

DESIGNING BRITAIN 1945 – 1975

From solving problems to selling product: the changing role of designers in post-war Britain

Assignment 1 - Text Analysis

Aims

- To introduce you to primary source material drawn from the periods covered in this module.
- To encourage you to analyse and compare differing viewpoints.
- To develop your research analysis skills.
- To develop your knowledge of the cultural context for design practice since 1945.

The Texts

Set A: 1930-1950

Herbert Read, 'Introduction', *Art and Industry* (pp 7-10), Faber and Faber, London, 1934

Gordon Russell, 'What is Good Design?', *Design 1* (pp 2-6) Design Council, London, 1949

Set B: 1950-1970

Richard Hamilton, 'Persuading Image', *Design 134* (pp 28-32), Design Council, London, 1960

Reyner Banham, 'A Throw-away Aesthetic', *Design By Choice*, (ed. Penny Sparke), Academy Editions, London, 1981 [1955]

Set C: 1970-1990

Deyan Sudjic, 'Are You What You Own?', *Cult Objects*, Paladin, London, 1985

Peter York, 'Culture as Commodity: Style Wars, Punk and Pageant', *Design After Modernism*, (ed. John Thackara), Thames and Hudson, London, 1988

Task

This exercise is to compare and contrast two differing points of view. Carefully read all of the excerpts provided and only then make a decision about which pair you wish to work with. Each of your chosen texts should be taken from a different period.

In your preparatory notes, begin by summarising the main points that are being made by the authors. What examples do they use to illustrate their arguments? Are they convincing? Do you agree with them?

Try to identify how the points of view being expressed differ, and also where there may be similarities.

How have contemporary views on the subject changed since the time these pieces were written? If you wish you may bring in references to more recent texts in order to strengthen your points. You should start with the annotated bibliography contained in the Theory section of the website for guidance on further reading.

Submission Details

You should submit your findings in the form of a 2000 word essay, illustrated if you wish, which demonstrates that you fully understand the points being made by the authors and that you are able to place their views in relation to each other, and within a contemporary context. You are also expected to draw your own conclusions from the information you have been given and to express these clearly in your conclusion.

Your essay should be word-processed, fully referenced and contain a full bibliography set out according to standard academic conventions.

Assessment Criteria

Knowledge and Understanding of Subject(s):

- Awareness and understanding of historical and contemporary practice of the subject and the grasp of its critical and theoretical underpinning.

Communication, Presentation Skills and Literacy:

- Ability to convey ideas and information comprehensibly in written and visual forms.

Critical Skills

- Ability to analyse information and situations, to formulate independent judgements, and to articulate reasoned arguments in the review and evaluation of the work of others.

Information Skills

- Competence in handling information including information sources, evaluation criteria, navigation methods, and presentation issues.