kar bi lahko zadovoljilo človekovo prizadevanje za osvoboditev izpod tiranije potrošnje.«¹⁷⁹ V Loosovem slovarju tiranija potrošnje pomeni tiranija mode, tiranija želje po nenehnem spreminjanju s ciljem ustvarjanja vedno novega formalizma. Torej tistega, kar po Agambenu prinese prav reprodukcija. Slednja generira že v prejšnjem poglavju omenjeno stanje *nenehne možnosti*, ki ustvarja pogoj za navidezno novost. Na tej osnovi je zavrnil industrializacijo že Morris in enako jo zavrne Loos. Kajti le z obrtnim načinom lahko dosežemo končnost, lahko dosežemo iskani popolni izdelek, in ne zgolj modne muhe v obliki dekoracije, formalizma.

Posledično formalizem po Loosu botruje »potrati časa in truda« in je »primer nepotrebne neumnosti.«¹⁸⁰ Je pa med Morrisom in Loosom razlika. V Morrisovem primeru ne gre za popoln izbris ornamenta, temveč zgolj za izbris izrojenega ornamenta. Šele z Loosom stavba in uporabni izdelek, ki sta bila prej gola le v teoriji, postaneta gola tudi v praksi. Ornament postane nepotrebno trošenje dela, ki zgolj na račun izrojene tradicije zavira tek evolucije v moderno smer. Temi, evolucijo in modernost, pred vstopom v oblikovanje že najdemo v arhitekturi. Sullivan besedilo *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered* začne z mislijo, da so se arhitekti in generacije znašli pred novostjo, »evolucijo in integracijo družbenih pogojev [...], ki rezultira v zahtevi po gradnji visokih zgradb. [...] Oblikovanje visokih stavb je treba prepoznati kot problem, h kateremu moramo pristopiti in ga rešiti. Gre za vitalen problem, ki zahteva pravo rešitev.«¹⁸¹ Po kratkem naštevanju družbenih pogojev zaključí, da vse našteto kliče po »modernejši poslovni stavbi.«¹⁸² Napisano Loos skoraj dobesedno povzame, toda s pomembno spremembo. Sullivanovo misel postavi v povsem drug kontekst. V kontekst – kot bomo

179 Morris, »Useful Work versus Useless Toil«, *News from Nowhere ...*, p. 299.

180 Adolf Loos, »Josef Veilich (1929)«, *On Architecture* (ed. Adolf in Daniel Opel), Ariadne Press, Riverside (CA) 2002, p. 186.

181 Louis H. Sullivan, *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered*, 1896, http://www.gwu.edu/~art/Temporary_SL/177/pdfs/Sullivan_Tall.pdf, (februar 2011), p. 340.

182 *Ibid.*

videli v nadaljevanju – prisile iskanja stila za novo stoletje. Loosova zahteva v parafrazi zveni: evolucija in integracija družbenih pogojev prinese zahtevo po iskanju novega stila za novo stoletje. Iskanje novega stila je treba prepoznati kot problem, h kateremu moramo pristopiti in ga rešiti. Gre za vitalen problem, ki zahteva pravo – moderno – rešitev.

Iz zapisanega sledi, da če je bila prva Loosova ključna misel ta, da delo v oblikovanju poveže z ekonomijo in reševanjem problemov, slednje generira drugo, in ta je, da je za novi material treba najti nov jezik. Ob tem moramo imeti v mislih, da Loos takšno zahtevo postavi v času, ki ga označujemo kot vrhunec eklekticizma, času, katerega edina alternativa se je zdel secesijski totalni pristop.¹⁸³ Obe misli tvorita temelj oblikovanju, kot ga poznamo danes, saj fokus oblikovalca od krašenja preusmerita v polje vsebine. Hkrati pa podobno kot pred njim Ruskin in Morris tudi Loos zavrne aktualne trende in v svojem razmišljanju nasprotuje prevladujočim družbenim normam. Z vzpostavitvijo distance uvidi alternativo.

Loosov teoretični diskurz v večjem delu sestavljamo skozi krajša predavanja in poljudne članke ter eseje, objavljene v dnevnikih in umetniških časopisih ter njihovih prilogah. V času njegovega življenja sta izšli dve zbirki besedil, *Govoriti v prazno* (*Ins Leere gesprochen*, izbor esejev, napisanih do leta 1900) in *Vendar* (*Trotzdem*, izbor člankov in predavanj iz obdobja 1900–1930). Oba naslova zgovorno pričata o Loosovi zagrenjenosti (ta se je kazala predvsem v starosti) in občutku, da je v svojem razmišljanju ostal nerazumljen.¹⁸⁴ V enem svojih zadnjih objavljenih člankov (leta 1931) zapiše, da so tudi

183 V secesijskem stilu je *moralo* biti oblikovano prav vse, od stavbe pa do najmanjšega detajla. Loos tak pristop na ciničen način prikaže skozi *Zgodbo o ubogem majhnem bogatem človeku*, ki si prizadeva imeti dovršeno/dokončano (gotovo) prav vse. Na koncu mu to uspe, kar pa mu ne prinese veselja, saj v svoje *perfektno* dovršeno stanovanje ne more več ničesar dodati, v njem ničesar spremeniti. Ob tem Loos cinično zaključuje: »Gotov je.« V: Loos, »The Story of the Poor Little Rich Man (1900)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 52.

184 Da ga občutek ni varal, priča dejstvo, da je prva zbirka besedil prvič izšla šele leta 1921 v Franciji (noben nemško govoreči založnik ni bil pripravljen tvegati z izdajo Loosa), njegov najbolj znani spis *Ornament in zločin* pa je bil objavljen v *Frankfurter Zeitung* šele leta 1929, medtem ko je Loos besedilo napisal že enaindvajset let prej, leta 1908. Kljub omenjenemu so bile njegove ideje zaradi svoje polemičnosti (v teoriji in praksi) ter vnete želje po izboljšanju avstrijskega okusa tako v strokovni kot laični javnosti dobro znane. Če nič drugega, je bilo do leta 1929 besedilo prevedeno v številne jezike. Ob prvi nemški objavi omenjajo prevoda

v Bauhausu napačno interpretirali njegovo doktrino, saj so njegovo misel preoblikovali v novo umetniško gibanje, v tako imenovano »novo objektivnost«, kar je po Loosu v praksi pomenilo zgolj premik od secesijskega romanticizma ornamenta k Bauhausovemu konstruktivističnemu romanticizmu.¹⁸⁵ »Priti mora dan, ko bodo vsi ti gospodje prenehali delovati po sloganih, in končno – tako kot sem sam želel že leta 1896 – [...] začeli delovati na moderen način.«¹⁸⁶ Z današnjega gledišča se Loosova neizprosna kritika Bauhausa zdi zgrešena – če ne drugega, tudi Loos v svojih besedilih rad uporablja slogane in manifeste. Kot je mogoče razbrati iz skope zavrtnitve delovanja, se očitno ne strinja s premikom Bauhausa iz zgodnjega ekspresionističnega obdobja, ki je strogo temeljilo na posamezniku, v čas, ko Bauhaus pod vplivom Thea van Doesburga¹⁸⁷, očeta nizozemskega gibanja De Stijl, stopi na pot povezovanja umetnosti s tehnologijo. Gre za ključni odmik od prvotno načrtane povezave umetnosti in obrti.¹⁸⁸ S tem premikom se namreč, gledano s stališča zgodovine razvoja oblikovanja, zgodi eden od pomembnejših korakov k profesionalizaciji discipline industrijskega oblikovanja.

v japonščino in hebrejščino. V angleščino je bilo besedilo prevedeno leta 1913, v slovenščini pa smo dobili prevod leta 1952. Besedilo je bilo objavljeno v reviji *Arhitekt*, št. 5, julij-avgust 1952, pp. 40–42. Vsi citati iz članka »Ornament in zločin« so vzeti iz omenjenega prevoda.

185 Loos, »On Josef Hoffmann (1931)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 197.

186 *Ibid.*

187 Van Doesburg je Bauhaus v Weimarju obiskal leta 1920. V šoli je prepoznal velik potencial, bil pa je povsem razočaran nad končnimi izdelki, ki so tam nastajali. Zato se je leta 1921 preselil v Weimar, v upanju na mesto profesorja. Ker do povabila ni prišlo, je leta 1922 organiziral tečaj De Stijla s ciljem Bauhausove študente na načelih De Stijla naučiti ustvariti celotno umetnino. Kratko van Doesburgovo obdobje v Weimarju je za Bauhaus izrednega pomena, saj so bili rezultati njegove delavnice tako odmevni, da so vse kasnejše delo v Bauhausovih delavnicah prenesli na novo raven. Prej so študentje znanje, ki so ga prejeli pri začetnem, pripravljalnem predmetu Johannes Ittna, zgolj prenesli še v delavnice, po van Doesburgu pa sta v Bauhaus vstopila oblikovanje in želja po nadgradnji osvojene veščine. Glej: Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus: 1919–33*, Bauhaus Archive, Benedikt Taschen, 1993, p. 54 in 58.

188 Po besedah Magdalene Droste Theo van Doesburg s svojo kritiko Bauhausa spodbudi premik v razmišljanju. Člani De Stijla so v manifestu iz leta 1918 zagovarjali principe »premostitve premoči posameznika« in ustvarjanja »kolektivnih rešitev« – tudi v smislu industrijske proizvodnje, ki lahko omogoči zastavljeno demokratizacijo oblikovanja. Slednje po uspešno opravljeni van Doesburgovi delavnici v Weimarju prepoznava tudi Gropius. Posledično zamenja izvirno kombinacijo iz Bauhausovega manifesta. Leta 1919 namreč propagira povezovanje umetnosti in obrti, saj naj bi ta povezava omogočila novo celoto, tri leta kasneje pa si premisli in zapiše, da »umetnost in tehnologija tvorita novo celoto«. Zgodi se torej ključni preskok v razmišljanju. Preskok na poti k industrijskemu oblikovanju, kot ga poznamo danes. Glej: *Ibid.*, tudi »De Stijl«: Manifesto 1, 1918, *Programs and Manifestoes ...*, p. 39. Misel gibanja De Stijl podrobneje obravnavam v naslednjem poglavju.

Na omenjeni Bauhausov *preskok* iz ekspresionizma v polje De Stijlovega formalizma ali prej omenjenega novega objektivizma pa Loos usmeri svojo kritiko. V menjavi smeri razvoja prepozna le lovljenje trendov, ne pa vsebinskega preskoka. Bauhausova odločitev za *ravno linijo De Stijla* po Loosu ni imela nobene vsebinske zveze z njegovo zahtevo po goli stavbi. Geometrijo in premočrtnost De Stijla simbolizira ravna črta, ki temelji na srečanju arhitekture Franka Lloyda Wrighta z arhitekturnimi predlogi futurista Antonia Sant'Elia in mislijo slikarja Pieta Mondriana, ki v prvi številki revije *De Stijl* zapiše: »Življenje sodobnega kultiviranega človeka se polagoma obrača stran od narave; življenje vedno bolj postaja a-b-s-t-r-a-k-t-n-o.«¹⁸⁹ J. J. P. Oud je v besedilu *Art and Machine* (1918) še bolj jasen – da dosežemo stil, je treba uporabiti »pozitivni trend, ki skuša dati estetski izraz izdelkom tehnične izdelave«.¹⁹⁰ Tako se bo po Oudu moderni umetnik boril proti čustvom.¹⁹¹ Kot opozori Loos, je problem *nove* ravne linije v tem, da je postala novi formalizem. Z razvrednotenjem vsebine ravna črta postane novi stil, v želji po lovljenju modnega. Modnega, in ne modernega, za kar se je zavzemal Loos. Kaj točno je mislil z zahtevo po začetku delovanja na moderen način? Za lažje razumevanje se je treba vrniti na začetek njegovega razvoja.

Na Loosov razvoj in način razmišljanja sta vplivala dva pomembna dejavnika. Med študijem arhitekture na tehnični univerzi v Dresdnu se je pri triindvajsetih letih, leta 1893, z denarjem, ki ga je prejel v zameno za dediščino, odpravil k stricu v Ameriko in na ogled svetovne razstave v Chicagu. V Ameriki, kjer je ostal tri leta, se je za preživetje priučil zidarstva, opravljal delo asistenta frizerja, kuhinjskega pomočnika in na koncu delo arhitekturnega risarja. V teh treh letih mu je uspelo izživeti le prvi del na poti do ameriških sanj, zato ni čudno, da se je leta 1896 vrnil v rodno Avstro-Ogrsko. Odpravil se je na Dunaj, trdno odločen, da med svoje *nekultivirane* sonarodnjake vpelje kulturo Zahoda. Kulturo, s katero se je srečal v Ameriki in ki je ključna za njegovo nadaljnje razmišljanje. Loosovo misel zaznamuje srečanje s teorijo in prakso omenjenega Louisa Sullivana, očeta modernistične arhitekture. Prevzame ga moderna arhitektura nebotič-

189 Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, The Mit Press, Cambridge MA, 1980, p. 150.

190 J. J. P. Oud, *Art and Machine*, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/j-j-p-oud's-art-and-machine/> -1918/ (januar 2011). Več v naslednjem poglavju.

191 *Ibid.*

nikov, pisarn in veleblagovnic. To védenje je bilo – kot sem delno že nakazala – ključno za njegovo reakcijo, ki je sledila prihodu na Dunaj.

Čas Loosovega prihoda na Dunaj zaznamuje odmeven izstop skupine umetnikov (slikarjev, kiparjev in arhitektov) iz Društva avstrijskih umetnikov (Wiener Künstlerhaus) in ustanovitev novega društva, Dunajska secesija (1897). Skupina umetnikov se je uprla okostenelosti, pretiranemu konservatizmu, nagnjenosti k historicizmu in eklekticismu, ki ga je zagovarjalo stanovsko društvo. Njihov glavni cilj je bil ustvariti lasten, času primeren stil, stil, ki ne bo temeljil na znanih preteklih oblikah. Slogan društva dobro povzame želeno: »Vsakemu obdobju svojo umetnost in umetnosti svobodo«. ¹⁹² Tako kot pri Ruskinu se tudi v programu društva Dunajska secesija pojavi klic po svobodi v umetnosti. Toda v tem klicu gre za povsem drugačno svobodo. Pri Ruskinu se je iskana svoboda navezovala na svobodo v odnosu do dela. V iskanju svobode, ki ti jo med delom omogoči razmišljanje in stopnja bivanja. Pri Dunajski secesiji pa že dodobra stopi v prakso omenjeni prelom med umetniško subjektivnostjo in materialom. ¹⁹³ Agamben v takšni umetnosti prepozna »absolutno svobodo, ki išče svoj konec ter svoje temelje v sami sebi ter zato ne potrebuje snovnosti ali kakršnekoli vsebine, saj se lahko meri zgolj z vrtoglavico, ki jo povzroča lastno brezno«. ¹⁹⁴ Ali kot zapiše na drugem mestu, »umetnost je zapustila področje zanimanja in postala zgolj zanimiva«. ¹⁹⁵ Novi slogan društva tako postane le še gonja za novim stilom, ki zdrsnje na raven *nove* dekoracije, katere cilj je kitenje v ogledalu okusa gledalca.

Loos je z novonastalim dunajskim društvom sprva sodeloval. V njihovem časopisu *Ver Sacrum* je celo objavil nekaj člankov. Izstopata *Potemkinovo mesto* in *Našim mladim arhitektom*. Oba že nakazujeta nekompatibilnost secesijskih idealov z Loosovim razmišljanjem o nepotrebnosti *maničnega* iskanja času primerne arhitekturnega stila. ¹⁹⁶ V članku *Potemkinovo mesto* zapiše:

192 IZPISANO NA STAVBI SECESIJE. Stavbo je načrtoval Joseph Maria Olbrich in je bila na Dunaju zgrajena leta 1897.

193 Glej poglavje *Morrisovo oblikovanje za vse*.

194 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 35.

195 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

196 Kasneje Loos v člankih pogosto navaja, da stil našega časa že od vsega začetka imamo. V mislih ima predvsem izdelke, kot so bili lokomotiva, kolo, usnjeni izdelki, ali kot sam zapiše: »To velja za vse izdelke, kjer

»Revščina ni sramotna. Vsak ne more biti rojen v baronskem dvorcu. Poskušati druge prepričati o tem je smešno in nemoralno. Nič sramotnega ni v tem, če živimo v isti stavbi z ljudmi istega družbenega statusa. Nič sramotnega ni v tem, da si določenih stavbnih materialov ne moremo privoščiti. Nič sramotnega ni v tem, da smo ljudje devetnajstega stoletja, ne pa ljudje tistih časov, katerih hiša pripada prejšnjim obdobjem. Ko bomo to spoznali, bo naše obdobje kaj hitro dobilo svoj arhitekturni stil. Ampak saj ga že imamo, boste ugovarjali. Toda jaz govorim o stilu, ki ga bomo z mirno vestjo prenesli na potomce. Govorim o stilu, na katerega bomo ponosni tudi v oddaljeni prihodnosti. In tega stila Dunaj v tem stoletju še ni našel.«¹⁹⁷

Če se sprva zdi, da kritika leti na stavbni eklekticizem, ki se je v 19. stoletju razmahnil po vsej Evropi in tudi na Dunaju, pa je z zadnjo mislijo ost usmerjena na novonastalo secesijsko društvo. Jasno pokaže, da je na novo definirana smer (ob tem ne smemo zanemariti, da je Loos članek napisal že leta 1898, leto po nastanku secesijskega društva) v svojem bistvu zgrešena. Gre za smer, ki vsaj po Loosovem mnenju ne more obstati in ne more prinesiti želenih rezultatov za nadaljnji razvoj arhitekture. Hkrati pa je omenjeni citat pomemben tudi zato, ker lahko v tekstu razberemo, da si je Loos za eno od svojih nalog zadal – v maniri časa – *najti nov stil za naše obdobje*. Ta poanta je ključna predvsem za nadaljevanje, ko Loos omenjeno postavko lovljenja stila za novo stoletje postavi na glavo.

Poleg navedene kritike secesijskega gibanja še isto leto pride tudi do spora z enim od protagonistov secesijskega gibanja – Josefom Hoffmannom. Konflikt nastane, ko Hoffmann Loosu prepereči oblikovanje notranje opreme društvene sobe za sestanke.¹⁹⁸ Prav njun spor lahko označimo za drugi pomemben dejavnik v razvoju Loosove teorije in prakse. Pripelje ga namreč do točke, ko dokončno zavrne nastajajoči secesijski

umetnikom – s tem mislim na člane društva – še ni uspelo vtakniti nosu vanje.« V: Adolf Loos, »Cultural Degeneration (1908)«, *Ornament and Crime. Selected Essays* (ed. Adolf Opel), Ariadne Press, Riverside (CA) 1998, p. 164.

197 Loos, »The Potemkin City (1898)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 28 (poudarki so moji).

198 Loos petnajst let kasneje zapiše, da »ni večje nesreče kot biti obsojen na neaktivnost«. Kot prvi primer zavrnitve možnosti za delo navede pripetljaj s Hoffmannom. V: Loos, »My School of Building (1913)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 119.

slog, in to mu omogoči začetek snovanja lastne smeri razvoja. Ponovno se, tako kot pri Ruskinu in Morrisu, zgodi zavrnitev etabliranega, zavrnitev modnega. In enako kot pri predhodnikih mu ta zavrnitev v Agambenovem smislu razumevanja sodobnosti sčasoma omogoči uvideti svoj čas in posledično ponuditi alternativo. Ob zavrnitvi Loos pravzaprav ni vedel, kam ga bo ta pripeljala. Na tem mestu se lahko vrnemo k prej zastavljenemu vprašanju: kaj Loos misli z zahtevo po delovanju na moderen način? Kako doseči moderno?

»Ljudje, ki hočejo proizvajati najboljše stvari, lahko to storijo v okviru svojih omejitev in se ob tem ne zavedajo, kaj je moderno. Kajti zavedanje je tisto, ki preprečuje modernost. Tu se kaže ostra ločnica med pravim človekom in tistimi, ki so zgolj videti človeško. In čas je tisti, ki loči pleve od zrnja in prizna pravega človeka.«¹⁹⁹

Prvi stavek nam ponudi navodila, kako biti moderen. Če želiš delovati moderno, moraš izhajati iz svoje vednosti, toda tega se ne smeš zavedati. Ali povedano drugače, delati moraš spontano, na podlagi vednosti iz prakse, ki pa se je v resnici ne smeš *zavedati*, je načrtovati. Kajti načrtna zastavitev cilja, narediti nekaj moderno, pade že v izhodišču, saj te že sama namera pelje na polje modnosti, torej stran od modernega. Ali kot slednje označi Agamben, če se času prilegaš v vsaki točki, nisi sodoben, saj ti zaradi prileganja ne uspe upreti pogleda vanj.²⁰⁰ Takoj ko se začnemo zavedati, stopimo na polje prilagajanja, namesto da bi črpali iz problema, iz prakse, ki je pred nami. Loos se je tudi na tem mestu naslanjal na Sullivanovo misel. »Verjamem, da pravo bistvo vsakega problema vsebuje in sugerira lastno rešitev. To je po mojem mnenju naravni zakon.«²⁰¹ Izbira med biti moderen ali biti moden človeka loči na tistega *pravega* in tistega, ki je *zgolj videti kot človek*. Če slednje preberemo v smislu Sullivanovega naravnega zakona, je *pravi* človek tisti, ki rešuje probleme, tisti drugi pa se ukvarjajo z izmišljanjem *nove dekoracije v imenu novega stila*.

199 Loos, »Furniture and People (1929)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 192.

200 Agamben, »Kaj je sodobno?«, *Likovne besede ...*, p. 2. Več o tem pišem v poglavju *Vrnitev k Ruskinu*.

201 Sullivan, *The Tall Office ...*, (februar 2011), p. 341.

Sullivanov naravni zakon pa nam sugerira še naslednje: vsak problem pravzaprav že ponuja rešitev. Zato je naša naloga, da odkrijemo problem, ne pa, da si izmislimo rešitev. V misli se skriva tako Sullivanova kot Loosova ideja o evoluciji kot edinem pravem kontinuumu na področju oblikovanja in arhitekture. Od tod tudi izvira Loosovo obračanje k obrti, saj ta zagotavlja podporo njegovemu evolucijskemu razvoju izdelka. Kajti če obravnavamo industrijsko revolucijo kot začetek oblikovanja, potem začnemo iz točke nič, saj nam prekinitve (ali nov začetek) vso pridobljeno vednost iz prakse odvzame. Prekinitve pa po Sullivanu in Loosu v resnici ni. Gre zgolj za nove družbene razmere, za evolucijo, ki od nas zahteva, da spremembe integriramo v svoje delo. V Sullivanovem naravnem zakonu se skriva tudi rešitev Loosove zavrnitve secesije. In to, kar Loos na neki način ugotovi, je, da z zavrnitvijo secesije pravzaprav »postrga« prvo plast v iskanju bistva problema na poti k novemu stilu za novo stoletje.

Delovati v skladu z lastnimi omejitvami, toda po najboljših močeh, brez predhodnega načrtovanja, to je Loosov recept za doseg cilja – moderne alternative obstoječemu. Pot ga je vodila v zavrnitev novosti, ki jo je ponudilo secesijsko gibanje, saj je bila ponujena novost za Loosa skrunitev tradicionalnih kvalitete, ki smo jih skozi čas v obrtniških delavnicah osvojili. Vse, kar bi pravzaprav morali storiti (dokler ne dosežemo resnične stopnje novosti), je ponavljati osvojene vrhunce, ne pa ustvarjati novosti za zadovoljevanje okusa javnosti. Če čas s tehničnim napredkom še ni zrel za izboljšavo, je po Loosu treba »vztrajati pri stvareh, kakršne so bile do zdaj«. ²⁰² Ostajaj pri temeljih antike, toda oplemenitene z logiko današnjega časa. ²⁰³ Torej, *da* tradiciji, toda s pomembnim dodatkom – ne zgolj imitacija, ne zgolj variacija tradicije (to propagira šola), temveč ustvarjalnost, ki – ko za to pride zahteva – generira moderno. Takšno zahtevo pa lahko, sledeč Sullivanu, postavlja zgolj evolucija in integracija spremenjenih družbenih pogojev. In v tem kontekstu Loos v tradiciji prepozna moderno. Prepozna jo v temelju vsakega kakovostnega izdelka. V arhetipu, ki ga je moč prepoznati v stvareh, ki se je skozi zgodovino (ne glede na spreminjajočo se modo) ohranil, ostal moderen. Modne spremembe, ki se zavijajo v ovoj modernega, pa so po Loosu rezultat napačnega šolanja.

202 Loos, »Rules for Building in the Mountains (1913)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 123.

203 Loos, »Glass and China (1898)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, pp. 68–69, tudi v Loos, »Architecture (1910)«, *On Architecture ...*, pp. 84–85.

Po njegovem mnenju »iz maternice prav vsi priplavamo z modernimi živci. Transformacijo živcev v nemoderne imenujemo izobraževanje.«²⁰⁴ Ost kritike je letela na šolanje arhitektov in oblikovalcev (»uporabnih« umetnikov) v *modernem* secesijskem slogu. Slogu, ki je bil po Loosu daleč od prave modernosti. *Resnično* moderno prepoznamo v omenjenem vedenju, ki izraža iz prakse. Obrtniški mojstri so tisti, ki z »neokrnjenim« znanjem – znanjem, ki izhaja iz gole praktičnosti in tradicije izdelovanja – delajo tisto, kar je *resnično* moderno. In le tako lahko po Loosu zadržimo osvojene standarde, ki jih v nasprotju s secesijskimi izdelki – katerih glavna poanta je lovljenje modnih muh – ni treba menjati vsaka tri leta. Kajti lovljenje modnih muh pod krinko napredka (s pomočjo visokih šol) se je po Loosu odražalo zgolj v vedno bolj umetelnem »krancljanju« fasad.

S takšnim razmišljanjem Loos ne ostaja zgolj kritik oblikovanja v času prehoda iz 19. v 20. stoletje, temveč s kritiko secesije ostaja aktualen še danes. Čas secesije se v oblikovanju ni nikoli zares končal. Res se je spremenil stil, toda površinska sprememba nečesa, kar temelji na lovljenju trendov, je še danes več kot sprejemljiva, če ne celo nujna. Stilizem je v številnih primerih tista komponenta, ki izdelek na površini spremeni le toliko, da v razmerju do obstoječega izdelka spodbudi občutek zastaranosti. V kopičenju enih in istih navidezno novih izdelkov ostaja na mestu Loosova kritika, ki jo na svoj način ponovi oblikovalec Karim Rashid v filmu *Objectified*: »Sedemdeset odstotkov sveta je nefunkcionalnega. Sedemdeset odstotkov sveta je povsem neudobnega. To vsi občutimo. [...] In če samo pomislimo, koliko stolov smo doslej oblikovali. Kako je potem mogoče, da še vedno sedimo na neudobnih stolah? Za to ni nobenega opravičila.«²⁰⁵ Tu se vrne Loosova misel – če čas ni zrel za izboljšavo, vztrajaj pri tistem, kar je doslej doseglo najvišjo raven kakovosti. Tako kot danes ni opravičila za vsakodnevno proizvodnjo slabih stolov, tudi po Loosu ni bilo opravičila za slabo oblikovane, toda *modne* izdelke pred dobrimi sto leti.

204 Loos, »Furniture and People (1929)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 192. Tudi tu se Loos ponovno naslanja na Sullivanovo misel. Glej: Sullivan, *The Tall Office ...*, (februar 2011), p. 344.

205 *Objectified*, dokumentarni film, režija Gary Hustweit, A Swiss Dots Production, 2009.

»Jedilni stol iz časa Thomasa Chippendalea je bil popoln. Bil je rešitev. Boljši ni mogel biti. Podobno kot naše vilice, naše sablje, naši izvijači. Ljudem, ki ne morejo priviti vijačka, ljudem, ki se ne znajo mečevati, se zdi preprosto oblikovati nove izvijače, nove sablje in nove vilice. To naredijo – kot sami temu pravijo – z umetniško domišljijo. Toda moj sedlar umetniku, ki mu prinese nov predlog oblikovanja sedla, reče: 'Moj dragi profesor, če bi jaz vedel tako malo o konjih, o jahanju, o svojem delu in o usnju kot vi, potem bi imel vašo domišljijo.'«²⁰⁶

S tem ko Loos s prstom pokaže na tradicijo in njeno modernost v primerjavi z modnim, pa v nadaljevanju povzroči trk v razumevanju vloge in pomena (uporabne) umetnosti. Po eni strani sledimo degradirani vlogi umetnosti (po Agambenu je to tista umetnost, ki se odmakne od vsebine), po drugi strani pa Loos verjame, da je prav umetnost tista, ki lahko revolucionira²⁰⁷, rešuje probleme. Na eni strani imamo umetniško domišljijo, ki kompenzira nevednost, na drugi strani pa vednost, ki se izraža iz prakse. Praksa je – kot sem doslej že pokazala – po Loosu tista, ki kaže pot. Obrtniki pri svojem delu izhajajo iz funkcije in šele ob soočenju z morebitnim problemom tega rešujejo tako, da rešitev poiščejo v bistvu problema. Način, kako *najdeni* problem rešimo, je iskana ustvarjalnost. Torej ne *umetniška ustvarjalnost*, ki svoje nepoznavanje prakse kompenzira z vedno novimi umetelnimi vzorci, temveč ustvarjalnost, ki jo generira znanje, izhajajoč iz prakse. In v tem smislu Loos (podobno kot Morris pred njim) obrt prepozna kot izredno težko, toda ustvarjalno nalogo, ki je zaradi vsega naštetega edina moderna.

