The Chalice of Abbot Suger of St-Denis.

"The dull mind rises to Truth through that which is Material" Abbot Suger of St-Denis

(1081-1151)

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TITLE

Toward a better understanding of Luxury Design via Actor-Network-Theory

ABSTRACT

Luxury Design is an undeveloped theory. (I will be capitalizing Luxury Design and Luxury Object within this study as legitimate areas of study.) Using Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory, this study develops a theoretical critique of Luxury Design, Luxury Object, and luxury design clients. The study deploys Actor-Network-Theory for the analysis of Luxury Design, and reviews foundational commentators, its development, its usage, the typical actors within luxury and its relevance to the study of design & Luxury Design. The study shows that Actor-Network-Theory can open windows onto those active players in Luxury's role in society not fully disclosed through current design or management methodologies, and to produce meaningful commentary on why Luxury Design continues to prosper uncontested as a focus for societal longings.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

RATIONALE, RESEARCHER CONTEXT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The need for design method for the analysis of Luxury Design is a pressing one. This thesis is research based, yet research into Luxury Design is limited to use of optics mostly reserved for a management studies environment. The objective of this research study will be to offer an approach to theory development that is not management based nor even design theory based.

As an auto-ethnographic embedded design researcher, the motivation for this thesis is to critically challenge some impressions found by the author within the academic community that sometimes seems wilfully disengaged as regarding alternative understandings or diverse meanings in Luxury Design. Anecdotally, I have heard many times that Luxury Design is not real design. Academia seems to look away from this subject despite an avowed commitment to being contemporarily relevant. The rationale for this study is to move into further research which might serve to widen access and diversity into this subject and fulfil a current research gap.

The author will be using Actor-Network-Theory (ANT is its usual acronym) as a model for the thesis. This theory was first set out in the book *Reassembling the Social* (Latour, 2005.) This theory is not new but is certainly new as a method for analysis of Luxury Design. ANT has contributed significantly to the areas of study as varied as food production, power generation, housing, and transport (the latter includes an extended critique of an experimental rail system that Latour used as basis for his book

The Love of Technology (Latour,1996.). The book is itself experimental. In it, the rail system "speaks" of its own concerns.

This theory is principally a form of anthropological genealogy. So, ANT is a continuously expanding and research theory that has global adherents. This thesis is thereby using a tested methodology. Yet I believe it needs here to have full extensive exposition to explain of how ANT has itself its own genealogy and its own founders. Basically, I am using this first section as the over-arching justification for its deployment. It is important to understand why this method is preferred and where it has come from.

RESEARCH AIM, RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH STUDY STRUCTURE

The title of this research is to develop and move towards a better understanding of Luxury Design via Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). This study is framed I must state as auto-ethnographic in nature, as I am both researching Luxury Design and I am embedded as a practitioner daily involved in its creation.

This thesis is therefore divided into five chapters each with an aim of developing an understanding of Luxury Design leading to the development of new and diverse theoretical perspectives. This fulfils a current gap in theoretical understanding of Luxury Design outside of the previous lens of design or management studies. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the post-structuralist theory called Actor-Network-Theory for the analysis of Luxury Design and reviews those commentators that historically would be called its founders. The second chapter explains the theories origins and the aims of ANT. The third chapter deals with the application of this theory to the study of design & Luxury Design. The fourth chapter discusses some actors that are repeatedly revealed through this method.

In conclusion the study considers the elaboration of this methodological approach to a better understanding of Luxury Design via ANT and the development of a new practice theory in this field. For a further future study, the author will consider the application to the key actors: Luxury Designers, luxury design clients and the Luxury Object itself.

INTRODUCING METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This thesis analyses the concepts of Luxury Design by a genealogical method. Genealogy is a study of the present by careful identification of active actors both in the past and in an immediate network of kinship of concepts. One particular form of genealogy can be used to bring forth a meaningful structure of Luxury Design, which additionally would carefully, and yet speculatively, consider the unsuspected or unrecorded in both our lived experience and conceptual understanding. The genealogical theory that will be the basis for this thesis is called Actor-Network-Theory.

In Foucault's phrase, genealogy looks at elements that "we tend to feel are without history" (Foucault,1980 p9.) yet are present in the currency of our lives.

Genealogy is not an historical linear chronology. Neither can it be a search for ultimate origins. The latter because of post-modernism scepticism as to who is authoring that historical origin and suspicious of explanations that construct history as truth unaffected by power, in contradiction of the likelihood that it is mostly constructed through power. Therefore, a genealogy accepts that origins are contingent rather than ultimate. So genealogical origins are likely to be manifold or alternate rather than univocal. This will produce a commentary that is speculative and acknowledges uncertainty. And additionally, uses uncertainty as a key part of a toolkit to doubt the monolithic explanations. Genealogy begins knowing it will not end by produce a definitive method.

A genealogy is not a long section through all history but is a study of why-is-now-happening, not where-did-now-come-from. The first is a genealogy, the second a history. The difference in literary terms would be the difference between plot and story. The plot is what happens: this is history. The story is why it happens: this is genealogy.

Genealogy seeks to find structures that may be unsuspected but does arbitrarily invent structures and cannot do so because of a format that will admit the asymmetrical and the dissenting which encourages the formation of a working hypothesis but works against the formation of a "just-so" philosophy. The traditional schemata of history method are paralleled and critiqued by genealogical method the better to increase understanding of both.

A SHORT HISTORY OF GENEALOGY

NEITZSCHES GENEALOGY

Nietzsche was the first to overtly use the term in a major publication. (This species of doubt however, traces at least back to Kierkegaard and continues forward to Derrida arriving at Baudrillard and Zizek). His book *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Nietzsche ,1887.) was a continuation of his project to clarify and add to his program of disbelief and dissent in the origins of ethics and the claims of science and religion that morality is historically founded in unquestioned truth.

This is not the place to discuss this thread, although Nietzsche generally has much to say about beauty and technology both of which are pertinent to design but not in this thesis as at this juncture, I am looking at why Nietzsche chose genealogy is the right method for looking at a subject, just as I am suggesting that I too will be using this method to examine Luxury Design.

Nietzsche formal training and his only formal employment was as a historian, translator, and interpreter of classical philosophical Greek texts. This is called philology and he was professor of philology at Basel University. He specialised in the works of those philosophers who preceded Socrates. This, pre-Socratic knowledge he saw as the true origin source of moral knowledge that was corrupted by the later Greek philosophers and further corrupted by early Christian church scholastic tradition and finally to the even more remote, obscurantist and crude interpretations of the German protestant church in which he grew up. His contemporary world did nothing to address the issues of what is moral but instead directed its followers away from truth and toward a bland acceptance of state controlled and approved ethical behaviour.

Indeed, following Darwin's reconfiguration of the creation of life as opposed to the definitions of religion many commentators had similarly reconstructed social relationships which took on the character of anthropology and psychology. The latter being used as framework transferred to cultural criticism where aspects of society were seen as "symptomatic" of the ills of society, much as luxury is pilloried today. However, Nietzsche sees the sickness of decadence not as a deviation from normative society but hopeless conformity to it. His viewpoint is predicated on his belief in a society in disintegration. However, he developed a method that kept him as the estranger to ensure that he too was not a product of that disintegration. His methodology is neither the progressive linear history in the Enlightenment tradition or the determinism (the inevitability) of Hegel. Neither did he wish to claim that this methodology had neutrality or unbiased. He saw the latter as a fallacy or undesirable. His model moved from the present backwards and sideways and, with much prescience, forward into the future. It examined what conceptual entities are actually connected and those that were merely a fabricated union. He wished to isolate those entities that were active and responsive in

concert, against those that were static and inert, or possessing qualities of existence wholly dependent on agencies to maintain them artificially.

Nietzsche's very personal project was to show that the sources that the church and state used at foundations for the exercise of power were false. He needed sources with equal validity and weight that could demonstrate that a different kind of moral life could and should be lived. In these sources he sought to find new interpretation, that a life of affirmation could be achieved if we could reorder society through a framework of authentic genealogical connections. Finally, within his book Nietzsche also comments on the hegemony of ideas (and presumably its tangible extant forms) that emanate from a society unwilling to countenance "affirmation" (Nietzsche,1887 p19.) but instead indulge luxuriously in cults of self-abnegation.

FOUCAULTS GENEALOGY

The following is taken from Foucault's (1971) essay: *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*.

"Genealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and re-copied many times" (Foucault,1971 p76.)

In this he is making a contrast to history that is merely linear development which ignores a world that has had invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, and ploys. His version is a palimpsest of history that acknowledges that what we can know is contentious.

He goes on in the same chapter, "from these elements genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint, it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality...it must seek them in uncompromising places, in what we tend to feel is without

history…genealogy must define even those instances where they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealized" (Foucault,1971 p76.)

This essay first appeared in Homage à Jean Hippolyta (1971), along with *Réponse au cercle d'épistémologie,* which became the introductory chapter of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Archaeology being the parallel method in Foucault historifying.

It is the core essay pertaining to Foucault's reimagined form of history. Additionally, throughout he refers to other Nietzsche tracts such as *Untimely Meditations* and *Human,all too Human*. Clearly if not the starting point, then certainly these were his origin of source for his interpretations. Though Foucault himself was not fond of the word "origin". Indeed, Nietzsche himself was concerned as much about interpretation than origins. All of Foucault's own books (particularly *The Order of Things*) are similarly a construct of interpretation as much as his overt subject which was historical power and domination.

Foucault was not suggesting that a genealogy could produce new knowledge. The aim was register new connections. Moreover, the aim was to support knowledge by offer a critique of a critique. A genealogy could be used to disassemble only if reassembly were valid. In other words, it does not want to support anti-knowledge, unscience, ignorance or relativist subjectivity. It aims "To produce an awareness of the complexity, contingency and fragility of historical forms "(Smart,1983 p76.)

Genealogy is not a method for something producing a narrative that is more truthful. Rather like palaeontology, the knowledge is already there in the ground, yet palaeontology was a study process that took several attempts to correctly assemble an ancient Triassic reptile. Early attempts reflected merely what an academy hoped they would be?

