



## THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN LIQUID SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

The industrial revolution marked the modernity development with its social, cultural and political changes. Its concepts are based on the online productive system "Fordism", in the systematic work way, in organization, in the determined space in industry, and in capital as the main factor of economic sustentation and politics. We now live in a so-called postmodern period, where there is a refusal of long narratives about things. There is a valuation of the snapshot, of the fast, a search of the new, that is, everything that is old is bad and ugly. Today we live in a world called by some "post-industrial", we are increasingly surrounded by information, and the speed of technological changes is changing professional and personal relationships. The new industrial age is based on the large amount of digital information available. Design, as a discipline, has the capacity to conform, that is, to transform something that previously existed only in the world of ideas, desires, needs, into something palpable, physical, incorporating values and technology. It has a multidimensional characteristic and a greater aesthetic flexibility compatible with the current era of relativism and abundance of interpretations, capable of proposing new disciplinary interactions, leverage productivity in the industrial sector, adding new technologies and value to products and services, sizing up all commercial sectors.

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## INTRODUCTION

Today society is characterized by rapid production processes, communication and information dissemination. However, main characteristic of this society is the consumption, which had its affirmation with the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution marked the beginning of modernity, with social, cultural and political changes, new forms of thinking, beliefs and especially change in relation to consumption. There was a devaluation of the artisanal product and the substitution for mechanized products. Modernity, also called solid society, has influences that were based on the in line productive system called "Fordism" and its thinkers and idealizers, Taylor, Fayol, Max Weber, among others, who in a certain way established

the systematic way of working, organization and space determined in industry, capital as the main factor of economic and political sustainability, among others. Today, there are several names that serve as a reference for modernity evolution: "postmodern society", "liquid society", "liquid modernity", "information society", among others. The main characteristic of this new modernity phase, according to Zygmunt Bauman, (2001), is that people seek their identity not in what they are, but in what they consume, that is, "I am what I buy", Fig. 1. Today, there is valuation of temporary and not permanent and people are living more and more anxious and frightened, mainly by condition and perspective of work (liquid work). Changes in relation to employment, in this society considered "postindustrial", bring apprehension, because technology increasingly occupies people space. The consumption culture, which was established after the industrial revolution, is going through a time of great crisis. There is a notable change in society in relation to hyperconsumption.

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Source: <https://pt.slideshare.net/filipeccx/bauman-sociedade-de-consumo>

**Fig. 1. Bauman Consumer Society**

Today we have financial crises and a society accustomed to consumption, there is a prospect that the standard of living will fall and employment will tend to decrease, especially with austerity measures imposed by governments, that is, we are facing separation of power and politics. Today, many aspects that influence our lives are beyond the reach of any political institution (Bauman and Zygmunt, 2001). We are at a time when the old way of thinking and acting no longer works and new ways have not yet been fully invented. Today we are going through a great cultural revolution based on the new media and its democratization. We have as an example the internet as a great and exemplary tool of this change. We now live in a so-called postmodern period, where there is a refusal of long narratives about things. There is a valuation of snapshot, the fast, a search of new, that is, everything that is old is bad and ugly. Value is in ephemeral, in eclectic, in heterogeneous, in hybrid and technological.

Zygmunt Bauman (2001) wrote about it in his works, unveiling some characteristics of the so-called postmodern society, considering that postmodern consciousness is the consciousness of a failure, that is, the modernity failure. According to Bauman (2001), in modern times, people had the concern of managing life, where efficacy and problem solving are fundamental premises, regardless of or taking into account morals. Beliefs are based on rationality, science, organization, specialty, and civilized capitalism under state control. Modernity is solid, you are what you wear, the car you walk, the book you read, and so on (Burdek and Bernhard, 2005).

In postmodernity or a liquid society, the state has less and less influence, private enterprise and the market will be increasingly free and will take care of all relations, such as work, education, etc. In postmodern consciousness, reason is no longer the solution, there is no right way to go, people have to invent themselves at all times, and there are no consistent projects for the future. Today, we live in a world called by some "post-industrial", we are increasingly surrounded by information and the speed of technological changes are changing professional and personal relationships, Fig. 2. Organizations are increasingly investing in state-of-the-art technology, modular production, service generation and information transmission. The end of industrialization-based model has been decreed, and a new model will be based on services, that is, an economy more linked to services, information and creativity, there is an exponential increase in capacity of computers, the vast amount of digitized information and new strategies.



Source: <http://mundoeducacao.bol.uol.com.br/geografia/terceira-revolucao-industrial.htm>

**Fig. 2. Robotics is striking in the Third Industrial Revolution, or post-industrial world**

This new post-industrial period values and gives great importance to knowledge and generation of ideas on top of a great information volume. The new industrial age is based on the large amount of digital information available. In addition, this information is present in design, problem solving methodologies, product development, testing of new materials, production line organization, material stocking, an equipment manual, etc. We can say with all this that we are in crisis! Nevertheless, what crisis is this? Moreover, what is the role of design in this crisis? The design has as its main characteristic the use of design methodologies for problem solving, it takes into account, first of all, the user, besides the functional, formal, emotional requirements, among others, and is in conflict with this change in the industrial setting. There is a dilemma between the industrial system of the twentieth century and the new industry 4.0, Fig. 3. The industrial processes transformation in post modernity occurs irreversibly. More and more production lines will be automated with the objective of making the production process more efficient and significantly increasing productivity, production control is increasingly being operated at a distance, due to communication systems.