Posledično se je Loos pogosto deklariral za nekoga, ki je bližje zidarju kot arhitektu.²⁰⁸ Zidar je namreč tisti, ki lahko z obvladanjem obrtniške veščine ustvarja tisto, kar je resnično moderno, medtem ko je arhitekt neveden domišljav okraševalec, saj se po Loosovem mnenju več ukvarja z dekoracijo na stavbi kot pa z arhitekturo. »Največ naročil ne prejmejo tisti, ki najboljše gradijo, temveč tisti, katerih delo je videti najboljše

206 Loos, »Josef Veillich (1929)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 186.

207 Glej Loosovo besedilo »Architecture (1910)«, v Loos, *On Architecture ...*, pp. 73–85.

208 Slednje navede v številnih člankih, npr. v že obravnavanem besedilu »Furniture and People (1929)«, v: Loos, *On Architecture ...*, p. 192. Zapiše tudi: »Revolucije se vedno zgodijo od spodaj in v našem primeru to pomeni iz obrtnikove delavnice.« V: Loos, »Our School of Applied Art (1897)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, pp. 15–16.

na papirju.«²⁰⁹ Z deklariranjem za zidarja pa se Loos pravzaprav izenači s statusom, h kateremu je sredi 19. stoletja pozival Ruskin. Izenači se z gotskimi obrtniki. Tistimi, ki z udarcem po kamnu manifestirajo svobodo razmišljanja in zmožnost (umetniškega) ustvarjanja. Vzporednica je zanimiva predvsem s stališča pogleda na to, kaj je moderno. Ruskinov in Morrisov pogled v preteklo označujemo za anahronizem. Njuna zahteva po vrnitvi v čas pred industrializacijo je bila v 19. stoletju označena za poziv, ki je sprt z logiko časa, in zato je bila njuna zahteva *nemoderna*.

Loos njune besede v začetku 20. stoletja na svoj način ponovi, s to razliko, da obrtniški pristop označi za primer pravega modernega delovanja. Delovanja, kjer v Sullivanovi maniri forma neizpodbitno sledi funkciji.²¹⁰ Misel tvori drugi Sullivanov naravni zakon. Po Sullivanu prav zato, ker temelji na naravi – kljub navidezni omejenosti – omogoča, da posameznik s sledenjem tej maksimi poišče in razvije individualne lastnosti. In s takšnim pristopom bo arhitektura po Sullivanu »kmalu postala likovna umetnost v najboljšem pomenu te besede, umetnost, ki bo živela zato, ker jo bodo ustvarjali ljudje, bo delana za ljudi in od ljudi.«²¹¹ Vrnitev k povezovanju gledalca/uporabnika in ustvarjalca pa ponovno spomni na grško pojmovanje *poiesis*, na katero opozori Agamben.²¹² »Grki so z besedo *poiesis* označevali *tehniko* [*technics*], človeško proizvodnjo v njeni celovitosti, in z istim imenom – *tehniko* – so označevali tako obrtnika kot umetnika.«²¹³ Poleg obrtnikov in umetnikov pa so v procesu ustvarjanja sodelovali tudi *uporabniki/naročniki* umetnosti.

Prav zaradi tega skupnega stremljenja k ponovni združitvi, ki izenačuje status obrtnika, oblikovalca in umetnika, se je Loosu še hujši greh od študija zdelo to, da so se resnični snovalci novega stila pustili *zasužnjevati* s strani samooklicanih umetnikov in svoje

209 Loos, »Architecture (1910)«, *On Architecture ...*, pp. 76–77. Posledično je Loos nasprotoval fotografiranju interierja, saj so »rezultati vedno drugačni kot v originalu. [...] Fotografije dematerializirajo realnost, medtem ko je moj namen, da ljudje v mojih sobah občutijo material okoli sebe, želim, da nanje učinkuje, želim, da se zavedajo omejitev sobe [...]«. V: Loos, »On Thrift (1924)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 178.

210 Sullivan, *The Tall Office ...*, (februar 2011), p. 345.

211 *Ibid.*, p. 346.

212 Temo sem delno načela že v prejšnjem poglavju, *Morrisovo oblikovanje za vse*.

213 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 72.

delo minimalizirati na zgolj fizično izdelovanje po diktatu izobražene elite.²¹⁴ Če je bil v Morrisovih časih stroj tisti, ki je zaslužnjeval obrtnike in jih spreminjal v spremenljivke za strojem, pa Loos tokrat s prstom pokaže na *snovalce z umetniško domišljijo*. Slednje je hud udarec za oblikovalce in arhitekte. Sploh če na oblikovalce gledamo s stališča Deutscher Werkbunda, torej kot na tiste, ki gradijo most. Gradnja mostu je brezpredmetna, če ti manjka temeljna vednost, in ta novodobnim snovalcem – po Loosu – umanjka. Z umanjkanjem prakse jim umanjka vednost. Oblikovalci in arhitekti pomanjkanje vednosti sicer nadomeščajo z *umetniško domišljijo*, s tem pa se odmikajo od pravega problema, ki bi ga morali reševati. Kajti – kot zdaj že vemo – če nismo sposobni prepoznati pravega problema, bo rešitev, ki jo bomo sugerirali, že v izhodišču napačna.

In v tem smislu, v skrivanju lastne nevednosti za *umetniško domišljijo*, laže razumemo Loosovo averzijo do povezovanja umetnosti in arhitekture, umetnosti in uporabnih izdelkov, temeljnega postulata novonastalega secesijskega društva ter številnih novodobnih gibanj in združenj. Kajti takšno povezovanje je daleč od vloge umetnosti, ki bi jo ta v družbi po Loosu morala imeti:

»Stavba mora zadovoljiti vse, za razliko od umetnosti, ki ji ni treba zadovoljiti nikogar. Umetniško delo je zasebna zadeva umetnika, medtem ko stavba ni. Umetniško delo nastane brez prave potrebe po njem, medtem ko mora stavba zadovoljiti potrebo. Umetniško delo ne nosi nobene odgovornosti, stavba je odgovorna vsem. [...] Umetniško delo je revolucionarno, medtem ko je stavba konservativna. Umetniško delo se ukvarja s prihodnostjo in nam kaže nove poti, medtem ko je stavba stvar sedanjosti.«²¹⁵

Citirani odlomek jasno kaže na to, da je Loos zelo hitro sprevidel, kam kolaboracija umetnosti z industrijo vodi. Vodi jo na trg. In na tem mestu se Loos strinja z Morrisom, saj po njegovem ni hujše stvari, kot je »umetnost v službi trgovine«.²¹⁶ Posledič-

214 Loos, »The Old and the New Style in Architecture (1898)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 31.

215 Loos, »Architecture (1910)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 82.

216 »Art in the service of commerce« je bil naslov razstave novonastalih izdelkov v Münchnu. Loos je bil do prikazanega zelo kritičen. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

no med umetnostjo in industrijo potegne jasno ločnico. Vsako križanje prinese zgolj sprevržene izdelke, ki si ne zaslužijo drugega kot posmeh. Degradacijo vsakdanjih izdelkov določata podvrženost potrošnikovemu spreminjajočemu se okusu in uklanjanje modi, medtem ko umetniška dela nikoli ne morejo biti iz mode. »Za moderne ljudi je umetnost boginja. Uporaba umetnosti na funkcionalnih izdelkih je prostituiranje umetnosti.«²¹⁷ Rešitev za *prave* uporabne izdelke je v konservativnem, ali kot to označi na drugem mestu – aristokratskem razumevanju obrtniške veščine in materiala. S tem pa pravzaprav ponovi Ruskinova načela. Zato je sprva presenetljivo, da Loos v besedilu *On Thrift* Ruskina označi za svojega največjega sovražnika. Po njegovem mnenju zaradi Ruskinovega dela ni bilo več mogoče kakovosti dela soditi zgolj na podlagi materiala in obrtne izdelave. Tega naj bi se zaradi Ruskina kot družba sramovali.²¹⁸ Razlika se torej kaže v ekonomiji dela. Oba, tako Ruskin kot Loos, sta zagovarjala vrhunsko obrtno izdelavo. Loos se je v želji po osvoboditvi odvečnega dela želel otresti dekorja, ki je po njegovem mnenju paraliziral pravo oblikovanje vsakdanjih izdelkov, katerih glavna naloga je – če uporabim današnje besede – trajnost. Po Loosu je ključ do dobrega uporabnega izdelka v izbiri najboljšega možnega materiala, ki bo uporaben stoletja. Povedano drugače, izdelek mora tako skozi funkcijo kot skozi obliko, ki mu sledi, in z materialom preseči moment časa, moment mode. Z aplikacijo dekorja pa se, prav nasprotno, ujamo v zanko časa, in kar je še huje, spregledamo pravi problem, zgrešimo temelj.

»Arhitektova naloga je, da se priklopi do temelja življenja, da začne misliti skozi skrajne človekove potrebe, da pomaga vsem tistim v manj ugodnem položaju v naši družbi ter da opremi čim večje število naših domovanj s kar se da popolnimi objekti za vsakdanjo rabo. Arhitektova naloga ni iznajdba novih oblik.«²¹⁹

Loos nas torej vrača k iskanju rešitve v problemu samem. Vrača nas k praksi, ki nam bo dala vedenje, da problem spregledamo in na podlagi tega ponudimo rešitev. Rešitev ni iskanje nove oblike (ta vendar sledi funkciji), temveč reševanje temeljnega problema, ki ga pred nas postavljajo spremembe v družbi. Slednje na svoj način dokazuje, da Loos ni

217 Loos, »Surplus to Requirements (1908). (The German *Werkbund*)«, *Ornament and crime ...*, p. 154.

218 Loos, »On Thrift (1924)«, *On architecture ...*, p. 183.

219 *Ibid.*

nasprotoval napredku in spremembam. Že na začetku sem omenila, da med pomembnejše Loosove maksime sodi načelo: nov čas zahteva nov pristop.²²⁰ Toda ta sprememba ne sme nastopiti za vsako ceno, sprememba je dovoljena samo takrat, ko smo priča *pravi* izboljšavi. »Spremembe v obliki niso zgolj spremembe zaradi spremembe, temveč izhajajo iz želje po izpopolnitvi najboljšega. Ne smemo poskušati ustvariti novega stola za našo dobo, temveč najboljši stol.«²²¹ Ob tem je pomembno poudariti, da je Loos absolutno proti spreminjanju izdelkov zgolj zaradi časovne potrebe po novem. Kritika je tukaj spet obrnjena proti secesijskemu iskanju sodobnega stila in proti potrebi po preoblikovanju vsega v *novem* stilu. Kajti ko nam uspe narediti absolutno popoln izdelek, lahko njegovo spremembo v oblikovanju upraviči zgolj »kataklizma, ki s seboj prinese veliko spremembo vrednot«.²²² Ob zadnji izjavi nas sprva preseneti, da Loos industrijske revolucije ne prepozna kot kataklizme, ki nedvomno s seboj prinese spremembo vrednot. Toda v spomin si je treba priklicati Loosovo misel, da se z industrijsko revolucijo pravzaprav ne zgodi prekinitvev, ne pride do novega štetja, temveč se zgodi le ena od sprememb, ki nam omogoči naslednji evolutijski korak v razvoju novih izdelkov. S pomembnim dodatkom – pri novih izdelkih, ki so rezultat sprememb, je nujen nov pristop v oblikovanju.

»Za oblike novih pojavov v naših kulturnih rešitvah (železniški vagoni, telefoni, pisalni stroji itd.) moramo spoznati, da ne *smemo zavestno ponavljati* starih stilov. Spreminjanje starih objektov zato, da jih prilagodimo modernim potrebam, ni dopustno. Moramo kopirati ali ustvariti nekaj povsem novega. S tem pa ne mislim, da mora biti novo v nasprotju s tem, kar je bilo prej.«²²³

220 V besedilu »The Potemkin City (1921)« Adolf Loos zapiše: »Naloga umetnika bi morala biti najti nov jezik za novi material. Vse ostalo je imitacija.« V: Loos, *On architecture ...*, p. 27.

221 Loos, »A Review of Applied Arts I (1898)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 135.

222 Loos, »The Old and The New Style in Architecture (1898)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 34. Slednje je sicer v nasprotju z izjavo, ki jo je Loos zapisal v članku »Surplus to Requirements« (v: *Ornament and Crime ...*), ko je želel pokazati na razliko med umetnostjo in uporabnimi izdelki. Takrat je namreč zatrdil, da so vsakdanji izdelki podvrženi spreminjajočemu se okusu in modi, medtem ko umetniška dela nikoli ne morejo iz mode.

223 Loos, »The New Style (1878)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 46.

Loos torej ne zavrne napredka in industrijske proizvodnje v smislu možnosti novega načina dela. Še več, tam, kjer je do novosti pripeljal razvoj (v našem primeru industrijska revolucija), je pri oblikovanju novih izdelkov nujen nov pristop. Zavrnitev se zgodi s stališča, da še bolj kot obrt, ki dela po nareku *umetnika*, industrijska proizvodnja pomaga pri prostituiranju uporabnih izdelkov. Za glavni cilj se izkaže zadovoljevanje trga in ustvarjanje potrošnikov z *okusom*. Zato je bilo – če se vrnemo k prej načeti misli – vključevanje umetnosti v polje uporabnih izdelkov po Loosu najslabša oblika mode, ki je botrovala degradaciji obrti, oblikovanja in umetnosti. Zato omenjeni most v oblikovanju nima kaj iskati, saj na ta način prostovoljno pristajamo v službi trgovine, v službi kapitala, in se odmaknemo od bistva našega poklica: reševanja problemov. V tem smislu se Loos postavi na stran obrti in zavrne novonastalo oblikovanje, ki ga umesti v polje spremenljive mode, podrejeno modnim muham na trgu. Kritika, ki v oblikovanju ostaja aktualna še danes.

Loosov obrat k obrti je zato treba brati kot napotek, kako pristopiti k oblikovanju, ne glede na izbrani tip proizvodnje. In v tem smislu se Loos odmakne od anahronizma, ki smo ga v obratu k obrti videli pri Ruskinu in Morrisu. V obrti prepozna tisto vedenje, ki lahko oblikovanju omogoči reševati prave probleme in ga *končno* odmakne od neutemeljenega stilizma. Kajti:

»Kaj je pravzaprav stil? To je težko definirati. Najbolje ga je definirala cenjena gospa, ki je rekla, če imaš levjo glavo na nočni omarici in enako levjo glavo na zofi, na omari, na postelji, na stolih, na umivalniku, skratka, na vseh predmetih v sobi, potem je to stil. Pri-
znajmo si, dragi dunajski obrtniki, ali se niste maksimalno potrudili in spodbudili razširitev takšnega nesmisla med javnostjo? Če v pohištvo ni bila vgrajena levja glava, je bilo pa kaj drugega, pa naj bo steber, izboklina, balustrada, včasih podaljšana, drugič skrajšana, potem odebeljena in včasih zožena. Takšne sobe terorizirajo svoje uboge lastnike.«²²⁴

Zmožnost odmika se po Loosu skriva v evoluciji. V nasprotju z Ruskinom in Arendto-vo Loos k spreminjanju mnenj pristopi s pozitivnim odnosom, saj verjame, da takšno

224 Loos, »The Interiors in the Rotunda (1898)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 57.

spreminjanje vodi v prvi vrsti k spreminjanju navad in na koncu k spremembi v kulturi.²²⁵ Slednje je po Loosovem mnenju odraz evolucijskega koraka v pozitivno smer. Tezo o kulturni evoluciji Loos utemelji na izjavi nemškega arhitekta in kritika Gottfrieda Semperja: »Pokaži posode, ki so jih ljudje izdelali, in na splošno lahko veš, kakšni ljudje so bili in na kateri stopnji je bila njihova kultura.«²²⁶ Torej, na podlagi oblikovanja uporabnih izdelkov lahko presojamo stopnjo evolucijskega »kulturnega« razvoja družbe. Iz slednjega Loos zaključí, da opulentnost ornamenta pomeni zgolj dodano, nepotrebno delo, ki ni več v skladu s stopnjo kulture, ki jo je človek dosegel ob prehodu iz 19. v 20. stoletje. »Razsipno umetniško delo na praktičnih izdelkih kaže na pomanjkanje kulture. [...] Sadizem osemnajstega stoletja bremeni z odvečnim delom in je tuj modernemu človeku.«²²⁷ In v tem smislu Loos razume odnos ornamenta in zločina. Ob tem je pomembno poudariti, da Loos ornamenta kot takega ni nikoli označil za zločin. Naslov odmevnega spisa je *Ornament in zločin*, in ne *Ornament je zločin* – na to razliko je Loos večkrat opozoril. V besedilu *Ornament and Education* je zapisal, da bo uporaba ornamenta zaradi praktičnosti na izdelkih izginila. S tem pa ni zahteval sistematične ukinitve ornamenta, temveč je zgolj želel opozoriti na dejstvo, da je tam, kjer je razvoj prišel do stopnje, ko je dekoracija odveč, ornament nemogoče obnoviti.²²⁸

Čas, v katerem *umetno* iščemo svoj stil, izraz, tip dekoracije, torej kaže na to, da nas je evolucijska stopnja pripeljala do točke, ko je naš izraz pravzaprav že tam, v tem, da ga – gledano s stališča ornamenta – ni.

»Jaz sem našel in svetu podaril naslednje spoznanje: *evolucija kulture je istovetna z odstranitvijo ornamenta z uporabnih predmetov*. Mislim sem, da bom svet razveselil, pa se mi ni zahvalil. Ljudje so bili žalostni in so povsili glave. Najbolj jih je težilo spoznanje, da si ni mogoče izmisliti nobenega novega ornamenta več. [...] Žalostno so potem hodili med vitrinami in se sramovali lastne impotence. Vsak čas ima svoj stil in samo našemu

225 Loos, »Cultural Degeneration (1908)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 163.

226 Loos, »Glass and China (1898)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 68. Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) je imel nedvomno močan vpliv na Loosovo razmišljanje. Poleg omenjenega citata je Loos po njem povzel tudi lju-bezen do antične arhitekture, h kateri se je v besedilih dostikrat vračal.

227 Loos, »Ornament and Education (1924)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, p. 186.

228 *Ibid.*, p. 187.

času naj bi bil stil odvzet? Stil – tako so imenovali ornament. Tedaj sem dejal: 'Ne jokajte! Glejte, saj v tem je veličina našega časa, da ni sposoben ustvariti novega ornamenta. Mi smo ornament preboleli, premagali smo željo po njem. Glejte, blizu je čas, čaka nas zadoščenje. Kmalu se bodo mestne ulice bleščale ko beli zidovi, kakor sveto mesto Sion, nebeška prestolnica. Takrat bo dano zadoščenje.'²²⁹

Če je Loos leta 1898 že vedel, da secesija in bidermajer²³⁰ nista pravi odgovor v arhitekturi na prelomu stoletja, je takrat še mislil, da bo treba novi stil poiskati. Kasneje je to mišljenje spremenil in teorijo pripeljal do zaključka, da je bil odgovor nenehno pred nami. To, da nam ni uspelo, je pravzaprav ključ do tega, da nam je uspelo. Uspeh se torej kaže v neuspehu, kaže se v *stilu*, katerega glavna vrlina je umanjkanje dekoracije. »Objekt, katerega forma *pokaže* izpraznjenost, ki izpostavi njegovo bit objekta. [...] Bit kot 'bit brez'.«²³¹ Takrat ko slečemo odvečno, šele pridemo do bistva, ki ga prej nismo mogli videti. Šele takrat se pokaže, da je za to, da do iskane biti pridemo, jo spregledamo, nujno potrebna odsotnost. Odsotnost odvečnega. In prav ta »objekt odsotnosti« (po Wajcmanu) postane nosilec sam.²³² Zgodi se ključni premik. Vse do takrat se je vrednost merila v bogastvu dekorja na stavbi, na nosilcu. Z odstranitvijo *odvečne* vrhnje plasti pa nosilec vrednosti postane objekt sam. In ko se Loos tega zave – v Sullivanovi maniri v problemu uvidi rešitev – podobno kot Badioujev sv. Pavel nič več ne *zahteva*, nič več ne *išče*, temveč *deklarira*.

»Če zahtevamo znamenja, bo tisti, ki je z njimi radodaren, postal gospodar tistega, ki jih zahteva. Če filozofsko izprašujemo, bo tisti, ki lahko odgovori, postal gospodar subjekta v dvomih. Toda tisti, ki deklarira brez garancije prerokb ali čudežev, brez argumentov ali dokazov, ne vstopa v logiko gospodarja. Deklariranje dejansko ne izhaja iz praznine (zahteve), kamor se naseli gospodar. Tisti, ki deklarira, ne izpričuje nobenega manka in

229 Loos, »Ornament and Crime (1908)«, *Ornament and Crime ...*, pp. 167–168. Prevod »Ornament in zločin«, *Arhitekt*, št. 5, julij-avgust 1952, pp. 40–42.

230 »Pred desetimi leti sem napisal serijo člankov in posvaril pred tema dvema stiloma [bidermajerjem in secesijo]. [...] Takrat sem bil v manjšini, v zelo majhni manjšini. V manjšini enega samega.« Loos, »Guided Tours of Apartments (1907)«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 53.

231 Wajcman, *Objekt stoletja ...*, pp. 70–72.

232 *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.

ostane izvzet njegovemu zapolnjenju s figuro gospodarja. Zato lahko zasede mesto sina.

[...] Sin je tisti, ki mu nič ne manjka, ker je zgolj začetek.«²³³

In prav to naredi Loos z deklariranjem kulture, ki nima več povezave z ornamentom. Dekoracija je v bistvu nepotrebna, saj je problem skrit v rešitvi, in zato se je treba obrniti k logiki obrtniškega mišljenja v oblikovanju. Rešitev je pred vsemi, če je ne vidiš, si zaslepljen. In v tem smislu Loos ustvari nov začetek v delovanju na področju arhitekture in oblikovanja, kot se odrazi glavna razlika med njim in Ruskinom ter njuno zmožnostjo revolucionirati čas, ki šele prihaja. Po Badiouju se na področju revolucionarne politike pojavlja vprašanje: »Ali lahko dogodek dojamemo kot funkcijo oziroma posredovanje?«²³⁴ Če z Badioujevo mislijo parafraziramo oba misleca, lahko zaključimo, da se je Ruskin moral zgoditi, da smo prišli do nečesa drugega, medtem ko je Loos s svojo teorijo in prakso prekinil predhodni režim in je sam zase to, kar se nam zgodi. Zgodi se padec ornamenta kot zakona na področju arhitekture in oblikovanja. Zgodi se, da funkcija dolgoročno prevzame nosilno vlogo na področju oblikovanja. Zgodi se še danes ključno obdobje v oblikovanju: modernizem. Obdobje, ko so oblikovalci in arhitekti verjeli, da lahko s svojim delom zgradijo nov, boljši svet.

S ponovno aktualnostjo se Ruskinova razmišljanja danes soočajo z vprašanjem, kaj je danes za nas gotika. Ali pa, kot bi provokativno vprašal Loos, kaj se danes kaže kot naslednja evolucijska stopnja. Kaj je danes moderno? Kaj je danes prava novost?

233 Alain Badiou, *Sveti Pavel. Utemeljitev univerzalnosti*, Analecta, Ljubljana 1998, pp. 61–62.

234 *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

De Stijlov stroj

Oblikovanje 20. stoletja – če se navežem na Loosovo misel iz prejšnjega poglavja – temelji na neuspehu. Neuspehu, ki se, kot nam pokaže Loos, izkaže za uspeh. Uspeh se kaže v tem, da nam ni uspelo ustvariti ornamenta za novo stoletje. Neuspeh v ospredje potisne *novi stil* 20. stoletja: funkcijo. Iz neke napetosti ali – če uporabim Kantov termin – iz enega od gonil [*Triebfedern*], ki ga v našem primeru definira »sila prilike«²³⁵, se torej poraja dejanje. Neuspeh arhitektov in oblikovalcev na prelomu 19. z 20. stoletjem se z Loosovo deklaracijo izkaže za dogodek, ki pomeni ključ do spremembe. Spremembe, ki generira novost. Novost, ki je vse do takrat ni bilo mogoče misliti. In tako se pravzaprav zgodi preobrat. Tisto, kar se sprva bere kot negativno, se – ko gledamo nazaj – izkaže za pozitivno alternativo. Izkaže se za afirmativen dogodek, ki ponuja novo paradigmo.

Da po Badiouju sploh pride do dogodka, moramo prepoznati tisto, kar se loči, kar se odteguje znotraj predikatov del, v katerih deluje, in jih »hkrati tudi že prečka«.²³⁶ Z odtegotvovanjem, z ločitvijo se namreč ustvarja luknja v vednosti:

»Če [...] lahko neka singularnost prek odtegotvanja pretendira na univerzalno, je to mogoče samo zato, ker igra identitetnih predikatov oziroma logika deskriptivnih vednosti o partikularnosti nikakor ne dopušča, da bi tako singularnost lahko predvideli oziroma jo mislili. Iz tega izhaja, da univerzalne singularnosti ni mogoče situirati v red biti, pač pa vse prej v red nenadne pojavitve. [...] Vsako univerzalno ima za svoj izvor dogodek, dogodek pa je nekaj, česar ni mogoče izpeljati iz situacijske partikularnosti.«²³⁷

235 Več v: Alenka Zupančič, »Etika realnega: Kant, Lacan«, *Problemi, Razprave*, letnik 31, številka 6, Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, Ljubljana 1993.

236 Alain Badiou, »Osem tez o univerzalnem«, *Filozofski vestnik*, XX (1/1999), p. 169. Rado Riha v besedilu »Kako je mogoče misliti singularno univerzalno« podobno prepozna pri Althusserju, v t. i. »nujnem paradoksu«. Zapiše: »Ta paradoks je, kot je znano, v tem, da filozofija, ki nima svojega objekta in deluje zgolj v imanentnosti svoje misli, ravno s svojim zgolj znotraj filozofskim delovanjem posega zunaj sebe.« V: *ibid.*, p. 193. Badiou nam pokaže, da takšno prečenje lahko najdemo tudi drugod, ne zgolj v filozofiji, ki nima svojega objekta.

237 *Ibid.* Kurziva je povzeta po avtorju (Badiou, »Osem tez o univerzalnem«, *Filozofski ...*, p. 169).

Zgodi se torej že omenjeni prelom, ki spremeni logiko delovanja in razmišljanja na področju oblikovanja. Hkrati pa nam Loos ponudi odgovor na vprašanje, ali je mogoče prepoznati *pravo* novost na delu. Odgovor se zdi na dlani. Če gre za pravo novost, je ni mogoče prepoznati, vse dokler se ne zgodi. Kot smo videli pri Badiouju, je za pravo novost značilno, da sodi v »red nenadne pojavitve«. Če smo novost sposobni prepoznati, ali še več, jo napovedati, potem gre za novost, ki to ni. Gre za novost zaradi novosti, novost, ki ustvarja zgolj navidezen občutek novega, je – če ostanemo v okviru oblikovanja – tam zgolj zato, da pospešuje prodajo.²³⁸ Zato Loos šele za nazaj prepozna v *sili prilike* iskani novi stil. In z deklariranjem na prvi pogled impotentne situacije najde iskani rezultat. *Sila prilike* ga prisili k identifikaciji problema. Prisili ga k spremembi paradigme, v razmislek o stilu, ali bolje, umanjkanju slednjega. Odgovori nam s ključnim elementom – mislijo, ki po Badiouju ustvarja podlago za univerzalno:²³⁹ tisto, kar je bilo prej brez vrednosti (gola stavba), z Loosovim dejanjem dobi neko vrednost. Na novo določena vrednost kot posledica postopoma spremeni logiko situacije. In to je pravzaprav ključni trenutek. Prava novost ima to moč, da ne samo prelomi obstoječo situacijo, temveč hkrati nosi zahtevo po spremembi. In ta sprememba se kaže v spremenjenem odnosu, v spremenjenem delovanju v stroki oblikovanja.

Vzporedno z Badioujevo diskontinuiteto pa je v oblikovanju prisotna tudi t. i. evulcijska kontinuiteta. Slednje spomni na Bergsonov primer o vodi in sladkorju, ki ga v knjigi *Podoba-gibanje* opiše Gilles Deleuze:

»Če dam sladkor v kozarec vode, pravi, 'moram počakati, da se sladkor stopi'. [...] Kaj pravzaprav hoče reči? Da samo gibanje translacije, ki razkroji drobce sladkorja in jih razporedi po vodi, izraža spremembo v celoti, se pravi v vsebini kozarca – da gre torej za kvalitativni prehod iz vode, v kateri je sladkor, v stanje sladkane vode. [Iz česar sledi

238 Ali, kot slednje opiše Gui Bonsiepe, »kapitalistični koncept oblikovanja [oblikovanje vidi kot] cilj za stiliziranje izdelka za maksimalni profit in distribucijo na trgu«. (V: Gui Bonsiepe, »Design and Democracy«, v *Civic City Cahier* 2, Bedford Press, London 2010, p. 6.) Zato je s strani trga definirana novost največkrat – kot se v številnih primerih že v izredno kratkem času izkaže – le novost zaradi novosti. Šminka za pospeševanje prodaje in večanje tržnega deleža.

239 Badiou, »Osem tez o univerzalnem«, *Filozofski ...*, pp. 167–175.

Bergsonov sklep:] celote ni mogoče dati zato, ker je Odprto in ker je zanjo značilno, da se nenehno spreminja oziroma poraja nekaj novega, skratka, da traja.«²⁴⁰

S pomembnim dodatkom. »Bistvo neke reči,« kot zapiše Deleuze, »se nikoli ne pojavi na samem začetku, temveč na sredi, med njenim razvojem, ko se njene moči okrepijo.«²⁴¹ In ti rezi po pojavitvi sredi neke stvari – kot sladkor, ki se raztopi v vodi – spreminjajo nadaljnji razvoj v stroki. Prav počasno topljenje učinkov dogodka, ki je pred tem zarezal v ustaljeno, ustvarja navidezen občutek, da se *prave* spremembe zgodijo postopoma, zgolj kot modifikacije predhodnega. Toda ravno zato, ker gre za pravo novost, je sprememba celote sploh mogoča.

