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ARTS, CRAFTS AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN SILESIA IN THE FIRST GLOBALIZATION AND THEIR NON-OBVIOUS GENRES, MEDIA AND PRACTICES

SZTUKA, RZEMIOSŁO I WZORNICTWO PRZEMYSŁOWE NA ŚLĄSKU W CZASIE PIERWSZEJ GLOBALIZACJI. ICH NIEOCZYWISTE GATUNKI, ŚRODKI WYRAZU I PRAKTYKI

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to outline the processes of formation of industrial design on a concrete example of the art and industrial landscape of Silesia, with particular regard to the role played by non-obvious genres, media and practices. It is about processes of developing of instances of pluralism and areas of “non-obviousness” at the interface of artistic, economic and social aspects, i.e. areas and phenomena that overlapped or were only vaguely defined, in the late 19th and turn of the 20th century. It is reflected as a result of many developments that began during the industrial revolution and are still affecting the world today, politically, economically, socially and culturally.

KEYWORDS: craftsmanship, arts and crafts, industrial design, Silesia, Modernity

This paper aims to outline the processes of formation of industrial design on a specific example of the art and industrial landscape of Silesia, with particular regard to the role played by non-obvious genres, media and practices. The region appears to be a peripheral area in the European and imperial context, and it has

been so far omitted in the world literature on the subject.¹ The timeframe of the text covers the period of the so-called “first globalization”, i.e. approximately the last quarter of the 19th century up to the 1920s.² This period, however, despite going beyond 1900, falls somewhat within the concept of the “long 19th century”, which was coined by Eric Hobsbawm and established by Jürgen Kocka.³ The term is also important for this topic as it evokes an epoch characterized by being the path to modernity, and therefore also by modern design, particularly with regard to certain sources of inspiration and influences, as well as by processes of cultural reinvention in society or interferences between design and discourses about and around knowledge.⁴

The industrial design, understood as a creative activity at the interface of artistic creation, technical planning, working with hand-held tools, and industrial production using machines, whereby any one of these aspects may, depending to the context, play a greater or lesser role, was a new phenomenon set in motion in the aftermath of the industrial revolution in the second half of the 19th century. On the one hand, it was seen as the reason for a perceived decline of artistic creativity. The rise of factories meant that manual craftsmanship no longer had a leading role in the production of consumer goods, but it became imbued with new meanings and ethical value. At the same time, economic and technical impulses from the fields of art, handcraft and the newly developing world of industry overlapped in the emerging area of industrial design. The production and circulation of knowledge about the manufacture and technical design of everyday objects was thereby institutionalized, i.e. professionalized. This process was stabilized and consolidated through standardization, testing methods and audit procedures as well as new forms of organization and methods of teaching and learning. At the same time, the same knowledge was already being historicized in the process of this change in that objects were being taken out of the sphere of production and consumption and

¹ See for example: Gert Selle, *Ideologie und Utopie des Designs. Zur gesellschaftlichen Theorie der industriellen Formgebung*, Köln 1973; *idem*, *Die Geschichte des Designs in Deutschland von 1870 bis heute. Entwicklung der industriellen Produktkultur*, Köln 1978; Bernhard E. Bürdek, *Design. Geschichte, Theorie und Praxis der Produktionsgestaltung*, Köln 1991.

² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914*, London 2010.

³ Jürgen Kocka, *Das lange 19. Jahrhundert. Arbeit, Nation und bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart 2002 (Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte, 13).

⁴ See e.g. Frederic Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War*, New Haven–London 1996; Claudia Mareis, *Design als Wissenskultur: Interferenzen zwischen Design- und Wissensdiskursen seit 1960*, Berlin 2011.

placed in new contexts where they were viewed and learnt about (for example in the museumification). As a result of these processes, instances of pluralism and areas of “non-obviousness” developed at the interface of artistic, economic and social aspects, i.e. areas and phenomena that overlapped or were only vaguely defined. This tendency could be observed in the areas of categorization, technology and manufacturing processes, as well as regarding materials. The classical categories began to dissolve. Through the division of labor in workshops and factories and also through technical development, new work processes and materials came to be tested and used. In addition to this, in a world increasingly globalized through the development of communication technologies and media, a further phenomenon emerged: the strong influence of popular trends and a Europe-wide reform movement. However, specific regional aspects continued to play an important role, both in local politics and for regional traditional crafts, which often were subject to revival attempts. The more important determinants were for example natural, technical as well as human resources.

After 1742, the majority of Silesia belonged to Prussia. The reform of the state administration began in 1808, as a result of which the province was divided into separate administrative districts. After 1820, these districts were Breslau (Wrocław), Liegnitz (Legnica) and Oppeln (Opole). The administration of each district was divided into several departments responsible for various fields such as politics, education, finance, and construction. The magistrates controlled a number of industry, handcraft and trade matters – for example, they supervised the guilds and guild committees.⁵ The development of the school system, which was crucial for the processes of knowledge transfer, also took place at the beginning of the 19th century, with schools in the provincial capital of Breslau playing a leading role. Examples were the university, which was founded in 1702, the *Königliche Kunst- und Kunstgewerbeschule* (Royal School of Arts and Crafts, which became an Academy in 1911) and the *Städtische Handwerker- und Kunstgewerbeschule* (School of Craftsmen and Applied Arts). In the last phase of the century, as well as shortly after 1900, the technical school system in particular was intensively developed and expanded throughout the province. Among many such schools, one of a particular significance was the *Keramische Faszule* (Ceramic Vocational School)

⁵ See also the State Archive in Wrocław, Branch in Legnica, Sign. 85/11/0 Komisja Cechów w Legnicy.