Examples are: the internet of things, the big data, among others (Baxter, 1998). Postmodern industry or industry 4.0, Fig. 3, is characterized by intelligent processes, where assembly line, products, workers and units in different places communicate instantly, as if it were a "social network". In this context, the work force is changing. Work in postmodern society will be based on people who are increasingly multidisciplinary, adaptable, with a sense of urgency and a good relationship. Design according to the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) (2017) is to be a creative activity with the aim of qualifying multidisciplinary objects, processes, services and systems. It is the central factor of the innovative humanization of technologies and the crucial factor for the economic and social exchange. It identifies and evaluates structural, organizational, functional, expressive and economic relationships, enhances sustainability, offers benefits to the

human society as a whole, and supports cultural diversity in spite of globalization and gives products, services and systems forms that express a certain concept. Design is a discipline derived from modernity, it developed in the twentieth century and brings together several areas of knowledge, from material realities to communicative functions (Preece and Jennifer, 2005). Therefore, the exact, humanities and biology sciences converge to produce new ideas and concepts such as semiotics, phenomenology and hermeneutics, which are some of the human sciences to be considered, as well as the practical and technical conceptions. The product of design does not only incorporate its practice, but also imposes its cultural and aesthetic significance, that is, the subjective side of products and services, the interpretation that is made and what is seen. As a creative activity, it expands and synthesizes the culture of a society and the speech of a civilization established in the semiotic relationship between the construction of language of projected products and services and the processes of signification.



Source: <https://www.saadsolutions.com.br/single-post/2016/08/23/Os-pilares-tecnol%C3%B3gicos-da-Ind%C3%A1stria-4.0>

**Fig. 3. IndustryModel 4.0**

Therefore, we can affirm that the design products have communicational meanings, that is, expressive and representational qualities, and in them are realized denotative deviations that produce conceptions and the way of seeing the world, translating longings, desires and, in a way, satisfying the human needs. Design in post modernity is no longer just form and function, it now takes the user into consideration. It captures, maintains and delegates powers to the user, improves processes and increases the intuition. Although the user often does not know what he wants or needs, he changes his mind, does not know what is priority and, in large part, has a restricted view of a particular problem, he is fundamental in the design process. Design products are those that encompass the structure of the product and its operation, usability analysis that takes into consideration the ergonomic point of view, i.e. its interaction with the user and how he uses the products and service, the ecological aspects such as the product life cycle, from the design room to its disposal, or re-use. The thought and the methods generation to understand this process allowed an emergence of new disciplines such as Eco design, design of experience, among others.

All this allows us to see in a practical way the interdisciplinarity and the transdisciplinarity of design (Nascimento, 2012). We can say that design is a discipline that has capacity to conform, that is, to transform something that previously existed only in the world of ideas, desires and needs into something palpable, physical, incorporating values and technology. In the case of design, the materialization of ideas or mental images occurs in the process of executing or managing them. In this case, it is necessary to take into account some points that, according to Bernard Lobach (1997), are important:

- The user of the artificially created environment, such as industrial products, communication products, architectural products, which uses these environments according to his needs, with naturalness and without further reflection.
- Industry and commerce that use design to increase sales, providing and aggregating values to products.
- The user service, with its technical environment of solutions and problem solving processes, and the artificial environment adaptation, the physical and psychic needs of men in society.

Design is a means by which an idealization of human thought becomes perceptible, it is a changeable discipline that permeates and absorbs the most varied areas of knowledge. The net society will increasingly be a multidisciplinary society, giving and looking for spaces, aiming to fulfill its desires, in the form of products or services. These products and services will be an idealization of human thought, with its desires, fears and perspectives.



Source: <https://www.moodlelivre.com.br/noticias/2829-nem-presencial-nem-a-distancia-hibrido>

**Fig. 4. Hybrid design**

It is, however, the design, a means by which an idea is transferred and stabilized in some manipulative, palpable, physical object or service, that is, what was previously thought becomes something physical, with sensibility, visibility and synaesthetic. In this transformation of mental image to form of visual representation, occurs "transgression", "enigma", surprise becomes present and time and spaces are transgressed in this semiotic relation between dream and reality (Sataellaa and North, 2008). We can also say that design is an activity, a practice based on the human intellect, which came to mediate and create interfaces between technologies and users in the new society. Design in postmodernity will increasingly play a mediating role at the interface among technologies, products, services and users. This interface should connect development

teams, customers, with users, help design the usage experience, and measure results. It has a multidimensional characteristic and a greater aesthetic flexibility compatible with the current era of relativism and abundance of interpretations (Holanda, 2010). Design is hybrid, there is one or more things happening at the same time, just as in our current society, Fig. 4. Thus, considering all the elucidated dimensions, in liquid society, design has the function of transforming desires into something real, what before was immaterial, fantasy and imagination materializes in a design object with texture, forms and meanings, in some way, satisfaction to the people who will interact with the creation product. In addition, in the productive sector, propose new disciplinary interactions, leverage productivity in industrial sector, adding new technologies and value to products and services scaling all commercial sector.

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