Foucault was suspicious of a "pathological" schema seeming to be at work in diagnostic medicine. In his work *Birth of a Clinic* (1976) he queries this diagnosis as a system of power. If we were to transfer this to Luxury Design, it would be subjected to an analysis of symptoms (how an object or situation presents itself) has similarity to the noting of symptoms in a disease. From these a link can be made to the cause and cure of the disease. This diagnosis scheme is known to be generally reliable. However, this method can produce serious misinterpretations. Some symptoms can be misinterpreted as connections to other diseases. Alternatively, the schema is inverted so that the disease is firstly promoted and symptoms are artificially found to confirm the diagnosis. This is a re-examination of what causality is, and why causality is an important and communicable mechanism for those in positions of power. All agencies of power would therefore seem to prefer to construct a world where the causality must be overt to the exclusion of covert disruptive interactions and that networks or systems must be symmetrical to have value. Symmetry is visually and conceptually a static closed immobile state representing historical certainty. Coherence is an asymmetrical dynamic that allows (requires) an open system that countenance movement and adjusts agilely to allow uncertainty to be manipulated. For instance, if education can be considered an agency of power, medical staff must necessarily be educated and certainly live within a cohort of a "community of practise" (Wenger,1999.) that could possess symptoms of this schematic misinterpretation. Medical training would be defining good health. If this is true of medics, must it not be true of designers? Is design education similarly excluding unsuspected parts and players to make a worldview of smooth happy causality? Is it the smooth untroubled activity of designing luxury, that is creating the smoothly untroubled object of Luxury Design? And by extension if this is the case in Luxury Design is this the case for all design activity?

Repeatedly within his critical essays and earlier his lectures (1980-1981) Foucault references "Masks". This is the Marxist concept of character masks where a hidden power creates a façade that neutralizes further interrogation of the masks true owner or purpose. This could well be an accusation levelled at Luxury Objects. Foucault however was directing the idea towards agencies that held control and that, consciously or not, deployed that power for the purpose of sustaining itself. The character mask being its notional inter-face with parts of society that it, the agency, believed to be sovereign over. We know power then, only through its mask and our wish to abide with this mask is our hope for its permission to know it closer. Thematically this is still a concern for contemporary commentators like Zizek, who would assert "the symbolic mask matters more than the direct reality of the individual who wears this mask" (Zizek, 2005 p1.)

CHAPTER TWO

This second chapter explains the theories origins and the aims of ANT. This provides a foundation that has previously not been addressed in a critique of luxury design.

LATOURS CRITIQUE of the SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD

Social Science was first constructed as a commentary and then became a repudiation of how we live. Bearing in mind Social Science is at least 100 years old (Durkheim published *The Rules of Sociological Method* in 1895) and bearing in mind the considerable resources social science has accumulated during that time, it seems odd that social science which aims to expose the agencies of power within society has not considered its own role as powerful formal institution and its potential for normative pressure, accompanied or directed by a distinct bias.

Social science may have been too successful in in disseminating its role so that much that its language, if not its foundational principles, have has drifted from academia to soundbites. The latter not helping social sciences claims. In any case, social science is a now an institution like any other and therefore attracts the same critique as all institutions. It is noteworthy that as a study area, social science arrived much as design arrived, at the same time and by the same means by the handy tools of technology, economy, and science. It is possible that instead of social science and sesign being the elements that allowed us to understand and control technology, economy, and science, it is also possible that the reverse is happening. In which case are social science and sesign actually encoding and not critiquing the former. Encoding and cataloguing is, after all, the role of the institution and proof if its character, while research provides

the institution with a mirror-mirror on the wall to attract the funding from technology, economy and science to act as their validator.

This would place social science in the same position as design has within the academy. The academy being both the site of designs creation and the site of its critique. This is less a paradoxical absence of critical space, and more a simple disjuncture that allows neither to happen successfully.

Sociological method, like design method, it is product of an excess or superfluity of economy, science and technology, and, if it conforms to my earlier criteria, then it is a wholly Luxury Object itself. A proof of this character would be that like all Luxury Objects it seeks, amongst other things, to validate is own existence by insisting on its detached historical autonomy, yet like all kitsch entities, being wholly dependent and contingent. Any intuition that creates its own arbitrary structure and then autonomously authorizes itself, is a kitsch institution. A County Constabulary would never get away with this.

Latour therefore considers that the "social" isn't particularly social or the "science" particularly scientific (Latour 2005 p2) All of the above is not to denigrate social science but to outline the enormity of its task. After all, the history of social science was the need to offer a cohesive account of society to counter the perceived threat from rationalism and mechanistic empiricism. And this was just the latest battle that began when Rousseau's humanism took on The Enlightenment. Rousseau founded social science by founding human experience as the departure point for knowledge and not the Parisian salons of the intellectuals. They assumed that their grand narratives of liberal meaning explained, even predicted, social development backed by learning (Ricardo, Malthus, Adam Smith et al) that initially granted mankind an emancipation though

science, but later calcified into systems of rules that brooked no alternative and maintain itself with authority.

 The contemporary issue is: who is now offering the unassailable meanings or ideologies and what structure does that look like? Indeed, this not a contemporary issue at all, as it is the same issue that drove Nietzsche to examine history as genealogy and later Foucault to do the same. So, rather than say this is a contemporary issue, better to say it has been, and continuous to be, an active driver for the re-examination of those supposed authorized structures which have excluded suspected unauthorized structures even when out human experience informs us that these unacknowledged elements are active in our lives. The reason genealogy was the form that both deployed was because it could be used to destructure/ restructure existing knowledge without accusations of having "invented" knowledge, simply to better fit a new form. It is worthwhile remembering that although Rousseau is the source of human-centric interpretations regarding the social, he was inventing a new perspective, not discovering a latent absolute. Science discovers things like Black Holes, it does not invent Black Holes. This is why Sociology sits so uncomfortably as a science.

Better then, to call it interpretation, though the human theatre in which it is made manifest could be known as affirmation, will or existential. The act (or drive) of forming a new arrangement (or network) of active elements (or players) would seem to be a consideration in identifying creativity present in the individual. Or alternatively identifying, as an absence or general avoidance, the non-creativity of an individual. Or even an entire society.

LATOURS ACTOR-NETWORK-THEORY

Actor-Network-Theory is principally a form of genealogy which prefers even-handed anthropological reports that find traces of developing or recently relations (the Network) between clusters of agents (the Actors) which need not be social or human or natural in form. It maps the simultaneous relations between that which is material and that which is conceptual. In ANT there is no axiological myth of a "society". Unlike classic Marxist sociology "it does not posit the existence of a thing called "society" (Latour, 2005 p5.). This sort of domain specificity allows classic sociology to make commentary on only those parts of other domains that displayed properties that sociology consider to be social. Or even gift sociological explanations to parts of domains that may not have needed a sociological explanation and do not benefit from it. Briefly put; "An actor is: Any material, i.e. human beings or nonhuman". And a network is, "Related actors in a heterogeneous network of aligned interests". (Jackson, 2015 p29-44)

This form of sociology firstly constructs their reality of an all-encompassing but fixed and defined contextual framework then dialectically (in the Hegelian tradition) make judgements as to which binary values need considering. This is their structure. The ANT form of post-structuralism does not attend to theories leading to explanations but to extensive descriptions that try to arrest briefly the flux of associations and re-associations. This being to *Reassemble the Social.* For this reason, Latour named the older approach the "sociology of the social" and for ANT "the sociology of associations" (Latour, 2005 p9.)

Design has been identified as important in ANT: "As a type of connector, design is not a separate cold domain of material relations…expanding the project of ANT to the field of design requires mobilizing this method's persistent ambition to account and understand the objects of design, its institutions and different cultures. This means we must

understand the <u>designerliness</u> of design objects, networks and artifacts, instead of trying to provide, by any means, a stand-in." (Yaneva, 2009 pp273-288.).

At the point where a thesis (like this one) examines a critical theory rather than deploy one, (essential using a critique to critique another) there needs to be a setting out, but not an apology, of how this is happening.

Human activity produces systems as a reflection of itself. Being human these Networks (I will call them Networks for now onward) are a full of genius and frailty as anything else man-made. And historically good ideas and right ideas have contended to produce networks which are evaluated at the time of their creation and retrospectively with the advantage and disadvantage of hindsight.

A network is constructed from components in its immediate contextual hinterland and connections to more distant components. Through the sociological method suggests that whatever the network is, it gathers to itself that which validates itself and assists its appearance of symmetry. The sociological method does not consider asymmetrical networks as being networks and excludes them. Or else generates networks that are artificially symmetrical, this is actually a fake coherency. ANT insists that asymmetry is the lived human experience, while symmetry stretches credulity. This is often a misunderstood element on ANT as its has been suggested that ANT is contra-coherent. This is to mistake the authority of structure for its coherency, but this mere appearance. A structure might well be coherent, and needs to be to transmit its character, but does so only be excluding all parts that that might make it incoherent. This is to mistake the "cohesive" nature of a structure against the "coherent" nature of the network. To say that Actor-Network-Theory is not cohesive is true, to say that ANT is incoherent in not.

If a critique of a network is sited in the same hinterland of the network, then the critique must be strongly suspected of not being a critique of the network but merely an extension of it. As all networks has merits and failings, you can't critique the failings of a network by using methods that are its merits. Indeed the status quo positively encourages critique, as encouragement of criticism is one of its merits.

Inevitably, if a criticism is levelled at theory for being, for example too linear. Then linearity should be absent from that criticism. If a theory is considered to be deflationary, the critique needs to be inflationary. If a theory is radical, then its critics must advocate quietism.

Unfortunately, neither is this enough, because the absence of the oppositions within a theory are only possible because of there being always potential opposites already within a theory. If a thing is present, it <u>cannot not</u> suggest the opposite which is the non-presence of the thing (its absence). Derrida (1978) would use the term "absence" and "presence" only in partial distinction The presence of a component in a theory depends upon the contra-absence. So, a simple binary critical opposition is dependent on that which is criticising. A thing that can chose to be present and non-present simultaneously is a mysterious entity and usually refer to as God. As Luxury Design is designed to suggest that only its positive values are present to the exclusion of any absences, it's not surprising we use the term "worship" when talking about Luxury Design. Derrida further introduces the terms "difference" and "trace", both used to maintain open-ended evaluations that resist re-enclosure back into a system. Derrida concept of Trace needs some explanation as a connection to an unsuspected Network. I can paraphrase this extract from Of Grammology (1978) "The trace is difference…it does not depend on sensible (meaning, sensory) plenitude, neither audible or visible, phonic or graphic…and although it does not exist…it is intelligible and permits the

articulation of signs" Here, I am taking "signs" to be the associations of Latours Network. "Trace" being an element Latour incorporated in ANT, so ANT itself has a genealogical link through Derrida. Caution is wise in quoting Derrida in that he has a notorious impish wit that has no problem stating that "trace" does not exist, yet it is intelligible? This is, I believe, to be his consideration that humans have some form of pre-life synthetic *apriori* knowledge in order for them to begin to contextualize their world. Suggesting that some things have always been here. It is a very luxury concept that looks to concepts of "prior sense" to assure their customers not simply they have origins bit possibly pre-origins.

All the above I have written to demonstrate that that ANT is not a stand-alone methodology (an invention) but a continuation of an existing movement. The consequence of this, is that a thesis, like this one, is at pains not to replicate the very thing its wish to criticize. If Luxury Design is monolithic, linear, balanced, and symmetrical then a critical thesis will need be amorphous, aphoristic, sets aside balance, and reaches for coherency instead.