in Bunzlau (Bolesławiec), founded in 1897.⁶ At the same time, and as a result of the increasing role of local elites and especially officials, two developments took place that resulted in the establishment of three lace-making schools – namely, the development of the needle tip and a state-led initiative to support the lace industry. All three schools were situated in the province’s mountainous regions: these were the Schlesische Spitzenschule (Silesian Lace School) in Schmiedeberg (Kowary), founded in 1880 by Margarete Hoppe-Siegert and having five branches until 1920, the Spitzenschulen (lace schools) founded by Margarete Bardt and Hedwig von Dobeneck in Hirschberg (Jelenia Góra), and taken over by the Fürstin von Pless in 1921, and the Stickschule Mittelwalde (Międzylesie Embroidery School), which was founded in 1897 with the aim “of supporting the local arts and crafts by contracting embroidery work to trained (female) workers”.⁷ The Holzschnitzschule (woodcarving school) in Bad Warmbrunn (Cieplice Śląskie-Zdrój)⁸ was also of paramount importance to arts and crafts in the mountain region of Lower Silesia from 1902 on. In 1910, the technical university was opened in Breslau. From the mid-19th century onwards, other institutions and organizations were established, including the Museum Schlesischer Altertümer (Museum of Silesian Antiquities), founded in 1859 in Breslau, and the Kunstgewerbeverein für Breslau und die Provinz Schlesien (Arts and Crafts Association for Breslau and the Province of Silesia), initiated in 1883. The individuals, groups, institutions, and companies involved were endowed in different ways with social, economic and symbolic capital,⁹ which

⁶ See also Anna Bober-Tubaj, *Zawodowa Szkoła Ceramiczna w Bolesławcu i miejscowy przemysł artystyczny*, [in:] *Bolesławiecka ceramika na drodze do nowoczesności. Wybrane aspekty działalności Zawodowej Szkoły Ceramicznej w latach 1897–1945 = Bunzlauer Keramik auf dem Weg zur Moderne. Ausgewählte Aspekte der Tätigkeit der Bunzlauer Keramischen Schule in den Jahren 1897–1945*, Ausstellungskatalog Muzeum Ceramiki w Bolesławcu, Schlesisches Museum zu Görlitz, hrsg. von Anna Bober-Tubaj, Marcus Bauer, Bolesławiec–Jelenia Góra 2013, pp. 11–49.

⁷ Kunz Blume, *Das schlesische Kunsthandwerk und Kunstgewerbe. Seine wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Bedingungen*, Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Würde eines Doktors der Staatswissenschaften bei der Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftlichen Fakultät an der Schlesischen Friedrichs-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau, Breslau 1934, p. 82. See also Ksenia Stanicka-Brzezicka, *Artystki śląskie ok. 1880–1945*, Toruń 2006, pp. 194–198.

⁸ See also Cirillo dell’Antonio, *Die Holzschnitzschule in Bad Warmbrunn*, Hirschberg [um 1927], Günther Grundmann, *Die Warmbrunner Holzschnitzschule im Riesengebirge*, München 1968 (SILESIA, Folge 1).

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Choses dites*, Paris 1987; *idem*, *Ökonomisches Kapital – Kulturelles Kapital – Soziales Kapital*, [in:] *idem*, *Die verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht*, Hamburg 1992, pp. 49–80; see also Frédéric Lebaron, *Symbolic Capital*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, eds. Alex C. Michalos, Springer, Dordrecht, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5>.

they also exchanged between themselves. A museum could, for example, exhibit an object that had been mass-produced for the consumer market (using the economic capital of the manufacturer), thus imbuing it, as an acclaimed design object, with “symbolic capital”. When investigating these kinds of knowledge transfer processes, we can also observe that innovations often do not come from the centers, where such capital is concentrated, but instead from the real or perceived peripheries, i.e. places where, in a moment of historical significance, new approaches are able to unfold more freely, as they are less hindered by the “establishment”, that is, by self-contained relationships and circumstances that exist between recognized experts, authorities and between or within institutions, or by the premature closure of a field of innovation.¹⁰

A good example of a place where this kind of “peripheral development” took place was the ceramic school in Bunzlau. It was founded by the Ministerium für Handel und Gewerbe (Ministry of Commerce and Industry) in Berlin and municipality of Bunzlau in 1897 as part of a move to counteract the deteriorating situation of potters, as well as restrictive customs policies around exports and the rising cost of coal. The school was also set up as part of an initiative to compete with new materials, such as enameled sheet metal, which were increasingly being used to manufacture objects for daily use.¹¹ (Fig. 1)

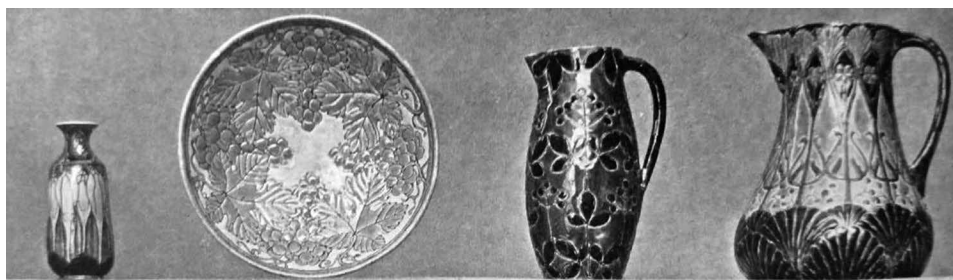


Fig. 1. Works from the Ceramic School in Bunzlau/Bolesławiec, “Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift” Jahrbuch des Schlesischen Museums für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer, Bd. II, Breslau 1902.

¹⁰ Können Maschinen handeln? Soziologische Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Mensch und Technik, hrsg. von Werner Rammertz, Ingo Schulz-Schaeffer, Frankfurt–New York 2002, pp. 121–123; Susanne Giesecke, *Innovationssysteme von Nationen, Regionen und Technologien – ein Überblick über die Literatur und Diskussion*, „Politische Vierteljahresschrift“, 41 (2000), 1, pp. 135–146.

¹¹ Bober-Tubaj, *Zawodowa Szkoła Ceramiczna*, pp. 15–16.