Primer nam ponudi možnost razumevanja, kako lahko v oblikovanju hkrati sledimo evolucijski kontinuiteti in prepoznamo diskontinuitete v razvoju discipline. Evolucijski razvoj utemeljuje Loos z – na prvi pogled – *preprostim* dejstvom: »Treba je zgolj razmišljati in občutiti v stilu našega časa in ostalo bo samo po sebi sledilo.«²⁴² S takšnim razmišljanjem ne zanika tradicije (na tej sta svojo misel utemeljila Ruskin in Morris), še več, za Loosa je temelj vsega antika, ki pa se novosti umakne takoj, ko je čas zrel za njeno izboljšavo. Gre torej za logično stopnjo v razvoju, ki jo je v Sullivanovi maniri treba *zgolj* prepoznati in uporabiti, v skrajnem primeru celo prepustiti toku napredka. Italijanski oblikovalec in teoretik Enzo Mari gre še dlje, saj po njegovem vse temelji le na nekaj arhetipskih delih. »Če prvih sto arhetipskih del ne bi bilo nikoli ustvarjenih, potem ne bi bilo modela za vseh tisoč nadaljnjih del – in mi ne bi imeli enakega koncepta estetike. In če že govorimo o oblikovanju, ta obrt ne bi obstajala.«²⁴³ Slednje povzame tudi grška teoretičarka Artemis Yagou z nadgradnjo misli Davida Pya: »Oblikovanje

240 Gilles Deleuze, *Podoba-gibanje*, Studia humanitatis, šesti letnik, Založba Škuc in Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 1991, pp. 18–19.

241 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

242 Loos, »Cultural Degeneration (1908)«, *Ornament and crime ...*, p. 165. Zelo znana je tudi njegova misel iz članka *Ornament in zločin*: »Evolucija kulture je istovetna z odstranitvijo ornamenta z uporabnih predmetov.« *Ibid.*, p. 167.

243 Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Enzo Mari – The Conversation Series*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln 2008, p. 28.

lahko razumemo kot postopen proces adaptacije, korak za korakom, prej obstoječe rešitve; gre prej za modifikacijo kot inovacijo.«²⁴⁴

Po drugi strani pa nam prav Loos s svojo deklaracijo novega *golega* stila, pa tudi Ruskinova in Morrisova misel pred njim dokazujejo, da v Badioujevi maniri glavne spremembe v stroki nosijo rezi, ki prečijo ustaljeno misel. Rezi, kjer ne moremo pisati o evolucijski kontinuiteti, kot je bila po Sullivanu gradnja stolpnic, temveč gre za diskontinuitete, kjer se na spremembo ne navajamo in jo počasi sprejemamo, temveč nas sili k nenadnemu premisleku. Niko Kralj zapiše:

»Živimo v času, ki ga karakterizira eksplozija ustvarjalnosti in nestalnost dolgoročnega načrtovanja, živimo v času sodobne tehnične civilizacije, ki bi jo želeli pri nas s samoupravnimi družbenimi spremembami preroditi v tehnično kulturo. To je čas, ko nova tehnična odkritja zamenjujejo včerajšnje rešitve, to je čas nasprotij, labilnega ravnotežja, zaostajanja in prehitevanja.

Oblikovanje in iznajditeljstvo sta dva konca ene same inovacijske verige. Težko je postaviti meje, kjer prehajata drug v drugega. V primerjavi iz živega sveta pa je oblikovanje samo evolucionalna sprememba na izdelku in prilagajanje novim zahtevam, medtem ko je izum – mutacija – skokovita kvalitetna sprememba in s tem navadno čisto nova likovna rešitev.«²⁴⁵

Niko Kralj poleg evolucije v oblikovanje vpelje še en biološki termin – mutacije. Kot razloži, v naravi mutacija pomeni genetsko spremembo, v oblikovanju pa gre za invencije, kot so bile šivanka, kolo ali žarnica. Gre torej za rez, prelom, skokovito spremembo. Spremembo, ki drastično vpliva ne samo na oblikovanje, temveč na družbo v celoti. Prelom, ki dolgoročno vpliva in spremeni način delovanja, razumevanja; dogodek, ki spremeni naše potrebe.

244 Artemis Yagou, *Rewriting Design History from an Evolutionary Perspective: Background and Implications*, http://ead.verhaag.net/fullpapers/eado6_id186_2.pdf (avgust 2010).

245 Niko Kralj, *Oblikovanje in znanstveno tehnična ustvarjalnost*, [1971], [p. 2]. Besedilo je ohranjeno kot tipkopis in ga hranijo v arhivu Muzeja za arhitekturo in oblikovanje, v Ljubljani.

Loosu takšen rez – ali po Kraljevo mutacija – uspe z dejanjem, ko iz nezmožnosti ustvariti novi stil deklarira iskano novost. Podobno kot slednje Jelica Šumič Riha prepozna pri Adornu, pri katerem utopično upanje tvori prav tisto, kar ni zmoglo nastati, se ustvariti. Temelji na propadu stvari, kar ji omogoči, da postane stvar.²⁴⁶ Povsem drugačen, toda še vedno izredno zgovoren primer negativnega izhodišnega položaja iz prakse oblikovanja nam poda Victor Papanek v knjigi *Design for the Real World*. Vse do druge svetovne vojne so v Ameriki prevladovali izdelki, katerih temelj oblikovanja Papanek definira kot »manipulativno vizualno navdušenje«. ²⁴⁷ Do radikalne spremembe pride z začetkom druge svetovne vojne. Kot opiše Papanek, so bile takratne avtomobilska in druge potrošne industrije primorane svojo proizvodnjo preusmeriti v oskrbovanje vojske. Posledično industrijskim oblikovalcem ni preostalo drugega, kot da so

»(sicer zgolj začasno) razvili občutek za odgovornost. [...] Oblikovalci so se na podlagi vsiljenega vojnega stanja srečali s pravimi zahtevami uporabnosti. Potreba po iskrenem oblikovanju (oblikovanje-v-uporabi namesto oblikovanja-za-prodajo) je za razliko od tistega na trgu ustvarila veliko bolj zdravo disciplino. Kritično pomanjkanje materiala je oblikovalce, ki so še naprej delali za potrošnike, prisililo v premišljene izvedbe izdelkov – tako na področju uporabnosti kot na področju materiala in drugih s strani vojne vsiljenih omejitev. Izvrsten primer slednjega je tričetrtilitrska posoda, narejena iz plastificiranega kartona. Posoda je tudi po več ur zdržala na 240 stopinjah, mogoče jo je bilo prati, uporabljati v neskončnost, na trgu pa je bila naprodaj za 45 centov. Kljub omenjenemu je [...] do leta 1945 ni bilo več moč najti na trgu.«²⁴⁸

Po koncu vojne – ko se po predpostavki vrnemo v *pozitivni* izhodiščni položaj – namesto utilitarnih posod trg preplavijo izdelki, ki jih po Papaneku večinoma simbolizira slaba kopija Reynoldsovega kemičnega svinčnika. Podjetni trgovec je potrošnike navdušil z vzneseno *obljubo*, da bodo z novim kemičnim svinčnikom lahko pisali pod vo-

246 Jelica Šumič Riha, »A Matter Of Resistance«, v: *Filozofski vestnik*, št. 2, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 1997, p. 136.

247 Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World, Human Ecology and Social Change*, Academy Chicago Press, Chicago 1992, p. 33. Med oblikovalci, ki so trg polnili z opisanimi izdelki, Papanek navede Harolda van Dorena, Normana Bel Geddesa, Raymonda Loewyja, Russla Wrighta, Henryja Dreyfussa, Donalda Deskeyja in Walterja Dorwina Teaguea. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

248 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

do.²⁴⁹ Kemični svinčnik je kljub absurdnosti potencialne uporabe (kolikokrat se nas je pod vodo polotila želja po pisanju?) čez noč postal simbol zmagovalcev vojne in posledično so ga prodajali za »pičlih« 25 ameriških dolarjev za kos. Po Papanekovih besedah prav z »Reynoldsovimi v prsnem žepu puščajočimi kemičnimi svinčniki označujemo začetek nove dobe«. ²⁵⁰ Dobe, ko oblikovanje-za-prodajo s trga v večji meri izrine oblikovanje-v-uporabi.²⁵¹

Kot je razvidno iz obeh Papanekovih primerov, se s spremembo izhodišča več kot očitno spremeni način reševanja problema. Christopher Alexander v delu *Synthesis of Form* oblikovalski problem opiše kot »poskus, da bi dosegel skladnost dveh entitet: iskano obliko in njen kontekst. Oblika je rešitev problema; kontekst problem definira.«²⁵² Slednje v nadaljevanju še dodatno razloži: »Oblika je del sveta, ki ga nadziramo in ga zavestno oblikujemo, medtem ko je ostali svet tak, kot je. Kontekst je del tistega sveta, ki obliki postavlja zahteve; vse, kar na svetu obliki postavlja zahteve, je kontekst.«²⁵³ Omenjena primera torej odgovarjata na spremenjeni kontekst. Kontekst, ki smo ga v našem primeru opredelili kot izhodiščni položaj. Hkrati pa nam Papanekova primera skušata razložiti, da so oblikovalci sicer sposobni razviti občutek za odgovornost, toda le, če so pred začetkom oblikovanja prisiljeni v negativen izhodiščni položaj. Šele takrat, ko so primorani reševati probleme, v katere jih pahnejo takšno ali drugačno pomanjkanje in omejitve (ali prej omenjena *sila prilike*), so sposobni izkoristiti svoj polni potencial ter oblikovati preproste in uporabne izdelke. *Iskrene izdelke* – kot jih z Ruskinovimi besedami označi Papanek – torej izdelke, katerih glavni cilj ni zadovoljevanje potrošnje, temveč uporabe.

249 Papanek ob tem doda, da pravzaprav razen pod vodo omenjenega kemičnega svinčnika praktično nisi mogel uporabljati nikjer drugje. *Ibid.*

250 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

251 Dobe, ki kljub temu, da se kupci večkrat empirično prepričajo o nasprotnem od oglaševanega, še vedno verjame bleščečim oglasom in podlega vedno nasilnejšemu znamčenju. Dobe, ki načrtno gradi na umetni zastarelosti izdelkov – še veliko bolj sofisticirano kot pred drugo svetovno vojno – in katere edini verodostojni kazalec se zdi nenehna rast prodaje.

252 Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1964, p. 15.

253 *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

Alexandrova razlaga nam ponuja tudi drug pogled na problem odgovornosti v oblikovanju. Kontekst, torej neki izhodiščni položaj, nas prisili, da iz nič nekaj naredimo. In v tem se skriva odgovor. Že to, da si nekaj prepoznal in rešil, implicira odgovornost. Odgovornost v oblikovanju je torej vezana na rešitev problema. Slednje nas vrne k Sullivanu in njegovi tezi, da je glavna naloga oblikovanja pravzaprav ta, da prepoznamo *pravi* problem. S tem ko ga rešimo – po Sullivanu nam pravi, prepoznani problem avtomatsko že sugerira rešitev – pravzaprav rešimo vprašanje odgovornosti v oblikovanju. Podoben odgovor nam ponudi Gerrit Rietveld:

»Nobenega razloga ni, da bi nekdo moral ponuditi zagovor zato, ker je nekaj naredil; prav nasprotno, potreba po konkretnem izražanju je umaknjena, če je bil nekdo pred tem v besedah sposoben izraziti potrebo. Zato ni nobene potrebe po dodatni razlagi dela, ki smo ga opravili.«²⁵⁴

Če želimo, da se oblikovanje zgodi, po Rietveldu potrebujemo izraženo potrebo.²⁵⁵ Potrebo po rešitvi nečesa. Iz česar sledi, da za začetek oblikovanja potrebujemo problem. Slednje nas napotuje k možnosti razločevanja prave potrebe od lažne. Prava potreba je torej tista, ki nas napotuje k reševanju problema. Z reševanjem problema pa vstopimo v polje oblikovanja. S to mislijo se vračamo k Alexandru, ki Rietveldov odgovor nadgradi s trditvijo, da v kulturah, kjer so problemi redki, pravih oblikovalcev sploh ne poznajo.²⁵⁶ Ali kot na vprašanje: »Kakšne so omejitve oblikovanja?« Charles Eames odgovori: »Kakšne so omejitve problemov?«²⁵⁷ Iz česar sledi, da je obstoj oblikovalcev pogojen z obstojem problemov. Pogojen z iskanjem rešitev problemov. Ali povedano drugače, dokler misliš – rešuješ, iz česar sledi: dokler misliš – oblikuješ. V tem dejanju se skriva bistvo oblikovalskega procesa. Kajti v odločitvi, da probleme prepoznamo in skušamo najti rešitev, se – kot to opiše Alexander – za postopnim procesom »redukcije napak«²⁵⁸ skriva temelj oblikovalčeve odgovornosti. In to kljub temu, kot še nadaljuje

254 Gerrit Rietveld, *Utility, Construction: (Beauty, Art)*, 1927, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/gerrit-rietveld-“utility-construction-beauty-art”-1927> (avgust 2011).

255 O razmerju med potrebo in željo pišem v naslednjem poglavju.

256 Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis ...*, p. 6.

257 »Design Q&A«, *The Films of Charles & Ray Eames*, vol. 4, Image Entertainment, Chatsworth 2000.

258 Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis ...*, p. 102.

Alexander, da lahko teža pomena določene zahteve problema variira od oblikovalca do oblikovalca, medtem ko je verodostojnost zahteve (je zahteva res zahteva ali morda ni?) največkrat neodvisna od osebnega mnenja oblikovalca.²⁵⁹ Slednje je ključno. Po Rietveldu zadostuje že ubeseditev. Zadostuje prepoznavanje, zadostuje razlog, da je nekaj treba rešiti. Posledično je vse moraliziranje in spraševanje, kateri odgovor, katera oblika, katera rešitev je *bolj prava*, odveč. Podobno kot se danes zdi odveč vprašanje o načinu produkcije. Toda prav zadnje, vprašanje o načinu produkcije, je na začetku 20. stoletja v večji meri diktiralo razmišljanje na področju discipline oblikovanja in proizvodnje izdelkov. Kajti z odločitvijo za spremembo orodja sledimo redefiniciji oblikovalskega področja.

V tej točki v oblikovanje vstopi avantgardno gibanje De Stijl.²⁶⁰ De Stijlu z mislijo *Stroj je tisti, ki dela, in ne obrtnik* uspe dolgoročno prevrednotiti vrednote na področju oblikovanja. V misli De Stijla zavzame stroj mesto orodja, ki vsebini 20. stoletja da formo. Stroj, ki ga v večji meri zavračajo vsi trije obravnavani predhodniki, od Ruskina do Loosa, z gibanjem De Stijl dobi svoje mesto v oblikovanju, kar posledično spremeni tudi izhodišče oblikovanja.

Kot sem že izpostavila v poglavju *Morrisovo oblikovanje za vse*, težnje v prid stroja in povezovanja oblikovanja z industrijsko proizvodnjo niso nove. Henry van de Velde – sicer goreč zagovornik Morrisovih idej – je v besedilu *A Chapter on the Design and Construction of Modern Furniture* leta 1897 zapisal:

259 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

260 Med tiste, ki so verjeli v industrijsko proizvodnjo in hkrati gradili pravila, kako strojno proizvodnjo vpeljati v oblikovanje, nedvomno sodi gibanje De Stijl. Kljub Loosovemu spoznanju, da je novi stil 20. stoletja ta, da stila ni, so destijlovci – kot pove že ime – Loosovo teorijo okrepili z mislijo Franka Lloyda Wrighta in s futuristično ideologijo ter zgradili podlago za *novi stil*, za novi jezik umetnosti. Jezik, ki temelji na iskanju drugačnega odnosa med partikularnim in univerzalnim ter vpliva tako na razvoj modernega slikarstva (ključni akter gibanja je bil slikar Piet Mondrian) kot na razvoj arhitekture in oblikovanja (z glavnima protagonista Theom van Doesburgom in Gerritom Rietveldom). Ključ za to, da so Nizozemci nenadoma prevzeli krmilo v razvoju na področju teorije oblikovanja, po Reyner Banhamu leži tudi v tem, da se je Nizozemcem uspelo s pozicijo nevtralnosti izogniti prvi svetovni vojni. Po Banhamu bi do podobnih zaključkov prišle tudi druge nacije, če jih ne bi vojna ustavila v razvoju. Glej v: Banham, *Theory and Design ...*, p. 139.

»Prizadevati si moramo za temelje, na katerih bomo zgradili novi stil. Po mojem mnenju temelj najdemo v tem, da nikoli ne ustvarimo nečesa, kar nima tehtnega razloga za obstoj, pa četudi to pomeni sankcijo vsemogočne industrije in posledice za razmnoževanje silnih strojev. Toda lahko bi se ponašali z zagotovo veliko bolj individualnimi načeli sistematičnega izogibanja oblikovanja vsega, kar ne more biti *množično proizvedeno*. Moj ideal bi bil, da bi bili moji projekti tisočkrat izvedeni, seveda ne brez strogega nadzora [...]. Zato lahko le upam, da bo moj vpliv mogoče občutiti in da bom – ko bo industrijska aktivnost bolj razširjena – lahko maksimalno izkoristil svoj potencial, ki ga vodijo družbena prepričanja. Namreč, da je človekovo vrednost mogoče izmeriti s številom ljudi, ki so imeli korist od njegovega življenjskega dela.«²⁶¹

Henry van de Velde je s selitvijo v nemški Weimar kmalu postal eden od pomembnejših članov že omenjenega nemškega združenja Deutscher Werkbund, združenja, ki si je za enega od ciljev zastavilo vpeljavo strojne proizvodnje v oblikovanje in hkratno vpeljavo najvišjih standardov v oblikovanje množično proizvedenih izdelkov. Deutscher Werkbund se je – kot sem že razložila – izkazal za ključnega v prepoznavanju oblikovanja kot mostu med temi, ki inovirajo, in tistimi, ki izvajajo.²⁶² Tisti, ki si zamisli in je vse do takrat veljal za enega od bregov, po novem preraste v most in ponovno poveže tisto, kar je delitev dela po Ruskinu in Morrisu nasilno ločila. Hkrati pa se z mislijo van de Veldeja vrne Morrisova misel o ustvarjanju oblikovanja za vse. Ali kot to označi van de Velde, gre za *oblikovanje, od katerega ima korist čim večje število ljudi*. S pomembno razliko v produkcijskih sredstvih: obrtno proizvodnjo nadomesti množična, strojna, ki pa s seboj nosi dvom. Če je pri Morrisu v njegovi težnji po umetnosti, oblikovanju za vse mogoče brati željo po univerzalnosti, pa smo z množično proizvodnjo že v 19. stoletju (v dvajsetem pa še toliko bolj) vstopili na trg potrošnje, ki se največkrat le dela (propagira), da je za vse. Misel, ki bo – kot bomo videli v nadaljevanju – dodobra namučila člane gibanja De Stijl.

261 Henry van de Velde, »A Chapter on the Design and Construction of Modern Furniture«, v: *Form and Function. A Source Book for the History of Architecture and Design 1890–1939* (ed. Tim in Charlotte Benton in Dennis Sharp), Granada Publishing, London 1980, p. 18.

262 *The Werkbund. Studies ...*, pp. 7–8.

Poleg omenjenega je za razmišljanje protagonistov gibanja De Stijl izredno pomembna tudi misel Sullivanovega učenca Franka Lloyd Wrighta. Wright je stroj videl kot orodje, ki dela po naših navodilih. Če z rezultatom dela nismo zadovoljni, moramo (preprosto) spremeniti navodila:

»Vsako obdobje je svoje delo opravilo in proizvedlo umetnost z najboljšim možnim orodjem ali napravo, ki so jo poznali. Z orodjem, ki je najuspešneje reševalo najpomembnejšo zadevo na svetu – človeški napor. Grčija je imela sužnje za osnovno orodje svoje umetnosti in civilizacije. To orodje smo zavrgli in zavračamo vrnitev grške umetnosti pod pogoji njene obnove, saj zdaj vztrajamo pri temeljih Demokracije.

Ali ni bolj verjetno, da se je medij umetniškega izražanja razširil in spremenil, da je treba najti novo definicijo in novo usmeritev umetniške aktivnosti v prihodnosti, da je Stroj naposled za umetnika naredil – pa naj si ga lasti ali ne – sijajno distinkcijo med staro Umetnostjo in Umetnostjo, ki šele prihaja? Distinkcijo, ki jo je ustvarilo orodje, ki osvobaja človeško delo, podaljšuje in razširja življenje najpreprostejšega človeka in posledično ustvarja temelj Demokraciji, pri kateri vztrajamo.«²⁶³

Stroj po Wrightu ni več naš sovražnik, kot ni več le potencial, temveč celo ustvarja temelj za demokratičen družbeni sistem. Na prehodu iz 19. v 20. stoletje se torej zgodi prevrednotenje stroja. Še več, stroj je dobesedno politično reformiran, postane akter, ki nam bo (po naših navodilih) omogočil boljši jutri. Družbena ureditev, pri kateri vztrajamo, pa odpre še eno pomembno vprašanje takratnega obdobja – altruizem posameznika v družbi. Nizozemski arhitekt in teoretik Hendrik Petrus Berlage načne vprašanje pomena dobrobiti družbe v primerjavi s srečo posameznika. Berlagejeva misel, poleg naštetih, odigra pomembno vlogo²⁶⁴ v nadaljnjem teoretičnem razmišljanju skupine:

»Krščanstvo je mrtvo in za zdaj je moč občutiti le predhodni nemir novega svetovnega koncepta, ki bo temeljil na posledicah znanstvenega napredka. Potrebujemo etičen dogovor in v tej povezavi na površje privre vprašanje našega časa – Altruizem. Pride do na-

263 Wright, »The Art and Craft of the Machine«, v: *The Industrial Design ...*, pp. 57–58. Velike začetnice so avtorjeve.

264 Glej v: Banham, *Theory and Design ...*, pp. 139–149.

slednjega [vprašanja] – posameznik ali Skupnost? Ali naj si načelo enakosti posameznik z zanikanjem tradicionalne morale prisluži ali naj mu bo dano?«²⁶⁵

Iz omenjenih teorij in praks je mogoče razbrati elemente, ki tvorijo misel 20. stoletja, to pa na svoj način pooseblja prav skupina De Stijl. Prvič, množična proizvodnja je orodje za doseg množic, ki bodo imele od dobrega oblikovanja korist. Vpliv se meri s številom ljudi, ki imajo od našega dela korist. Drugič, most med novim orodjem – strojem in množicami gradi oblikovanje. In tretjič, stroj je tisto orodje, ki nas osvobaja nepotrebne delo in tvori temelj na novo definirani demokratični umetnosti 20. stoletja – oblikovanju.

Stroj kot orodje prihodnosti in serijska proizvodnja kot njegov rezultat osujeta temelj na novo definirani disciplini, oblikovanju. Zgodi se sprememba vrednot oziroma, kot to označi Walter Benjamin v besedilu *Umetnina v času, ki jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati*, zamenjava avtoritete stvari:

»Pristnost neke stvari je zbir vsega, kar ji je od začetka dodala tradicija, od njenega materialnega trajanja pa vse do zgodovinskega pričevanja. Ker je to drugo zasnovano v prvem, v reprodukciji pa se je prvo človeku izmaknilo, izgubi zadnje, se pravi zgodovinsko pričevanje, svojo trdnost. V resnici se zamenja avtoriteta stvari. [...] *Na splošno bi lahko rekli, da reprodukcijska tehnika ločuje reproducirano od tradicije. S tem ko množi reprodukcijo, zamenjuje enkratni pojav umetniškega dela z množičnim. In s tem ko omogoča reprodukciji, da se približa tistemu, ki jo sprejema v sleherni situaciji, aktualizira tudi reproducirano. Oba procesa vodita k močnemu pretresu vsega tradicionalnega, vsega tistega, kar je druga stran današnje krize in prenove človeštva.*«²⁶⁶

265 Citat Berlageja vzet iz: *ibid.*, p. 144. Pomen Berlagejeve misli poudari tudi Gerrit Rietveld v besedilu *New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture*, 1932, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/gerrit-rietveld-“new-functionalism-in-dutch-architecture”-1932> (avgust 2011).

266 Benjamin, »Umetnina v času, ki jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«, *Izbrani spisi ...*, p. 151. Kurziva je avtorjeva.

Pretres tradicionalnega v oblikovanju pomeni pretres Morrisove in Ruskinove dogme, da je *pravo* oblikovanje zgolj tisto, pri katerem jasno razpoznamo, kako tradicija vodi sled roke. Pri čemer prav s sledjo razpoznamo vse zmote in vso svobodo razmišljanja, ki jo obrtnik z izvedbo izdelku vtisne v formo. Z odstranitvijo tradicije in sledi roke, t. i. svobode razmišljanja, se poraja vprašanje: kaj izdelku sploh še ostane? Benjaminov močni pretres tradicionalnega se na področju oblikovanja izdelkov bere kot destrukcija temeljev zgodovinskega pričevanja. In zato se Wrightov poziv k redefiniciji stroke na začetku 20. stoletja članom skupine De Stijl zdi povsem na mestu. Theo van Doesburg ga opiše kot »dvojno funkcijo vsake inovacije, pa naj gre za znanost, kulturo umetnosti ali arhitekturo, [ta] mora zadovoljiti in biti v skladu z na eni strani gradnjo kosa za kosom nove podobe sveta, medtem ko stari svet na drugi strani kos za kosom razstavljamo. Prvo je po navadi rezultat zadnjega.«²⁶⁷ In prav slednje De Stijlu uspe. Sistematično razstavi in na novo sestavi novo definicijo oblikovanja.

Iz bogate zbirke De Stijlovih besedil in manifestov se bom v nadaljevanju osredotočila na tri poglavja, ki so po mojem mnenju ključna za razumevanje sprememb, ki so se v oblikovanju zgodile v prvi polovici 20. stoletja. Kot sem že omenila: s tem ko se De Stijl postavi na stran stroja, povzroči tako prevrednotenje vrednot na področju oblikovanja kot tudi v definiranju, razumevanju poklica oblikovalca. Slednje se kaže v naslednjih prekrivajočih se temah:

Prvič, s tem ko se člani skupine De Stijl odločijo za stroj, zavestno vstopijo v polje – kot to poimenujejo sami – univerzalnosti. Zahteva po univerzalnosti po njihovem mnenju pomeni zahtevo, ki dela v dobrobit skupnosti in formira jasno opozicijo partikularnosti – narcisoidnosti avtorja. Po novem oblikovalec ne rešuje svojih problemov, temveč probleme skupnosti. Povedano drugače, problemi skupnosti postanejo problemi oblikovalca.

267 Theo van Doesburg, *Architecture and Revolution – Revolutionary Architecture? Utopian Designs by Tatlin, Lissitzky, and Others*, 1928, <http://rosswolfe.wordpress.com/2010/10/03/theo-van-doesburgs-architecture-and-revolution-revolutionary-architecture-utopian-designs-by-tatlin-lissitzky-and-others/> -1928 (januar 2011).

Drugič, z odločitvijo za stroj je narcisoidni avtor izbrisan. Izbrisane so emocije, izbrisana je sled roke. Oblikovalec po novem postane misleči subjekt, ki upravlja stroj in z oblikovanjem funkcionalnih izdelkov rešuje probleme skupnosti.

Obe zgornji točki pa nas pripeljeta do tretje, do dveh vprašanj: kakšen je *novi, iskreni* izdelek, ki odgovarja na potrebe novega stoletja? In kaj se zgodi, ko serijski izdelek v očeh oblikovalca postane pozitiven izdelek, ko postane univerzalni element?

S prvo trditvijo, odločitvijo za stroj, oblikovanje vstopi v polje univerzalnega in problem skupnosti postane problem oblikovalca. Po besedah Mateia Calinescuja²⁶⁸ in Victorja Margolina²⁶⁹ je Comte Henri de Saint-Simon prvi filozof, ki je (že okoli leta 1820) v umetniku prepoznal družbenega vizionarja. Po Saint-Simonu umetniki, znanstveniki in industrialisti sestavljajo elitno sveto trojico, ki bi, če bi idealna država obstajala, v takšni državi vladala. Naloga umetnikov je, da si zamislijo prihodnost družbe, naloga znanstvenikov, da preverijo trdnost zamisli, industrialisti pa bodo tisti, ki bodo izvedljive ideje spravili v prakso.

»[P]ri tem prevzemu bodo umetniki, ljudje domišljije, spodbudili napredek: iz preteklosti bodo vzeli zlato dobo in jo kot darilo ponudili prihodnjim generacijam; družbo bodo pripravili do tega, da bo s strastjo sledila vzponu dobrega počutja, in to jim bo uspelo s slikanjem nove blaginje, z ustvarjanjem zavedanja, da bo prav vsak član družbe kmalu deležen svojega deleža ugodja, privilegija, ki ga je bil vse doslej deležen le ekstremno majhen razred; peli bodo o blagoslovih civilizacije, in zato da bodo dosegli svoj cilj, bodo uporabili vsa umetniška sredstva, govorništvo, poezijo, slikarstvo, glasbo; z besedo bodo razvili poetično podobo novega sistema.«²⁷⁰

268 Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadance, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, Duke University Press, Durham 1987, pp. 102–103.

269 Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917–1946*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago in London 1997, pp. 1–2.

270 Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity ...*, pp. 102–103.

Skupni cilj umetnikov, znanstvenikov in industrialistov je torej dobrobit družbe, dobrobit skupnosti. Z zastavitvijo takšnega cilja umetnosti avtomatično prisodimo moč, da je zmožna na skupnost vplivati in jo v končni fazi spreminjati. Moč, ki jo je umetnost pravzaprav že imela in po Agambenu izgubila šele v sredini 17. stoletja, ko se je – kot sem že omenila – v evropski družbi pojavil »človek z okusom«. ²⁷¹ Vse do takrat – sploh pa v antični Grčiji – so za umetnost verjeli, da ima tolikšno moč, da lahko spodkoplje temelje mesta, in je torej za družbo nevarna. ²⁷² Danes smo v situaciji, ko po Agambenu sploh ne moremo razumeti, kako bi lahko umetnost imela takšno moč. Toda prav potenciala te moči se oblikovalci in arhitekti na začetku 20. stoletja zavejo. Že v 19. stoletju elitizem umetnosti in okusa pri oblikovalcih ne zadostuje več. Na to opozori tudi William Morris s postavitvijo zahteve po umetnosti, ki bi je bili deležni vsi. Torej celotna družba. Ali kot to definira van de Velde – šteje število ljudi, ki imajo od našega dela korist.