This is not really an issue as the theoretical means that I am using is trying to construct coherent "associations", not mechanical historical linear social "connections". Coherence is to be preferred to balance as balance achieves the balance by discounting of any activity that would unbalance it. Coherency acknowledges the asymmetric. This, which is Actor-Network Theory, does not invent knowledge or fantasized connections. It is a method that is de-formatting out the social connections and reformatting into social associations, and does so without the need for invention, as it is interpretation. Which is why ANT is coherent about the challenge of interpretation. Meanings can change but only in the interaction (inter-actors) between the social actors. If meanings

are not changing, then the posited association is not therefore an association. So, ANT reveals non-associations as well as associations.

The final part of Latours "turn" and its consequences for Luxury Design is that in ANT the essential component is the inclusion of agencies that are non-natural or non-numan. Indeed in a lecture Arjun Appadurai unfavourably compared humans and non-humans "..unlike objects however, humans are seen as tainted or damaged by their histories – even when their past is seen as worthy of compassion, their future is seen as illegible and problematic".(Appudurai, 2005.) The preference for the non-human seems obvious. At this point Latour makes a comparison between cosmologists and sociologists. The universe in quantum physics terms is missing a vast quantity of mass for it to exist. Cosmologists call it Dark Matter and have been searching for it since the imbalance was discovered. Likewise, Latour believes that when sociologists find a gap in there their system (or his words "looking for the missing masses: Latour 2005) they should be finding the making up in non-human things. These might be called Objects. And Luxury has a high dependency on Objects. However, as a "mode" ANT seeks to remove the subject / object boundary. Here, the very word Object (Luxury Object) is in tension with the suggestion that it may not be object at all. Which might show that a Luxury Object would then not acquire its status through its existence within that definition. So, within a Latour genealogy, Objects have human characterises of human in as much as their influence / non-influence. They have authentic / non-authentic meanings.

Objects can be anything from subways to sandwiches. They are not in a hierarchy. Or rather ANT removes them from any contemporary assessment that puts them in a hierarchy. So, a birthday card and Rolls Royce Phantom Eight are both living amongst us, not as pets, but as players. These entities exert a gravity upon us as we do to

them. They are fellow actors on our stage. The suggestion being ultimately that we are players on their stage.

Latour would explain this as firstly the inclusion of objects into our world as fellow subjects but additionally a likely an enfolding of both into a new "techno-anthropocene". But this emerging state that ANT suggests is still being obstructed by an earlier construct. This was a simpler sociological anthropocene.

Latour insists that Actor-Network-Theory is a strategy not a theory (despites his own title) and looks at situations like a techno-anthropocene in networked ways, as a techno-anthropocene is itself a network. The following would be an example:

Firstly, we have to define the network ANT is exploring. A techno-anthropocene comprises the entire natural phenomena of earth on a planetary scale and then "not just our machines, but us humans too… social systems by which we interact with technology – factories, schools, universities, cities, airports, banks, political parties, the internet and … includes the domestic animals that we grow in enormous numbers to feed us, the crops that are cultivated to sustain both them and us, and the agricultural soils that are extensively modified to carry out this task" (UNESCO, 2018.) Noteworthy that UNESCO still refers to machines as "our" machines?

So, a basic view of what a techno-anthropocene looks like is a view out of a plane window (an incredibly popular luxury visual image). Latour used this example in a recent lecture. (Latour 2010) As he was travelling over the Artic and made an image through the window of the Artic Sea full of disintegrating ice packs with the foreground being the jet aero-engine of the Airbus A32-80. This image is itself an actor in luxury.

The foreground is the non-human / non-natural agency, and the background is the consequences for the Natural and Human world. Climate change, rising sea-levels,

destruction of environments. However, this however is a rather simplistic sociological arrangement. As there seems to have been a wilful omission of other actors in this network. ANT includes all the actors in the scene to create the techno-anthropecene.

This still begins with the jet aeroengine as a foreground against the backdrop of a supportive background of the sea. But that image is only possible because of non-human object called a Camera. So, within a modernist reordering of the concept of landscape the real important foregrounded object is the camera. But this would not be a camera. It would be a phone. So as "camera" both as word and object becomes a relic of cultural and semiotic obscurity, the phone is now our companion, though in our time, more of a prosthetic to our own body.

It does not stop there. The phone is only part of a network that laces us into the virtual internet. So, the foreground is now the Internet. This intensely non-human agency is still not the "active foreground" as the levers that operate this engine are the social media platforms. If we now look back across this space of actors, the only component left that has natural agency is the very distant and now barely visible sea. The human component being only a temporary mechanism until this predominantly non-human network finds a way of visual recording its own emerging existence. (Much as a baby is too young to do a selfie of itself). The terminus of this process is that the phone is not prosthetic to us, we are prosthetic to it.

To suggest that if you put a picture of jet plane and melting ice together you get a meaningful critique, now looks very naïve.

Therefore, the idea that "we" are the humans within nature, and "they" are the machines is no longer division that has any meaning. The older form posited the concept further in that we are the earth-bound and material and then there were other things

that had immateriality and transcendence. Forms (include ourselves) were merely striving representations, while the other things being non-physical was called Meta-physical. These things are not available to us as presences but available to us as exemplars of how the world could /should be. Which is how Luxury Design sees itself.

This is because once we accept, as shown through Actor-Network theory, that genealogically we are now the non-natural / non-human objects then our aspiration is towards not being better humans, but being better objects. This is our real connection to Luxury Design.

All objects develop into other objects. The earlier human view was that objects ought to develop into better objects or be discarded. But once this human view is removed there is no need for change or development and objects develop only as interactions with other objects. This has no particular criteria for betterment. And now as we too are objects in a world of objects, we can only see the world as interactions and trans-actions within which this spectrum. The other course being no interactions or transac-tions at all, in which case stasis produces a world that has no discernible characteristi-cally human ontology. At that point a distantly backgrounded anxiety produces an al-ienated society that has no option to believe only in here-and-now by doing the Right thing (which is the immediacy of "wants" that drives Luxury) yet senses that this is not the Good thing. Escape to the Good means setting aside our lives as non-human ob-jects and make judgements that return us to our anxious subjective selves that might have to consider constructing a future. This course, being too risky, we just buy the Bentley instead.

Moreover, if we are to use ANT as a search for associations we can see that ANTs re-quirement to allow all actors from all sources means that, in an issue like global warm-ing, we can't exclude social media as an actor. We can't assume this actor is positive

in its action. Other critical methods would probably include this conclusion too. However, ANT requires the enlargement of the scope of the critical field to include other methodologies too. Economics makes it plain that economies, particularly those that are or aspire to be neo-liberal, require surplus to be created for the movement of goods and capital. Capital uses new resources to ensure the destruction of older modes in order to survive. This requires massive stimulation of an economy and the consequent (quite literal) over-heating of that economy.

"Big Pharma" and "Industrial Tech" (and indeed coal-fired power stations) are merely opportunistically making profits from a situation where social media demand we all express our identity through consumerism including Luxury. Social media is not a moral or ethical entity or even vaguely coherent. The same Twitter that demands the switch to electric cars is the same Twitter that swoons over the mining the oceans for the lithium for car batteries. But either way the limitless ungrounded noise of both attitudes drives exponential economic growth one way or another. Actor-Network Theory would conclude that social media, (and like all other previous media, Newspapers, Radio, Film, and TV which social media has cannibalized in order to survive) drives demand in whatever way they are expressed. What is new to the situation is the globalized nature and reach of this media. The social media that is campaigning to cease the use of dirty jet fuels, is itself a fuel that burns on human dreams, ignites economies, leaving only traces of human resentment as the unbiodegradable ash. ANT cannot pronounce on what is wrong, but it can identify what is there.

Actor-Network-Theory would offer that it is social media that is melting the poles.

Sensing the truth in this, Luxury Design industry is decisively moving away from social media as generalized platform to limited custom-curated access to their products. Luxury really does not want to be part of global warming shaming. That's for poor people.

Unfortunately, the poor lack the resource to move from anthropocene to techno-anthropocene. This form of humanity is already suffering the consequences of remaining in the older form.

THE GOOD & THE RIGHT within ANT

For clarity here I DO NOT mean The Right as a political concept. The Right as described here does contain elements of behavioural conservatism, however this is not in itself a signature of a political stance.

Our towardness toward Luxury Design is framed by the Luxury Designs claim that is the reality that we all desire and it is natural for us to do so. In the modern psychoanalysis tradition, Lacan would say that "reality" and "the real" are not the same thing. Rather that reality is a construct that hides and suppresses the real so that it is only occasionally glimpsed through the cracks of a hermetic wall that both keeps us out of the space that would inform us of our identity and within a space that reassures us, that that is no other spaces than our current reality. And that this arrangement is the right and proper order of things, thus bringing together the reality of our materialism and the natural world of our metaphysical. The quote Malcolm Bowie from *Lacan* "...the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are an unholy trinity… could as easily be called Fraud, Absence and Impossibility, then the Imaginary, a realm of surface appearances which are inherently deceptive, is Fraud". (Bowie,1991 p112.) Note here how "fraud", much like Luxury Design, makes an appearance.

However, Luxury Design reorders through reversal two separate spectrums into one.

These being right and good / wrong and bad. The first, good and right, are evaluations of a moral issue. Good is an evaluation of worth, dependant on the circumstance.

Right is an evaluation of worth, independent of circumstance. Luxury Design claims to be good because first it insists it is right. This is its prime categorical imperative. And Luxury can indeed be very good, however this is just the cultural industry's misappropriation of the language of ethics, a complete reversal of the historical role of the good and the right. Today, the right claims priority over the good by extension of "obligation".

I think it is worthwhile here to quote from Charles Lamore's essay, *The Right and The Good* :

"Once the right is made prior to the good, a person can expect to find himself in situations where what he ought to do conflicts with what he wants to do and where this conflict will not disappear (as it must in the ancient view) in the light of a deeper understanding of what he wants, from the moral point of view, his self-fulfilment must then give way before the claims of morality. And to have internalized the superiority of these claims is what it means to live under the authority of conscience." (Lamore,1998.)

Luxury Design is therefore an authoritative and autonomous agency of power that claims it is good by virtue (quite literally) of it firstly, being right. And a society, like the individual above, must cleave to any power that claims the right to be right, and has the resource to exercise that notion. This means we don't buy Luxury Design because it is good, we buy it because it is right. That it is good, is accidental and secondary.

The mirror of this is the second reversal where wrong and bad have been conjoined. This means that if well-resourced, yet arbitrary power structure considers something is different, it will consider it wrong. From there is the short step to different means bad. Designers should be alert to those that would judge different as bad, if only because much of society considers designers to be "different". Unless of course, designers do not wish to be thought of as different?

It would be realistic to think that for designers to avoid the charge of "different" they must commit their designwork to be supportive of the right. This impacts directly on what the output of their designwork looks like. Conversely, Luxury Design and luxury designers actively demand to be charged with being different and suffer the opprobrium of those of the right.