Within a short time, the whole ceramics industry in the region had become dependent on this institution, as it not only supplied specifically trained workers, but also introduced innovative technological solutions as well as new forms, models and decorative styles. At this point, we also come across the two terms that are etymologically very closely related: modernity and modernization. To this day, the concept of “modernization” is tied to an “inherent amorphousness”.¹² In a very broad sense, it is to be understood as “transformations of all areas of social life, including material and spiritual culture: religion, community, life, values, attitudes, and people’s mentality”.¹³ In his classical definition, Reinhard Bendix has historicized the term by linking it to the industrial revolution in England and the political revolution in France.¹⁴ In 1922, a number of decades after the industrial revolution began, the term was again defined by Max Weber in the context of social sciences¹⁵; he saw it as starting with technological and economic changes and encompassing the whole civilizing dimension of a given society. According to his definition, in economic, technical and social terms, and as a result of the great socio-economic transformation processes, it thus amounted to a “profound, positive, unifying change in the value of life”¹⁶ through industrialization, mechanization, development of communication systems or increase of the supply of goods and production technologies as well as redistribution of goods. It always has its origin, he suggested, in the forces of production, which aligned with classical Marxist thinking. Regions that have already been defined as “spaces of interference”¹⁷ also suit Dietrich Rüschemeyer’s concept of “partial modernization”,¹⁸ which is defined as

¹² „Inhärente Amorphität“ – see: Dirk Mellies, *Modernisierung in der preußischen Provinz? Der Regierungsbezirk Stettin im 19. Jahrhundert*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2012 (Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft, 201), p. 25.

¹³ Tadeusz Buksiński, *The Revenge of Culture*, [in:] *Identities and Modernizations*, ed. *idem*, Frankfurt am Main 2013 (Dia-Logos. Schriften zu Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaften, 17), pp. 13–31, here p. 16.

¹⁴ Reinhard Bendix, *Modernisierung in internationaler Perspektive*, [in:] *Theorien des sozialen Wandels*, hrsg. von Wolfgang Zapf, Köln–Berlin 1969, pp. 505–512.

¹⁵ Max Weber, *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik III. Abteilung: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tübingen 1922.

¹⁶ Moritz Csáky, *Einführende Überlegungen: Moderne – Peripherie – Mehrdeutigkeiten*, [in:] *Galizien. Peripherie der Moderne – Moderne der Peripherie?*, hrsg. von Elisabeth Haid, Stephanie Weismann, Burkhard Wöller, Marburg, 2013, pp. 11–28, here p. 14.

¹⁷ Andreas R. Hofmann, Ute Raßloff, *Einleitung: Die changierenden Muster der Interferenz*, [in:] *Wellenschläge: kulturelle Interferenzen im östlichen Mitteleuropa des langen 20. Jahrhunderts*, hrsg. von Ute Raßloff, Stuttgart 2013, pp. 11–20.

¹⁸ Mellies, *Modernisierung*.

“a process of social change that leads to the institutionalization of relatively modern social structures [existing] alongside considerably less modern structures in one and the same society.”¹⁹ As an example of this, bureaucratization, industrialization and a reform of the school system were initiated, while, at the same time, the traditionalism of the agricultural regions was clearly noticeable. This created a dualism, almost a rift, between the urban centers open to modern trends (in Silesia, of course, this was the provincial capital) and rural areas with a strong tradition of handcraftsmanship. On the other hand, the concept of periphery does not need to have a negative connotation *per se*; popular slogans like “progress” and “backwardness” should not be considered in the context of industrialization either. Juri Lotman emphasized the importance of places on the peripheries and borders as “focal points of semioticizing processes”²⁰; “the margin”, he observed, is “a place of permanent dialogue.”²¹ Silesia, too, can be interpreted – both politically and economically, as well as artistically – as a place that found itself between “central” and “peripheral” developmental processes. The center–periphery relationship existed at various levels. Impulses from Berlin, Dresden or Weimar interplayed with the specific trends of a region, which were influenced by its local politics, the particular artistic landscape and industrial traditions, but at the same time relations and rivalries developed between the individual micro-regions of the province.²² This proved to be the case in the history and focus of the Silesian schools, associations, and emerging museums and private collections that contributed to the implementation of reform ideas or blocked them; thus, a mutual sense of tension developed between the educational institutions and the local structures of the traditional crafts, characterized by the expectations one side had of the other and also by a feeling of competition, so that, in the end, a broad spectrum of mutual interdependencies, connections and interrelationships emerged.²³ With the intensive changes in craft, trade and industry, fears around the general decline of

¹⁹ Dietrich Rüschemeyer, *Partielle Modernisierung*, [in:] *Theorien des sozialen Wandels*, pp. 382–398, here p.328; Mellies, *Modernisierung*, p. 26.

²⁰ Juri M. Lotman, *Die Innenwelt des Denkens. Eine semiotische Theorie der Kultur*, hrsg. von Susi K. Frank, Cornelia Ruhe, Alexander Schmitz, Frankfurt am Main 2010, p. 182.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 190.

²² *Wellenschläge: kulturelle Interferenzen*.