Iskanje koristi za vse, za čim večji del družbe, pripelje do De Stijlove opredelitve za skupnost. Šele s skupino De Stijl pomen skupnosti prvič stopi povsem v ospredje oblikovalčeve naloge. In s pomenom skupnosti v ospredje stopi stroj kot tisto sredstvo, ki bo destijlovcem omogočilo doseči željeno skupnost in naredilo konec individualizmu, ki ga v proizvodnji poseblja individualni obrtnik. Z njim bodo tudi dosegli iskano formo 20. stoletja. V prvem De Stijlovem manifestu iz leta 1918 člani gibanja zapišejo:

- »1. Obstaja staro in novo zavedanje časa. / Staro je povezano z individualnim. / Novo je povezano z univerzalnim. / Borba posameznika proti univerzalnemu se razkriva v svetovni vojni in tudi v današnji umetnosti.
2. Vojna uničuje stari svet in njegove vsebine: dominacijo individualnega v vseh stanjih.«²⁷³

V predavanju *The Will to Style* Theo van Doesburg zapisano dodatno razloži:

271 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 13.

272 *Ibid.*, pp. 4–7.

273 Theo van Doesburg et. al., »De Stijl: 'Manifesto 1'«, 1918, v: *Art in Theory: 1900–2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison in Paul Wood, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2005, p. 281.

»V politiki, kot v umetnosti, imajo lahko le kolektivne rešitve odločilen pomen. [...] Tam, kjer se ti dve liniji razvoja (tehnična in umetniška) srečata v našem obdobju, je aplikacija stroja za novi stil sama po sebi umevna. Stroj je najčistejši primer ravnovesja med statičnim in dinamičnim ter med intelektom in instinktom. Če kultura v najširšem pomenu resnično pomeni osamosvojitve od narave, ni čudno, da stroj ponosno prevzema mesto v konceptu kulturnega stila. Stroj je najboljši primer intelektualne discipline. Materializem, kot filozofija življenja in umetnosti, je ročno obrt razumel kot najčistejši izraz duše. Nova spiritualna filozofija umetnosti pa je takoj prepoznala njene potencialne omejitve umetniškega izražanja. Za stil, ki ga ne zanima proizvodnja individualnih slik, ornamentov ali zasebnih hiš, temveč kolektivno naskakuje celotne predele mesta, soseske nebotičnikov in letališč – s primernim upoštevanjem ekonomskih okoliščin – za takšen stil ni nikakršne možnosti za uporabo ročne obrti. Stroj je tukaj najpomembnejši: ročna obrt je primerna za individualistični pogled na življenje, ki pa ga je povozil napredek.«²⁷⁴

Vprašanja, ki se ob tem porajajo, so: zakaj skupnost, ki jo enačijo z univerzalnim, stopi v ospredje oblikovalskega zavedanja? Zakaj univerzalno postane temeljna vrednota? Zakaj imajo le kolektivne rešitve odločilen pomen? Gre morda le za odgovor na Morrisovo zahtevo po umetnosti za vse? Odgovor v maniri – to, kar je 19. stoletje mislilo, 20. izvede? Gre torej za odgovor v obliki demokratizacije oblikovanja, h kateri sta pozivala Morris in Wright? Za demokratizacijo v obliki dobrega izdelka za vse? In stroj kot sredstvo, ki nam to omogoči? Vse naštetu velja. Pa vendar, zakaj je vse naštetu tako ključno za nadaljnji razvoj oblikovanja?

Mart Stam individualizmu²⁷⁵ nasprotuje zato, ker nas ta »odmika od družbe. [...] Posameznikova izoliranost je vodila v dominacijo čustev. Toda sodoben pogled – nezave-

274 Theo van Doesburg, »The will to Style«, v: *The Industrial Design ...*, p. 102.

275 Mart Stam, *Collective Design*, 1925, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/22/mart-stam's-collective-design-1925>. Mart Stam sicer ni bil del skupine De Stijl. Bil je nizozemski arhitekt, ki je aktivno deloval v istem obdobju in ki v besedilih pooseblja duha modernizma. Nanj se sklicuje tudi Banham v poglavju o De Stijlu (Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, The MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1980, p. 149.) Nasprotovanje individualizmu sicer zasledimo v številnih De Stijlovih besedilih, npr. v besedilu glavnega arhitekta skupine: J. J. P. Oud, *Art and Machine*, 1918, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/j-j-p-oud's-art-and-machine-1918> (oboje januar 2011).

dno že delno sprejet – življenje vidi kot **eno**, ki sega iz **ene** moči. To pomeni, da mora tisto, kar je posebno ali individualno, prispevati k tistemu, kar je splošno za vse.«²⁷⁶ S tem ko si po Stamu priznamo, da smo primarno del skupnosti, problemi skupnosti postanejo problemi posameznika. Ko za De Stijl zapišemo, da se z mislijo gibanja v oblikovanju zgodi prevrednotenje vrednot, to prevrednotenje temelji prav na zadnji misli. Namesto reševanja problema posameznika na prvo mesto načrtno postavijo probleme skupnosti. Skupnosti, katere del smo vsi, in z reševanjem problemov skupnosti bomo kot oblikovalci pripomogli tudi k reševanju partikularnih problemov. Takšen premik v odnosu in razumevanju problemov se po besedah J. J. P. Ouda kaže v samem družbenem prizadevanju časa. Prepoznamo ga lahko v »potrebi po organiziranju posameznih elementov v skupine, društva, konfederacije, podjetja, koncerne, monopole itd. Paralelizem intelektualnega in družbenega prizadevanja je nujen za kulturo in pomeni temelj stila.«²⁷⁷ Pomeni temelj oblikovanju, ki se odpoveduje osebnemu, odpoveduje partikularnemu delovanju na podlagi impulza.²⁷⁸

De Stijlova odločitev za skupnost pa je ključna še v eni točki. Čeprav destijlovci uporabljajo izraz umetnost, pa za področje, kot je oblikovanje, slednje pomeni jasen odmik od umetnosti. Odločitev, da bo oblikovanje delalo za družbo, za skupnost, s sredstvi, kot je industrijska proizvodnja, v ospredje potisne pomen utilitarnih izdelkov. Izdelkov, ki nas dnevno obkrožajo in dobesedno gradijo naše okolje, naše življenje. In to okolje so oblikovalci prepoznali kot tisto točko, v katero lahko posežejo s svojim znanjem, jo preoblikujejo in posledično zgradijo boljšo skupnost za vse. Še več, po van Doesburgu prav neumetniški, praktični objekti kažejo pot umetnosti 20. stoletja. »V teh objektih,

276 Stam, *Collective Design ...*, (januar 2011). Poudarke v besedilu povzemam po avtorju.

277 Oud, *Art and Machine ...*, (januar 2011).

278 O tem piše tudi Theo van Doesburg v besedilu *Elementarism*, 1930, [http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/19/theo-van-doesburg's-\"elementarism\"-1930](http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/19/theo-van-doesburg's-\) (avgust 2011).

Podobno razmišljanje v drugi polovici 20. stoletja zasledimo pri vizionarju R. Buckminsterju Fullerju, ki Zemljo označi za vesoljsko ladjo, na kateri smo vsi zemljani člani posadke in zato soodgovorni za stanje in reševanje problemov na njej. Tako kot člani skupine De Stijl tudi Fuller v napredku tehnologije prepozna sredstvo za doseg omenjenega cilja. Cilja, kjer posameznik v zameno za lastne partikularne interese v ospredje postavi kolektivne rešitve za skupnost, katere del smo vsi. Fuller temo obravnava v številnih predavanjih in delih. Med najbolj znane sodi: R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, Lars Müller Publishers, Baden 2008 (prvič objavljeno leta 1969).

ki izhajajo iz potrebe vsakdanjega življenja, sodobni umetnik prepozna, da je nastopil konec impulzivnim in spekulativnim proceduram.«²⁷⁹ To, kar van Doesburg po novem zahteva od umetnosti, je nedvoumnost,

»in ta zahteva ne more biti nikoli izpolnjena, če umetnik uporablja individualizirana sredstva. Nedvoumnost je lahko rezultat discipline sredstev in ta disciplina vodi h generalizaciji sredstev. Generalizacija sredstev vodi k elementarni, monumentalni stvaritvi.«²⁸⁰

To nas vrne k prej obravnavanemu pomenu odgovornosti v oblikovanju. Zavedanje, v katerem polju delovanja kot oblikovalec prevzemaš naloge. V polju partikularnega ali v polju kolektivnega. Ključ je v sposobnosti prepoznavanja *pravih* problemov. In ti so po De Stijlu le tisti, ki so problem skupnosti. De Stijlu torej uspe prepoznati probleme skupnosti in jih v disciplini oblikovanja postaviti na prvo mesto, pri čemer skupnosti ne vidijo le kot množico potencialnih brezglavih potrošnikov, temveč v njej prepoznajo sebi enakovrednega sogovornika. Skupnost prepoznajo kot družbo, katere del postane tudi vse doslej vzvišeni umetnik. Oblikovalec sestopi s piedestala in si za cilj zada reševanje skupnih problemov. Problemov, katerih del smo vsi, tako skupnost kot oblikovalec, ki pripada tej skupnosti in hkrati rešuje njene probleme, s tem pa avtomatično tudi svoje. S poudarkom, da te probleme rešuje za vse. V tem smislu oblikovanje dobi potencial, da postane tista univerzalna disciplina, ki jo De Stijl v svojih besedilih zahteva.

Prav ta zahteva pa nas ponovno vrne k stroju kot sredstvu za izvedbo zahteve. Odločitev za stroj s seboj prinese nove zahteve. Zahtevo po novih *navodilih* za oblikovanje. Zahtevo po izbrisu emocij, po izbrisu sledi roke. Oud v besedilu *Art and Machine* izpostavi, da je »glavni cilj sodobnega umetnika ta, da se trudi doseči univerzalno, medtem ko čustva (subjektivnost) vodijo k partikularnemu«.²⁸¹ Čustva se na področju izdelkov, ki odgovarjajo na potrebo, kažejo v obliki sledi roke, v tradiciji, v obrtni izdelavi. Posledično se vsakršna sled roke izkaže za napako, za nepotrebno čustvo, ki nas odmika

279 Theo van Doesburg, *Elemental Formation*, 1923, <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/theo-van-doesburgs-“elemental-formation”-1923> (januar 2011).

280 *Ibid.*

281 Oud, *Art and Machine ...*, (januar 2011).

od čiste oblike, ki nam hkrati – če jo dosežemo – zagotavlja estetski rezultat. Gre za popolno opozicijo Ruskinovi in Morrisovi misli, ki prav na napakah in v sledih roke iščeta iskren izdelek in dostojanstvo oblikovalca-obrtnika. Destijlovci, nasprotno, o iskrenosti čustev podvomijo in v sledi roke prepoznajo nepotrebne emocije, odsev starih časov, še več, prepoznajo oviro, ki nas odmika od reševanja pravih problemov. Zato so zanje emocije le nekaj priučenega, arhaičnega; nekaj, kar v objekte vnaša dvoumnost namesto iskane jasnosti. In zato je Benjaminov močni pretres tradicije neizogiben. Oud zapiše:

»V vsakem obdobju je univerzalni element umetnosti imel svojo zunanjo obliko. Ta je refleksija treh faktorjev: duha (viden kot skupek intuicije in zavesti), materiala in proizvodne metode. Veliko je bilo napisanega o duhu sodobnega umetniškega dela, toda mi moramo dati enako težo tudi drugima faktorjema, materialu in proizvodni metodi. Če želimo *dati* dokončno plastično ekspresijo duhu, potem moramo najprej določiti sredstva. In katero sredstvo je bolj določeno in bolj del našega časa kot stroj? Naj bo torej duh realiziran s strani roke ali stroja? Prihodnost razvojne linije mora sodobnega umetnika neizogibno voditi k stroju, pa čeprav se bo sprva ta tendenca zdela heretična. In to ne le zato, ker lahko stroj da bolj izbrano plastično ekspresijo kot roka, temveč je tudi s stališča družbenega pogleda in ekonomskega stališča stroj najboljše sredstvo za proizvodnjo izdelkov, od katerih bo skupnost imela več koristi kot od umetniških izdelkov današnjega časa, ki dosegajo le bogatega posameznika.«²⁸²

Oud gre celo tako daleč, da besedilo *Art and Machine* zaključi s trditvijo, da v prihodnosti »unikatni izdelek, kakršnega poznamo danes, ne bo več obstajal«,²⁸³ s čimer potrди drugo misel; misel, da se z De Stijlom zgodi prevrednotenje vrednot. Vse doslej je imel unikatni izdelek veliko večjo težo od serijskega. Po novem pa se vloga serijskega izdelka radikalno poveča. Še več, po Oudu naj bi serijski izdelek unikatnega povsem nadomestil. Moč serijskega izdelka potrjuje število ljudi, ki imajo od serijskega izdelka korist. Odločitev za skupnost zato hkrati pomeni na novo pridobljeno moč serijskega izdelka.

282 *Ibid.*

283 *Ibid.*

Poleg novopridobljene vrednosti serijskega izdelka pa zahteva po izbrisu roke s seboj nosi še eno radikalno zahtevo, zahtevo po izbrisu avtorja. Zahteva po izbrisu oblikovalca kot avtorja. Ob tem je treba poudariti, da se ne zgodi izbris oblikovalca kot mislečega subjekta, le njegova pozicija avtorja izgubi svoje mesto v procesu. Po Wajcmanu je to tako, »kot da bi velika industrija z moderno znanostjo delila prizadevanje, da odstrani in izbriše vsako sled subjekta (toda obstajajo le misleči subjekti, ki lahko mislijo celo to, da so izbrisali sledi, da so izbrisali svoje lastne sledi)«. ²⁸⁴ Po Wajcmanu mislečega subjekta torej ne moremo izbrisati, tudi če se trudimo. In tudi destijlovci ga s svojo zahtevo po izbrisu sledi roke ne izbrišejo. Z izbrisom oblikovalca-avtorja pravzaprav redefinirajo vlogo oblikovalca. Oblikovalec se postavi za stroj, rešuje probleme skupnosti, toda z umikom podpisa oziroma sledi roke njegov položaj v procesu postane anonimen.

Z izgubljenjo sledjo avtorja izdelek v skupnosti postane rezultat stroja. Učinek se torej kaže v generiranju novega z izločitvijo starega. Izločen je oblikovalec kot avtor. Nadomesti ga industrijsko oblikovanje. Kaj to pomeni za oblikovanje? V času Ruskina in Morrisa je oblikovalec-obrtnik nastopal kot singularna figura, z De Stijlovo redefinicijo oblikovalca pa vstopi v polje kolektivnega, v polje anonimnega. Stroka po novem nima več posameznika, ki bi svojo prisotnost dokazoval z napakami pri delu. Po novem dobimo veliko bolj rafiniran misleči subjekt, ki pa ga ne individualiziramo. Oblikovalec namreč ostaja v ozadju. Še več, manj ko je napak, bolj ko je neviden, boljši je rezultat. Preprosto deluje in s tem uspešno poenostavlja naše življenje, življenje skupnosti. Življenje posameznika v družbi, katere del smo vsi.

Slednje da slutiti, da se izbris avtorja kompenzira s končnim uporabnikom izdelka. Torej s tem, da se izdelek uporablja in zadovoljuje svojo primarno funkcijo, zadovoljevanje človekove potrebe. Giorgio Agamben v besedilu *Avtor kot gesta* svoje izhodišče utemelji na Foucaultovi misli: »Sled pisca se kaže zgolj v singularnosti njegove odsotnosti.« ²⁸⁵ In prav ta – kot jo imenuje Agamben – gesta, ki »avtorja prikrajša za vso pomembnost

284 Wajcman, *Objekt stoletja ...*, pp. 58–59.

285 Michel Foucault, *What Is an Author?*, 1969, pp. 102–103, vir: <http://www.mediafire.com/?bbing1k419l> (julij 2008).

identitete, hkrati utrdi njegovo nezmanjšano nujnost«. ²⁸⁶ Avtorjev vložek pravzaprav zaživi na podlagi njegove odsotnosti, pod pogojem, da se vzpostavi interakcija z bralcem. Avtor se nekako umakne, napravi prostor bralcu in ta lahko nato skozi branje prepozna avtorjev vložek. V primeru oblikovanja bralca nadomestimo z uporabnikom, torej: avtorjev vložek zaživi na podlagi njegove odsotnosti, pod pogojem, da se vzpostavi interakcija z uporabnikom. Interakcija med izdelkom in uporabnikom ali, kot to razloži Clive Dilnot, s spremembo načina dela v oblikovanju, s preходом iz obrtniške v industrijsko ero, začnemo govoriti o »simbiozi med posameznikom in artefakti«. ²⁸⁷

Z izbrisom avtorja (toda ne mislečega subjekta, ki stoji za strojem) pridemo do tretje prelomnice: če za strojem stoji dober načrtovalec, lahko tudi s strojem izdelamo dober serijski izdelek. S tem De Stijl pravzaprav stopi na stran vseh že omenjenih teoretikov in praktikov. Tako kot Ruskin, Morris in Loos se tudi destijlovci zavzemajo za končni rezultat v obliki dobrega izdelka. Vprašanje, ki se postavlja, je, v čem se končni *iskreni* izdelek De Stijla razlikuje od vseh doslej obravnavanih. Oud serijski izdelek opredeli s pomočjo dveh načel:

»Prvi je tehnični in industrijski trend – poimenovali ga bomo pozitivni trend – ta poskuša dati estetski videz izdelkom tehnične veščine. Drugi trend – zaradi lažje primerjave ga označimo za negativnega (čeprav so njegove manifestacije enako pozitivne) – pa je umetnost, ki skuša s sredstvi zmanjšati (abstrakcijo), da bi prišla do funkcije.

Združitev teh dveh trendov je temelj novega stila.« ²⁸⁸

Na eni strani imamo torej tehnični videz izdelka, ki ga dosežemo z izbrisom roke. Če sem pri Ruskinu in Morrisu skušala dokazati, da je prav sled roke tista sled misli, ki se zrcali v posameznem, unikatnem obrtniško izdelanem objektu, slednje odpre vprašanje, kako se sled mislečega subjekta kaže v izdelku, pri katerem je sled roke povsem izbrisana. Predmet, izdelan s serijsko logiko stroja, je namreč nekaj povsem drugega,

286 Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, Zone Books, New York 2007, p. 62.

287 Clive Dilnot, *Ethics? Design?*, The Archeworks Papers, Volume 1, Number Two, Archeworks, Chicago 2005, p. 43.

288 Oud, *Art and Machine ...*, (januar 2011).

kot če bi bil izdelan ročno. Postane izdelek, ki že v izhodišču odmisli partikularno in se osredotoči na skupnost, ki mu daje vrednost. Misleči subjekt se zato zavestno osredotoči na iskanje rešitev, ki bodo reševale probleme skupnosti. Člani De Stijla slednje razložijo v prvem manifestu: »Nova umetnost je v ospredje potisnila vsebino novega zavedanja: ravnovesje med univerzalnim in individualnim.«²⁸⁹ Ravnovesje tvori oblikovalec, misleči subjekt, ki s pomočjo stroja išče rešitve in načrtuje izdelke, ki bodo kar se da univerzalni in posledično uporabni za čim večje število ljudi. Gre torej za ravnovesje med oblikovalcem in skupnostjo. Med oblikovalcem in njegovo spremenjeno vlogo v skupnosti. Njegovim učinkom, ki ga lahko v skupnosti ustvari. Vse to mora izražati tudi končni izdelek. Izražati mora natančnost, nedvoumnost in popolnost. Torej vse vrline, ki jih v 20. stoletju z De Stijlom pripišemo strojni izdelavi. Izražati mora vrhunec tehnične veščine in dejstvo, da je izdelek narejen z najboljšim možnim orodjem.²⁹⁰

Poleg tehničnega videza pa hkrati De Stijl pred nas postavi zahtevo po golem funkcionalnem objektu. Že pri Ruskinu, Morrisu in Loosu zasledimo, da je ena od glavnih nalog oblikovalca izogibanje produkciji nepotrebnih izdelkov. Od Sullivana dalje prevzema funkcija v oblikovanju temeljno mesto v polju oblikovanja izdelkov. Funkcija je tista, ki narekuje formo; posledično vse nepotrebno odpade. S to primarno idejo modernistična logika, kot se zdi, zelo dobro odgovori na zahtevo po ekonomski računici. O slednji je ne nazadnje pisal tudi Loos, z njo utemeljeval umanjkanje dekoracije in se hkrati zavzemal za funkcijo. Toda med *golo* ekonomsko učinkovitostjo in iskanjem *novega* funkcionalizma po mnenju članov De Stijla zeva razkorak. Nanj opozori Gerrit Rietveld v besedilu *New Functionalism in Dutch Architecture*.

»Namera doseči novi funkcionalizem ni namera po dosegi zastavljenega cilja; dejstvo je, da tudi ni še en 'izem' ali ideal; preprosto gre za arhitekturo, ki vztraja pri svoji funkciji. Novi funkcionalizem v arhitekturi je nekaj povsem drugega od trenutne predstave o

289 van Doesburg et. al., »De Stijl: 'Manifesto 1'«, 1918, v: *Art in Theory ...*, p. 281.

290 Slednje spomni na Le Corbusierovo idejo hiše kot stroja za življenje. Hiše-stroja, ki bo ovrgla vse stare koncepte in odgovorila na potrebe in zahteve časa – množično proizvedene hiše. Le Corbusier gre celo tako daleč, da nas postavi pred izbiro: arhitektura ali revolucija. Torej sodobna arhitektura, ki bo izkoristila prednosti, ki jih nosi sodobni čas, in kot rezultat ustvarila standardizirano hišo-stroj. Le Corbusier o tem piše v knjigi *Towards a New Architecture* [1927], BN Publishing, Thousand Oaks 2008.

poslovni učinkovitosti. [...] Poslovno je zahtevati vrednost za vloženi denar in termin 'novi funkcionalizem' vključuje idejo učinkovitosti; toda v celoti termin označuje precej drugačno vrednost. Na koncu vendarle pride do tega, kdo nam daje več in kdo manj prostora za življenje.«²⁹¹

Iz zadnjega stavka je razvidno, da člani gibanja De Stijl niso sprevrgli funkcionalnosti na zgolj golo zadovoljevanje utilitarnosti. Funkcionalnost lahko po van Doesburgu dosežemo le, če oblikovalec in arhitekt zadovoljita utilitarne zahteve ter upoštevata tudi psihološke, taktilne in optične potrebe. Po van Doesburgu je goli utilitarizem brez upoštevanja naštetega obsojen na skorajšnji konec.²⁹² Po Rietveldu se skrajni rezultat utilitarizma celo kaže v sterilnosti.²⁹³ Sicer konceptu »čiščenja« prizna dosežek v obliki koncepta »praznine«, ki je vse do takrat veljal za znak revščine. Toda glavni problem se izkaže v tem, da so se posegi, ki naj bi »življenje lajšali, [...] v resnici znebili vsega, kar nas je na življenje opominjalo.«²⁹⁴ Posledično sta bila zapostavljena tako posameznik kot skupnost.

Misel nas pripelje do vprašanja, katere so človekove potrebe, ki naj bi jih kot oblikovalci zadovoljevali, reševali. Rietveld v besedilu *Utility, Construction: (Beauty, Art)* razloži:

»Umetnost naredi vidne posamezne značilnosti vsakega objekta, tako da jih zaznavamo z različnimi čuti; to idejo o lepoti pripelje na bolj splošno raven. Že po svoji naravi je umetnost ustvarjalna, saj ustvarja realnost in jo prepoznava.

Tagore je rekel: 'Z omejitvijo neomejenega resnica postane stvarnost.' Ko konstrukcija nasprotuje fizičnim in kemičnim zakonom, postane nesprejemljiva; toda ali iz tega sledi,

291 Rietveld, *New Functionalism ...*, (januar 2011). Čas gibanja De Stijl sicer povežujemo z obdobjem, ko je izhajala istoimenska revija, od leta 1917 do 1931. Revijo sta ustanovila Piet Mondrian in Theo van Doesburg.

292 Walter Dexel, *Theo van Doesburg*, 1931, [http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/21/walter-dexel's-\"theo-van-doesburg\"-1931](http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/21/walter-dexel's-\) (januar 2011).

293 Rietveld s to izjavo kritizira van Doesburgovo držo, da se lahko veliko več naučimo v medicinskem laboratoriju kot pa v umetniških studiih, ki so kot kletke smrdečih bolnih opic. Samo na ta način lahko dosežemo perfekcijo, ki ne bo odsevala ročnega dela. V: van Doesburg, *Elementarism ...*, (januar 2011).

294 Rietveld, *New Functionalism ...*, (januar 2011).

da mora konstrukcija postati povsem 'naravna'? Ne nazadnje je v tem smislu že v osnovi nenaravno, da namiguje na hotenje po obstoju stvari.«²⁹⁵

Pri vprašanju potrebe se v oblikovanju vedno znova ustavljamo pred razmišljanjem, katere potrebe so bolj *bistvene*, *nujnejše*, *naravne* in katere so tiste druge, umetno spodbujene²⁹⁶ in zato manj nujne; tiste, ki nemara pod pretvezo zadovoljevanja ene od potreb v resnici zadovoljujejo le želje in/ali kapital. Toda – in na to namiguje tudi zgornji citat – naravne človekove potrebe pravzaprav ni. Takoj ko se potreba pojavi in jo rešujemo, je ponujena rešitev umetna. Še več, po Rietveldu je nenaraven že namig na hotenje po obstoju stvari. Saj – kot smo videli na začetku poglavja – da se oblikovanje zgodi, po Rietveldu potrebujemo le izraženo potrebo. Torej z izrazom potrebe že stopimo v polje kulture, v polje nenaravnega. Slednje nam ilustrativno pokaže anekdota o grškem filozofu Diogenu iz Sinope, ki je v želji po zadovoljitvi le naravnih potreb vrgel stran skodelico, ko je videl otroka, ki pije vodo s pomočjo dlani. Ob tem je pripomnil: »Otrok me je premagal v skromnosti življenja.«²⁹⁷ Diogenova posoda, pa naj bo še tako preprosta, je korak, ki nas po Flusserju odtuja od naravnega okolja in nas pelje v polje kulture.²⁹⁸ Takoj ko kost v naših rokah postane orodje (ali orožje), prestopimo na stran umetnega. Vse, kar naredimo, je stvar umetnega. Agamben takšen premik prepozna v trenutku, ko se zgodi premik od živali k človeku. Po Agambenu je jezik tisti, ki ločuje človeka od živali, »ta pa ni naravno dan in neločljiv od psihofizične strukture človeka; prej gre za zgodovinsko produkcijo, ki kot taka ne more biti povsem pripisana ne človeku ne živali.«²⁹⁹ Agamben slednje označi s terminom antropološki stroj, ki je na delu v naši kulturi.

295 Rietveld, *Utility, Construction ...*, (avgust 2011).

296 Nazorno razlago umetno spodbujene potrebe odlično poda Adrian Forty v poglavju »Electricity – the fuel of the future«, glej v: *Objects of Desire. Design and society since 1750*, Thames and Hudson, London 1986, pp. 182–206.

297 *Diogenes the Cynic*, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/greece/hetairai/diogenes.html (februar 2011).

298 Flusser, *The Shape of ...*, p. 45.

299 Giorgio Agamben, *The Open. Man and Animal*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2004, p. 36.

»Dokler nastaja produkcija človeka v opoziciji človek/žival, je človeško/nečloveško na kocki in stroj obvezno funkcionira s sredstvi izločanja (kar je hkrati vedno tudi že zavzetje) in sredstvi vključevanja (kar je hkrati vedno tudi že izključitev). Prav zato, ker je človek vsakič znova že vnaprej predviden, stroj pravzaprav proizvaja nekakšno stanje izjeme, cono nedoločnosti, v kateri je zunaj le izločitev notranjega in notranjost je ravno obratno, le vključitev zunanjega.«³⁰⁰

Črpamo iz umetnega in smo produkt umetnega. In v tem pogledu lažje razumemo De Stijlovo zahtevo po stroju, ki bo dal obliko vsebini 20. stoletja. Lažje razumemo njihovo zavestno odločitev, da bodo »sebe realizirali v vsakem polju, vključujoč zunanje življenje«. ³⁰¹ Za dosego cilja pa morajo izločiti dominanco individualnega. Gre za izjavo, ki tvori rez v disciplini oblikovanja. Kot oblikovalci, arhitekti, znanstveniki in umetniki gradimo naše okolje. Posledično je – kot nas opomni De Stijl – skrajni čas, da okolje začnemo graditi na način, ki bo zadovoljil potrebe skupnosti, katere del smo vsi. Okolje gradimo tako, da bo funkcionalno, a bo hkrati dalo dovolj prostora za življenje ljudem, ki v tem umetnem svetu živimo. Rietveld besedilo iz leta 1932 zaključí z besedami: »Dejstvo je, da v naših boljših trenutkih udobneje sedimo na mizi kot na stolu, dejstvo je tudi, da sploh ne potrebujemo hiše, mize ali stola, kar pomeni, da se hiša prihodnosti (hiša za novo generacijo) ne more in ne sme podrediti ideji 'življenja', ki je trenutno razširjena.«³⁰²

300 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

301 van Doesburg et. al., »De Stijl: 'Manifesto 1'«, 1918, v: *Art in Theory ...*, p. 281.