This issue additional has the complication of the Luxury Design being "naturally" either right or good. Or simply that a product is Luxury because it is constituted naturally. Nature and that which is natural, revives Rousseau once again. His claims that nature is inherently good and right as a contrast to the horrors of inhumanity. However, Rousseau's claim that humans experience is the basis for human knowledge becomes defused as because as he is unwilling to ascribe that characteristic either to one as a reflection of God or to a science which he sees as dehumanized activity. This leads him to offer "Nature" as the paradigm.

This is the beginning of Romanticism. Unfortunately, romanticism is a mythopoeic activity that is key in the promotion of Luxury. "Naturally" we all want to go to an expensive spa, not simply because it is good or right but because the spas evoke the materials of the earthly realm that has deep-seated cultural warrants to back its proposal. Isn't expensive nature wonderful? The smell of a scented candle is proof that the mind smells the sea, the Himalayas or Peru while the body simply inhales the acetone, benzene, and toluene that the burning candle produces as carcinogens. Though Luxury would be aghast at that suggestion, as they hotly defend their superior scented product as being made with natural bees wax, not paraffin. When did bees become Luxury Insects?

All the above is leading to a popular social construct that might be called Luxury conscience. This is truly aspirational, and a very active design sector. It offers an object,

event or program that supports nature which allows conscience to be fully engaged, without the anxiety of defining which nature it is we are loving. Friends of The Anthropomorphically Wide-Eyed Tiger Cubs are well funded. Save The Cockroach continues to be ignored. So, the luxury of conscience is designed to allow its user full control of how they alone would define their conscience and the how much or little they chose to be active within it.

Meaning that, the luxury of conscience is now offered as bundle as a buy-one-get-one-free with the luxury of consciousness. This transfers to such areas of Luxury Design as "ethical investing". As individuals retreat from the Lacanian real to the Luxury of their personal reality they can defer the anxiety of guilt by conscious "awakening" every morning to news of how much profit their conscience is making.

We cannot assume that the creation of any network is a creation that derives from the good, and if a network is brought to fruition by deep resources alone then it is more likely to be the right. Luxury does this all the time. But there again, so do universities. It would seem that any method which returns the good as priority before the right might assist our understanding. Luxury and Luxury Design could benefit from an analysis that attempts that.

CHAPTER THREE

Having considered the theories origins and the aims of ANT as a foundation that has previously not been addressed in a critique of luxury design, this third chapter now deals with the application of theory to the study of design & Luxury Design and definitional issues as understood through ANT.

What is DESIGN?

This study must now turn to look at "what-is-design" because in some ways it oppositional to "what-is-Luxury-Design". And secondly a thesis within a design faculty has an obligation to consider the foundational nature of design

The issue of what-is-design is connected both to its historical realizations and to the contemporary mode of living. It might be said that we live in a post-modern society, so it is not unreasonable to see that design too has been formulated within this framework. The advent of the post-modernist society and its critical pose have leveraged great and beneficial changes to societal constructs that were previously thought of as unperishable and unchallengeable. The core instrument of post-modernism is deconstruction, and its central tenet is the unknowable nature of things and the unreliability of all narrative that would claim otherwise. Post-modernism is however, not without its real failings as a critical position or the consequences that those failings create.

The supercomplexity of contemporary society can be scrutinized through the compound eye of post-modernism but its outcomes reveal the plot but not the story. The plot being merely the mechanism. And, as this mode that disavows authorship, this

is not surprising. The result of the deconstruction is the iconoclastic reduction of meaning as separated from value. Usually these are former meanings, but as deconstruction is operant and destructive on all meanings at all times, there is no evaluation as to which meanings deserve destruction. As applied to design this leaves post-modernism no option but to deconstruct it into fragments. These fragments only exist because the entity that held them existed. In other words, Design must exist for to be deconstructed. This requires firstly a deliberate selection of components that have be assigned to category that post-modernism considers to be design. However, this is authorship. And this is the exact quality that post-modernism denies.

Secondly that components themselves within the category is highly contestable. This evokes the classic anthropologist paradox of finding things in an environment that was put there by the anthropologist to find. This unconscious re-ordering is a political act. It is the avoidance of this solipsism that is the task of a correct analysis of design. Yet, design as a category is firstly created by sociological method into an entity that can be deconstructed. Then the sociological method deconstructs it.

I would suggest that this deconstruction of design has tended to fall into three main modal forms. The first form is one that the sociological method recognises as existing but has no interest in ascribing value to. There is no need to enquire greatly on designs (or anything) created to be disposed of. Being disposable, I will call this the "trash"mode.

The second is the "pure" mode of design. This is highly value laden as its status demands it to be.

The third is the "hybrid" mode of design. This also attracts great status as it works on blends of concepts like functionality, price, accessible, makeability, appeal etc. Overwhelmingly, the hybrid is the largest category of design.

There is a senatorial feel to the pure mode, whereas the hybrid, more of the character of the tribune. I write all this just to label the trash mode with the quality of "slave". Being in existence merely to be disposed of this seems a reasonable description.

The pure mode is the product of rejecting of the prosaic mechanism of the hybrid design and an active disregard for the trash mode. It has transcendent qualities. The criteria for entry into this form are abstract and esoteric. And connects with a view of objects that accords more with platonic forms. These design objects are representative of virtues. Of course, one might say "whose virtues"?

This is the serious issue for the pure mode as it actively strives to distance itself from questions regarding the means of production. The pure mode is a type of metaphysics. It is a historic form, in that this might be called "classicism". Again, it is surprising that a classical object would have many supporters in a post-modern world as this form is readily deconstructed as an instrument of power and repression. This suggests that the pure mode is an example of ideology made tangible yet has transformed in some way and continues to thrive within a supposedly judgemental critical environment. Generally, any design fails when it seeks to impose ideology. "Public Man" negatively responds to Objects that seek to promote themselves overtly as containing qualities of superiority, particularly when there seem to be no immediate or overt demonstration of that superiority. Design is then resented.

The hybrid design works as demonstrable evidence of factors within the general framework of society. If cost, function, price, accessibility, and appeal are present in

society, then they appear in hybrid design. It is society's concerns made manifest. A hybrid design would likely be created for a future purpose, this spatial-temporal nature of design acknowledges the future by fulfilling emergent needs. This makes a claim of anticipating function. But functionality is still however just a claim. The forum for proof of the claim is its use by the public realm. This being the case it would be seen that designs exists only as contingencies within a culture and like all cultures is subject to the normative pressures of cultural determinism. Thereby making functionality (though not efficiency) as culturally determined as the concept of meaning. This brings us, briefly, to the difference between efficiency, which is not culturally determined, and function which is culturally determined. Society might desire a useless thing to be created for a specific function. An Object can be useless and have no function, but still be highly efficient.

A design activity for function-in-the-now must reflect the needs of human's existence, and naturally will be, indeed must be, as transient as all human existence. The experience of designers is that the Objects they help create have a short life span. The objects of hybridization must therefore become redundant, and this is neither surprising nor undesirable. This is because, unlike art or architecture (its principal adjacencies) which are super-categories framed as paradigmatic of enduring social values, hybrid designs enduring quality is its human frailty and immediacy. What appears in the shop, later appears in the car boot sale. By this proximity of its match to human society is hybrid design measured. Hybrid design works when it fits our natural human instinct for dynamic strategies that inform our existence. Its handiness. Conversely the adoption by hybrid design by global commercial entities have caused such a success of these hybrids that they dominate our lives. However their power

comes from And now these hybrids, empowered by resource, have created rigidity and stasis rather than dynamism. It is now difficult to be wholly positive about the design input into airlines, brands, apps, power companies, insurance, the internet et al. The insistence that these designs are for our benefit is sounding hollow.

What is LUXURY DESIGN?

The contemporary world has put "necessity" on a spectrum. Though in probability it always was, as the definition of necessity is a continuously evolving redefinition. But that luxury and necessity could be on the same spectrum is the contemporary revolution. In other words, once there was spectrum that traced necessity from the basic needs of human survival to the level of comfort needed to recognise that human existence was more than merely the struggle to survive. Luxury, however, was never on a spectrum as it was a signature nexus point definition. No-one expressed doubt about what it was. "What is Luxury Design?" is a very contemporary question. This is caused by luxury moving off a singular point, to become a sliding scale within a zone that includes necessity too. My luxury is your necessity.

However, objects, and here I do not mean just luxury "things" like interiors, furniture, cars, Hermes handbags, Rolexes but all objects in the sensory world, these could be trees, dogs, clouds, colours, wind…anything in the sensory world, are imaginative portals through which we pass to achieve a particular mental state. We might take a trip to walk in the park to achieve a state of relaxation. The park is the object we are using as the imaginative portal. As the zip-wire extreme sports trip is to another portal. Or a visit to a football match. Once any of these trips have been made, they are formed into a mythopoetic experience that is used by its owner as a different access portal, over

which he has better control. (Mythopeosis being how an individual can mythologize his own life) However, this newly imagined event can acquire all the narrative structure that the actual event can't provide. With practise by using the right tools, the activity can be made to happen distantly, vicariously, virtually so that the narrative can be in construction before the actual event. And of course, it can be repeated later as a memory and through using these tools improve the quality of the memory. A personal dependency for this sort of activity in the end comes not in the event but in the tools. Unfortunately, these tools could be other people. Meaning some people use other people to be used as mythopoetic objects. This is the basis for narcissism and the consequences of creating the true self / fake self (Winnicott,1960 pp 140–57.) Luxury very much exhibits attitudes. This would suggest that the world is never more than our capacity or resource to modulate our mythopoetic experience of it. Inevitably the real event or the object becomes a hindrance to our experience of that event or Object if it does nor successfully perform the task of portal. In the end, if the interaction with the park, match, dog, cloud just won't provide the right sort of memory that an individual (or a society) currently believes it needs, then being-in-the-world becomes problematic. This might manifest itself as anxiety.

However, Luxury Objects (which are rarely acquired to be gifted away) do seem to allow far greater control over the self-mythologizing. As they are they specifically acquired for personal activity, perhaps this activity does not produce anxiety in the owner? The luxury object and the owner are things in the world, but unlike the previous events or objects, the interaction here is so deep that the consciousness is fused with both activity and the moment so powerfully that consciousness itself is transcended, then there is no self-realised knowledge which alerts the consciousness to reflection. Or to comparison. Or to evaluate and make judgements? What sort of

person is forced to suffer the anxiety of judging correctly? Not Caesar. The Luxury Object is offered up to permit the individual the pleasure of a narcotic relationship with the world, where his state where consciousness is untroubled. This used to be called happiness. And would fit very well to any philosophy (say, Schopenhauer?) that concludes that happiness is the reward for activities that free you from pain of your existence. Meaning that, unlike those objects in the world that eventual come to remind you of co-existence and co-authorship of the fractured world, Luxury objects provide a relief from the anxiety of being.