²³ See for example: Grieger, *Die Handwerkerfrage als Organisationsfrage, als Bildungsfrage und wirtschaftliche Frage*, [in:] *Verhandlungen des 42. Schlesischen Gewerbetages in Königshütte am 6., 7. und 8 September 1908*, hrsg. vom Vorstand des Schlesischen Central-Gewerbe-Vereins zu Breslau, pp. 8–11.

handcrafts and hopes for reform were addressed by various committees and in a number of constellations.²⁴ Among the most frequently and decidedly addressed problems were, among others, the lack of young craftsmen and therefore the necessity to develop training programs in the underrepresented trades, the mistrust of craftsmen towards modern forms of guild, growing competition (from consumer associations, colonial goods dealers, department stores as well as emerging art schools), unfavorable economic conditions, rising material prices, cheap and fast industrial production, changing fashions, and many social questions on issues such as subsidies, premiums, pensions, and loans.²⁵

At the same time, however, Silesia – despite its peripheral location – and in opposition to a globally active consumer goods industry, offered new opportunities in newly created institutions to individuals from the other centers who were willing to climb the ladders, thus creating a framework for innovative development. The Breslau Royal School of Arts and Crafts, sometimes referred to as the “Bauhaus before Bauhaus”,²⁶ was regarded as a leading authority, although its role, especially with regard to the development of industrial design, is yet to be properly assessed.²⁷ These processes were accompanied by theoretical studies, like those of Werner Sombart, who, as professor of political science at the University of Breslau between 1890 and 1906, developed his pioneering ideas on art sociology. In 1900, he published an essay entitled “Luxus” (Luxury) in Breslau’s cultural journal “Die Eule. Wochenschrift für Kunst und Leben” (The Owl. Weekly Publication for Art and Life), in which he sketched out, for the first time, his theory on the connection between the understanding of society, consumption and culture.²⁸

However, one of the most important discourses – the discourse on artistic genres and the emerging industrial design – was reflected in these developments and emerging networks that could be observed at the local level, as well as in local contexts and scope for action, and in the regional media. Here, the process of

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Paeschke, *Das schlesische Handwerk im Jahre 1906*, [in:] *Verhandlungen des 41. Schlesischen Gewerbetages in Schweidnitz am 16., 17. und 18 Juni 1907*, hrsg. vom Vorstand des Schlesischen Central-Gewerbe-Vereins zu Breslau, pp. 17–20.

²⁶ Hartmut Frank, *Ein Bauhaus vor dem Bauhaus*, „Bauwelt“ 41 (1983), pp. 1640–1658. See also Deborah Ascher Barnstone, *Beyond the Bauhaus. Cultural Modernity in Breslau, 1918–33*, University of Michigan Press 2016.

²⁷ See also: Petra Hölscher, *Die Akademie für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe zu Breslau. Wege einer Kunstschule 1791–1932*, Kiel 2003.

²⁸ Frank, *Ein Bauhaus*.

shaping design was not seen as one of adapting machine production to aesthetic norms and standards of craftsmanship, but involved searching for new aesthetic norms for new production methods. In other words, it required a clear understanding not only of the processes of modern production, but also of the essence of art itself.²⁹ For a long time, it was a common opinion that everything that emerged after the beginning of the industrial era was freed from all aesthetic values and thus lay outside the sphere of art historical interest, belonging rather to the sphere of competence within the world of material culture. By being mass-produced in series, an object would lose its uniqueness, become impoverished and lacked an “aura”, an idea about which Walter Benjamin wrote so suggestively in the 1930s.³⁰ With the awareness of the genesis of industrial design, the mass-produced object, which was the most typical product of the era of dynamic industrialization, began to be considered in the context of its own era and slowly came to be accepted in all its manifestations and according to necessarily newly formed value criteria.³¹ The discussion about the equal rights of all genres of art, about the dissolution of boundaries that were not always rightly drawn between so-called “pure” and “applied” art – which had remained in the social consciousness as relics of a 19th century heritage – became intensified.³²

In all these matters, the terms and their definitions remain an important, open question. “Terms are agreements, assignations that can only serve the purpose if they are clearly defined in terms of their scope and content. Otherwise, they create ambiguity and confusion, and often do harm”, wrote the art historian and publicist Fritz Nemitz in 1930.³³ He noticed that a change had taken place with regard to the

²⁹ Jerzy Sołtan, *Przedmowa*, [in:] Herbert Read, *Sztuka a przemysł. Zasady wzornictwa przemysłowego*, Warszawa 1964, p. 7.

³⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Dzieło sztuki w dobie reprodukcji technicznej*, [in:] *idem, Twórca jako wytwórca*, Poznań 1975, pp. 69–73 [Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (1936)].

³¹ See Paweł Banaś, *Polskie szkło XX w. Stan badań. Postulaty badawcze*, [in:] *Z dziejów szkła artystycznego w Polsce. Wybór materiałów z sesji naukowej zorganizowanej w 1980 roku przez Muzeum Okręgowe w Jeleniej Górze*, Jelenia Góra 1985, pp. 55–68.

³² Cf. Irena Huml, *Polska sztuka stosowana XX wieku*, Warszawa 1978, p. 5. See also: Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design. From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (1st ed. 1936), Walter Crane, *Of the Revival of Design and Handicraft, with notes on the work of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* and E.S. Prior, *Furniture and the room*, both texts [in:] *Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Arts and Crafts essays*, ed. William Morris, London 1899.

³³ Fritz Nemitz, *Kunst und Handwerk*, „Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration: illustr. Monatshefte für moderne Malerei, Plastik, Architektur, Wohnungskunst u. künstlerisches Frauen-Arbeiten“ 67 (1930–1931), pp. 31–32.

meanings of certain terms (and in particular to the term “craftsmanship”), which had given rise to confusion; the craftsman had become an artist: “Two different activities, which are only secondarily related to each other, have been placed in a primary relationship, thereby obscuring both the field of craftsmanship and that of art”.³⁴ Craftsmanship, the author continues, comes from skill, while art – from the very being, from the soul. By confusing two only conditionally connected activities, a “new intermediate realm” – that of “arts and crafts” (in German: *Kunstgewerbe*) – had been inserted between craftsmanship and art. The term was, and is, a controversial one. Already at the beginning of the 20th century, Hermann Muthesius defined the term “arts and crafts”, which was coined in the 19th century.³⁵ He wrote: “Arts and crafts is a new concept, a special field of our time, something new both in terms of word formation and of substance.”³⁶ Previously, one spoke of “craftsmanship”, which was not considered to be an art, although, even by the criteria of the time, it had certainly belonged to the category of “arts and craft” since the mid-19th century. Muthesius, however, thought that the special emphasis on the artistic seemed superfluous, because “the connection between art and craft had grown naturally and was therefore felt to be organic and inseparable”.³⁷ The London World Exhibition of 1851, however, showed that the paths of these two areas had separated.