302 Rietveld, *New Functionalism ...*, (avgust 2011).

Upor antidizajna

Kljub velikopoteznim željam De Stijla, ki s formiranjem zahteve po univerzalnem postavi probleme skupnosti na prvo mesto in stroj za tisto orodje, ki nam bo slednje omogočilo, pa zastavljeno v praksi oblikovanja prinese preobrat. Kot se sčasoma izkaže, se De Stijlov stroj iz orodja v službi skupnosti sprevrže v orodje v službi trga. Princip univerzalnosti se sprevrže na nivo zadovoljevanja partikularnih interesov proizvajalcev in tržnikov. Stroj in z njim tudi oblikovanje probleme skupnosti nadomestita s proizvodnjem naraščajoče količine izdelkov, katerih glavni cilj bolj ali manj postane spodbujanje potrošnje. Oblikovanje v tem procesu prevzame želeno glavno vlogo, saj se izkaže za učinkovito sredstvo. Izkaže se za večkrat omenjeni most med družbo, ki sprememb načelno ne mara, in hitro naraščajočo industrijsko proizvodnjo, ki trg polni v številnih primerih le z navideznimi novostmi. Ali kot zapiše Adrian Forty, »med načini, kako doseči sprejemljivost sprememb, oblikovanje s svojo zmožnostjo narediti stvari drugačne od tega, kar so, odigra ključno vlogo«. ³⁰³

Na sprevrženost situacije se v drugi polovici 20. stoletja kritično odzovejo predvsem italijanski oblikovalci. Zaradi privolitve oblikovanja v katalizatorsko vlogo v procesu potrošnje kritični pogled obrnejo sami vase, torej v stroko oblikovanja. S samokritiko želijo spodjesti temelje nekritičnega, brezzobega oblikovanja, ki ne prepozna (kot je tudi ne išče) alternative zunaj danih (in na videz nespremenljivih) okvirov formirane tržne logike. S kritiko želijo doseči možnost za dogodek. Torej tisto, kar je – kot smo skušali dokazati v prejšnjih poglavjih – s kritiko (torej z zmožnostjo prepoznavanja teme sedanosti) že uspelo nekaterim predhodnikom.

Na poti do omenjene kritike pomembno vlogo odigrata dva pristopa v razumevanju pomena oblikovanja v družbi. Oba se trdno navezujeta na odnos do okolja kot celote ³⁰⁴ in na procese, ki so del te celote. Pri prvem pristopu središčno pozicijo v procesu

303 Forty, »Image of Progress«, *Objects of Desire ...*, p. 11.

304 V oblikovanje je ideja o celostnem pristopu vstopila že konec 19. stoletja. Henry van de Velde je idejo *Gesamtkunstwerka* povzel po nemškem skladatelju Richardu Wagnerju, ki je o tem pisal v eseju *Umetnost in revolucija*. Van de Velde je idejo o tako imenovani celostni umetnini prenesel na področje uporabne

oblikovanja zavzame uporabnik.³⁰⁵ Če za Morrisa trdimo, da je z idejo *oblikovanja za vse* dolgoročno demokratiziral oblikovanje,³⁰⁶ nam De Stijl ob iskanju funkcije hkrati pokaže, da ima prednost tisti izdelek, ki človeku daje več prostora za življenje. Pomemben prispevek k preusmeritvi fokusa od naročnika k uporabniku najdemo pri drugem direktorju Bauhausa, Hannesu Meyerju. Na podlagi študiranja funkcionalnih in bioloških interpretacij arhitekture je v svojem nastopnem govoru³⁰⁷ ob prevzemu direktorske funkcije na Bauhausu za temelj oblikovanja in arhitekture postavil funkcijski diagram. Diagram, ki je sistematično raziskoval Rietveldovo *idejo življenja*. Sledil je dnevni rutini posameznika v gospodinjstvu, njegovemu odnosu do hiše, vrta, živali, vse do ljudi, s katerimi se znajde v interakciji – poštarjem, dimnikarjem, zdravnikom, vlomilcem ipd. S tem ko arhitekt in oblikovalec prepoznata vse našteto, se zgodi premik v njuni vlogi. Po Meyerju so bili pred tem arhitekti in oblikovalci zgolj »umetniki«, po novem pa postanejo »specialisti za organizacijo«.³⁰⁸ In prav z zadnjim, ko v procesu oblikovanja uporabnika načrtno postavimo v središčno pozicijo, hkrati dosežemo raz-

umetnosti, kar se je – gledano z današnje pozicije – v arhitekturi in oblikovanju manifestiralo kot želja po absolutnem nadzoru. Prav vsak detajl, ki je tvoril notranjost in zunanost stavbe v času art nouveauja, je bil oblikovan v skladu z načrtovano celoto.

Kasneje se je v arhitekturi in oblikovanju razvila smer, ki je delovala po začrtanih principih celostnega oblikovanja – totalno oblikovanje. Po besedah Marka Wigleyja je bil namen totalnega oblikovanja preseči meje svojega delovanja. Šlo naj bi tako za implozijo (oblikovanje najmanjšega detajla) kot za ekspanzijo, za: »širitev oblikovanja na vsa možna področja sveta. In v vsakem primeru naj bi bil arhitekt tisti, ki bi nadzoroval, centraliziral, orkestriral, dominiral.« In kot še doda Wigley: »Totalno oblikovanje je fantazija o nadzoru, o arhitekturi, ki nadzoruje.« (V: Mark Wigley, »Whatever Happened to Total Design?«, *Harvard Design Magazine*, Summer 1998, no. 5, p. 1.) Slednje ponovno spomni na Wrighta, ki v zibko modernega oblikovanja položi prav idejo o nadzoru. Nadzoru proizvodnega stroja, ki ga upravljamo. Stroja, ki dela po naših navodilih. In slednje ne velja le za množično proizvodnjo izdelkov, temveč se želja po nadzoru preusmeri k vsemu, kar gradi naše (umetno) okolje.

Prve kritike te malodane obsesivne želje po nadzorovanju slehernega detajla zasledimo v času secesije. Kot sem že omenila v poglavju *Loosova evolucija*, Loos kritiko celostnega pristopa cinično prikaže skozi *Zgodbo o ubogem majhnem bogatem človeku*. (V: Loos, »The Story of the Poor Little Rich Man«, *On Architecture ...*, p. 52.)

305 Podobno kot pri pristopu k celostnemu oblikovanju tudi osredotočanje na uporabnika spremljamo že od začetkov profesionalizacije discipline.

306 Glej poglavje *Morrisovo oblikovanje za vse*.

307 Hannes Meyer, »Building«, v: *Programs and Manifestoes ...*, pp. 117–120.

308 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

širitev v razumevanju oblikovalčeve vloge. Slednjo Meyer označi za »načrtno organizacijo življenjskih procesov«.³⁰⁹

Z razširitvijo razumevanja oblikovalčeve vloge pridemo do naslednjega ključnega pristopa. Ta temelji na De Stijlovem prepoznavanju pomembnosti okolja in njihovem pozivu, da je skrajni čas, da okolje začnemo veliko bolj načrtno graditi (seveda tako, da zadovoljimo potrebe skupnosti, katere del smo vsi). Iz slednjega se še toliko bolj potrди zavedanje, da je prav vse, kar je okoli nas, na svoj način oblikovano, ne glede na to, kdo stoji za strojem. Še več, kot nas opozori že Semper, prav ostanki našega preteklega oblikovanja tvorijo materialno kulturo, po kateri ocenjujemo stopnjo civilizacije. Povedano drugače, prav materialna kultura je tista, ki dokazuje naš obstoj.³¹⁰ Če torej prepoznavamo okolje kot nekaj, kar smo skozi čas postopoma gradili in preoblikovali, lahko nanj pogledamo kot na *le* še en rezultat človekove materialne kulture. Hkrati nam takšen pogled omogoči, da na okolje pogledamo od zunaj. Podobno kot v kinu ali v gledališču iz avditorija opazujemo dogajanje, ki je vpeto v scenografijo (okolje) na odru, po novem gledamo na okolje, v katerem bivamo. Ali – kot to označi Agamben – s tem ko se znajdemo v vlogi gledalca, se zavemo, da je tudi okolje posredovano prek estetske reprezentacije.

S pogledom od zunaj okolje postane tisto, iz česar lahko izstopimo. Ali natančneje, v trenutku, ko upremo pogled vanj, smo pravzaprav že zunaj. Distanca je vzpostavljena. Z njo pa dosežemo, da se zavemo lastne zmožnosti poseganja v okolje, zmožnosti spreminjanja, preoblikovanja celote. Celote, ki se je vse do takrat zdela dani, nespremenljivi kontekst. S pogledom od zunaj okolje torej ni več tisto, kar je zgolj dano, ni nekaj, v kar ne moremo poseči, temveč postane še eden v vrsti oblikovanih elementov, ki naj bi se prilagajali nam, in ne obratno. Okolje torej postane tisti element, ki mora uporabnika postaviti v prej opisano središčno pozicijo. Rezultat slednjega je – vsaj tako aludira stroka oblikovanja v 20. stoletju – če je okolje v celoti oblikovano, potem je sistem gradnje okolja najbolje prepustiti oblikovalcem in arhitektom. Oblikovalci so tisti, ki

309 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

310 O tem piše tudi Vilém Flusser, *The Shape of Things. A Philosophy of Design*, Reaktion Books, London 1999.

okolje lahko preoblikujejo po meri človeka, ali kot bi popravili člani De Stijla, po meri skupnosti.

Preizkus slednjega v praksi oblikovalcem in arhitektom omogoči sanacija mest, v katero so bili v številnih državah prisiljeni zaradi devastacije druge svetovne vojne. Med tiste, ki do okolja, v katerem ustvarjajo, vzpostavijo svojstven pristop, nedvomno sodi nemški oblikovalec Dieter Rams. Rams velja za eno glavnih figur industrijskega oblikovanja v drugi polovici 20. stoletja. Z novim pristopom k oblikovanju tehničnih izdelkov bi lahko v maniri De Stijla Ramsov pristop poimenovali kot uresničevanje popolnega tehničnega videza tehničnega aparata. V času, ko je Rams začel oblikovati radijske aparate in gramofone, so imeli proizvajalci in oblikovalci navado tehnične aparate zapirati v lesene omare, na zvočnike pa so nameščali preproge. Toda slednje za Ramsa ni bil glavni problem. Nove izdelke je *preprosto* oblikoval tako, kot jih je videl in želel sam, z logiko »manj, toda bolj«. To, kar je po Ramsu v času nastajanja njegovih visoko sofisticiranih, tehnično dovršenih in vrhunsko oblikovanih aparatov bil pravi problem, je bilo okolje samo. »Okolje se ni ujemalo z objekti. Zato smo morali oblikovati tudi okolje, ki bi se prilegalo oblikovanim izdelkom.«³¹¹ Na prvi pogled izredno prevzeta izjava. Okolje se bo prilagodilo mojim izdelkom, in ne moji izdelki okolju. Toda to, kar Rams v praksi izvede, je prej opisani izstop iz okolja, v katerem deluje. Distancira se od obstoječega. Okolje prepozna kot le še eno od form, ki jo je mogoče in v njegovem primeru treba preoblikovati.

Z opisanim primerom okolje tudi v praksi izgubi pozicijo tako imenovanega danega konteksta, v katerega ni moč poseči. Postane le še eden od elementov, ki ga lahko kot oblikovalci preoblikujemo. Ali povedano drugače, novo okolje Ramsu uspe na novo ustvariti. In s tem pravzaprav nadgradi idejo celostnega pristopa, ki je v oblikovanju prisotna od 19. stoletja, ter v praksi izpelje Wrightovo idejo o prevzemu nadzora. V Ramsovih očeh sta okolje (in posledično družba) zaostajala za vizijo o tehnično dovršeni družbi, ki jo je imel sam. In prav ta specifična situacija Ramsa prisili, da lastno

311 Barbara Predan, *Dieter Rams interview: Luck plays an important roll in our life*, <http://www.pekinpah.com/said/interview-Rams.htm> (avgust 2011).

vlogo oblikovalca na novo definira. Definira jo v vlogo tistega, ki ne ustvarja le izdelkov, temveč tudi okolje in posledično naša razmerja v njem. Zato se – sicer veliko bolj sofisticirano od futuristov, v načelu pa z istim ciljem – loti izgradnje novega okolja sodobne družbe. Rams namreč verjame, da se bodo s tem, ko se bo spremenilo okolje, spremenili tudi ljudje. Njihove navade, njihov okus. In na ta način bo ustvaril prostor svojim izdelkom. Zato za tehnične in gospodinjske izdelke, ki jih oblikuje za Braun, hkrati oblikuje tudi prostore, okolja, ki se prilegajo njegovim izdelkom, in ne obratno. Na precej radikalno futurističen način Ramsu uspe ustvariti pravo novost. Kajti v skladu s pravo novostjo se spremembe v družbi res zgodijo. Tehnični aparati, ki spominjajo na pohištvo, povsem izginejo s trga. Kredence in težke komode nadomesti preprosto, lahko in v številnih primerih zložljivo pohištvo. Okolje se prilagodi, ali še več, prevzame oblikovalčevo vizijo sveta. V praksi se torej zgodi Meyerjeva s strani oblikovalca spodbujena načrtna organizacija življenjskih procesov. Čemur sledi vzpostavitev novega razumevanja vloge oblikovanja: naloga oblikovalca je, da s svojim delom posodablja družbo. Pristop, ki dodobra vstopi v širši evropski prostor. Tudi v Italijo.

Podobno kot nemško oblikovanje z Deutscher Werkbundom in Bauhausom tudi italijansko oblikovanje svojo pozicijo v družbi vzpostavi že pred drugo svetovno vojno. S skupino, ki se poimenuje racionalisti, na pot t. i. modernega gibanja stopijo v sredini dvajsetih let 20. stoletja. Predstavniki skupine si za cilj zadajo »ustvariti človeka, zmožnega ustvariti mednarodno kulturo, ki bo temeljila na razumu in tehnologiji«. ³¹² Tako kot vsa avantgardna in številna druga gibanja v prvi polovici 20. stoletja so si tudi racionalisti za cilj zadali spremeniti človeka in zasnovati novo družbo. Kljub sprva jasnemu koketiranju z uradno politiko – fašizmom – racionalistom ni uspelo prodreti na pot uradnega *italijanskega stila*. Še najbolj je zahteva po racionalnem oblikovanju v Italiji prešla v prakso takoj po drugi svetovni vojni. Takrat je politika oblikovalce in arhitekte povabila k sodelovanju pri gradnji nove družbe. Jonathan M. Woodham je zapisal:

»V postfašistični Italiji so takoj po vojni, po volitvah leta 1946 in oblikovanju italijanske republike leta 1947, ministrski položaji predstavnikov italijanskih socialističnih in

312 Andrea Branzi, *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*, Thames and Hudson, London 1984, p. 33.

komunističnih strank številne napredne arhitekta in oblikovalce vodili v prepričanje, da imajo še nikoli prej videno priložnost ustvarjanja nove demokratične družbe. Predvidevali so gradnjo na milijone domov, ki naj bi bili opremljeni z dobro oblikovanimi izdelki. Njihova naloga naj bi vključevala oblikovanje vsega, od 'predmetov do mest'. To potencialno radikalno zaveznitvo med materialno kulturo in politično usmeritvijo je uničil izid volitev leta 1948, v katerih so Američani – v strahu pred možnostjo, da bi se naslednja italijanska vlada povezala s Sovjetsko zvezo v nastajajočem ozračju hladne vojne – odigrali izredno vplivno vlogo pri zagotovitvi zmage demokršćanske desnice in nadaljnjega razvoja potrošniške družbe.³¹³

Italijanski oblikovalci se po komaj pridobljeni priložnosti za sodelovanje pri prenovi države ponovno znajdejo v opoziciji. Posledično – kot to prepoznajo sami – izgubijo priložnost »ustvariti neposredni stik z družbeno maso«.³¹⁴ Država se – kot še nadaljuje Andrea Branzi – po mnenju italijanskih oblikovalcev znajde na napačni poti. Na poti, ki se ji je evropsko oblikovanje v času avantgardnih gibanj pred drugo svetovno vojno večinoma izognilo. Po Woodhamu je vse do takrat med progresivnimi oblikovalci, teoretiki in organizacijami za prenavo zevalo brezno v odnosu do realnosti množične potrošnje.³¹⁵ Glavne težnje raziskovanja so bile usmerjene v iskanje »ideje *Zeitgeista* ali 'duha časa', ki se je oziral k abstraktnim oblikam in njihovi simboliki, ne pa k funkcijskim razmerjem modernosti skupaj z ekonomskimi implikacijami standardizacije in množično proizvodne tehnologije«.³¹⁶ V zadnjem vidno vlogo prevzamejo Američani, ki poleg uspešne politične prekinitve italijanske levice hkrati v Italijo izvozijo tudi svoj model sodobne potrošniške družbe.

313 Jonathan M. Woodham, *Perspektive industrijskega oblikovanja po letu 1945 – Slovenija in Iskra v spremenjajočem se svetu*, v: *Iskra: neuvršćeno oblikovanje 1946–1990* (ed. Barbara Predan in Cvetka Požar), AML in društvo Pekinpah, Ljubljana 2009, pp. 21–22.

314 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 39.

315 Po besedah Suge Yasuka ideja o potrošnji prvič vstopi v oblikovanje v viktorijanski Angliji. Z nastankom tako imenovanega Chamber of Horrors – še enega od rezultatov svetovne razstave v Londonu – naj bi bili priča »prvememu poskusu nadzora področja blaga. In to ne z zakonom, temveć s prikazom in z diskurzom o moralnosti potrošnje. [...] [S] tem oznaćujemo ključno toćko preobrata, ko se je diskusija o okusu od pogleda proizvodnje preusmerila v na potrošnjo orientiran pogled.« V: Yasuko, »Designing the Morality of Consumption: 'Chamber of Horrors' at the Museum of Ornamental Art, 1852–53«, *Design Issues ...*, p. 44.

316 Woodham, *Twentieth-Century ...*, p. 65.

Kljub politični prekinitvi italijanske levice italijanskemu oblikovanju vseeno uspe zadržati pomemben in aktiven položaj v družbi. Njegova vloga postane še veliko bolj vidna, saj po novem italijanski izdelki redno polnijo revije in trgovske izložbe. Kot posledica nove popularnosti pa se pokaže izguba ostrine. Italijansko oblikovanje izgubi radikalni naboj, ki ga v večji meri lahko spremljamo od futuristov dalje. Namesto ostrine v Italijo (in v večji del zahodne Evrope) vstopi ameriški model *novega človeka*, človeka, ki je: »preprostejši in veliko bolj surov, toda z očitno zmagovalno ideologijo, ideologijo, kjer je bilo takojšnje zadovoljstvo prepoznano kot edini možni temelj za človeško družbo, stvarno družbo, kjer se je od industrije pričakovalo, da bo poskrbela za zdravje, obilje, presežek in potrošne izdelke.«³¹⁷

Po volitvah leta 1948 italijansko oblikovanje pod ameriškim vplivom stopi na pot komercializacije, na pot, ki temelji na spodbujanju potrošnje. Še več, italijanskim oblikovalcem v razmeroma kratkem času uspe zgraditi svojstveno nacionalno identiteto, kar jim omogoči prodor na tuje trge pod skupno znamko *italijansko oblikovanje*. Namesto materialne in kulturne rekonstrukcije oblikovanje razmeroma hitro uspešno »producira druge mite: množično proizvodnjo, fleksibilnost, montažni trak, modularnost, sintezo umetnosti itn.«³¹⁸ Ne glede na ideološko spremembo oblikovalcem uspe zadržati preteklo kolektivno idejo oblikovanja, le da je tokrat rezultat podrejen logiki kapitala, in ne več dobrobiti skupnosti, h kateri je oblikovanje pozval De Stijl. Inklinacija k potrošnji se v Italiji pokaže veliko prej kot v omenjenem nemškem primeru, kjer oblikovalci potrošnika na prvem mestu skušajo izobraziti (posodobiti). Delavci v Braunu po besedah Ramsa v času proizvodnje sploh niso verjeli, da bi kdorkoli želel kupiti aparate, ki jih je oblikoval.³¹⁹ Bili so preprosto preveč drugačni od vsega, kar so poznali in je bilo dosegljivo na trgu. Kljub omenjeni težnji po izobraževanju pa tudi v Nemčiji in drugod po Evropi potrošnja sčasoma (podobno kot smo to že videli v 19. stoletju³²⁰) vedno bolj prevzema vodilno vlogo pri diktatu, kaj se oblikuje in proizvaja. Diktatu, ki ga Victor

317 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 37.

318 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

319 Vanj je verjel Erwin Braun. Glej: Predan, *Dieter Rams interview ...*, (avgust 2011).

320 Na to opozori že naveden citat iz Morrisovega političnega manifesta iz leta 1885. Glej: Morris, *The Manifesto ...*, (julij 2010).

Papanek v sedemdesetih letih opiše z besedami »več kupiti, več trošiti, več porabiti in več zavreči«. ³²¹ Gre za mantro, s katero dodobra vkorakamo v svet oblikovanja po drugi svetovni vojni. Oblikovanje, ki je v Evropi vse do takrat imelo vizijo, da bo prevzelo nadzor nad gradnjo okolja, pod diktatom potrošnje in kapitala sčasoma začne izgubljati tako nadzor kot pozicijo tistega, ki snuje navodila. Zato se med številnimi mislečimi oblikovalci kot glavna kazen oblikovanja kmalu pojavi občutek vpetosti v kolesje potrošno orientirane »mašinerije«. Slednje spomni na Ruskina. Ruskin nas je namreč že sredi 19. stoletja posvaril pred kaznijo, ki čaka oblikovanje zaradi ločitve načrtovalca od izdelovalca. Slednje botruje nastanku gospoda, ki z intelektom vodi ročno delo delavca. Kot končni rezultat bomo dobili »družbo, sestavljeno iz morbidnih mislecev in nesrečnih delavcev. Kajti samo z delom je lahko misel zdrava in samo z mislijo je lahko delo srečno, zato se ločitev ne more izogniti kazni.« ³²² To, kar se pravzaprav sčasoma izkaže, je, da *gospod oblikovalec*, torej Ruskinov *morbidni mislec*, postane le navidezni vodja. V procesu industrijske proizvodnje se izkaže za dodaten člen v masi *nesrečnih delavcev*. *Gospod oblikovalec* – kljub nepogrešljivemu mostu, ki ga gradi – postane le del te ogromne mase proletariata. Proletariata, katerega koncept razloži z besedami, da »vključuje vse tiste, katerih delo posredno ali neposredno izkoriščajo ter podjarmljajo kapitalistične norme produkcije in reprodukcije«. ³²³ Še več, kot še zapišeta Negri in Hardt, »proletariat kot razred določa dejstvo, da je znotraj kapitala in ga vzdržuje«. ³²⁴

Prav zadnje je ključno pri razumevanju vloge povojnega in današnjega – postindustrijskega – oblikovanja v produkcijskem sistemu. Ključno je zato, ker so – tudi če se omenjene pozicije zavedamo – poskusi ločitve v stroki oblikovanja redki. Namesto da bi prepoznali sprevrženje De Stijlovega koncepta problema skupnosti in stroja, ki slednje omogoča, večji del stroke nastalo situacijo (preusmeritev k potrošnji) sprejema kot naslednjo razvojno stopnjo v oblikovanju. *Novo* pozicijo oblikovanja številni oblikovalci dojemajo le kot še eno od omejitev. Dojemajo jo kot izziv, kot nekaj, kar je mogoče preseči in ustvariti nekaj novega. To seveda drži in takšni preboji so vedno na delu. Drži

321 Papanek, *Design for the Real ...*, p. 252.

322 Ruskin, »The Nature of Gothic«, *The Stones of ...*, p. 169.

323 Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 55.

324 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

pa tudi, da je večina prebojev v skladu s tržnim sistemom, v skladu s spremembo zaradi spremembe, novostjo zaradi novosti in v grobem dejavnik, ki pospešuje, učvrščuje prodajo.³²⁵ In to kljub nenehno izraženi želji oblikovalca, da bi se nad sistem povzdignil in končno prevzel nadzor. Adrian Forty takšno »neudobno pozicijo« opiše z besedami:

»Po eni strani je oblikovanje določeno z idejami in stanjem materiala, nad katerimi oblikovalci nimajo nobenega nadzora, toda po drugi strani je oblikovanje rezultat oblikovalskega izvajanja ustvarjalne avtonomnosti in originalnosti. Če paradoks privedemo do skrajnosti, kako lahko za oblikovalca trdimo, da ima nadzor nad tem, kar počne, če je hkrati le agent ideologije in ima pri odločitvi končnega rezultata svojega dela toliko moči, kot je imata mravlja ali čebela delavka? Na to vprašanje ni odgovora: dejstvo je, da obe stanji sobivata, pa naj bo še tako neudobno za samo delo oblikovanja. [...] Večina oblikovalcev rešitve ne najde v teoriji, pač pa v tajnem dogovoru z mitom o lastni vsemo-gočnosti in hkrati v celoti ignorirajo svojo vlogo agentov ideologije.«³²⁶

Kaj Forty misli z agenti ideologije? Po njegovem »nobeno oblikovanje ne deluje, če ne poseblja idej, skupnih ljudem, ki jim je izdelek namenjen«.³²⁷ Posledično, kot še doda, nobeno delo oblikovalca ne more biti ločeno od družbe, v kateri nastaja. Z željo po povzdignitvi se oblikovanje v resnici le (navidezno) loči od družbe in se navzven predstavi kot unikum oblikovalskega mišljenja. Takšna pozicija oblikovalski izdelek po Fortyju v končni instanci osiromaši bistva. Saj gre, kot še zapiše, za sobivanje in temu ni mogoče uiti. To, da je oblikovanje del družbe, ki ga določa in ki jo hkrati soustvarja, pravzaprav ni nič novega. Kaže pa – kljub omenjeni ustvarjalni avtonomnosti, ki po Fortyju sobiva v oblikovanju – da prav s sprejemanjem pozicije agentov ideologije hkrati bolj ali manj sprejemamo submisivno vlogo, brez možnosti vplivanja, kaj šele spreminjanja.

Manj podrejeno vlogo oblikovalca-agenta ponudi Norman Potter. Vlogo oblikovalca-agenta prepozna v »procesu, ki (gledano retrospektivno) postane očiten prek daljšega

325 Kot zapiše Jelica Šumič Riha, tudi kritika ne odigra prave vloge, saj sistem konsolidira, namesto da bi ga preseгла. Šumič Riha, »A Matter Of Resistance« ..., p. 128.

326 Forty, »Design, Designers and the Literature of Design«, *Objects of Desire* ..., p. 242.

327 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

obdobja; izpraševanje se izvaja skozi postopek sprejemanja odločitev v raznovrstnih situacijah. Že na samem začetku bo osebno opazovanje vključevalo samoizpraševanje.«³²⁸ V nasprotju s Fortyjem, pri katerem je oblikovanje (če želimo, da odigra vlogo, ki mu pritiče v družbi) poosebljanje že obstoječih idej (kljub izključujoči, toda sobivajoči ustvarjalni avtonomnosti), Potter spodbuja samoizpraševanje. Med oblikovalci, če se navežemo na uvodno misel poglavja, spodbuja samokritiko. Spodbuja dvom o danih ideologijah, o *samoumevnih*, s strani družbe *determiniranih*, pričakovanih odločitvah.

Kritika je torej tisti pogoj, ki lahko preseka navidezno nemogoče, saj odpre prostor za dogodek. Vsi doslej obravnavani primeri iz teorije oblikovanja – od Ruskina prek Morrisa in Loosa vse do De Stijla – so na svoj način tvorili kritiko aktualnemu stanju na področju oblikovanja. S svojim delom so nam v praksi dokazali, da je mogoče preseči tisto, o čemer sprva nismo mogli niti misliti. Kritika se je izkazala za ključni rez v disciplini oblikovanja. Rez, ki je ustvaril pogoj za dogodek, katerega učinki so vplivali na spremembe v nadaljnjem razvoju stroke oblikovanja. Vprašanje, ki se na tem mestu poraja, je: kaj se zgodi s kritikami na področju oblikovanja po drugi svetovni vojni, sploh glede na ekspanzijo potrošnje? In predvsem: ali je kateri od kritik uspelo prečiti vednost v stroki oblikovanja, ustvariti pogoj možnosti za dogodek in doseči učinek, ki mu lahko sledimo še danes?

Manifesti in kritike po drugi svetovni vojni sprva zamrejo, saj ima prednost želja zgraditi najboljšo družbo za vse. V petdesetih, sploh pa v začetku šestdesetih, prve kritike ponovno vzniknejo. Po besedah Woodhama med prva odmevnejša povojna kritična dela sodi knjiga *The Hidden Persuaders*. Knjigo je leta 1957 napisal Vance Packard in še danes velja za pionirsko delo, saj razkrije, kako oglaševalci uporabljajo psihološke metode, vse zato, da se prikradejo v našo podzavest, potrkajo na naše želje in nas »prepričajo v nakup vedno novih izdelkov«.³²⁹ Leta 1963 v izredno odmevnem manifestu *First Things First*³³⁰ na problem podrejanja oblikovanja tržnim metodam opozori britanski

328 Potter, *What is a designer ...*, p. 135.

329 Woodham, *Twentieth-Century ...*, p. 227.

330 Garland je manifest prvič javno predstavil 29. novembra 1963 na Inštitutu sodobnih umetnosti [Institute of Contemporary Arts] v Londonu. Uradno je bil objavljen leta 1964, med drugim so ga ponatisnili tudi v

grafični oblikovalec Ken Garland. Po njegovem se je oblikovanje sprevrglo v orodje oglaševanja, saj naj bi bilo delo v oglaševanju najbolj dobičkonosna, učinkovita in zaželena uporaba naših talentov. Svoje znanje, veščine in domišljijo oblikovalci prodajajo za trivialne stvari, kot so mačja hrana, detergenti, regeneratori las, dietni proizvodi itd. Posledično Garland predlaga »spremembo prioritete v smeri bolj uporabnih in trajnejših komunikacij«. ³³¹

Glavni cilj poziva je bila želja po ponovni radikalizaciji oblikovanja, ki je po mnenju Garlanda in ostalih podpisanih postalo leno in nekritično. Podobno kot večina manifestov z začetka 20. stoletja se je tudi ta zavzemal za spremembo vrednot, spremembo prioritete. Hkrati pa so podpisniki želeli poudariti, da je modernistično razumevanje oblikovanja kot nevtralnega posrednika le teorija na papirju, saj je v večji meri – dokler disciplina takšno stanje sprejema – zgolj lutka, ki jo upravlja kapital. Namesto iskanja humanistične note oblikovalci zapravljajo svoje znanje z ukvarjanjem s potrošnjo in z vprašanjem, kako jo še dodatno spodbuditi, povečati. Leta 1999 so manifest delno predelali in ponovno izdali pod naslovom *First Things First 2000 – a design manifesto*. ³³² Podobno kot original iz leta 1964 so se tudi v novejši verziji podpisniki zavzeli za prenehanje izkoriščanja oblikovanja za nesmiselno potrošništvo, saj naj bi bila glavna naloga oblikovanja ta, da ljudem pomaga razumeti vedno bolj kompleksen in krhek svet.