Therefore, Luxury Design stands apart from the everyday design and presents a critique of it. Principally because design is the making of the uncertain future and the consequential, yet-to-be-written narrative of experience which creates anxiety. Whereas Luxury Design is the remaking of the past through rediscovery of a wholly known narrative experience of certainty that usages the individual's anxiety. In Luxury, there is a re-memory of a past that never was or was thought to be lost. This is its mythologizing character.

Luxury is different to the everyday. If we were to consider Rolls-Royce Phantom, it would be a surprise that the function of its 6.75Litre 563bhp V12 engine was to allow the smooth walking pace required to make circuits of Harrods. As the physical size of super yachts continues to grow, manning the latest the boats need fewer crew, and if necessary, they can be satellite controlled. There are boats with fuel tanks of 1 million Litres. Technologically they are so efficient they have a cruising range that make some of them trans-atlantic. Unfortunately, they are so big that are few harbours big enough for them. No need to charge your automatic Rolex, the mechanism is so sophisticated it winds itself. For decades. The real expensive ones, of course, are never worn, they just accumulate value in specialist banks. Either way, the amount of

applied design content that goes into these Luxury Objects is colossal. But Luxury Design is not about function. Just as function and efficiency are not the same. Neither is function and utility. Function is culturally determined. Function and utility are not the same thing, because an object can have a Function with no Use or no Usefulness (Utility). A Luxury object cannot therefore be Luxury if it has Utility.

And now we have on the same deconstructed palette, choices and admixtures containing efficiency, function, utility, luxury and necessity. This isn't helpful, though it seems typical of a post-modern approach.

There are the usual inadequate concepts of luxury. Objects being luxury because of factors such as expensive, rarity, exclusivity, quality of construction, quality of materials but none of these are exclu- sive explanations either singularly or in combination. These are quantities rather than qualities. Luxury does indeed depend upon being, the most expensive, rarest, biggest, fastest, highest et al in all types of categories of quantity. This is the power Numeriscism, to claim value and meaning through excess of quantities. However, all these descriptions are not unreservedly connected to Luxury Design. The above could describe a Rolex, but just as easily an MRI Scanner.

The sociological method would say that for many people an MRI Scanner is a luxury. This is undoubtedly true. In effect, it is the right answer. Unfortunately, it is not the good answer. This is because it is a further refusal to answer the question "what is Luxury in a Rolex?" by deflecting or redirecting enquiry away from the objects yet again. Once again, the right is unquestioned, and the good ignored. ANT would like this question answered.

Similarly, there are concepts of Luxury Design that are sited in marketing or finance that are unhelpful for Luxury sited in design. I have heard of "affordable luxury" and

"consumer-centric luxury" and "The democratisation of luxury". In all these titles I would prefer to substitute the word "Narcissism" for the word "Luxury". Although you could just as easily substitute the words healthcare or education. These concepts do not bear on Luxury Design as design.

Finally, if design is deconstructed into modal forms, then what form is luxury placed in. It is unlikely to be the pure mode. The pure mode stands separate from worldly agencies. You could not find anything more worldly than Luxury. It is unlikely to be the hybrid mode, as one of the ybrids cornerstone qualities is its utility. Useful luxury is a social fallacy.

This leaves the category of the trash mode. Just to recall this forms make-up, it is a posited concept only. It has no content beyond it being a collection of junked ideas that other and better forms of design can be more easily deconstructed into. This sounds like Luxury. Yet it also sounds like anything (anything at all) that has no content but is clearly, like Luxury, draws on popular appetites. Which means it is either cut off from academic approval, like the pure mode, or cut off from the economy because of its intransigence and is therefore unlikely to be the hybrid mode.

The only thing that can bind and motivate the trash mode it is will or power. Will or power are the powers invested into this trash mode that gives it its authority. These motive forces can then allow luxury to draw on huge resources of global commercial and political entities. Both its impurity and its unwillingness to be rolled-out then becomes its signature. Luxury Design accepts no other version of the world because it need not accept any other version.

This gives luxury a powerful and undisputable hegemony. Meaning ultimately, whatever we decide is Luxury IS Luxury because we have the will or resource to say it is.

Simultaneously, Luxury connects to its adherents through its seemingly non-aligned attitudes. Politically this is called Popularism. In summation, Luxury Design relieves the pain of living, disconnects you from anxious reflection, allows the concept of the individual to flourish, is a bulwark against institutional determinism and gives access to foundational historical truth. And it glitters.

Luxury is The Peoples Design. All $1.2 Trillion Dollars of it.

"…The Rolls-Royce is famous for its quietness. It's said that in the car, all you can here is the ticking off the clock. How would a Luxury designer ensure that, however that car is designed, this would always be the case?"

Make the clock louder.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THEATRE OF ACTORS IN LUXURY DESIGN

In Chapters two and three the theoretical origins and the aims of ANT as a foundation for a critique of luxury design was established together with an application of the theory to the study of Design & Luxury Design and definitional issues as understood through ANT.

This chapter now moves to connect to the key actors in an application of ANT to luxury design. The concept of Interpassivity and ANT, looking at the Luxury Object, Kitsch and Luxury Aesthetics, Character Masks and Resentment are examined closely in relation to the research aims and objectives.

SOME ACTORS IN LUXURY DESIGN

The nature of these actors is that in some way they repeatedly leave traces outwards from Luxury Design. Either singly or in combination or all together at some point these play a part in the objects life. There are many more, as this list is not and cannot and should not be comprehensive. For once the division between the human and the non-human is collapsed the object responds as does the human to any phenomena. Principally however the interplay between the human and the object is connected by the same networks as human to human or object to object. These associations between us and other things are shown up by enveloping Luxury Design by Actor-Network-Theory. ANT is fundamentally anthropological. Anthropology studies the human society but looking at other grouping that are first posited as possible mimetic constructs of human society, observing them carefully and descriptively, without commentary then transferring them to human society for evaluation.

Anthropology actively looks for the genealogy of humans and identifies back-grounded origins and emergent themes. These headings below are the back-grounded origins and emergent themes of the Luxury Object.

These headings are simultaneously the areas that a professional designer would need to consider in the practise of designing luxury, and therefore also areas of study for any potential student of Luxury Design.

They are in no hierarchy or order.

INTERPASSIVITY and ANT

Luxury Design is connected with a social theory called Interpassivity. This theory was first put forward by Robert Pfaller in his book *The Aesthetics of Delegated Enjoyment* (Pfaller,1992). It has been extended to apply the theory in into a wide variety of subjects which cover, social situations, objects, and events.

Slovoj Zizek wrote that this theory is "...Interpassivity is one of the great founding texts of social thought, on par with classics like Max Weber"

The theory suggests that the individual in contemporary society can sometimes allow others, not simple work in your place, or further to consume in your place, but consequently wishing others to enjoy themselves in our place. Critically, this includes objects, events, and situations. Meaning that whereas most of our interrelationships with objects are active (interactivity) this theory is suggesting that some interrelationships are passive (interpassivity). This has strong meanings in luxury as desires for luxury are commonly thought of as being heightened and direct connections to ANT

via the prospect of granting the status of enjoyment to objects themselves that take the responsibility of living parts of our life for us.

In Luxury Design, as in all lived experience, we all interact with our world. So Interpassivity does not stand apart from interactivity. It's a mode of interactivity. All activity has values attached to it. Maybe most activity can be called "necessary". It must be assumed the interaction with Luxury Design is by choice and is pleasurable, if only that it assumes the activity is devoid of the compulsion of the necessary. The necessary being the cost we are grudging pay to the demanding world.

There are activities that, when engaged in them, mean you become lost to the world in that activity. This is where you and your activity lead you fusing together. This would be you, your being in time, and your activity into one. This is interactivity. However, this is a very intense form of it. Mostly Interactivity is not that intense. Nevertheless, activity is in some way something you are "in". And to be engaged in this reveals itself to you or you to it.

Interpassivity is an activity where you are "along-side" the object of your activity. Better to say you are "proximal" to it. Engaged but of sufficient distance that the activity isn't sufficient to reveal either you to it, or it to you. But that the activity can extract, without conditions or evoking judgement, those things which can relieve your anxiety. This is a frictionless transfer. This is the world that doesn't demand payment. Naturally this mode of activity is a very appealing situation. (Personally, as a creator of Luxury Design and being an observer in that world, I can see that Luxury Design displays these characteristics of interpassivity most clearly.)

The title of the book itself needs exposition. I see no problem with "delegated" however both "enjoyment" and "aesthetics "needs a closer look. "Aesthetics" because

Pfaller I suspect is not using the word in its classic meaning and enjoyment because, though it seems similar to pleasure, it is not only a different concept but be likely to be state that is evoked by Luxury. Briefly, enjoyment is outwards towards the enjoyment-providing-event, and pleasure is inwards towards the pleasure-providing-reflection. This has consequences when we look to Luxury to give us enjoyment or pleasure. When we enjoy something, it is because we have happily, yet mostly subconsciously found a form of category to put it in. Thus, becoming an entity that can be consumed and communicated.

Generally, if we are encouraged to create highly personal categories the opportunity to share meaningful communication is inhibited. Specifically, if the object itself demands us to respond by isolating it in within a specialized category (as an example: Luxury Design) then the specialized language and communication of its meanings distort and undermine the socially shared community of sense and category. In this case, it is likely the object would dominate us. Particularly if the dominance of the object is requiring us to enjoy it via anticipation or retrospection or particularly postponement. The latter seeming very like a delegated response by enjoying the object by not having to hand and possibly never wanting it to hand. In this way we can enjoy keeping an idea rather than owning an object. Particularly if the ownership is promoting anxiety or feelings of culpability. This guardianship causes in the owner the pleasing sensation of noble obligation without any chance of the obligation being called to account. This is the sort of Luxury much in evidence in major public exercises in Interpassivity like the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos.

The Luxury Object is creating a phantom narrative that only requires the Object to actualize as little more than souvenir. The Luxury Object being carefully designed to provide a perfect memento of a journey we never took. This however engages with

Lacanian model of the psyche in that it is part of Lacans triumvirate of orders. The interactive or interpassive response to the Luxury object is characteristic of the symbolic order and its weaving together with imaginary order, both being in tension with the real. (Lacan, 1991.). Luxury here is framed: as a need by reality, as a demand by the imaginary and as desire by the symbolic. In order for Luxury Object to stay as luxury the response from the individual must be to revert to the imaginary order to prevent a symbolic dominance.