The concept of arts and crafts also became the field of interest of the aforementioned Werner Sombart. In the first years of the 20th century, he wrote “*Kunstgewerbe und Kultur*” (Arts and Crafts and Culture),³⁸ in which he described the aesthetics of convenience as “rising from an apologetic need” and the “machine style” as a superfluous adaptation of art to the demands of modern technology.³⁹ He demanded the education of the public, workers and entrepreneurs by artists who controlled the artistic aspects of production. For the purposes of this training, “state vocational schools and experimental institutions for arts and crafts should be established in which artists’ designs are implemented and tested.”⁴⁰

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

³⁵ Hermann Muthesius, *Der Weg und das End Ziel des Kunstgewerbes*, „Dekorative Kunst”, 1905, 8, pp. 181–190, 230–238.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ Werner Sombart, *Kunstgewerbe und Kultur*, Berlin 1908 (Die Kultur. Sammlung illustrierter Einzeldarstellungen, 26–27).

³⁹ *Idem*, *Die Modernität des Kapitalismus*, hrsg. von Karl Lichtblau, Springer 2018 (Klassiker der Sozialwissenschaften), p. 154.

⁴⁰ Quote from: Frank, *Ein Bauhaus*, pp. 1640–1658.

It is on Sombart's work that the observations Kunz Blume are based.⁴¹ He saw above all – in distinction to the trades in general – the restriction of the applicability of the arts and crafts to “a very specific form of trade”: “[A]s the German name, in its composition, aptly expresses: arts and crafts is a combination of art – more precisely: fine arts – and trade – more precisely: industrially produced objects. It is a union of artistic intentions with things that are intended to serve a certain purpose”.⁴² In the arts and crafts – as Blume quotes from Sombart – “the beautiful marries with the useful. The beautiful form, the manifest design, merges with functionality”.⁴³ He also cited other definitions, such as those of Heinrich Waenting: “One may give the term «arts and crafts» to that commercial activity which, at the same time as achieving a technical purpose, seeks to achieve artistic effects”.⁴⁴ However, what is significant for Blume is, above all, that the two “most important approaches” be adhered to: namely, that in arts and crafts there is, firstly, a separation between the designer and the exporter and, secondly, that its limits, precisely where it begins and ends, should ultimately not be set.

Thus, the redefinition of the terms was a consequence both of the rupture of the original unity between artistic design and execution in craftsmanship as caused by the advance of industrial production, as well as the processes surrounding the “arts and crafts idea” in the sense of an aspired synthesis of all artistic and work-related disciplines. In 1899, as part of his “General remarks on a synthesis of art”, Henry van de Velde observed that: “It is necessary [...] to establish that all the terms such as «lower art», «second-rate art», «art industry», «applied art», and «hand-crafts» can only be valid to the extent that they refer to things that have been agreed upon as being thus designated. But it cannot be admitted at all that they are true, or even that what they refer to really exists”.⁴⁵ This problem can be clearly traced in objects that are created in much larger structures – industrial structures – and where the manufacturing process, including design, and the choice of material, shape and decoration, is strongly dependent on various economic factors. Silesian porcelain, ceramics and glass industries provided examples of this. Ornamentation

⁴¹ Blume, *Das schlesische Kunsthandwerk*, pp. 6–15.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ Sombart, *Kunstgewerbe und Kultur*, p. 1; Blume *Das schlesische Kunsthandwerk*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ Heinrich Waenting, *Kunstgewerbe*, [in:] *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, Jena 1924, Bd. 6, p. 301; Blume, *Das schlesische Kunsthandwerk*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Henry van der Velde, *Allgemeine Bemerkungen zu einer Synthese der Kunst*, „Pan“, 5 (1899–1900), 4, pp. 261–270; see also Huml, *Polska sztuka stosowana*, p. 6.

and form had to be adapted to market tastes, as well as to new technologies developed in chemical laboratories. These were organized by large factories, such as the Chemisch-Technische Versuchsanstalt (Chemical-Technical Experiment Center) at the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Berlin (1878), but the province also made its contribution – the experiments carried out by the head of the Berlin institution, the chemist Hermann Segers, were continued in Bunzlau by Wilhelm Pukall, who headed the Ceramic School as a chemist, which, incidently, was explicitly desired by the Ministry of Trade and Industry⁴⁶ (Fig. 2). In Breslau, this was mainly expressed in the transformation and renaming of the School of Crafts to a School of Applied Arts in 1910. It was not without a shadow of the conflict of the municipal school with the Royal Arts and Crafts School, which advanced to become an Academy in 1911, while at the same time it was continuing to cultivate her arts and crafts focus. A little later, Richard Heyer, who led the crafts school since 1918, commented on the “organic fusion” of the artisan and art school with the academy, saying that there was no boundary between crafts and art. The craft must have its peaks in the arts and the art must have their roots in crafting.⁴⁷ In this sense, the school took further steps on the way to the arts and crafts: among others, the precision engineering and locksmithing classes were discontinued because they were only loosely related to the school’s profile. “The education of a plumber, precision mechanic, etc. takes place in a completely different direction than that of a carpenter, painter”⁴⁸ and should be taken over by other educational institutions, i.e. commercial vocational schools. Practically, the school differentiated itself from the craft.

⁴⁶ Sally Schöne, *Brenn Punkte. Keramische Fachschulen seit 1875. Landshut, Höhr, Bunzlau*, Ausstellungskatalog Hetjes-Museum, Deutsches Keramikmuseum, Düsseldorf 2001, p. 10–30.