Tako originalna kot revidirana verzija manifesta sta v oblikovalski in oglaševalski javnosti sprožili polemiko, v praksi oblikovanja pa hujših pretresov ni bilo. Slednje kaže na shizofreno situacijo, ki smo ji priča. Najočitnejša so vedno številnejša zbiranja podpisov in nestrinjanje s situacijo na eni strani ter pomanjkanje pravega učinka na situacijo na drugi strani. Celotno prvega manifesta Ken Garland je kasneje priznal,

časopisu Guardian. Pod manifest se je v originalni verziji podpisalo 22 somišljenikov. Ken Garland, *First Things First*, <http://www.kengarland.co.uk/KG%20published%20writing/first%20things%20first/index.html> (maj 2010).

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² *First Things First 2000 – a design manifesto*, <http://www.xs4all.nl/~maxb/ftf2000.htm> (maj 2010). Prenovljeni manifest je ob ponatisu podpisalo 33 somišljenikov. Objavljen je bil v revijah *Adbusters*, *AIGA journal*, *Blueprint*, *Emigre*, *Eye*, *Form in Items* jeseni 1999 in spomladi 2000.

da je po objavi manifesta »svoje delo nadaljeval povsem enako kot prej«. ³³³ V kratkem besedilu z naslovom *Responsible to Whom, I'd Like to Know? Consorting with Clients to Con Shareholders* ³³⁴ je ironično opisal logiko tipičnega oblikovalskega upora. Ko se nabere dovolj stvari, ki nas pri vsakdanjem delu z naročniki, v proizvodnji, z uporabniki in ostalimi dejavniki zmotijo, »spustimo ventil« z javnim robantenjem, akcijo in zbiranjem podpisov. Tisti »ta veliki« slednje pokroviteljsko *spregledajo*, saj *razumejo*, da si kot umetniki lahko vzamemo malo več svobode in da je vse skupaj zgolj na ravni performansa. Dobro namreč vedo, da bomo, ko bo prišlo do pravih, *resnih* zadev, na vse svoje robantenje pozabili in naredili tako, kot nam je naročeno. Po Garlandu je podobno s politiki. »Po neki definiciji demokracije je 'oblika vladanja takšna, da poveš, kar hočeš, in narediš, kar ti je naročeno'.« ³³⁵

Garland s svojimi besedami ponovi Fortyjevo misel o oblikovalcu kot marljivi čebelici delavki. Toda v drugi polovici 20. stoletja iz povprečja brezzobe oblikovalske kritike izstopi italijansko oblikovanje. Emilio Ambasz v predgovoru kataloga *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* zapiše, da je prav italijanskemu oblikovanju uspelo načeti glavno kritiko modernega gibanja, saj naj bi takrat postalo jasno, da »čeprav je dobro oblikovanje obvezen pogoj, ni sam po sebi zadosten, da bi zagotovil avtomatično rešitev vseh problemov, ki nastanejo še pred ustvarjanjem, in vseh tistih, ki nastanejo po njem«. ³³⁶ Če ne prej, so se vsaj v času delovanja skupine De Stijl oblikovalci zavedeli, da je prav vsak, še tako majhen izdelek del širšega družbenega ustroja in da kot tak določene probleme rešuje ter hkrati – kot nas pred Ambaszom na to opozori že Sigmund Freud – tudi ustvarja nove. Nove probleme.

333 Ken Garland, »Responsible to Whom, I'd Like to Know? Consorting with Clients to Con Shareholders«, *Citizen Designer. Perspectives on Design Responsibility* (ed. Steven Heller in Véronique Vienne), Allworth Press, New York 2003, p. 190.

334 *Ibid.*, pp. 188–190.

335 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

336 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. Achievements and Problems of Italian Design* (ed. Emilio Ambasz), The Museum of Modern Art in Centro Di, New York in Firenze 1972, p. 11. V Muzeju moderne umetnosti v New Yorku je bila v času od 26. maja do 11. septembra 1972 razstava z istim naslovom.

V besedilu *Nelagodje v kulturi* Freud izpostavi posledice tako imenovanega *napredka v kulturi*. Z vsakim napredkom sledi odpravljanje problemov, ki jih ta isti napredek z nastankom generira. Freud slednje opiše s primerom: »Če ne bi vpeljali plovbe prek oceana, prijatelj ne bi šel na pot prek morja in jaz ne bi potreboval telegrafa, da bi pomiril svojo skrb zanj.«³³⁷ Iz česar sledi: čeprav z napredkom v kulturi iščemo ugodje, po Freudu to še ne prinaša človekove sreče.³³⁸ Ali kot nam pove že z naslovom, z lovljenjem ugodja v razvoju kulture hkrati generiramo vedno novo nelagodje. Z izgradnjo kulture se znajdemo v situaciji, ki po Freudu služi dvojnemu namenu. Po eni strani kultura ščiti človeka pred naravo, hkrati pa ureja medsebojne odnose med ljudmi.³³⁹ S tem ko gradimo, ustvarjamo umetno okolje, ki skupnosti daje zaščito, hkrati pa prav z izgradnjo okolja generiramo dodatne napetosti v družbi. Sledeč temu se De Stijlov cilj, oblikovanje za dobrobit skupnosti, nenadoma ne zdi več tako preprosta naloga. Kajti, kako se izognemo generiranju novih problemov, medtem ko rešujemo enega od problemov? Ob tem da – kot nas opozori Freud – nove probleme generiramo prav z našo *napredno* in *ustvarjalno* kulturo.

Freudova ugotovitev vrže tudi povsem novo luč na v prejšnjem poglavju omenjeno Alexandrovo trditev, da v družbi, kjer ni problemov, tudi oblikovalcev ne poznajo, v kompleksnejši družbi pa potreba po oblikovalcih naraste. Potreba se kaže v tem, da rešujejo vedno nove probleme, ki jih po eni strani generira napredek, po drugi pa jih v številnih primerih generirajo tudi oblikovalci sami ob vsakokratnem reševanju obstoječih problemov. Slednje Alexander opredeli kot neprileganje. Neprileganje ali tisto nelagodje, ki se kot stranski učinek nepredvidoma generira med reševanjem izvirnega problema. Po Alexandru je optimalni cilj ustvariti *popolno* prileganje med formo – torej tem, kar oblikujemo/nadzorujemo, in med kontekstom, ki je dan, toda ne v celoti. *Popolno* prileganje je tisto, ki ne ustvari nobenega novega nepredvidenega nelagodja. Gre za oblikovanje, katerega variabilnost ustvarja vrednost o, torej da med reševanjem problema ne nastane nobeno dodatno neprileganje forme s kontekstom.³⁴⁰ Kajti tisto,

337 Sigmund Freud, *Nelagodje v kulturi*, Gyros, Ljubljana 2001, p. 37.

338 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

339 *Ibid.*

340 Alexander, *Notes on the synthesis ...*, p. 27.

kar nam je pravzaprav največkrat dano, preden se lotimo oblikovanja, je prav neprileganje obstoječe forme in konteksta. Neprileganje, ki se kaže kot problem in ga je treba odpraviti.

Prav neprileganje in nelagodje pa sta tudi najprimernejši opis stanja, ki je med italijanskimi oblikovalci in intelektualci tlelo že vse od izgubljenih volitev leta 1948. Torej od trenutka, ko je država po njihovem stopila na napačno pot, pot uklanjanja potrošnji. Posledično italijanski oblikovalci po Branziju v oblikovanju niso videli več

»pozitivnega odgovora na funkcionalne zahteve, temveč ustvarjanje zahteve same. [Prepoznajo ga] kot aktivno intervencijo v modificiranju obnašanja, ustvarjanju novih funkcij in novih svobod. Ettore Sottsass Jr. je že leta 1954 zapisal: 'Ko je Charles Eames oblikoval svoj stol, ni oblikoval stola, temveč način sedenja; to pomeni, da ni oblikoval za funkcijo, temveč je oblikoval funkcijo.'³⁴¹

Branzi nam v tem kratkem citatu ponudi kar tri iztočnice. V prvi vrsti vrže rokavico modernistični okrnitvi Sullivanovega naravnega zakona, po katerem naj bi oblikovanje strogo sledilo funkciji, hkrati pa ponudi popravek Sullivanovega drugega zakona. Po Sullivanu naj bi se v omenjenem zakonu oblikovalci osredotočali na iskanje izvirnega problema, saj naj bi nam ta avtomatično sugeriral rešitev. Branzi pa, nasprotno, pred nas postavlja izzivalno logiko, da je naloga oblikovanja oblikovati izvirni problem kot tak. Pozitivni odgovor ni več iskana rešitev, temveč – kot nas na to napeljuje zgornji citat – *ustvarjanje zahteve same*. Ne oblikujemo torej rešitve problema, temveč iskani in odkriti problem. In v tem kontekstu lahko razumemo, kaj Branzi misli, ko zapiše, da je nujno ustvarjati samo zahtevo. Ne gre za umetno ustvarjene potrebe, temveč za preoblikovanje najdenega problema, katerega posledica je ustvarjanje novega načina uporabe.

Misel zasledimo tudi pri Giorgiu Agambenu, ki se v kratkem spisu *In praise of Profanation* osredotoči na posebno relacijo med uporabo in profanacijo. Izpostavi: »[P]re-

341 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 49.

od vzvišenega [*sacred*] v profano se lahko zgodi [...] s sredstvi povsem neprimerne uporabe (ali bolje, ponovne uporabe) vzvišenega: največkrat igre.«³⁴² Da do posebne relacije med uporabo in profanacijo pride, Agamben v formulo vpelje še tretji element, igro. Kot primer navede otroško igro, saj otroku z igro na preprost način uspe spremeniti na prvi pogled povsem neuporabno stvar. Povedano drugače, otroku z igro uspe ustvariti igračo na nov način. Ključ je v igri, ki mu omogoči, da odpre, ustvari novo uporabo. Je pa slednje pomembno tudi zato, ker po Agambenu zmožnost ustvarjanja nove uporabe ponuja odgovor na potrošnjo kapitalizma. Ta po Agambenu tvori

»čisto obliko separacije, vse do stopnje, ko ni več ničesar mogoče ločiti. [...] Pri tržnem blagu separacija leži v sami obliki objekta. Deli ga na uporabno vrednost in menjalno vrednost, kar ga transformira v neoprijemljiv fetiš. Omenjeno velja za vse, kar je narejeno, proizvedeno ali izkušeno – celo človekovo telo, celo seksualnost, celo jezik. So ločeni od samega sebe, postavljeni v ločeno sfero, ki več ne definira stvarne delitve in kjer vsa uporaba postane in ostane nemogoča. Ta sfera je potrošnja.«³⁴³

Da uporabnost takšnemu izdelku vrnemo, smo po Agambenu primorani deaktivirati staro uporabo in tako ustvariti možnost za novo uporabo.³⁴⁴ Skratka, ni dovolj le izbrisati separacije, ki objekt delajo neuporaben, temveč se od nas zahteva, da prek igre ustvarimo novo uporabo. Ob povedanem pravzaprav ugotovimo, da Branzi in Agamben govorita o isti stvari. Govorita o *igri*, o oblikovanju, ki bo omogočilo nove funkcije, nove svobode in zmožnost aktivne intervencije v modificiranju obnašanja.

Čeprav se Branzijeva pozicija sprva bere kot negativni odgovor na pozitivni odgovor funkcionalizma, se oblikovalcem pravzaprav ravno v tem, da prepoznajo, da lahko tudi v času potrošnje s svojim delom ustvarijo nov način uporabe in posledično modificirajo obnašanje, zazdi, da lahko ponovno pridobijo iskano moč, iskani nadzor. In na tej ideji

342 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, p. 75.

343 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

344 *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.

se kot alternativa prej omenjene italijanske povojne kritike v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja formira radikalno italijansko oblikovalsko gibanje *antidizajn*.³⁴⁵

S kritiko se člani gibanja posvetijo raziskovanju družbeno-kulturnih implikacij oblikovanja izdelkov in njihovega vpliva na obnašanje ljudi ter si ob tem zastavijo vprašanje sedanje in prihodnje vloge oblikovanja.³⁴⁶ V številnih umetniških akcijah (pod vplivom pop arta) člani gibanja antidizajn podvomijo o oblikovanju, ki je vpeto v tržni sistem, podvomijo o sistemu neuporabne fetišizacije. Zavrnejo samosprevrženje oblikovanja, ki namesto skupnosti na piedestal postavlja potrošnjo. Zavrnejo kontekst potrošnje, v katerega je oblikovanje nenadoma povsem vpeto. Še več, zavrnejo s strani tržnega sistema oblikovanju odrejeno mesto. Posledično si člani gibanja *antidizajn* zadajo nalogo oblikovanje iztrgati iz danega (na videz nespremenljivega) konteksta potrošnje. Podobno kot Loos tudi člani antidizajna ne zavrnejo zgolj obstoječega konteksta, v katerega je vpeto oblikovanje, temveč hočejo poiskati novega. Ali povedano v Sullivanovi maniri, kontekst potrošnje, v katerega je umeščeno oblikovanje, prepoznajo kot tisti problem, ki ga je treba reševati.

»Naturalističen in dialektičen koncept trga je nadomestil povsem umeten mehanizem za spodbujanje lažnih potreb, ki nadomestijo vsako spontano zahtevo trga. Celoten industrijski sistem se je razvijal po povsem umetnih kanalih potrošnje, na podlagi programa, ki je navidezno zagotavljal in spodbujal konkurenčnost in družbeni trg [...]. Imperializem je bil skriti faktor, ki je tvoril to svetovno izobilje; in premagati ga je treba z njegovim lastnim orožjem, in ne z reformistično moralnostjo buržoazije.«³⁴⁷

345 *Antidizajn* je skovanka, ki je bila italijanski radikalni arhitekturi in oblikovanju dana naknadno. Andrea Branzi, eden od protagonistov gibanja in član radikalne skupine Archizoom, v svoji knjigi *The Hot House* izraza ne uporablja. Uporablja termin *radikalna arhitektura*. Izraz *antidizajn* (ki ga večina teoretikov uporablja danes) najverjetneje izhaja iz skupne pobude radikalnih skupin, ki so leta 1974 v Firencah odprle t. i. antišolo arhitekture in oblikovanja. Kot napiše Branzi, so sicer bolj kot o antišoli govorili o nešoli, in njihova prva akcija je bila usmerjena v izdelavo nekakšnih *rumenih strani*, kjer bi dobili kontakte in napotke, ki bi nam pomagali pri osvoboditvi človeka od kulture. V: Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 83.

346 Za primere naštetega glej katalog: *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*

347 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 55.

S strani Wrighta obljubljeni demokracija industrijske produkcije se v kratkem času sprevrže v izjemno ozek prostor potrošnje. Namesto da bi industrializacija prostor odpirala, vedno znova – pod pritiskom potrošnje – le rešuje nelagodja, ki jih pred tem sama generira. S kritiko oblikovalci gibanja *antidizajn* torej zavrnejo pozicijo oblikovanja, ki ne ustvarja novih funkcij, temveč le izvršuje naloge po nareku trga. Posledično oblikovanje – podobno kot v Morrisovih časih, takrat še po nareku gospodarjev, tokrat pa po nareku trga – *ustvarja* neuporabne izdelke, neoprijemljiv fetiš, vse zato, da zadovoljujejo lažno potrebo. Oblikovalci zato podvomijo o razvoju, ki nas od civilizacije stroja pripelje v civilizacijo potrošnje. Zavrnejo človeka-potrošnika, ki naj bi (še) v potrošnji izživel »svoj maksimalni potencial kulturne ustvarjalnosti in civilizacijske blaginje«. ³⁴⁸ Da bi bila kritika učinkovita, izkoristijo *lastno orožje* trga in kot odgovor pripravijo razstavi (leta 1966 in 1967) z naslovom *Superarchitettura*. Oblikovalci, v glavnem gre za člane skupin Archizoom in Superstudio, ³⁴⁹ ob razstavi zapišejo: »Superarhitektura je arhitektura superprodukcije, superpotrošnje, supernapeljevanja k potrošnji, s strani supermarketa, Supermana, super-visoko-testiranega goriva. Superarhitektura sprejema logiko produkcije in potrošnje in se zalaga za njuno demistificiranje.« ³⁵⁰

Iz zapisa je mogoče razbrati novo nalogo oblikovanja: demistifikacijo realnosti. Razkrivanje stvarnega. Ali kot zapiše tudi trenutno aktualna ICSID-ova definicija oblikovanja, ena od nalog oblikovanja je, da »razkriva in vrednoti strukturna, organizacijska, funkcionalna, izrazna in ekonomska razmerja«. ³⁵¹ Oblikovalec ima kot aktiven udeleženec v procesu možnost spoznati razmerja, ki vladajo, in ena od njegovih nalog je, da za dobrobit družbe slednja skupnosti razkrije. Zgodi se torej premik od Fortyjevega opisa oblikovanja, za katero je v številnih primerih značilno, da *stvari naredi drugačne*

348 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 54.

349 Pri Archizoomu so delovali oblikovalci Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Dario Bartolini, Lucia Bartolini in Massimo Morozzi, pri Superstudiu pa Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Adolfo Natalini, Alessandro Poli in Cristiano Toraldo di Francia.

350 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 54.

351 *Definition of Design*, <http://www.icsid.org> (avgust 2004), prevod: Nataša Velikonja. Za razliko od npr. 18. stoletja. Takrat naj bi po Fortyju za industrijsko oblikovanje veljalo, da je naloga oblikovanja v tem, da z temeljenostjo na arhaičnih modelih omogoča lažje preseganje upora proti inovacijam, ki se v družbi dogajajo. V: Forty, *Objects of Desire ...*, p. 12.

od tega, kar so. Pri razumevanju razkrivanja nam je lahko v pomoč Althusserjevo razmišljanje o razmerju umetnosti do spoznanja in ideologije.

»Umetnost v strogem smislu ne prinaša spoznanja, torej ne nadomešča spoznavanja (v sodobnem pomenu: znanstvenega spoznavanja), kljub temu pa je to, kar nam prinaša, v nekem specifičnem razmerju s spoznavanjem. To razmerje ni razmerje identitete, pač pa razmerje razlike. Naj pojasnim. Menim, da je posebnost umetnosti v tem, da nam 'daje vedeti', 'daje zaznavati', 'daje čutiti' nekaj, kar aludira na realnost. [...] To, kar nam umetnost daje videti, kar nam torej daje v obliki 'videnja', 'zaznavanja' in 'čutenja' (ki ni oblika spoznavanja), je ideologija, iz katere se rojeva, v kateri plava, od katere se loči kot umetnost in na katero aludira.«³⁵²

Če je ena od dolžnosti oblikovanja razkrivati, potem je ključna poanta v tem, da »daje vedeti«. Toda razlika z umetnostjo (kot jo vidi Althusser) je v tem, da naj oblikovanje ne bi zgolj aludiralo, namigovalo na realnost, temveč naj bi »dalo vedeti« nekaj, kar realnost je. Razkrivalo naj bi realnost takšno, kot je. V tem pogledu je oblikovanje bliže ideji grškega razumevanja umetnosti, za katero po Agambenu ni značilna »podaoba praktičnega ali spontanega procesa, temveč je njen modus resnica, razumljena kot razkritje«. ³⁵³ In prav ta, neposredna bližina resnice je ključ za razumevanje povzdignitve umetnosti nad ostalo praktično delo. ³⁵⁴ Archizoom in Superstudio z omenjenima razstavama demistificirata umetno vzpostavljena družbena razmerja. Razkrijeta jih tako, da vse tisto, kar poznamo in nas dnevno obkroža, potisneta do skrajnosti. Vse je super, vse je grandiozno, vse je tam zato, da bomo tudi mi še bolj super. Toda šele s čezmernim potenciranjem opazimo, prepoznamo tisto, kar nas dnevno obkroža in kar prav zaradi vsakdanjosti tudi nekritično sprejemamo. Ali kot zapiše Branzi, zato da bi situacijo lahko premagali, bo treba uporabiti njihovo lastno orožje. Le na ta način bo v kulturo oblikovanja kot trojanski konj ponovno vstopila politična vsebina. ³⁵⁵ Vstopila

352 Althusser, Balibar, Macherey, Pêcheux, *Ideologija in estetski učinek*, zbornik (ed. Zoja Skušek - Močnik), Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1980, p. 323.

353 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, p. 69.

354 *Ibid.*

355 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 54.

bo skozi idejo, da oblikovalci s svojim delom ustvarjajo za vse, imajo možnost ustvariti nove uporabnosti, kar jim omogoči aktiven poseg v polje politike. Povedano drugače, dejanja oblikovalcev postanejo politična.

V praksi italijanskega oblikovanja se aktivni poseg zgodi leta 1968. Po besedah Ješe Denegrija tega s protesti naelektrenega leta Enzo Mari skupaj s somišljeniki in študenti okupira milanski triennale. Skupina protestnikov triennale zapre za javnost in ga spremeni v mesto vstaje. Na javnost in stroko naslovijo vprašanja, kaj naj počne umetnik v družbi trga in kaj naj počne umetnik v družbi ideološke polarizacije. Ponovno opozorijo na nevzdržno stanje, kjer je oblikovalec kot lutka na vrvicah brez možnosti reševanja pravih problemov. Vse, kar se od oblikovalca pričakuje, je, da bo kot stroj vedno znova produciral dobro oblikovane izdelke, ki jih družba v resnici ne potrebuje, si jih pa – vsaj tako trdi sistem – želi. Vse te želje po posedovanju navidezno vedno novih stvari pa so zgolj – in na to člani gibanja antidizajn vedno znova opozarjajo – umetno inducirane s strani tržnega sistema proizvodnje.³⁵⁶ Mari je omenjeno misel kasneje nadgradil ter umetnike in kritike pozval k razmisleku o razmerju med političnim angažmajem in njihovim poklicem, saj se po njegovem kot umetnik s politiko ukvarjaš takrat, ko se boriš proti institucionaliziranemu sistemu proizvodnje.³⁵⁷ Torej takrat, ko ne privoliš v na prvi pogled dane in nespremenljive situacije, ali v našem primeru, dane kontekste. To, kar nam gibanje antidizajn vedno znova kaže, je, da so vse situacije umetno generirane in zato spremenljive. In v tem pogledu je ukvarjanje s politiko v oblikovanju neizogibno. Še več, 20. stoletje nam pravzaprav pokaže, da sta oblikovanje in politika neločljiva.

Neločljivost oblikovanja in politike se kaže v skupni želji po preoblikovanju sveta, ki temelji na logiki »danes za jutri«. Logiki, ki temelji na Agambenovi igri, na nujnosti ustvarjanja nove uporabnosti, saj se le tako vsakič znova iztrgamo iz danega konteksta. Novonastali konteksti od oblikovanja terjajo vedno nova pravila delovanja. Toda pra-

356 Ješa Denegri v intervjuju z Branko Ćurčić, »Dizajn i ideologija – Diskusija o potrošačkom društvu, medijima i ekstenziji autonomne umetnosti u produktivnu praksu. Razgovor sa Jerkom Denegrijem«, v *ID: Ideologija dizajna*, (ed. Branka Ćurčić), Autonomedia in Centar za nove medije_kida.org, New York in Novi Sad 2009, pp. 64–65.

357 Luisa Perlo, Intervista ad Alessandra Pioselli, *Artkey*, 7. 3. 2005, http://www.teknemedia.net/magazine_detail.html?mId=574 (avgust 2010).

vila, ki jih ne vsiljuje s strani drugega odrejeni kontekst. Politika v oblikovanju je torej nujna zato, da vsakič znova kontekstualizira, ureja razmere med novo uporabnostjo in kontekstom, ki je sicer vnaprej dan, a se vsakokrat z novo uporabnostjo spremeni.

Želja pisati (ali ne pisati) lastna pravila – ne nazadnje nas je na to napeljal že Wright – je bila eden od razlogov, ki je protagoniste gibanja antidizajn pripeljal do omenjenih milanskih protestov. Ustvarili so možnost za upor proti stanju, v katerem se je oblikovanje znašlo. Prepoznali so, da je oblikovanje že od leta 1948 na razpotju. Na razpotju med bartlebyjevskim odnosom, da vpetosti oblikovanja v kolesje tržnega sistema, ki diktira zahtevo po množičnih izdelkih, ni mogoče spremeniti, in na drugi strani občutkom, da kot akterji na področju oblikovanja nismo naredili dovolj, da bi takšno pozicijo nemoči spremenili, revolucionirali.

V tem pogledu se ponovno vrnemo k Morrisu in njegovemu utopičnemu upor. Kajti italijansko gibanje antidizajn je na svoj način reaktiviralo Morrisova vprašanja. Tako kot Morris tudi italijanski oblikovalci na oblikovanje gledajo v smislu njegovega družbenopolitičnega konteksta in se uprejo relativizmu golega zadovoljevanja trga. S svojim praktičnim in teoretičnim delom opozarjajo na že omenjeno sprevrženost oblikovanja, ki zapravlja svoj potencial z gradnjo potrošniške družbe. S to razliko, da člani gibanja antidizajn k utopiji boljšega življenja pristopijo z nasprotne strani.

»Namesto nenamernih utopij moderne arhitekture in mestnega načrtovanja, ki predlaga nemogoče ureditve sveta, avantgardna arhitektura proces obrne na glavo: utopijo razume kot dani temelj dela in ga razvije realistično. Ko je bil proces enkrat zaključen, ni bilo nič izpuščeno; vse je bilo izpopolnjeno v dejanju, ki je bilo do popolnosti izvedeno samo v sebi, kot čista energija, brez izgube, v konstruktivno energijo. Utopija ni bila zaključek, temveč realnost situacije; v njej ni bilo nobenih prispodob, le povsem normalen fenomen. S parafrazo Flauberta smo lahko rekli: 'L'architecture c'est moi.'³⁵⁸

358 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 60.

V družbi, ki ponuja zgolj eno kulturo brez izhoda, se člani antidizajna odločijo ustvariti opozicijo obstoječemu. Izhodišče zastavijo na utopičnem. Na tistem, kar je očiščeno vseh umetno dodanih vrednosti, torej na tistem, kar v danem trenutku v uradni kulturi ne obstaja, se zdi nemožno, je le hipoteza. Ali kot bi slednje označil Agamben, utopijo gradijo na potencialnosti.³⁵⁹ Potencialnosti zato, ker kot oblikovalci – gradniki našega okolja – v sebi že nosimo znanje, torej potencial, ki nam omogoča spremeniti okolje, spremeniti kontekst, s katerim nismo zadovoljni. Odločitev, ali bomo omenjene potencialne izpeljali v prakso, pa ostaja na ramenih nosilcev znanja, teh, ki lahko. Torej oblikovalcih. Povedano poenostavljeno. Vsak oblikovalec se vsakodnevno znajde pred dilemo: »Imaš znanje. Kaj boš torej naredil?« Ne: »Kaj bi lahko naredil?« Kajti znanje, ki ga imaš, te že postavlja v pozicijo zmožnosti, potencialnosti. Zato se vprašanje: »Kaj bi lahko?« spremeni v: »Kaj boš?«

V tem smislu lažje razumemo delo gibanja antidizajn. S tem ko se odločijo za razkrivanje stvarnega na način skrajnega potenciranja, poiščejo utopično, nestvarno, potencialno in na tem nato zgradijo novo realnost. Hkrati s tem, podobno kot Morris pred njimi, do lastnega časa ustvarijo distanco, ki jim ponudi pogled od zunaj. Slednje pa jim omogoči razmišljanje o novih rešitvah, o novih funkcionalnostih. Nalogo prečiti ustaljeno si oblikovalci antidizajna sprva zadajo na potenciranju obstoječega, v naslednjem koraku pa na način ustvarjanja maksimalne opozicije obstoječemu. Če je uradna kultura zagovarjala kvaliteto, so oni zagovarjali kvantiteto. Umetno induciranim vrednostim so nasproti postavili gole, nevtralne izdelke, izdelke brez alegorij. V *dom* so vrnili vse, kar je civilizacija skozi napredek izpustila in diskreditirala kot necivilizirano. Od »domišljene banalnosti, namerne vulgarnosti, urbane opreme [do] psov, ki grizejo«. ³⁶⁰ Identificirali so se z ostanki, s smetmi. Podobno kot kasneje definira Flusser³⁶¹, se člani gibanja antidizajn zavejo, da ljudi ne obkrožata le dva svetova, naravni in kulturni, temveč trije. Poleg prvih dveh še svet, ki ostaja *spre gledan*, namerno izključen,

359 Ko se v nadaljevanju naslanjam na razumevanje potencialnosti v oblikovanju, se naslanjam na Agambenovo misel o potencialnosti. Slednjo razloži v spisu »On Potentiality«, v: Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities. Collected Essays in Philosophy*, (ed. Daniel Heller-Roazen), Stanford University Press, Stanford 1999, pp. 177–184.

360 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 55.