The LOOK of LUXURY and ANT

Luxury Objects conform strongly to principles that hardly vary across sectors. Here, we are writing about objects but they display the same principle in services or policies. They are several principles but the prime one is that of "totality". This is because most luxury items have the backing of resource sufficient to ensure this. In objects like Ferraris, the hegemony is global. This is unlike most objects in the world, both made and imagined, and similar to human life that are subject to contingences and time. Most made objects cannot achieve totality as they are made in an environment of uncertainty by humans that similarly live uncertain lives. Not so Luxury. They are made in an environment of this-is-how-the-world-should-be.

So how does the object in its appearance transmit the concept of this is how the world should be? Firstly, you have to consider how should the world be? In short, it should be a world of certainty that promotes meaningful ideas of simple truth. The personal and public doubts go away and a harmonized future stretches out.

This isn't how the world is, however. But it is in Luxury Design. So how does a Luxury Object visually transmit those qualities?

This has a long history. It's the usual representations that say "don't worry, all is well.". It's full of certainty and confidence that these visual values will take us to a brighter future via an even brighter past. There was a tacit public understanding of the centre holding and providing a secure, untroubled continuity. The community understood that "luxury for a few" was the inevitable consequences of a society's structure. That community of sense has now disappeared, and though there has always been Luxury Design, its contemporary role is to provide, for the privileged, powerful support in an age where most individuals has been forced back into an exposed situation that asks them to provide for themselves what society will not. Moreover, a great many of the unprivileged in society now aspire to be sheltered by Luxury Design. Consequently, how Luxury Design visually "speaks" becomes one of many socially differentiated languages in contemporary use.

Visual Totality is the key in which Luxury Objects speak and its principal channel is social media. Indeed, it's truer to say that the Luxury Object is possibly today only accessed as web content. This is because we are no longer living in the Age of Commodity. (Capitalism) We now live in the Age of Images. (Globalisation) So there is possibly no longer any need for actual commodities, even luxury ones. Yet their design and meaning will still not change.

Visually, the object must simultaneously be overt and covert in its design. It must speak and yet keep mysteriously silent. The outer certainty must evoke the inner truth, and as owner of that object you are allowed access to its secret knowledge. You'd expect profundity to be kept in a nice expensive box. Materials, construction method, exclusivity, complexity, status, historical meanings, price, precision and availability all play a part in Luxury Design. This why Luxury Design is so difficult.

Incidentally, there are objects that contain all those criteria and have huge similarity to Luxury Objects that are not luxury. Perhaps like the 12th C Church altarware on this thesis frontispiece? I have seen many such pieces. Sociological method would condemn them as luxurious representations of coercion within the doxa of formal religion. Actor-Network-Theory would trace this out to the the sublime or sacredness. They seem inviolate. This does need research, but it may connect to the "makingness" and the human hand that did it. This is a pre-reformation Object, so no amount of the designing of this object would suffice its dizzying intended Function. Design has therefore always been tricky, but the advantage of ANT is that it does not just see objects solely conceptual identity but allows us to share the human action in its creation. Has the craftsman's faith transferred into the design and materiality of the chalice sufficient, even now, to ward off any slide into mere luxury? Even to ward off an alternative Ideology? ANT would see that, within a faith, the act of making is a celebration of a deity's transference of its power through the hands of the craftsman, and into the object. This produces a depth of totality far deeper than simple visual totality. It would seem craftsmen from all faiths have been able to produce objects of greater visual totality than secular designers. The issue is now; faith in what? And it must be understood that, in Richard Sennetts words (from *The Craftsman*) "…we are more likely to fail as craftsmen due to our inability to organise our obsession than because of our lack of ability" (Sennett, 2008.)

The contemporary mode of visual presentation is overwhelmingly virtual and digital. The currency of an Object is importantly augmented by its quality of sharedness, however it is the technology itself that opens the secret door into the objects real value. The software technology that conceptualizes, shapes, forms, makes and distributes the object is indivisible from its luxury status. All the criteria above can be

fully accessed and displayed by this technology. And although any objects can be so developed, the Luxury Object has these criteria in excessive amounts. A plastic kettle is designed and made with the same processes, but this object has no wish to reveal or be prideful of its lowly components. But luxury delights in this minutia. And the technology gives precise control over its presentation. For instance, luxury watch design is wholly dependent on 3D Engineering Software (on which CGI is based). The design, complexity, fit, application of materials, testing is all virtual. But then so is the imagery. This allows you to see images of how the inside of your luxury watch is made. (You see these particularly going through places like Geneva Airport where images of watches as advertising are enlarged to super wall-size images) These images of the depths of the watch look barely credible. The complexity, the superbness of the design. Imagine if you owned this watch, the image is big enough to step into, walk around it, own it. Here surely is evidence that, at the right price, you can own an object that seems to suggest a divinity at work? How could these not be how-the-world-should-be?

However, these barely credible images are just that. Actually, you cannot see into a watch. Even a powerful loupe (a portable magnifier) will not get you that clarity of image. It's all CGI. There's just no way of knowing if that's the real inside of your watch. The human eye cannot resolve that detail. Even a camera lens couldn't to do. Though I have noticed some nice Photoshop touches that have added blur to part of images to suggest a lens has tried to photograph it. Its suggesting that, even a wonderful Swiss lens, wasn't quite good enough to capture its full majesty.

It seems once again we are back to trust. And why we chose not to think these are Fakes. Furthermore, the hypereality of this images are also only possible because of contemporary technology. There are archive cut-away drawings of post-war

Rolexes, but they do not have the overwhelming visual power of a high-definition CGI image. But then no-one doubted that those Rolexes looked like that inside.

All this produces a "look". However, the look is only a manifestation of drivers of luxury. It is the transmission of look that is indivisible from the luxury itself, and this depends on the quality and manipulation of the software, and this is defined by the resource available to the luxury manufacturer. So, whereas a mainstream manufacturer has neither the time nor resource to put against products, a luxury manufacturer does have that resource. Consequently, the means to communicate the look of luxury is the luxury. This is now playing out as a preferred aesthetic for many people. After all, if luxury is aspirational and preferred as a life-style, then the look of luxury is the preferred aspirational visual schema for all aspects of the life-style. This would mean that the clinical, denatured, absolutism of the luxury watch even turns up in the design of their homes. I know it does. I design them that way.

You can set this on a background of immaturity of the image-making tool. Frankly, 3D Software as a medium is clunky and time-consuming. Rather like fresco, it requires expertise and still is no guarantee that the image is of any quality. Particularly as this medium is still in its immature stage of believing a faithful rendering of nature has some merit. Other mediums (oil paint, marble sculpture, even photography) abandoned the pursuit of realism a long time ago. Contemporary software is still enthralled by this. Actor-Network-Theory however, sees this preference in the immaturity of the class that demands Luxury. Not actually its juvenile capriciousness but as a class, buoyed up and funded by globalisation rather than capitalism, has not existing long enough to develop a mature disinterest in reality. Indeed if you extend the concept of realism into Mark Fishers concept of Capitalist Realism (Fisher, 2005.)

then you can see that the only thing that is valuable is that which is visually part of a social adherence to a "business ontology" (Fisher, 2005.)

Therefore, a signature of luxury is excessive realism in visual schema. Naturally the object needs to be made of materials that maximise this effect. The next question would need be, what effects do this software do best? What does 3D Studio Max do better than anything else? And if you look at Luxury Objects they have a tendency to be opaque, hard, shiny, heavy and close-ratioed colour spectrum. These are the surfaces that are best to recreate digitally also. You can take those criteria and apply it to a Luxury Holiday or Luxury Investment Portfolio and thats because as objects, the humans that enjoy these pastimes like to imagine themselves as opaque, hard, shiny, heavy and close-ratioed. Which means incidentally that luxury looks very masculine. Generally, this would suggest that our global contemporary aspirational visual schema and the lives it illustrates are based on the limitations or inadequacies of the available software or tool. And historically that was probably always the case. In that as Luxury Object (as indicated earlier) is just an extreme extension of an ordinary object, then the look of both is bounded to time-constrained technology (chisel or software). Any advanced (real or virtual) constructional method that produces a different look that sets up a threatening dissonance will be not judged to be luxury. Being freed from human causality and the deterioration of material through time, these non-humans luxuriate in the company of other immortals. Luxury has to look immortal.

RESENTMENT and ANT

Generally, Design fails when it seeks to impose ideology. Public Man negatively responds to any objects (not just Luxury Objects) that seek to promote themselves

overtly as containing qualities of Superiority but actually contain the covert qualities of Inferiority. This is because if the presentation of the object, in some way, has a quality of what-it-is-claiming is not reconcilable with quality of what-it-is, then the object and the design is then resented. This Resentment (Ressentimente) can be both active and passive. I am saying qualitative assessment here, as quantitative assessment avoids this tension. The trick of Luxury is that it avoids this sort of qualitative assessment. Resentment is evoked when the space between the two qualities is perceived as being a form of ridicule. Luxury would never make that error.

This concept of resentment is from a variety of sources: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre and from contemporary sources like Peter Sloterdijk. The latter suggesting that design is complicit in repression of social and individual freedoms. The societal response being inwardly directed rage. I feel that resentment an actor in Luxury Design, because as Sloterdjik (2015) points out "…modernity invented the Loser". And it would be absurd to "claim that rage's best days are behind it". (SloterdjIk,2015.) If resentment and the rage it produces are in human society, are they also in our fellow objects? For example, despite the palliative care I demonstrate toward my collection of classic film cameras, I know they could only be regarded as losers. Here was an object that was instrumental in making the 20th Century happen. Now theyre reduced to suffering the retraining and rehabilitation as many humans have been. And the humans are furious about this. Bearing in mind that losers have little access to society, this is not surprising. Particularly when rage has been suppressed as its seen as anti-social whereas mere petulance is seen as regrettable yet tolerated and inevitable within luxury life-styles. But suppose designers themselves had no access to the society?

Meaning the possibility that designers themselves are both producers and channels of resentment which manifests itself in the Luxury Objects they help create. Apparently, the much-recorded historical antipathy of car workers to their production of cars they cannot afford is not something that affects the designers of Luxury Objects. ANT would wonder why these designers are exempt from these feelings? I am a Luxury Designer too. Is anyone going to record how I feel about? Or does society assume my complicity? When we hear the oft heard "Luxury Design is not real design" are real designers saying this? That sounds like Resentment to me. It would be beneficial if research (which I am hoping to move forward with) would examine, via ANT, the possibility that contemporary prejudices and negative beliefs within the design community actually communicate themselves to the objects they are designing in contradiction to bland hope that designers are "building a better future". If you've ever felt rage for waiting an hour to get through the thickets of a customer-friendly company answering system then recall that this, as a system, was designed too.

LUXURY, KITSCH and ANT

The issue with Kitsch starts with the issue of reality. Anthropologically, reality as a concept connects to the Language of Human Survival. Language grew up on warnings that, if ignored, were fatal. Contemporary supercomplexity makes accessing the real ever more unlikely, just as human survival is less a human issue.