⁴⁷ The State Archive in Wrocław, Akta Miasta Wrocławia, Sign. 26672, *Betreffend Vereinigung der Kunstgewerbeschule mit der Kunstakademie*, p. 6–9.

⁴⁸ The State Archive in Wrocław, Akta Miasta Wrocławia, Akten des Kuratoriums der Handwerker- und Kunstgewerbeschule, Sign. 26629, *Protokoll der Sitzung des Schulvortandes der Handwerker- und Kunstgewerbeschule vom 30.04.1924*, p. 238.



Fig. 2. The Ceramic School Bunzlau/Bolesławiec,
„Keramische Rundschau“, 33 (1925), No. 44

Another very important approach can be found in the relation between the arts and crafts and machine work, and the recognition that, in this area, one should not limit oneself to individual performances of only artistic nature, but should consider a broader, economic basis. On the one hand, it was economically justified for the craftsman to turn to the machine: things that were produced by hand and by individual craftsmen within the framework of their daily commercial production could not meet the increasing demand or compete with functional, factory-made products created with standardized materials and manufacturing processes (Fig. 3). There was also wider acknowledgement of the validity of the machine approach. Muthesius conceded that, with certain exceptions, the machine did serve a specific function for arts and crafts and that one should “credit the machine for its ability to produce the correct forms as appropriate to its mode of operation”.⁴⁹ Karl Groß also expressed this point of view.⁵⁰ The latter did not use the term “arts and crafts” and, as a matter of principle, polarized craftsmanship and manual work on

⁴⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁵⁰ Karl Groß, *Kunsth Handwerk*, [in:] *Kunstgewerbe*, Dresden 1906, pp. 29–30.

the one hand and machine work and the art industry on the other. The machine, he believed, should only serve to make manual work easier. Otherwise – as Petra Gamke, author of a monograph on Karl Groß, points out – he saw machine work as a synonym for industrial production and thus for mass production. If artistic values played a role in industrial production, it was an art industry. Gamke considers the term “arts and crafts” to be the most fitting description for what took place around 1900: the separation of artistic design and production in the workshop at a stage between the individual product and serial production.⁵¹



Fig. 3. Erich Fuchs, "Webstube" (interior of a chamber with a weaving workshop) by Ignatz Holfeld in Georgswalde/Jiřikov bei Rumburg/Rumburk (Czech Republic), Herder-Institute Marburg, inv. number 149353.

The use of machines in the Silesian craft and industry can be traced to various examples. First of all, a general modernization occurred in the textile industry. Steam power and production mechanization were used here at the earliest. The textile craft – which later turned into industry – was located primarily in the area

⁵¹ Petra Klara Gamke, *Karl Groß. Tradition als Innovation? Dresdner Reformkunst am Beginn der Moderne*, München, Berlin 2005, p. 92.

from Leobschütz (Głubczyce) to Löwenberg (Lwówek Śląski), mostly in and around the mountains and near the region where large flax industry in Bohemia was concentrated. In the third quarter of the century, hand weaving practically ceased, except for Kłodzko Valley (Glatzer Land), where this tradition was maintained the longest. Machine spinning mills spread rapidly, the number of mechanical weaving mills has increased more slowly. The transition from hand weaving to industrial production is illustrated by, for example, the history of the company Websky, Hartmann & Wiesen AG Wüstewaltersdorf (Walim), which was known for high-class and cost-effective textiles. The first attempts there were made by Ernst Trautvetter. He was already working with Jacquard looms in 1848, and in time his weaving manufacture of 1864/65 turned into first textile factory in this region. Quite accurate and detailed quantitative data can be reconstructed for respective districts. Thus, for example, in the summer of 1914, before the outbreak of war, Waldenburg (Wałbrzych) had 19 mechanical weaving mills with 4010 looms for linen, half linen, cotton and half wool, and 150 looms for pure wool fabrics, as well as a silk weaving mill with 145 looms.⁵² In ceramic production, the expansion and mechanization of the individual companies also took place. Around 1904, Julius Paul increased the burning capacity of his factory thanks to a second kiln. Until 1907, the modernization of the production followed, i.a. “power-driven machines provided suitable preparation of masses and glazes”.⁵³ Around 1910, the factory advertised as “largest machine driving company” („Größter Maschinen-Eindrehbetrieb”⁵⁴) and experienced still a change until 1913. Furniture production is an area in which we can observe different stages of the incorporation of the machine into production. In addition to the large factories such as Ruscheweyh Aktiengesellschaft furniture factory in Langenöls (Olszyna), there were craft workshops such as by Otto Pohl in Oels (Oleśnica) or brothers Milde in Festerberg (Twardogóra). There, all models were made exclusively in the workshop, although sometimes designs have been purchased from other architects. Machines were used only as an aid.

Such measures – and the industrial revolution in general – also turned the way materials were managed and used upside down. Firstly, they called into question a principle that is of central importance to craftsmanship: to think in terms of

⁵² The State Archive in Wrocław, branch in Kamieniec Zabkowicki, Inspekcja Przemysłowa w Wałbrzychu 1897–1945, Sign. 12, Lage der Industrie 1913–1937, p. 8–12.