361 Besedilo »The Non-Thing 2«, v: Flusser, *The Shape of things ...*, p. 90.

to je svet odpadkov. Flusser sosledje narava – kultura – odpadki označi za izprijen krog, iz katerega se je moč iztrgati le s kulturo brez proizvedenih stvari.³⁶²

Pred Flusserjem do podobnega zaključka pridejo tudi oblikovalci antidizajna. Zavejo se, da lahko zastavljeno dosežejo le z deklariranjem smrti arhitekture.³⁶³ Z deklaracijo, ali bolje, eliminacijo vsega običajnega, vsega, kar nas definira. Ali kot bomo videli v nadaljevanju, oblikovalci postopoma postavijo zahteve po eliminaciji mest, eliminaciji dela in nazadnje eliminaciji objektov. Takšna eliminacija jim omogoči začeti znova, brez utesnjenih spon tradicije. Kajti s tem dejanjem bo njihova beseda v praksi postala arhitektura. Zato kot rezultat na razstavi³⁶⁴ v Muzeju moderne umetnosti v New Yorku leta 1972 archizoomovci alternativo zgradijo na tisti »najmanj fizični zadevi na svetu, na besedi«. ³⁶⁵ Beseda jim omogoči, da namesto ene vizualizacije potencialne utopije zgradijo toliko utopij, kolikor je bralcev in poslušalcev. Namesto ene kulture ustvarijo eno za vsakogar. Tako ustvarijo orodje brez vsiljenega precedenčnega primera. Ustvarjanje modelov, ki kažejo zgolj eno pot, je po mnenju Archizooma stvar preteklosti. Po njihovem je treba prekiniti prakso, pri kateri nekaj intelektualcev razlaga in organizira svet ter obliko našega okolja. »Pravica, da se upremo realnosti, v kateri manjka 'smoter' (zato ker gre za realnost, ki jo proizvaja sistem, in ta je brez 'smotra' sam po sebi), je pravica do ukrepanja, modificiranja, oblikovanja in uničenja okolja, ki nas obkroža. To je neprenosna pravica in zmožnost, ki jo ima vsak.«³⁶⁶ Z zadnjim stavkom se ponovno postavimo na stran Agambenove potencialnosti, s to razliko, da se s povedano izjavo zavemo, da potencial, ki nam omogoča spremeniti okolje, poseduje vsak. Torej ne le oblikovalec. Victor Papanek ali Norman Potter bi slednje označila z mislijo, da smo

362 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

363 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 58.

364 Avtor razstave Emilio Ambasz je poleg izbora italijanskega oblikovanja razpisal tudi vabljeni natečaj na temo oblikovanja okolja. Oblikovalci so lahko k tematiki pristopili na dva načina: »z razumevanjem, da je oblikovanje aktivnost, ki rešuje probleme in je v fizični obliki sposobna formulirati rešitve problemov, ki nastajajo v naravnem in družbeno-kulturnem miljeju. Drugi, lahko bi ga poimenovali tudi antidizajn pristop, pa izbere poudarjanje potrebe po prenovi filozofskega diskurza za družbeno in politično udejstvovanje kot način za prispevek k strukturnim spremembam v družbi.« V: *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 137.

365 *Ibid.*, p. 234. Celoten opis projekta temelji na besedilu, Archizoomovem predlogu okolja, pp. 232–239.

366 *Ibid.*, p. 234.

prav vsi oblikovalci. In če smo vsi oblikovalci, vsi posedujemo znanje, ki nas postavlja v pozicijo tistega, ki lahko.

Za to, da bomo, pa potrebujemo prostor. Oblikovalci antidizajna pred nas postavijo praznino. Pred nas postavijo »le« besedo, katere ideja se realizira šele s posameznikom, ki v sebi prepozna zmožnost. Vzpostavi se interakcija, ali kot to označijo antidizajnovci, pride do samoprodukcije kulture. Šele s tem ustvarimo zmožnost osvoboditve izpod represivnega sistema, ki ga okoli nas gradi uradna kultura. Kultura, ki je okoli nas spletla neskončno mrežo vrednosti in pomenov ter nam s tem odvzela svobodo spreminjanja okolja po lastni volji. »Naša naloga je torej izničiti moralno težo stvari, metodično dvomiti o vseh vzorcih religijskega, estetskega, kulturnega in celo okoljskega obnašanja.«³⁶⁷

Z interakcijo in prepustitvijo ljudem, da se do danega opredelijo, predvsem pa da v končni fazi samoproizvedejo, spodbudijo potencial za ukrepanje, spodbudijo postopek emancipacije v razmerju do danega sistema, v katerem delujemo in ki ga vse do omenjenega trenutka nekritično sprejemamo. Z emancipacijo se vzpostavijo vzvodi, ki nam omogočijo zavrnitev, ali še več, omogočijo nam eliminacijo mest, dela in objektov. Vse tri elemente člani gibanja antidizajn prepoznajo kot tiste glavne sponse, ki nas umetno določajo in nas posledično v naši potencialnosti omejujejo. Naj na kratko povzamem, zakaj.

Glavni produkt mreže, ki jo plete uradna kultura, je mesto. Gre za vsakdanji izdelek človekovega dela. Mesto v ideologiji srednjega razreda gradi most med človekom in naravo ter med človekom in družbo. Srž problema je mesto srednjega razreda. Po Archizoomu ta tvori spontani mehanizem, v katerem blago svobodno kroži in pridobiva vrednost, medtem pa proizvodnja ostaja skrita na obrobju, brez možnosti priznanja funkcije. Kot rezultat ugotovljenega avantgardna arhitektura ne deluje več na področju gradnje boljšega mesta, temveč »izziva ideologijo mesta srednjega razreda, oznanja njegovo sleparsko vlogo in ustvarja mestno načrtovanje na novem sistemu, z novo uporabo, ki ni zgolj

367 *Ibid.*, pp. 234–235.

instrument za družbeno manifestacijo in spodbujanje vrednosti.«³⁶⁸ Podlago v teoriji najdejo pri Engelsu, po katerem »problem drugačnega mesta ne nastaja zaradi delavca: njegov problem je prej v tem, da si prilasti mesto, ki že obstaja. Novo mesto bo v resnici rojeno z inverzijo mesta, ki obstaja danes.«³⁶⁹ Posledično moramo arhitekturo razumeti kot »nevtralni sistem, ki je na razpolago za nediferencirano rabo, ne pa sredstvo za organizacijo družbe; [razumeti jo moramo] kot svoboden, opremljen prostor, v katerem je mogoče izvajati spontane akcije eksperimentiranja v individualnem ali kolektivnem bivanju.«³⁷⁰ Da do takšnega nevtralnega sistema arhitekture pridemo, pa moramo po mnenju Superstudia mesta ukiniti. Le tako lahko pride do odstranitve preteklih strukturnih moči, ki so se sčasoma v mestih nakopičile. »Z eliminacijo mesta kot hierarhije in družbenega modela, v iskanju nove, osvobodjene enakopravne države, ki omogoča, da prav vsak dosega različne nivoje razvojnih možnosti, ob čemer vsi začnemo z istega začetnega položaja.«³⁷¹

Naslednja stopnja eliminacije mesta je zahteva po eliminaciji dela. Kajti da lahko postanemo gospodarji lastnega življenja, se moramo v Archizoomovi alternativni v prvi vrsti »osvoboditi dela. Zgolj tako nam bo uspelo obnoviti vse neizkoriščene ustvarjalne sposobnosti, ki jih imamo v sebi. Te so zaradi frustriranega dela v stoletjih povsem atrofirale.«³⁷² Po Branziju se je poslovnež na osvoboditev od dela, ki je za vse izkoriščene delavce pomenila utopijo, odzval z avtomatiziranim tekočim trakom. »S tem ko so se znebili človeškega dela, je kapitalizem ustvaril temelje za transformacijo družbe v čisto potrošniško silo. In v industrijski družbi postane potrošnja ustvarjalna aktivnost, tako da proizvaja vrednosti in modele.«³⁷³ Podobno kot pri Archizoomovem predlogu tudi člani skupine Superstudio za pogoj svoje alternative *predpišejo* družbo, ki ne temelji na delu, to je namreč povezano z močjo in nasiljem. Da bi alternativa delovala, mora temeljiti na družbi neodtujenih človeških odnosov. Nomadizem postane permanentno stanje, pri čemer gibanje enega dela vpliva na celoto. Naše osnovne zahteve

368 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

369 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 58.

370 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape...*, p. 239.

371 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

372 *Ibid.*, p. 235. Uporaba kurzive se drži izvornika.

373 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 81.

zadovoljujejo visoko sofisticirane (miniaturizirane) tehnike. Z zadovoljtvijo osnovnih potreb pride do boljše zmožnosti razmišljanja in do integralne uporabe naših fizičnih potencialov. Potencialov spontanij in ustvarjanja nove uporabnosti. Našteto postavi temelj za življenje človeka, osvobojenega želje. Želje (ali potrebe), ki je, kot na to že od začetka opozarjajo člani gibanja antidizajn, umetno spodbujena. Zato je klic po osvoboditvi od dela – ali kot to označijo na drugem mestu, zahteva po družbi brezdelja ali celo smrti dela³⁷⁴ – v svojem bistvu iskal takšen način »ustvarjanja svobode, ki bo posamezniku omogočila, da si jo bo pridobil sam«. ³⁷⁵

Zadnja zahteva spomni na Ruskinovo misel in njegovo iskanje svobode misli v delu. Ruskin jo, kot vemo, prepozna v zamahu kladiva. Z zamahom se je izrazila vsa obrtnikova/oblikovalčeva misel in prav to svobodo nam je po Ruskinu in Morrisu industrijska proizvodnja z mehanizacijo odvzela. De Stijl kasneje stroj sprevrže v le še eno od orodij, s katerim lahko – tako kot v časih, h katerim stremi Ruskin – *zamahnemo* po materialu, le da to izvedemo še toliko bolj učinkovito in posledično dosežemo boljše oblikovanje za vse. Toda, kot se sčasoma izkaže, za razliko od industrijske proizvodnje, ki nam je v času Ruskina in Morrisa odvzela svobodo misli, nam svobodni zamah kladiva tokrat jemlje uradna kultura, ki nas v 20. stoletju degradira v potrošnike. Če se želimo izviti iz primeža proletariata, ali bolje, iz primeža kapitala, ki ga proletariat vzdržuje,³⁷⁶ se po Archizoomu pravzaprav vračamo h ključni ideji Morrisove utopije. Vsak posameznik *dela* tisto, kar potrebuje, s pomočjo prosto dostopnih globalnih orodij³⁷⁷ in znanj. V gradnji globalnih orodij in znanj se tudi skriva mesto oblikovalca. Oblikovalca, ki v nevtralni mreži vzpostavlja in odpira možnosti za nadaljnjo samouporabo. Za zmožnost ustvarjanja novih funkcij. Ali kot slednje sledeč Marxu ponovi Morris, »od vsakega po njegovih zmožnostih, vsakomur glede na njegove potrebe«. ³⁷⁸ Da do svojstvene realizacije sploh pride, je torej v prvi fazi nujna odtegnitev dela.

374 *Ibid.*

375 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 235.

376 Negri in Hardt, *Imperij ...*, p. 56.

377 Na tej ideji leta 1973 osnujejo antišolo za arhitekturo in oblikovanje z imenom *Globalna orodja*.

378 William Morris, *How We Live and How We Might Live*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/hwl/hwl.htm>, (avgust 2010) tudi v Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1975, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/cho1.htm> (januar 2012).

»Družba brezdelja je bila družba, v kateri se je začejala nova množična proizvodnja intelekta. Tisto, kar danes označujemo za brezdelje ali prosti čas, temelji na potrebi po ponovni uveljavitvi začasnega psihofizičnega ravnovesja, ki bo omogočilo okrevanje lastnih možnosti produkcije.«³⁷⁹ Po archizoomovcih je torej ključ v brezdelju, saj nam šele to omogoči svobodo odločanja, svobodo izbire. Osvobodi nas umetno inducirane želje, tako kot nas osvobodi zaslužjenega odnosa, ki se z delom neizogibno vzpostavlja. Z zavrnitvijo obstoječega sistema, z emancipacijo od dela, se vzpostavi podlaga za izgradnjo nevtralne mreže, ki nam omogoči korak k spontanemu samoproizvajanju.

Pred spontanim samoproizvajanjem pa si je po predlogu Superstudia za newyorško razstavo treba zamisliti še eno alternativo življenja. Življenja *brez* objektov. Po smrti arhitekture, mesta in dela oblikovalci zahtevajo še smrt produkcije. Kajti vse, kar proizvajamo, pa naj bo še tako nujno, je vpeto v potrošniški krog. Le s prekinitvijo tega kroga se bomo po mnenju članov antidizajna lahko otresli nadzora kapitala. S takšnim pristopom bomo »ponovno pretehtali razmerja med procesom oblikovanja in okoljem, prek alternativnega modela obstoja, s prikazovanjem vidnega na podlagi serije simboličnih podob«.³⁸⁰

Člane Superstudia do dokončne eliminacije objektov – v želji uiti pastem produkcije – pripelje postopek redukcije vseh umetno vzpostavljenih vrednosti. Z destrukcijo objektov želijo doseči »destrukcijo njihovih atributov statusa in konotacij, ki jih nanje nalagajo tisti na oblasti. [Po novem bi] živeli z objekti (zreduciranimi na nevtralno stanje in razpoložljive elemente), in ne za objekte.«³⁸¹ Na tej točki se ponovno vrnemo k Agambenovi misli o profanaciji. K obzervaciji, da potrošnja izdelek oropa vse uporabe, še več, potrošnemu izdelku povsem onemogoči kakršnokoli uporabo v zameno za »spektakularno razstavo«.³⁸² V zameno za vse umetno zgrajene in dodane attribute statusa in konotacij, na katere – sklicujoč se na Marxa – opozorijo člani Superstudia.

379 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 81.

380 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 242. Celoten opis projekta temelji na besedilu, Superstudiovem predlogu okolja, pp. 240–251.

381 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

382 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, p. 82.

Marx objekte opiše kot tiste kočljive reči, polne metafizične zvitosti in teoloških muh.³⁸³ Opozori na razliko med uporabno vrednostjo izdelka in njegovo menjalno vrednostjo. Slednjo izdelek dobi takoj, ko postane blago. In takoj ko postane blago, še do tistega trenutka *le* uporaben kos lesa nenadoma postane poln različnih *idej* o tem, kako pomemben (vreden) je. Posledično oblikovalci antidizajna oporekajo umetno inducirani vrednosti, ki spremlja vsako blagovno menjavo. Oporekajo transformaciji od uporabnega izdelka v neuporaben in neoprijemljiv fetiš, kot izdelke potrošnje opiše Agamben.

Ob tem pa je treba opozoriti, da se člani antidizajna ne zadovoljijo zgolj z odstranitvijo menjalne vrednosti, temveč zahtevajo tudi odstranitev (stare) uporabne vrednosti. Kot nas opozori Agamben, je namreč pogoj za novo uporabo deaktivacija stare uporabe, prepoznavanje njene neoperativnosti.³⁸⁴ Postopna redukcija vseh vrednosti in deaktivacija uporabnosti člane gibanja antidizajn skozi razmišljanje pripelje do popolne odstranitve objekta samega. Princip redukcije v oblikovanju seveda ni nekaj novega. Srečali smo ga že pri Sullivanu, ki v enem od naravnih zakonov prepozna potrebo po redukciji navideznih problemov, zato da pridemo do pravega. Misel nato zasledimo tudi pri Loosu in De Stijlu, ki redukcijo preneseta na nivo iskanja objekta, slečenega dekoracije. Prvič pa se zgodi, da gredo v postopku redukcije oblikovalci do konca. Skoraj do konca. Ustavijo se namreč pri ideji, pri misli, pri besedi. Ta članom Superstudia omogoči novo definicijo oblikovanja: po novem ga razumejo kot »filozofsko špekulacijo, kot sredstvo znanja, kot kritični obstoj«. ³⁸⁵ In vse to omogoči posamezniku s potencialom, da samoproizvaja.

Superstudio in Agamben pa se ujameta še v eni točki razmišljanja. Pri obeh najdemo izražen dvom o potrebi po posedovanju izdelkov. Kot zapišejo v Superstudiu, mora v

383 Marx zapiše: »Očitno je, da človek s svojo dejavnostjo spreminja oblike naravne snovi na način, ki mu je koristen. Oblika lesa se npr. spremeni, če naredimo iz njega mizo. Kljub temu miza ostane les, čisto navadna čutna reč. Kakor hitro pa nastopi kot blago, se preobrazí v čutno nadčutno reč. Ne stoji samo z nogami na podu, temveč se vsem drugim blagom postavi nasproti na glavo in v njeni leseni glavi se ji rojevajo čudne muhe, veliko bolj čudne, kakor če bi sama od sebe začela plesati.« (p. 72) V: Karl Marx, »Fetiški značaj blaga in njegova skrivnost«, *Kapital. Kritika politične ekonomije*, prvi zvezek, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1986, pp. 71–82.

384 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, p. 86.

385 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, p. 242.

ospredje stopiti življenje z objekti, in ne za objekte. Kajti pri življenju z objekti nas izdelki, ki jih uporabljamo, vedno znova silijo k ustvarjanju nove uporabe. Nujen je odklon od posedovanja, h kateremu nas nenehno napeljuje potrošnja.

»Potrošnja, ki obvezno uniči stvari, ni nič drugega kot nezmožnost ali negacija uporabe, ki predpostavlja, da substanca stvari ostaja nedotaknjena (*salva rei substantia*). Toda to ni vse: preprosta de facto uporaba, ločena od posedovanja, v naravi ne obstaja; v nobenem pogledu to ni nekaj, kar bi nekdo lahko 'imel'. [...]

S tem pravzaprav povemo, da je uporaba vedno v razmerju z nečim, česar se ni mogoče polastiti; referira se na stvari do te mere, da ne morejo postati objekti posedovanja.«³⁸⁶

Z odmikom od objektov posedovanja, ali bolj natančno, z eliminacijo objekta kot takega Superstudio pot pripelje k prej omenjeni definiciji oblikovanja – filozofski špekulaciji, sredstvu znanja – pripelje jih k t. i. mentalnemu stanju koncentracije in znanja. K stanju, ki je po mnenju avtorjev osnova za resnično človeško eksistenco. S tem ko bodo

»objekti prenehali obstajati kot spodbujevalci družbenih komunikacij, bodo postali oblika realnosti in neposredna izkušnja realnosti. [...] Ko bo oblikovanje kot motiv potrošnje prenehalo obstajati, bo nastal prazen prostor, v katerem bodo počasi, kot na površini ogledala, začele nastajati stvari, kot so potreba po dejanju, spreminjanju, dajanju, ohranjanju, modificiranju. [...] Oblikovanje bo postalo popolno in racionalno, s pomočjo sinkretizma bo sintetiziralo različne realnosti in se v končni fazi transformiralo. Toda ne v smislu iz sebe, temveč se bo umaknilo vase, v svoje končno bistvo naravne filozofije. Na ta način bo oblikovanje vedno bolj sovpadalo z obstojem: ne gre več za obstoj pod protekcijo oblikovanih objektov, temveč obstoj kot oblikovanje. Konec je z obdobjem, ko je uporabnost generirala ideje in ko so ideje generirale uporabnost, zdaj so ideje uporabnost. In s to novo uporabnostjo življenje svobodno oblikuje v kozmični zavesti. [...] Po pretresu čezmerne produkcije se v miru lahko rodi stanje, v katerem bo svet prevzel obliko brez izdelkov in odpovedovanj. Nastala bo cona, kjer bo mišljenje energija in surovi material tudi že končni izdelek in kot tak edini neoprijemljivi objekt za potrošnjo.

386 Agamben, *Profanations ...*, pp. 82–83.

Oblikovanje regije, osvobojene polucije oblikovanja, je podobno oblikovanju zemeljskega raja ... To je končni izdelek – in to je edini projekt za prekrasno metamorfozo.«³⁸⁷

Je prej iskano oblikovanje, katerega že omenjeno variabilnost bi po Alexandru ustvarila vrednost o, pravzaprav oblikovanje, ki se odpove fizični materialnosti in ostane le še vsebina, ideja? Gre za agambenovsko kategorijo *poiesis*³⁸⁸, ki za razliko od *praxis* ne išče takojšnjega izraza v dejanju, temveč zadostuje, da nekaj preide iz neobstoječega v obstoječe? Zadostuje torej že obstoj ideje? Ali kot to izpostavi Artemis Yagou v svojem besedilu *Rewriting Design History from an Evolutionary Perspective*³⁸⁹, cilj oblikovanja je v premiku študijskega fokusa: od ustvarjanja izdelkov v ustvarjanje idej. Tako se po Yagoujevi namreč v resnici ne soočamo z zgodovino izdelkov, temveč se soočimo z zgodovino idej, ki tvori zgodovino kulture, medtem ko so izdelki zgolj manifestacija omenjenih idej. Torej stran od obsedenosti z materialom v svet kulture idej. Stran od potrošnje, ki izdelek sprevrže v neuporaben objekt poželenja.

Antidizajn rešitev torej prepozna v radikalni zavrnitvi materialne produkcije, v želji najti možnost proizvodnje, ki ni vpeta v tržni sistem. Rešitev prepoznajo v produkciji idej. Vprašanje, ki se neizogibno pojavi, je, kako ideje obvarovati pred sistemom trženja. Kako ideje obvarovati, da ne postanejo blago? Antidizajn varovalko zastavi na praznini, zastavi jo na uporabniku praznine. Posameznikova naloga je, da najde svojstven odgovor na dano praznino, na dano nevtralnno mrežo. Njegova naloga je, da ustvari novo uporabo. In njegova naloga je, da postane aktivni soudeleženelec v procesu ustvarjanja ter posledično zavrne s strani drugega definirano vlogo potrošnika. Le na ta način, ko bo posameznik tisti, ki bo svobodno odločal, osvobojen vseh spon mesta, dela in produkcije, bomo po antidizajnu dosegli zemeljski raj, osvobojen polucije oblikovanja.

Rešitev je torej v mišljenju posameznika. Edini neoprijemljivi stvari, ki je potrošnja ne more sprevreči v neuporabni fetišizem. S tem ko to prepoznamo, prepoznamo smoter

387 *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape ...*, pp. 246–251.

388 Agamben, *The Man without ...*, pp. 68–93. Agamben obema kategorijama posveti poglavje z naslovom § 8 *Poiesis and Praxis*. Temo pa načne že v poglavju prej, § 7 *Privation Is Like a Face*.

389 Yagou, *Rewriting Design ...*, (avgust 2010).

oblikovanja, katerega bistvo ni v ustvarjanju izdelkov, temveč v ustvarjanju nove uporabe, v spodbujanju potencialnega novega mišljenja.

V tem pogledu, ne glede na vse doslej obravnavane primere, antidizajn svojo pozicijo do oblikovanja postavi v najradikalnejšo luč. S svojo kritiko oblikovanja, arhitekture in družbe kot celote išče opozicijo uradni kulturi, v katero smo vpeti. Išče alternativo, ki jo skuša zgraditi na vsem, kar uradna kultura ni. Išče točko nemožnosti v okolju, ki se na prvi pogled zdi Alexandrov dani kontekst, torej polje, v katero ni mogoče poseči, temveč ga je treba le kar se da dobro razumeti in mu kar se da uspešno prilagajati formo, nad katero imamo nadzor. Že Ramsov pristop k oblikovanju nam pokaže, da je tudi okolje le rezultat človekovega dela, torej rezultat, ki ga je mogoče spremeniti, popraviti, redefinirati. In s tem ciljem v oblikovanje vstopijo člani gibanja antidizajn. Vse okoli nas je umetno generirano, od objektov in mesta vse do razmerij med ljudmi in tem, kar jih obkroža. Prav zadnje, razmerje med človekom in objektom ter človekom in mestom, je za antidizajn najbolj problematično. Vsa vzpostavljena razmerja, moralna, estetska ali verska, so tam le zato, da nam jemljejo svobodo. Pod pretvezo napredka v kulturi nas omejujejo, določajo in hkrati degradirajo v *ustvarjalnega* potrošnika. Zato je še toliko bolj nujna degradacija vzpostavljene stopnje kulture. Le *nižja* stopnja kulture bo omogočila drugačna razmerja, ki bodo sicer še vedno umetno ustvarjena, toda, kot si zamislijo člani antidizajna, temeljila bodo na nevtralnosti. Posledica nevtralizacije bo kriza vrednosti, kriza obstoječih razmerij in iz te krize bo mogoče zgraditi nov (nevtralen) družbeni sistem. Ustvarila bo praznino, ki jo bo polnil vsak posameznik, brez vnaprej določenih pravil in razmerij. Njihov objekt oblikovanja je torej praznina, ki je tam zato, da v nas spodbudi potencial, ki je že tam, s ciljem zapolnitve dane praznine. Branzi zapiše: »Teorija, da bo praznina omogočila največjo stopnjo fleksibilnosti in svobode, je bila nekakšna *tabula rasa*, ki jo je ustvarila ali skušala ustvariti naša generacija, na vseh preteklih izkušnjah smo poskušali zgraditi nove temelje oblikovanja in arhitekture, tako da bi spodbudili alternativno rabo.«³⁹⁰

390 Branzi, *The Hot House ...*, p. 80.

Da do tega pridemo, pa moramo zavrniti vse, kar našo kulturo tvori. Od objektov, arhitekture, mest vse do dela. Z zavrnitvijo dela člani gibanja antidizajn prehitevajo neizogibno. Odvečno človeško delo bo slej ko prej zamenjal stroj, ki se ne pritožuje in ne postavlja zahtev. Eliminacija dela se zdi samoumevna, z vedenjem, da nam prav ta hkrati omogoči vrnitev k razvoju intelekta. Omogoči nam ponovno obuditev svobode misli, h kateri se oblikovanje vrača vse od Ruskina dalje. Omogoči nam razmišljanje o drugi ideji življenja, h kateri nas je dobrih petdeset let prej napotil Gerrit Rietveld.

Zaključek: Pogoji za novo politiko oblikovalske emancipacije

Odnos med oblikovanjem in delom ter med oblikovanjem in produkcijo zaznamuje vse izbrane kritike. Pokažejo nam, da je Ruskinova kritika sredi 19. stoletja odprla problem, ki je v nastajajoči disciplini oblikovanja v precejšnji smeri določil tisto, kar je oblikovanje postalo, kako oblikovanje kot stroka misli. Predvsem pa je Ruskinu uspelo – to je danes več kot očitno – zastaviti vprašanje današnjega dne. Skupaj z Morrisom jima je uspelo v na novo porajajočo se stroko oblikovanja vsaditi potrebo po nenehnem izpraševanju lastne vloge in lastnega mesta v polju družbe. Za vse tudi velja, da se ne zadovoljijo zgolj s kritiko, temveč ponudijo alternativo obstoječemu. Če smo pri vseh do antidizajna obravnavanih kritikah prepoznali tudi učinke v stroki, se postavlja vprašanje, kaj se zgodi z najradikalnejšo kritiko med vsemi, ter predvsem, katere učinke smo zaznali v stroki.

Podobno kot se italijansko oblikovanje leta 1948 znajde na razpotju, slednje velja tudi za čas, ki sledi obravnavanim radikalnim akcijam in pozivom. Glavni akterji gibanja do sredine sedemdesetih let sčasoma resignirano ugotovijo, da oblikovanje v praksi očitno ni sposobno odigrati prevratniške vloge, za katero so se zavzemali. Nekateri povsem prenehajo delati na področju oblikovanja in arhitekture, drugi nadaljujejo prakso izčiščene modernizma, tretji pa konec sedemdesetih let v praksi ponudijo svojstveno nadaljevanje ideologije antidizajna. Ponudijo popolno nasprotje modernistični dogmi – postmodernistično skupino Memphis. Učinki njenih akcij so v praksi še najoprijemljivejši, saj Memphisu v stroki oblikovanja uspe zamajati modernistične temelje. Kljub preišljeni akciji tudi rezultate slednje trg sprevrže, jo – kot na to opozori Agamben – spremeni v fetiš ter izkoristi za svoj profit.

Še več, rezultat naštetih postmodernističnih akcij (katerih del je tudi antidizajn) namesto oblikovanja, ki bi bilo vpeto v zadovoljevanje tako imenovane *čiste potrebe*, ali bolje, ustvarjanje *gole ideje*, ki bi temeljilo *zgolj* na *misli* in se manifestiralo skozi praznino, v končni instanci rodi oblikovalca kot avtorja. Avtorja, ki ga kapital sprevrže v statusni simbol. Zgodi se torej vse tisto, proti čemur so se oblikovalci vse od Morrisa do članov

antidizajna v svojih tekstih borili. Danes oblikovanje, še bolj kot v preteklosti, sprejema vlogo enega od glavnih katalizatorjev potrošnje, še več, danes oblikovanje odkrito velja za dejavnik, ki ustvarja opevano dodano vrednost izdelka. Oblikovalci posledično dnevno in nekritično ustvarjajo umetno inducirane vrednosti objektov.