Today there are surpluses of time and material, which removes the need for alertness to survival as a means to access the real. It's almost a commonplace trope to believe that reality is a contested, relative space, full of the possibilities of self-

determination. Who-is-to-say-what-is-real? The knowledge that this concept is just localised in the First World does not seem to dent the concept. The majority of world still regard "who-is-to-say-what-is-real?" as an example of a luxury society. A second bowl of rice, might seems more luxurious.

So, when we get definitions of kitsch suggesting it's a type of fake, it hard to avoid using the same methodology. Who-is-to-say-what-is-fake? The suggestion being that kitsch, like all forms of fake, is a mimetic activity that contains the superficial form of reality but directed away from authenticity comment.

This just leaves us with who-is-to say-what-is-authentic? This doesn't help.

The response has been to search for the verifiable by placing reality into objects. This materialism is obviating the need for understanding of the real by transfer those understandings to the tangible.

Tangible objects are good enough as stand-ins for most things. Hence the rise of Material Culture. This means, though we can set aside the real as a benchmark, we must use the tangible as spectrum onto which to place objects as representations.

By then applying judgements to objects they then appear on this spectrum with a scale of individuated values. So important to society is this scaling of values, that the scale must not be devalued by any object that devalues that scale. Thus fakes appear. At this point ANT would want to look at Fakes in all its forms, as the fake within ANT is still an actor in the network and might be the prime actant?

Fakes seem to appear in a category on the material scale but are variable within the category. Consequently, the semiotics of fakes produce concepts as far apart as "copy" and "clone". There is also: facsimiles, replicas, models, counterfeits, repro-duction, and frauds. And finally, kitsch.

These are not synonyms but places on a spectrum with real signature qualities, like essences, they are not really transferable. So, within language there are highly developed understandings imparting our close human relationship with copies.

Objects will have multiple shared qualities but only one (or very few) qualities that are definingly necessary. Meaning, what is that necessary quality within that object that, were it not present would prevent it from being that object?

A **Model** of the Millennium Falcon contains the quality of Scale. A **Replica** of a Ford Shelby Cobra contains the quality of Historicism. A poster of *Breakfast at Tiffanys* is a **Reproduction** containing the quality of Homage.

These are not slices of reality, these are slices of fake. This spectrum extends all the way to simulacra where the fake is no longer is a stand-in for reality but is preferred reality with no original or to clones which are not copies but more of the same thing. All-in-all we have an important daily interaction with the concept of fake. But all this depends on our trust that all these things are fake. Scepticism towards that fakeness erodes the depth of that trust.

So, if you buy a Gucci handbag off the pavement of the piazza in front of the Basilica of San Lorenzo for 10 Euros, then the handbag is a fake. But we all know that. Importantly however, we can trust in that. There is nothing in this object that contains the quality of forgery. We know it is a fake. Therefore, there is no forgery. However, a forgery is a fake that truly seeks to deceive. It uses our trust against us.

What sets kitsch apart as a fake, is that contained in kitsch is the quality of this-is-how-the-world-should-be. And that is the forgery. A forgery is a covert and active attempt to deceive.

Which means that ANT would not place kitsch in the real / fake category but trace it out to the truth / deceit Category. The reason the hub-caps on a Rolls-Royce don't go around is not to suggest it is superior to other cars, but to question why all cars can't be as honest. It's asking you to share a world of similar "right-thinking" people. It's an expensive mechanical trick, of course, but that's not important for the buyers of Rolls-Royce who consider themselves to be right-thinking people. After all, that's how the world should be?

Actor-Network–Theory would show that the only difference between a greetings card with a pink tearful kitten, and Rolls-Royce Phantom VIII is that amount of resource that brought to bear in convincing you that this-is-how-the-world-should-be. One is a printed pasteboard card, the other an astronomically expensive supercar. But as both trace out to the same thing, they're both kitsch. And this is why kitsch is powerfully normative. Luxury Design is about producing objects with the resource to convince you this-is-how-the world-should-be, whereas a printed card does not have that resource. But resource is the only difference. So, if all luxury is kitsch and everyone aspires to luxury, then clearly, we are a society that aspires to kitsch because at very least we know its true status. Which is one of untruth. However, Luxury is the forgery in this case, as real fake does not seek to deceive. Importantly, kitsch is not just found in objects, but in everything from academic concepts to industrial processes to political parties to holidays-of-a-lifetime. It has been suggested that kitsch is what every white-middle-aged-man rejects. This is just another kitsch suggestion by another group of right-thinking people. Kitsch is an ideology, and, like all shared illusions, it cannot bear interrogation. Actor-Network-Theory breaks down its insidious ability to envelope by deceit and interrogate it from its distant sites. It is not surprising that the best example of how Kitsch works comes from an eastern European

dissident who lived under totalitarian rule. To quote Miles Kundera from his book

"*The unbearable lightness of Being*"

"Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to
see children running on the grass!
The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children
running on the grass!"

 Join in! Vote Kitsch! Be a right-thinking person today!!

THE LUXURY OBJECT in the Theatre of Character Masks within ANT

The Marxist concept of Character Masks is in-play with social relations in society.

However (following Appadurai *The Social Life of Things*) it's reasonable to suggest

that inanimate, inorganic objects themselves have social relations between us and

between each other. (see Appadurai, 2019 Video) This is core concept within Actor-

Network-Theory.

So, if we have masks, then objects themselves must also have masks. The marxist

concept is a taken from Marx's early study of Greek theatre transposed to the inter-

actions between social classes. The Luxury Object stands on the stage presenting

itself to the world of luxury consumers. The mask of the object hides the hinterland of

production and resource. The consumer has a mask too, for the receiving of the

idea that the object is presenting. For Lacan this is a form of Prosopopeia, which de-

fined as "a figure of speech in which an absent or imaginary person (or Object) is

represented as speaking or acting." Furthermore, "The attribution of speech to an

entity that is commonly perceived as unable to speak (nature, commodity, truth it-

self…), for Lacan is the actual condition of speech." (Zizek, 2007 p2.)

Whether the consumer knows or cares whether he has a mask is not a concern of the object which is designed to speak to the mask, not the person. Looking around, the person sees the object communicating with the other people and not knowing whether the object is speaking to the person or the mask the person assumes that there is some personal fault in his inability to receive this message. The choice is, acquiring the correct mask or in some way disavowing the message.

Seemingly the person must desire the mask as much as the object as the mask is the portal to the understanding. The Luxury Objects mask has a gaze that surveys the recipients of the object, but additionally looks back to its producers with a different mask, one that pleads its near opposite to the outward facing mask. The Janus-like quality of the Luxury Object allows the object to be both celebrated and defended by both sides of an opposition that would probably be hostile to each other. Without the object neither side could communicate, meaning the object mediates all messages thus giving to the object a mythical quality that resists destruction as its liquidity moves to simultaneously to thwart and encourage both demand and supply and yet protect its own existence and maintain its autonomy. This is the mythopoesis of the object.

Faced with a role in which the individual is a minor actor, the only option, in order to separate the authentic self from the social self, is to only live behind his mask of character. This is directly relatable to the understanding of Luxury Objects. These objects present an outward appearance of excellence yet may have personal backgrounds in humble or even immoral origin.

The LUXURY OBJECT in the Aesthetics of ANT

Aesthetics might be thought of as an earlier form of ANT. ANT traces out to nodes on a network that need descriptors, but then can be assessed into similarities (associations). This is essential to assess what it is and what are its meanings? This is the historic method used in aesthetics. Therefore an overview of aesthetics is important to understand ANT if only because both are materially concerned with lived experience, rather than conceptualized experience.

The central analytical tool in aesthetics is Categorization. Unless the thing under consideration is placed in the correct category then the analysis is unlike to reveal its essence. Aesthetics, however, is currently regarded unfavourably in academic study. This is due to a feeling that aesthetics is about art and beauty and left to people called connoisseurs.

John Dewey would not agree. As an educational pragmatist he wanted aesthetics to come out of the confines of museums and into the lived experience of the community and denounced non-essential dualisms as high & low or material & ideal. In *Art as Experience* (he condemns the move to put space between the aesthetic and the mundane as it has affected "…the practice of living, by driving away aesthetic perceptions that are necessary ingredients of happiness, or reducing them to the level of compensating transient pleasurable excitations…" (Dewey, 1934 p16.)

In complete contrast to Deweys pragmatism of aesthetics, there are supporters from the Phenomenology tradition.

Here is Gadamer on the subject of refiguring aesthetic subjectivity. He writes the role of aesthetics; "…almost defines the role of philosophical hermeneutics: its task is to

retrace the path of Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind until we discover in all that is subjective, the substantiality that determines it.." (Gadamer, 2013 p302)

The existentialists insists that aesthetics be studied because both art and design can be the motors of social change and as freedom of expression that assists the freeing of the individual and his capacity to understand the world. This being the breaking out of the confines of what the world determines through the "Imaginary." And in his book "*The Imaginary*" Sartre comments on the expansive world and anything that attempts to format it: "… there is a kind of overflowing in the world of things: there is, at every moment, always infinitely more than we can see; to exhaust the richness of my current perception would take an infinite time." (Sartre, 2004 p9)

None of the above commentators think aesthetics is about painting.

Aesthetics is about how to understand the world and live in it. Which incidentally is what ANT is trying to do. However, we have to start with the basic building blocks of understanding, and this is how we extract the things in the world to see them both as part and as whole. And it is this which begins with Categories.

Basically, the things we see in an object depends upon what category we perceive the object as belonging to. Here is Kendall Waltons commentary:

"...Perceived as belonging to the Category of Painting, Picasso's Guernica will be perceived as "violent, dynamic, vital, and disturbing". But perceived as belonging to the Category of "Guernicas"—where Guernicas are works with "surfaces with the colours and shapes of Picasso's Guernica with the surfaces moulded to protrude from the wall like relief maps of different kinds of terrain"—Then Picasso's Guernica will be perceived not as violent and dynamic, but as "cold, stark, lifeless, or serene and restful, or perhaps bland, dull, boring." (Walton, 1993)

The assignment of an object to a particular category creates then a type of under-standing that varies upon which category we place the object. This is how ANT works too. So, ANT is an extension of an earlier formal critical method. It might be said that this might be all subsumed into Cultural Theory, rather than Actor-Network-Theory? But there is an Up / Down: Down / Up relationship here. Cultural Theory is an examination of the culture which suggests the object. However, in Actor-Network-Theory it is an examination of the object which suggests the culture. Did the Art Gal-lery produce the painting? Or did the painting produce the art gallery?

Say, for instance there was a guitar. The guitar is an object in the world. And that people who own guitars enjoy that situation. How are they enjoying it? There are var-ious ways and combinations of ways.

The guitar can be enjoyed for its potential to create music. Or it can be enjoyed by a guitar player by its actual means to create music. Already there are two categories as to enjoy a things "actuality" is not the same as enjoying a things "potentiality". Or it can be enjoyed for the components that make up an object called a guitar. The neck, the tuners, the strings, the body. Or you can enjoy its form as shape in totality. These are just some examples of sub-categories within the larger category guitar.