⁵³ Inge Lippert, Konrad Spindler, Werner Endres, Ekkehard Lippert, *Bunzlauer Keramik. Die Feinsteinzeugfabrik Julius Paul & Sohn in Bunzlau (1893–1945)*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart 2002, p. 52.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

a material and to create out of it. In response, the English Arts and Crafts movement placed the theme of material in the foreground in accordance with the idea that beauty is created by the materials used, by the variety of color tones and the richness of textures, and thus the properties of the materials and their processing are of central importance. At the same time, new materials were discovered and introduced, which revolutionized the structural principles of building (including what the equipment and tools were made of!), as well as those of transport and communication. One of the most important principles was that processing should, as far as possible, be carried out so as to preserve and enhance the character and properties of the material; thus, manufactured objects should not imitate any other or polyvalent materials and should not take on the specific shapes of any other materials. According to this thinking, each material has its own laws of form and new materials require new forms of use. The idea was to regain a sense of the “obviousness” of the material. These principles also gained ground in Silesia, thanks to Hermann Adolf Kühn, then director of the Royal School of Arts and Crafts in Breslau (1881–1902), his successor Hans Poelzig, and many other artists. Influenced by his teacher Carl Schäfer, Poelzig developed a particular sensitivity to the question of materials, which he revealed in many of his projects, for example the model house at the special exhibition of the Kunstgewerbeverein (Arts and Crafts Association) in 1904.⁵⁵ At the same time, the Ceramic School in Bunzlau was working with a strong focus on materials and was also using scientific methods to produce new materials, such as the porcelain stoneware mix made of Bunzlau clay, feldspar and sand, which gained importance throughout the entire Bunzlau pottery industry around 1899/1900. The “more fragile porcelain stoneware” was well suited for the design of “modern practical and ornamental forms that require precise detail” and also appealed to “a more affluent group of buyers.”⁵⁶

Of course, techniques and processes are closely associated with materials, both in the case of individual creations and in the typification process. Here, the relationship to the machine kept changing, albeit not everywhere, not immediately and not without a theoretical discourse that would continue for years. After a few decades of industrial development, however, there was no way back and Ruskin’s

⁵⁵ See also *Hans Poelzig in Breslau. Architektur und Kunst 1900–1916*, hrsg. von Jerzy Ilkosz, Beate Störkuhl, Aschenbeck und Holstein 2000; Hölischer, *Die Akademie für Kunst*.

⁵⁶ Inge Lippert, *Chronik der Familie Paul im Kontext mit den Besitzverhältnissen der Feinzeugfabrik Julius Paul & Sohn*, [in:] Lippert, Spindler, Endres, Lippert, *Bunzlauer Keramik*, p. 140.

praise of the imperfection of handmade things became the narrower path at the crossroads between craftsmanship and design as an element of the divided manufacturing process.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Ruskin's teaching was by no means forgotten. Especially here, in the example of a province that found itself between the central and peripheral developments, we can clearly see the tension between industrialization and a renewed appreciation of hand craftsmanship (the latter being supported by a whole range of resources and initiatives). Parallel to this, industrial structures (for example, porcelain production) developed alongside cottage industries where activities, such as needle-point production or wood carving, were carried out at home. In the background, major players such as the Silesian Central Trade Association (Schlesischer Central-Gewerbe-Verein), Breslau Arts and Crafts Association (Breslauer Kunstgewerbeverein) and various schools in Breslau, steered attempts to introduce a reform of the arts and crafts, which would demand a close connection between design and execution (Fig. 4). Here, attempts were also made to point out a number of processes that produce new knowledge and objects. If we identify the new developments as design, we have to realize that it does not belong to any of the spheres from which the individual actors originate and which are often viewed separately. It constitutes new relationships between people, machines and objects, and of course also new forms of negotiation within a culture as well as conflicting forms of social habitus. Furthermore, the contradictions between production and aesthetics, as well as between form and purpose, were no longer perceived – as had often been the case in the past – from the point of view of craftsmanship, but were now seen – economically – as a technical problem and – politically – as a scientific problem. One consequence of this change is that the questions posed by art historians about the media of art, or about the artist's workshop, must be answered from a transdisciplinary point of view that embraces social, economic and technical-historical paradigms. In this way, new perspectives must be included in the question, and these perspectives filter out new connections and networks from this area of diversity and lack of obviousness, allowing us to see similar problems and solutions where, previously, one may have encountered the limits of the discipline or genre.

⁵⁷ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, vol. 1–3, London 1851–1853; *idem*, *Die zwei Pfade: Modernes Handwerk und moderner Entwurf, 1859*, [in:] *Ästhetik der schönen Genügsamkeit oder Arts and Crafts als Lebensform*. Programmatische Texte erläutert von Gerda Breuer, Braunschweig–Wiesbaden 1998, pp. 87–93.



Fig. 4. “Ausstellung für Handwerk und Kunstgewerbe”, Breslau/Wrocław 1904, cover of the catalog.

Consequences of the discussed problems and changes were also visible in the interwar period. In principle, without this pluralistic and, at the same time, “non-obvious” 19th century, the modern age of the 1920s would not exist (Fig. 5). At the same time, however, researching this period on the basis of regional findings provides a good foundation for an analysis of the catchphrase “Silesian Modernism”, a term which has been already discussed in the 1920s. Oskar Moll asserted the connections between modern and traditional art, placing modernism in a continuum with tradition when he wrote: “We do not break the bridges to the past; we ourselves are standing on them. [...] we will all belong to the past for others. [...] artists are usually inseparable from their times.”⁵⁸ This is actually a prediction of the tendencies characteristic for “Rethinking Modernity” strengthening since the 1990s. Thomas Rohkrämer⁵⁹ has argued that the technological progress can be,

⁵⁸ Oskar Moll, *Katalog Staatliche Akademie für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe Breslau 1930*, p. 1–2. See also: Barnstone, *Beyond the Bauhaus*, p. 105.

⁵⁹ Thomas Rohkrämer, *Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland, 1880–1933*, Paderborn 1999.

and is in this case study, melted into local history and landscape. In Silesia, the process of transition from handicrafts to industrial production is characterized by an interest in traditions and by mixing various elements and motives. This development did not lead to the emergence of “obvious” (with the meaning of “pure”) modernism in applied arts, which seems to have a self-evident connection with the non-obvious genres, media and practices described here in many areas in the 19th century and later.