V tem pogledu laže razumemo resignacijo sicer še vedno delujočega italijanskega industrijskega oblikovalca Enza Marija. Konec osemdesetih na predavanju v beograjskem studiu ArtAvangarde izjavi: »Utopija industrijskega oblikovanja izgublja bitko. [...] Izgubila pa jo je zato, ker je poskušala uresničiti utopijo s pomočjo blagovnega sistema. [...] Tako kot drugi tudi mi delamo na tekočem traku. Drugih možnosti ni.«³⁹¹

Toda zakaj se zares zaplete z *zgolj mislijo* antidizajna? Zakaj predlog tako v stroki kot v javnosti deluje preveč radikalno, preveč nestvarno? To, kar se zgodi, je, da oblikovalci in javnost trčijo v problem razumevanja zmožnosti misli, ideje, kot nečesa, kar dejansko je. Z gledišča stroke in javnosti umanjka dejanje, predelava, izvedba misli v nekaj stvarnega. Zgolj misliti ostane nekaj povsem neoprijemljivega in nedokončanega. Zamisel antidizajna, da je šele vsak posameznik tisti, ki ponujeno praznino polni, trči v zakoreninjeno dožemanje (stroke in javnosti), da če oblikujemo, potem v stvarnosti tudi že izdelujemo, ustvarjamo, načrtujemo. Skratka, v praksi produciramo sled lastne misli. Ponujena praznina, ponujena *tabula rasa* je antipod vsemu, kar je oblikovanje od prvega zbrušenega kamna pa vse do Fordovega tekočega traka bilo in še vedno je. Smisel oblikovanja je njegova materializacija, njegova produkcija. Rezultat misli oblikovalca je bil vedno, v kakršnikoli že obliki – risbi, načrtu, izdelku, storitvi ... – stvaren, oprijemljiv. Toda – kot nas zelo jasno opozorijo člani gibanja antidizajn – vsaka, še tako nujna stvar, ki jo proizvedemo, takoj pade v krog potrošnje. Ali kot je slednje že leta 1884 opisal William Morris, prav zaradi tržne logike vsi sodelujemo v produkciji odpadkov, v produkciji stvari, ki so povsem nepotrebne, v številnih primerih neuporabne, in zato je takšno delo v celoti neproduktivno. Posledično še danes ostaja aktualno vprašanje: kako torej oblikovati in hkrati ostati zunaj kroga potrošnje? Ter seveda še

391 Ješa Denegri, »Dvomi sodobnega oblikovalca: med zavračanjem in povezovanjem. Enzo Mari v beograjskem Studiju ArtAvangarde«, *Sinteza*, št. 83–86, Ljubljana 1990, pp. 191–192.

bolj ključno: ali oblikovanje, ki ostane zunaj, še vedno dojemamo kot oblikovanje? Je to tista točka nemožnosti, ki jo iščemo?

Slednje nas vrne k vprašanju iz uvoda: kako v dobi, ko se zdi vse možno, najdemo točko nemožnosti?³⁹² Kaj je danes v oblikovanju nemogoče?

Odgovor na vprašanji se zdi na dlani, saj nas *preganja* že skozi vse besedilo: treba je uiti vpetosti (ujetosti) oblikovanja v tržno-produkcijski sistem. Industrializacija je ustvarila podlago za profesionalizacijo discipline in si jo s pomočjo tržnega sistema hkrati podredila. Stroki oblikovanja sta odkazali mesto. Predsodek je znan. Če oblikovanje ni vpeto v proizvodno-tržni sistem (obrti ali industrijski), potem se zdi, da o disciplini oblikovanja sploh ne moremo govoriti. Kot nam je že skušal povedati antidizajn, ni nujno tako. Čeprav njihov predlog o eliminaciji mest, dela, produkcije in objektov v praksi zveni preveč radikalno, nam hkrati ponuja alternativo, ki nas sili v nadaljnjo kritiko sistema. V nadaljnji pretres misli oblikovanja, ločenega od materialne izvedbe. Z odmikom od tržno-produkcijskega sistema morda res ne moremo govoriti o disciplini, kakršno poznamo danes, kar pa hkrati tudi ne pomeni, da ne moremo govoriti o oblikovanju, ki omenjeno zahtevo postavlja. Kako torej delati, misliti oblikovanje zunaj omenjenega sistema? Kako se lotiti dane zahteve?

Po Jelici Šumič Riha moramo ločevati »med dvema strukturno različnima zahtevama: zahtevo po 'imeti' in zahtevo po 'biti'«. Pri prvi zahtevi izražamo svoj manko in hkrati svojo zahtevo naslavljam na Drugega kot celega. Zahteva po biti pa »od Drugega ne terja ničesar, kar bi Drugi imel in nam zato lahko dal, ničesar, kar bi sodilo v kategorijo imeti, ampak zgolj to, da si, da obstajaš, zahteva prostor, kjer lahko si, kjer lahko obstajaš«. ³⁹³ Če gre v primeru oblikovanja za zahtevo po imeti, se ob tem takoj poraja vprašanje: na koga zahtevo naslavljam? Kdo je v našem primeru Drugi? Je to tržno-produkcijski sistem? Omenjeni sistem brez oblikovanja brez hujših prask preživi. Sicer

392 »Nemožnost je pogoj možnosti akta. Oziroma, če smo natančnejši: akt je tisto, kar pokaže, kar razkrije, kaj je v neki situaciji realno-nemožno. Če nobena meja ni določena oziroma če je nedoločljiva, potem tudi akt ni mogoč.« Šumič Riha, »Jetnik Drugega, ki ne obstaja«, *Filozofski ...*, p. 88.

393 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

oblikovalci radi slišimo parole, kot so: »Samo eno podjetje je lahko najcenejše. Vsa druga morajo uporabljati oblikovanje.«³⁹⁴ Drugo skrajnost predstavi hrvaški teoretik Goroslav Keller, ki se ob zagrojeni stavki s strani kanadskih oblikovalcev vpraša: »Si lahko zamislite, da bi vsi oblikovalci na svetu začeli stavkati za nedoločen čas: kako bi se to pokazalo in komu bi škodovalo? (Ciniki se celo sprašujejo, ali ne bi to koristilo družbi.)«³⁹⁵ Uspešna prodaja številnih slabo³⁹⁶ oblikovanih izdelkov govori v prid Kellerjevi izjavi. Če sistem torej ni iskani Drugi, so to morda kar oblikovalci, stroka sama? Po Jelici Šumič Riha to ni mogoče, saj »ni zahteve, ki ne bi vključevala Drugega«.³⁹⁷ Pa četudi je ta v resnici neobstoječ. Prav slednje pa je tipika današnje dobe. Saj je, kot še zapiše, »politika emancipacije v dobi neobstoječega Drugega [...] pred nalogo, da strukturno nemožnost zapore kapitalističnega diskurza preobrne v pogoj možnosti produkcijskega novega, pogoj možnosti za izum novega družbenega reda«.³⁹⁸ Pri tem še doda, da za izpeljavo nemožnega ni dovolj zgolj izjava in hkrati ugotovitev, da okoliščine nemožnega ne dopuščajo. Pač pa je treba »izumiti, dobesedno proizvesti, ustvariti tudi sredstva za 'obdelavo' tega nemožnega«.³⁹⁹

Kako torej začeti nemožno, ločitev oblikovanja od obstoječega tržno-produkcijskega sistema, ob tem da zahtevo naslavljamo na neobstoječega Drugega? Morda je odgovor v tem, da se prenehamo ukvarjati z *zahtevo po imeti* in svoj fokus namenimo *zahtevi po biti*. V tem primeru se vloga Drugega, tega, ki se mu ni mogoče izogniti, zmarginalizira. Spremeni se tudi cilj boja, saj z zahtevo po biti zahtevamo prostor za obstoj. Toda s takšno zahtevo se nenadoma soočimo z dilemo: ali z zahtevo po obstoju pravzaprav izjavljamo, da kot samostojna stroka sploh ne obstajamo? Verjetno za večino teoretikov in praktikov oblikovanja ne obstaja bolj heretična izjava, kot je ta, ki se ponuja kot odgovor na prejšnje vprašanje. In ta je: problem oblikovanja je, da ne obstaja kot samostojna stroka, da nima svojega prostora zunaj tržno-produkcijskega sistema.

394 Rodney Fitch, *Insights*, Design Council, London 1998.

395 Goroslav Keller, »Oblikovanje za izvoz«, *Sinteza*, št. 36–37, 1976, pp. 132–134.

396 Vse je oblikovano, dobro ali slabo, zato o neoblikovanju sploh ne moremo govoriti.

397 Šumič Riha, »Jetnik Drugega, ki ne obstaja«, *Filozofski ...*, p. 91.

398 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

399 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

S to ugotovitvijo pa pravzaprav ponovimo vprašanje Morrisa in antidizajna – kako naj oblikovanje deluje na polju trga? In če to prenesemo v polje našega razmišljanja: kaj bi se zgodilo z oblikovanjem, če trga (prostega ali državno reguliranega) ne bi bilo? Bi padli v svet *Pobesnelega Maxa*? Ali pa bi se morda približali možnosti iskanja rešitve problema, ki smo si ga pred tem zastavili: *ustvarjanje prostora oblikovanju kot samostojni stroki zunaj sistema proizvodnje*.

Za lažje spopadanje z nezaslišanim predlogom nam lahko pomaga teorija *Nevednega učitelja*. Kot zapiše Rancière, imamo na izbiro dve metodi. Staro metodo in metodo emancipacije.⁴⁰⁰ Po stari metodi nam učitelj pove, kaj se moramo naučiti in kako moramo razumeti. Nekdo drug za nas opravi selekcijo, ki jo osvojimo in na podlagi osvojenega navidezno napredujemo. Znanje ostaja fragmentarno, saj vedno ostanemo v primežu nekoga, ki nas vodi, ki nam odmerja znanje, ki ga še moramo osvojiti. Ko se odmerjeno naučimo, pridemo do stopnje, ko lahko kar se da hitro pozabimo. Saj s tem, ko pozabimo, po stari metodi prenehamo po nepotrebem obremenjevati spomin. In prav v naštetem naj bi bila po Rancièreju »genialnost razlagalcev: bitje, ki so ga v odnosu do sebe postavili v podrejenost, na deželo poneumljanja priklenejo z najtrdnejšo vezjo: z zavestjo o njegovi nadarjenosti.«⁴⁰¹ Gre za udobno pozicijo nedoletnosti⁴⁰², saj je veliko *lažje* hoditi po shojeni poti in s tujim vodstvom.

Po metodi emancipacije pa na tisto, kar se naučimo, navezujemo vse drugo. »Učenec mora vse videti sam, nenehno primerjati in vedno odgovarjati na tri vprašanja. Kaj vidiš? Kaj misliš o tem? Kaj s tem narediš? In tako v neskončnost.«⁴⁰³

400 Izraz *stara metoda* uvede že Rancière, medtem ko metodo nevednega učitelja poimenuje z izrazom »univerzalno poučevanje«. Za lažje razlikovanje ene metode od druge uvajam izraz *metoda emancipacije*, ki temelji na ideji, ki jo Rancière v knjigi razlaga. Na nekem mestu zapiše: »Kdor poučuje, ne da bi emancipiral, poneumlja. In kdor emancipira, mu ni treba skrbeti, kaj se mora emancipirani naučiti. Naučil se bo, kar bo hotel, morda nič. Vedel bo, da se lahko nauči, ker je v vseh proizvodih človekove umetnosti na delu ista inteligenca, da lahko človek vedno razume drugega človeka.« V: Rancière, *Nevedni učitelj ...*, p. 29.

401 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

402 Kant, »Odgovor na vprašanje: Kaj je razsvetljenstvo?«, *Vestnik ...*, p. 9.

403 Rancière, *Nevedni učitelj ...*, p. 34.

Zakaj se mi zdi Rancièrjevo univerzalno poučevanje zanimivo izhodišče za oblikovanje? Oblikovanje je trenutno povsem vpeto v staro metodo. Produkcijski sistem in kapital sta tista, ki za nas opravljata selekcijo in prevzemata vlogo učitelja, vlogo tistega, ki razlaga. Odmerjata nam fragmente znanja, celota pa zaradi navidezne kompleksnosti ostaja razdrobljena med številne specialiste, od katerih vsak skrbi za lastno gredo. Kapital je prav tako nenadkriljiv v prepričevanju slehernega specialista, da je nenadomestljiv, ključni element za celoto, in posledično vsak element dano situacijo brez večjega dvoma (ali pa resignirano) sprejema. Še več, sistem ustvarja navidezne možnosti zgolj zato, da zadovolji našo potrebo po izbiri in ustvari lažen občutek avtorstva. Avtorske odločitve sprevrže v stanje, kjer nenehno izbiramo med številnimi možnostmi, ki pa se med seboj le navidezno razlikujejo. Karkoli bomo izbrali, bo isto; karkoli bomo izbrali, bo učitelju prav. Naštete sponje sistema tvorijo hendikep potenciala discipline, saj večji del oblikovalskih storitev sistem prilagaja po svoji podobi. Vse *nedoslednosti*, vse *nelagodnosti* pa so že v izhodišču v resnici prilagojene ali kasneje integrirane – kot novi trend – v svet trženja.

Metoda emancipacije pa nam po drugi strani omogoča razmišljanje o alternativni. O alternativni v stroki oblikovanja. O oblikovanju, ki bo kot samostojna stroka zadostilo zahtevi po *biti* zunaj tržno-produkcijskega sistema. Vrne nas k prepoznavanju potencialnosti, ki jo stroka ima. Ni namreč vprašanje, ali kot stroka zmoremo, temveč ali bomo kot stroka omenjeni korak naredili. Na to nas pravzaprav opominja že Ruskin, ki pred nas postavlja besede umetnika Mulreadyja, vedeti moraš, kaj moraš narediti, in to narediti. Če je torej ena od nalog oblikovanja razkrivanje realnosti, se zastavlja vprašanje, ali realnost, v katero je oblikovanje vpeto, sploh vidimo. Z možnostjo razkrivanja realnosti moraš biti namreč v prvi vrsti sposoben videti. Videti tisto, kar je. V primeru oblikovanja je tisto, kar oblikovalec vidi, neko neskladje, neko nelagodje, neki problem. In vse od naštetega nas nenehno sili k premisleku. Šele na podlagi obeh korakov: nekaj videti in o videnem razmisliti, pridemo do tretjega Rancièrjevega vprašanja. Pridemo do koraka, ki nam omogoči sprejeti odločitev. Ali povedano drugače, z znanjem, ki ga imamo, se vsak posameznik zave, da ima potencial nekaj narediti ali ne narediti. Zato se pred vsakogar izmed nas vsakič znova postavlja vprašanje: kaj boš naredil?

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Summary:

Criticism in Design: The Search for the Conditions for a New Politics of Design Emancipation

The present dissertation is a contribution to the development of design theory. By choosing the critiques that have emerged in the discipline of design from the conceiving of its professionalization I demonstrate their key role in the formation of the profession as we know it today. I focus on five critiques of thinkers and design movements: on thoughts of John Ruskin, William Morris, Adolf Loos, the De Stijl group and Anti-Design movement.

Ruskin, the first of these, in his texts demands from us the return to a doorstep of a new choice – and to this end he unconditionally strives for. His search leads him to Gothic. This opens up the discourse that directs to instructions we need to read Ruskin's return to Gothic in the broadest possible sense. For him, Gothic represents an unlimited richness of discourse. It is not about the condition, it is merely about the illustration of something that can be created if we follow rules. If you act in consistence with rules, you act in consistence with truth and nature. And this is a foundation, to which he strives for. The return to history is therefore just an example of how we were already capable of acting and how should we continue in the future. In this sense, his looking back doesn't suggest nostalgia, but a threshold where we chose the wrong direction of development. And as I wrote at the beginning, with the ability of establishing a distance to his time Ruskin offers a paradigm of conceiving an alternative. With his critique of senseless mechanisation of craft Ruskin managed to pave the way to the purified modernism of 20th century. His critique lucidly analysed and rejected the existing state of affairs and offered a way to do things differently. We can read his looking back also as a reference for research today. For questions he raised in the 19th century, in fact, remain still topical. Just as Ruskin sought freedom of thought in work, we too still ask ourselves how we can discover a space today where freedom remains possible. And in this sense, the relevance of Ruskin is reconfirmed each time.

If Ruskin offered us a paradigm for conceiving an alternative, Morris's key contribution to the design field lies in his ability to conceive an alternative. His is one of the first utopian visions conceived and created by a designer. With it, Morris brought about a rupture in how the role of the designer was considered and understood. For with Morris's thought, the understanding of the designer's place in society is changed: the designer assumes a new role as one of the builders of society. The trace of Morris's effect comes fully to life with the advent of modernism in the first half of the twentieth century, for this is when design, through its desire to transform the world, actively enters the field of politics – a time when designers, filled with optimism, still believe they can build a better world. But there is a difference: if, with Morris, the answer for the future lay in the past (similar to Ruskin), modernists believed that the new world was yet to be constructed, it still needed to be designed. To be designed on Morris's principles but with the maxim of industrial production.

The path of design to modernism goes also through the thought of Adolf Loos. Loos with a declaration of culture, which has no relationship to the ornament anymore, destroys one of the fundamental laws in the field of architecture and design. He comes to this declaration by gradual purification of thoughts; and exactly this declaration is subsequently found to be a key move. All until then the value was measured by the richness of decoration on building, on the bearer. With the removal of *redundant* upper stratum the bearer of value becomes the object itself. And when Loos became aware of this – in Louise Sullivan's manner he saw the solution in a problem – in a way similar to Badiou's *Saint Paul*, he no longer *demand*s anything, no longer *seek*s anything; rather, he *declares*. He declares that the time when we *artificially* look for our own style, expression, the type of decoration, therefore shows that the evolution brought us to the point where our expression hides itself in the fact that there is – from the point of view of ornament – no expression at all. The result of Loos's declaration is that in the long run the function takes a key role in design. It becomes an affirmative event that offers a new paradigm.

A new paradigm in design is brought about also by the thought of the avant-garde Dutch movement De Stijl. Its members believe that by forming a demand for the universal they place the problems of community on the topmost position. A machine becomes a tool that will make this possible. This brings a turnaround in design practice. They build their theory on an idea that everything we do is a matter of artificial. We lean on the artificial and we are a product of artificial. On these basis members of De Stijl recognise a key to the next stage in design in the elimination of the dominance of the individual. This statement forms a cut in the discipline of design. We as designers, architects, scientists and artists build our environment. Consequently – as De Stijl warns – it is high time to build an environment in a way that will satisfy the needs of community that we are all part of. We build environment to be functional, but at the same time it will give enough space to people who live in this artificial world.

Despite the ambitious desires it eventually turns out that De Stijl's machine as a tool in the service of community turns into a tool in the service of market. The principle of universality degenerates to the level of satisfying the particular interests of producers and marketers. The machine and also a design replace the problems of community with production of increasing quantities of products whose main aim becomes more or less the stimulation of consumption. In this process design assumes a desired major role since it proves to be an effective means. At the same time by then almost commonplace critical potential that accompanies the design since the beginning of the formation of discipline, is largely lost.

Italian movement Anti-Design pushes design for a short time away from the obsession with the material into the world of culture of ideas. Anti-Design recognises the solution in the radical rejection of material production, in desire to find a possibility of production, which is not integrated into the market system. They recognise a solution in the production of ideas. To protect ideas from becoming a commodity, Anti-Design stakes a fuse on a void, it stakes it on a user of a void. The individual's task is to find a unique answer to a given void, to a given neutral network. His task is to create a new use. And his task is to become an active participant in the process of creating and subsequently

to reject by the other defined role of the consumer. Only in this way, when the individual will be the one who will be free to decide, free from all shackles of cities, labour and production, we will according to Anti-Design achieve a terrestrial paradise, free from the pollution of design.

Anti-Design offers the most radical critique of the profession. Among designers and in the public this critique collides with the problem of understanding the ability of thought, idea, as something that actually is. From the perspective of the profession and the public what is missing is the act: the processing of idea into something tangible. The mere thought remains something totally intangible and incomplete. The idea of anti-design that each individual is the one that fills an offered emptiness collides with the rooted perception (of the profession and the public) that if we design, then in reality we already produce. In practice we produce a trace of our own thought. Offered emptiness, offered *tabula rasa* is the antipode of everything that design from the first worked stone all the way to Ford's assembly line was and still is. The meaning of design is its materialisation, its production. The result of the designer's thought was always, in whatever the form – drawing, plan, product, service – real, tangible. But – as members of anti-design movement point out very clearly – any, even the most urgent thing we produce immediately falls in the range of consumption. Or, as William Morris described the latter already in 1884, because of market logic we all take part in the production of waste, in the production of things that are completely unnecessary, in many cases useless, and therefore such work is entirely unproductive. Consequently, even today a topical question remains: how to design and at the same time remain outside the range of consumption? And of course even more crucial: is design which remains outside still perceived as a design? Is this the point of impossibility we are looking for in this dissertation?

In other words, can we imagine an independent design profession outside market-production system? This question leads us to identify potentiality that the profession has. There is no question whether we can do it as a profession, but whether we as a profession dare to make that step forward.

Povzetek:

Kritika v oblikovanju ali iskanje pogojev za novo politiko oblikovalske emancipacije

Pričujoča doktorska disertacija je prispevek k razvoju teorije oblikovanja. Z izborom kritik, ki so se v disciplini oblikovanja zvrstile od snovanja profesionalizacije, dokazujem njihovo ključno vlogo pri formiranju stroke, kakršno poznamo danes. Osredotočam se na pet kritik mislecev in oblikovalskih gibanj. Na misel Johna Ruskina, Williama Morrisa, Adolfa Loosa, skupine De Stijl in gibanja antidizajn.

Ruskin, kot prvi med omenjenimi, v svojih besedilih od nas zahteva (in k temu tudi sam brezpogojno stremi) vrnitev k pragu ponovne izbire. Ruskina iskanje te točke pripelje v gotiko, toda zahtevano vrnitev h gotiki je treba brati v najširšem možnem pomenu. Po Ruskinu pri vrnitvi v gotiko ne gre za pogoj, temveč zgolj za ilustracijo nečesa, kar lahko nastane, če seveda upoštevamo pravila. Dokler delaš v skladu s pravili, delaš v skladu z resnico in naravo. In to je temelj, h kateremu Ruskin stremi. Vrnitev v zgodovino je torej zgolj primer, kako smo že znali delovati in kako bi morali nadaljevati v prihodnje. Njegovo obračanje nazaj v tem smislu ne pomeni nostalgije, temveč zgolj prag, na katerem smo izbrali napačno smer razvoja, hkrati pa nam na omenjenem temelju ponudi paradigmo koncipiranja alternative. To, kar Ruskinu še uspe, je, da s kritiko nesmiselne mehanizacije obrti tlakuje pot izčiščenemu modernizmu 20. stoletja. S svojim delovanjem in pisanjem mu je uspelo lucidno anticipirati obstoječe in ponuditi način, kako delati drugače. Je pa njegovo oziranje nazaj mogoče brati tudi kot napotek za raziskovanje danes. Kajti vprašanja, ki si jih je Ruskin zastavljal v 19. stoletju, pravzaprav ostajajo aktualna še danes. Tako kot je Ruskin iskal svobodo razmišljanja pri delu, se lahko tudi mi še vedno sprašujemo, kako danes odkriti prostor, kjer je še mogoča svoboda. In v tem smislu se aktualnost Ruskina vedno znova potrjuje.

Če nam je Ruskin ponudil paradigmo koncipiranja alternative, je ključni prispevek Williama Morrisa k področju oblikovanja v njegovi zmožnosti koncipiranja alternative. Ustvari eno prvih utopičnih vizij, zamišljenih in ustvarjenih s strani oblikovalca.

S tem je Morris ustvaril zarezo v razmišljanju in dojemaju vloge oblikovalca. Kajti z Morrisovo mislijo se spremeni dojetje vloge oblikovalca v družbi, ki po novem prevzame vlogo enega od gradnikov družbe. Sled Morrisovega učinka dodobra zaživi z nastopom modernizma v prvi polovici 20. stoletja, saj takrat, z željo po preoblikovanju sveta, oblikovanje aktivno vstopi v polje politike, v čas, ko oblikovalci polni optimizma še verjamejo, da lahko zgradijo boljši svet. S to razliko: če pri Morrisu (podobno kot pri Ruskinu) še velja, da je preteklost tista, ki bo dala odgovor za prihodnost, modernisti verjamejo, da je novi svet šele treba zgraditi, oblikovati. Oblikovati na Morrisovih temeljih oblikovanja za vse, toda z maksimo industrijske proizvodnje.

Pot oblikovanja do modernizma gre tudi prek misli Adolfa Loosa. Loos z deklariranjem kulture, ki nima več povezave z ornamentom, poruši enega od temeljnih zakonov na področju arhitekture in oblikovanja. Loosa do omenjene deklaracije pripelje postopno prečiščevanje misli, sama deklaracija pa se kasneje izkaže za ključni premik. Vse do takrat se je vrednost merila v bogastvu dekorja na stavbi, na nosilcu. Z odstranitvijo *odvečne* vrhnje plasti pa nosilec vrednosti postane objekt sam. In ko se Loos tega zave – v Sullivanovi maniri v problemu uvidi rešitev – podobno kot Badioujev sv. Pavel nič več ne *zahteva*, nič več ne *išče*, temveč *deklarira*. Deklarira, da čas, v katerem *umetno* iščemo svoj stil, izraz, tip dekoracije, kaže na to, da nas je evolucijska stopnja pripeljala do točke, ko je naš izraz pravzaprav že tam, v tem, da ga – gledano s stališča ornamenta – ni. Rezultat Loosove deklaracije je, da funkcija dolgoročno prevzame nosilno vlogo na področju oblikovanja. Izkaže se za afirmativen dogodek, ki ponuja novo paradigmo.

Novo paradigmo pa v oblikovanje vnese tudi misel avantgardnega nizozemskega gibanja De Stijl. Člani De Stijla verjamejo, da bomo s formiranjem zahteve po univerzalnem končno postavili probleme skupnosti na prvo mesto in stroj za tisto orodje, ki nam bo slednje omogočilo. Svojo teorijo utemeljijo na razumevanju, da je vse, kar naredimo, stvar umetnega. Črpamo iz umetnega in smo produkt umetnega. Na podlagi povedanega destijlovci ključ za naslednjo stopnjo v oblikovanju prepoznajo v izločitvi dominanc individualnega. Omenjena trditev tvori rez v disciplini oblikovanja. Kot oblikovalci, arhitekti, znanstveniki in umetniki gradimo naše okolje. Posledično je –

kot nas opomni De Stijl – skrajni čas, da okolje začnemo graditi na način, ki bo zadovoljil potrebe skupnosti, katere del smo vsi. Okolje gradimo tako, da bo funkcionalno, a bo hkrati dalo dovolj prostora za življenje ljudem, ki v tem umetnem svetu živimo.

Kljub velikopoteznim željam pa se sčasoma izkaže, da se De Stijlov stroj iz orodja v službi skupnosti sprevrže v orodje v službi trga. Princip univerzalnosti se sprevrže na nivo zadovoljevanja partikularnih interesov proizvajalcev in tržnikov. Stroj in z njim tudi oblikovanje probleme skupnosti nadomestita s proizvodnjem naraščajoče količine izdelkov, katerih glavni cilj bolj ali manj postane spodbujanje potrošnje. Oblikovanje v tem procesu prevzame zeleno glavno vlogo, saj se izkaže za učinkovito sredstvo. Hkrati pa se v večji meri izgubi do takrat skoraj samoumevna kritična ost, ki oblikovanje spremlja vse od začetkov formiranja discipline.

Stran od obsedenosti z materialom, v svet kulture idej, oblikovanje za kratek čas potisne italijansko gibanje antidizajn. Antidizajn rešitev prepozna v radikalni zavrnitvi materialne produkcije, v želji najti možnost proizvodnje, ki ni vpeta v tržni sistem. Rešitev prepoznajo v produkciji idej. Da ideje zavarujejo pred tem, da bi postale blago, člani antidizajna varovalko zastavijo na praznini, zastavijo jo na uporabniku praznine. Posameznikova naloga je, da najde svojstven odgovor na dano praznino, na dano nevtrarno mrežo. Njegova naloga je, da ustvari novo uporabo. In njegova naloga je, da postane aktivni soudeleženec v procesu ustvarjanja ter posledično zavrne s strani drugega definirano vlogo potrošnika. Le na ta način, ko bo posameznik tisti, ki bo svobodno odločal, osvobojen vseh spon mesta, dela in produkcije, bomo po antidizajnu dosegli zemeljski raj, ki bo osvobojen polucije oblikovanja.

Antidizajn ponudi najradikalnejšo kritiko stroke in zato tako med oblikovalci kot v javnosti trči v problem razumevanja zmožnosti misli, ideje, kot nečesa, kar dejansko je. Z gledišča stroke in javnosti umanjka dejanje, predelava, izvedba misli v nekaj stvarnega. Zgolj misliti ostane nekaj povsem neoprijemljivega in nedokončanega. Zamisel antidizajna, da je šele vsak posameznik tisti, ki ponujeno praznino polni, trči v zakoreninjeno dožemanje (stroke in javnosti), da če oblikujemo, potem v stvarnosti tudi že izdeluje-

mo, ustvarjamo, načrtujemo. Skratka, v praksi produciramo sled lastne misli. Ponujena praznina, ponujena *tabula rasa* je antipod vsemu, kar je oblikovanje od prvega zbrusnega kamna pa vse do Fordovega tekočega traka bilo in še vedno je. Zdi se, da je smisel oblikovanja njegova materializacija, njegova produkcija. Rezultat misli oblikovalca je bil vedno, v kakršnikoli že obliki – risbi, načrtu, izdelku, storitvi ... – stvaren, oprijemljiv. Toda – kot nas zelo jasno opozorijo člani gibanja antidizajn – vsaka, še tako nujna stvar, ki jo proizvedemo, takoj pade v krog potrošnje. Ali kot je slednje že leta 1884 opisal William Morris, prav zaradi tržne logike vsi sodelujemo v produkciji odpadkov, v produkciji stvari, ki so povsem nepotrebne, v številnih primerih neuporabne, in zato je takšno delo v celoti neproduktivno. Posledično še danes ostaja aktualno vprašanje: kako torej oblikovati in hkrati ostati zunaj kroga potrošnje? Ter seveda še bolj ključno: ali oblikovanje, ki ostane zunaj, še vedno dojemamo kot oblikovanje? Je to tista točka nemožnosti, ki smo jo z doktorsko disertacijo iskali?

Povedano drugače, si lahko zamislimo samostojno stroko oblikovanja zunaj tržno-produkcijskega sistema? Vprašanje nas napotuje k prepoznavanju potencialnosti, ki jo stroka ima. Ni namreč vprašanje, ali kot stroka zmoremo, temveč ali bomo kot stroka omenjeni korak naredili.