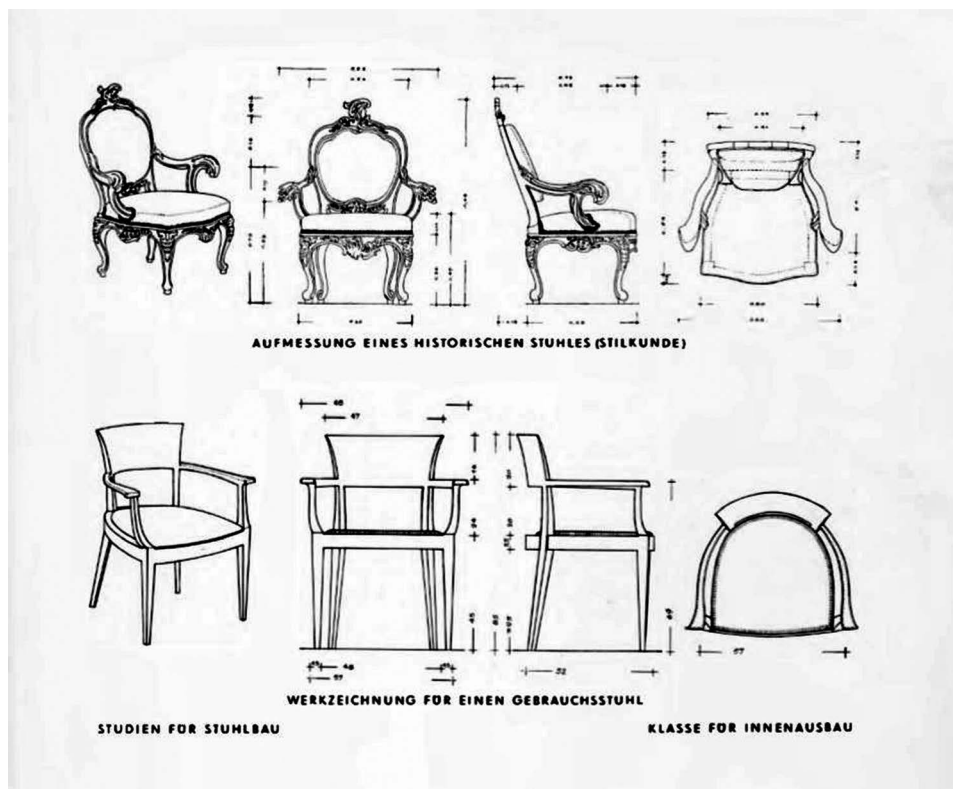


Fig. 5. Breslau/Wrocław, School of Craftsmen and Applied Arts, “Bericht 1926–1927–1928”.

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STRESZCZENIE / SUMMARY

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest próba przedstawienia procesów kształtowania się na przełomie XIX i XX w. pluralizmów i obszarów „nieoczywistości” na styku aspektów artystycznych, ekonomicznych i społecznych, a więc obszarów i zjawisk, które nakładały się na siebie lub były tylko mgliście zdefiniowane. Studium przypadku stanowi tu krajobraz artystyczny i przemysłowy Śląska. Problem ten jest analizowany jako odzwierciedlenie i efekt wielu przemian, które rozpoczęły się w czasie rewolucji przemysłowej i do dziś wpływają na świat pod względem politycznym, ekonomicznym, społecznym i kulturowym. Rewolucja przemysłowa ukazana tu została w złożonym kontekście jej oddziaływania na sztukę i kulturę. Z jednej strony jest ona bowiem postrzegana jako przyczyna upadku twórczości artystycznej, z drugiej – uruchomiła nowe zjawisko: design, definiowany jako działalność twórcza na styku kreacji artystycznej, planowania technicznego, pracy z narzędziami ręcznymi i produkcji przemysłowej przy użyciu maszyn, przy czym każdy z tych aspektów może, w zależności od kontekstu, odgrywać większą lub mniejszą rolę. Powstanie fabryk sprawiło, że rzemiosło przestało odgrywać znaczącą rolę w produkcji dóbr konsumpcyjnych, ale jednocześnie nabrało nowych znaczeń i wartości etycznej. W tym samym czasie ekonomiczne i techniczne impulsy z dziedziny sztuki, rękodzieła i nowo rozwijającego się świata przemysłu nakładały się na powstającą dziedzinę wzornictwa przemysłowego. Produkcja i obieg wiedzy o wytwarzaniu i technicznym projektowaniu przedmiotów codziennego użytku zostały w ten sposób zinstytucjonalizowane i profesjonalizowane. Proces ten został ustabilizowany i utrwalony poprzez standaryzację i normalizację, jak również nowe formy organizacji pracy oraz metody nauczania. Jednocześnie w tym procesie nastąpiło uhistorycznienie – obiekty (przedmioty) były wyjmowane ze sfery produkcji i konsumpcji i umieszczane w nowych kontekstach, gdzie były oglądane i poznawane (np. w muzeum). Zmiany można było zaobserwować nie tylko w zakresie technologii i procesów produkcyjnych czy materiałów, ale także w klasyfikacji i kategoryzacji (obiektów, gatunków). Stosowane do tamtej pory kategorie zaczęły się

rozmażywać. Ponadto w świecie coraz bardziej zglobalizowanym przez rozwój technologii komunikacyjnych i mediów pojawiło się kolejne zjawisko: silny wpływ popularnych trendów i ogólnoeuropejskiego ruchu reformatorskiego, chociaż specyficzne aspekty regionalne nadal odgrywały ważną rolę. Działania podejmowane w ramach lokalnej polityki, dla regionalnych zakładów rzemieślniczych i przez nie, często zmierzały do tego, aby ową lokalną specyfikę zachować lub nawet odrodzić. Powstałe w ten sposób nowe, wówczas jeszcze nieoczywiste praktyki, obiekty czy instytucje pozostały wobec siebie w licznych, kompleksowych, czasami wręcz zaskakujących relacjach. W efekcie obraz rzemiosła, sztuki i produkcji przemysłowej regionu nie był ani (czysto) nowoczesny, ani tradycyjny. Był pomiędzy, nieoczywisty.

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