Which is as far as formal aesthetics takes the critique. ANT will allow us to go further to include other categories that trace out to further categories.

This would include the categories of music, performance and culture. Plus in the case of an electric guitar the category of technology. (The latter being particular im-portant to ANT). This seems reasonable. All the above are categories which can contain guitars but also contain other things. However, a 1950s guitar and a 1950s vintage bus are not comparable as objects, but they are comparable under other

categories, such as a Historical. Under this category they may both be perceived to have a similar form: post-war enthusiasm for the shape of streamlined purpose. The accessibility in price and availability of both guitars and buses on a daily level, might also put them in a category of those-things-that-the-proletariat-have-knowledge-of. This title of category might seem very clumsy, but like Kendall Waltons "Category of Guernicas", the aim of categorization in ANT is the bringing of things together that often are excluded from other categories. This is commonplace situation. The idea of the health of society did not prosper under the category of medicine. It required the creation of the category of public health for the nation's health to improve. This is why ANT is widely used in producing models in healthcare.

And indeed, when objects are fitted into categories that would seem appropriate, but do not respond to analysis, it is possibly because, despite a notionally close relationship, they are in wrong categories. All this allowing Luxury Design to take the category of Historical (which contains no overt Luxury) and flips it into the category of Vintage (which can be a very Luxury Object) by porting an object from one category to another.

Just to remind the reader of the real scope of this ANT is its cross-disciplinary usage. This is exactly why a shop selling cameras is not a photography shop. A camera shop must organise its profit stream very differently to a photography shop. They are barely related categories. Car dealers sell leases, they'd never make any money selling cars. That would be obvious in ANT.

The aim of ANT, just like the earlier aesthetics, is to be able to look at things by bringing them into recognisable categories that can be useful for analysis or comparison. The difference is ANTs willingness to create categories that contain objects that

are coherent, yet different. Importantly, if a number of the same objects can be brought together from different categories, then there is the opportunity for a triangulated and therefore more whole appraisal. This connection of categories might be called a structure. However, ANT does not insist that structure (which ANT calls a Network) is a fixed and immutable arrangement but dynamic moment only.

To go further, what is the category of Luxury Object?

It could be said that this category contains representations of a culture that has sufficient resource to design and construct objects that are hugely costly and often highly technically advanced but are essentially very wasteful and ultimately useless? If you took this as a Descriptor of a Luxury Object Category, what else could fit under this category?

The First World War would fit perfectly. Only empires at their height of resources would consider committing to an event of such waste and meaninglessness. The First World War is a Luxury Object. Clearly there is a limit to the use of Categories as means to isolate objects for consideration. Or at least sound a warning to ensure that when an object is analysed it needs careful placement into a category. ANT would now regard categories with ambivalence as although it requires both distance and a great deal of disinterest to evaluate the First World War as Luxury Object, it does however, through characterisation, exhibit qualities that can be shown to be completely coherent with luxury. This would inevitably mean that some wars are luxury and others are not. For instance, if you created a category called "ideological confrontation" you couldn't put The First World War in it, as all sides had exactly the same ideology. In "The Gulf War did not take place" Baudrillard (1991) claims, not that the war had not occurred, but that the evidence of it had been so manipulated

that it was difficult to historically categorizes it as a war. There was insufficient unmediated evidence for it. Unlike the later conflict in Syria which was instead embedded with smartphone tech and produced a vast record of unmediated violence. This would be in the aesthetics of war photography via the luxury smartphone?

It is this which Latour means by "Hybridisation". In Hybridization, our ontology is based on categories that are no longer categorical. If a war cannot be categorically defined as a war, what hope is there to categorize luxury. Actor-Network-Theory being anthropological is only reporting what is there, but it can report it free of corrupted constructs. This will not produce particularly elegant solutions or explanations as is constructed to oppose and expose these neat categorical judgements. Incidentally, this means that a definition of what-is-Luxury-Design?, is at best, a hopeful shot in the dark "…as Berry (1994) and others have noted, because of its dependence on cultural, social and individual contexts and meanings, luxury defies objective definition". (Armitage & Roberts 2016)

Actor-Network-Theory also uses "disinterest" as part of its method. This classic formality can be used additionally to buttress the concepts in ANT by combining a close disinterested reading of objects in themselves but also insisting on tracings outward might allow an insight into a greater contemporary world. I would re-iterate at this point that I see opportunities in design research in this direction within the framework of ANT. Personally, I would hope to move forward with this as part of a doctoral research.

Therefore, I would welcome further research in the study of aesthetics as it closely matches ANTs non-judgmental speculation. However, just as there is no UK University Courses in Luxury Design, there is, once again, no undergraduate courses on

aesthetics. Probably because academia still believes aestheticians wear silk breeches and take laudanum, and think is a rather fluffy subject. But the origins of this disinterest aesthetic method come from Kant's Critique of Pure Judgement. Kant is not a fluffy philosopher.

Additionally, the non-existence of aesthetics is a very Anglo-American idea. Not so in Arabia where aesthetics is linked to nationalism. Not so in Japan where everyone understands the aesthetic concepts from Wabi to Iki. Not so in India where it is saturated throughout the population as a component in spirituality. The non-existence of aesthetics then sounds just like another Anglo-American blind spot.

Finally, Adorno, in his book "*Aesthetic Theory*" makes the case for the importance of Aesthetics as a Study Discipline. To quote: "Aesthetics presents philosophy with the bill for the fact that the academic system degraded it to mere specialization. It demands of Philosophy precisely what Philosophy has neglected to do: extract phenomena from their existence and bring them into understanding…" (Adorno, 2013 p355.) Adorno isn't particularly fluffy either.

NEEDS AND WANTS within ANT

Luxury Design falls into the categories as schedules that ANT (being anthropological) identifies as pre-origins in early human society. These categories are: shelter, food, clothing and leisure. These seem quite prosaic but spin out from Luxury Design towards concepts such as "…luxury hotels, luxury foods, luxury apparel."
(Berry,1994.) Which would include Jewellery, Watches et al. Cars might fit into leisure but as they are accessories to a lifestyle might easily be considered apparel.

Leisure can be luxury holidays and destinations these being the contemporary evocations of feast days and rituals.

Clearly the first headings are deep-sited into society as historical categories that cover the fundamentals for sustaining life. This means that luxury is not a subsection but an extension of existing forms. If you wished to find a super-category for Luxury it might be "Play". This is not surprising as in luxury, "Play" is an analogue of "Freedom".

Though Luxury springs from same origin there is a difference within these categories from those elements of fundamental requirements and those which are supernumerary. The need for shelter is fundamental, the luxury hotel is a want. This is the bifurcation point. Need is basic and universal. Want is privileged. The difficult arises in its semiotic use too. If you want a Ferrari you will need a Garage. But here the need is brought forth only to enable a want to come to fruition. These would be not a basic need. So, this is then divided into "Necessary Needs" and "Instrumental Needs". A garage is to a Ferrari as a box is to chocolates. Their existence is predicated on the existence of a something else (the want) and they are instrumental to it.

The presence of needs and wants in this formula towards societal goods also requires the presence of indifference. It's not simply that one person would see a thing as a want and another a need but yet another person would display complete indifference to the thing. This make luxury instead of a point on a nexus, rather more of spectrum which makes one person's wants, another person's needs, yet simultaneously another attitude that splits into those who would concede that object is luxury but has not response to it and those that simply do not see it as luxury. In his book *The idea of Luxury* Berry further suggests that Luxury has been through

"..Moralisation, De-Moralisation and is currently undergoing Re-Moralisation.." and is now attracting the language of "Rights".(Berry, 1994.)

To summarize: Needs therefore connect as a network as forms of goods, services and situations and are deemed Necessary by all, but not Luxury versions of these which are non-networked. Luxury versions can be generally catalogued as those which are: Instrumental to achieve a further or higher goal, those that are immoderately desired, those which are unique, and those that have sentimental value. Consequently, ANT reveals those entities that make the design of an object into a Luxury Object plausible. This too, however, is place / time / resource sensitive. ANT is identifying what is there but only in the now.

CHAPTER FIVE

A SUMMARY AND REVIEW OF CONCLUSIONS – IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

This thesis has five chapters: The first part deals with the introduction of a Post-Structuralist Theory called Actor-Network-Theory for the analysis of Luxury Design, and those commentators that historically would be called its Founders. The Second Part explains the theories origins and aims of ANT. The Third part deals with the application of this theory to the study of Design & Luxury Design. The Fourth part critiques some of the Actors that are repeatedly revealed through this method.

Luxury Design itself is nothing more than the tangible evocations of agencies that seek to provide what others will not or cannot provide. As Luxury Design is so visible in all contemporary life, a method is needed to allow critical distance to be created sufficient that the phenomenon can be analysed neutrally.

Throughout all chapters the author has shown that the question of what is Luxury Design is revealed discretely by the specific critical method being applied, and that current design critiques are insufficient to develop answers that have currency beyond those that are attendant extensions of critiques of Luxury Design through finance and marketing. Throughout this thesis I have tried to show that ANT is the best current critical method for examining Luxury Design, though it is not, and would never claim the status of a stand-alone method. This is because stand-alone concepts are the very concepts that ANT finds doubtful.

I have shown that any critique of Luxury Design that inhabits the same plasmatic space or is ideological repelled by the concept will not be able to undertake a serious critique of Luxury Design. Neither is there an option to ignore a $1.2 Trillion global industry. For the last reason alone Luxury Design is obviously vigorously examined within the fields of finance or marketing.

ANT however, is primarily anthropological and genealogical and earlier in this text I showed the historical connection and evolution, to underline the viability of this continuity in using this method. ANT arrives from academic origins and is still evolving. The founding text for this was Bruno Latours book *Reassembling The Social* (Latour, 2005) Earlier in this thesis, I developed an exposition of Bruno Latours reasoning that sees current critiques being those that examine the "...the sociology of the Social", whilst Actor-Network-Theory is in Latours words "…the sociology of Associations". These Associations are connections of a network that form and reform nodes that can be "traced" genealogically in directions to active agents in an unformatted plasmic background that issue forth to create forms that have the power to inform or direct situations without being a formalized or lasting structural shape. Latours "turn"

is to include non-human actors (like objects) in this formula. For designers of the materially and the non-material object, this should be a significant signpost.

So, the field of design itself would surely be the best framework for this enquiry. Yet designs own language as I have shown is not sufficiently "foundational" and requires borrowings for art, architecture, finance, and marketing to conduct its enquiry. However, I have also shown that a foundational language for design need not be developed if a ready-made critical structure was available that could serve this purpose.

This way of substituting an existing Working-Model-plus-Adaptions (ANT) for a contentious proto-model in-construction, might be called a design solution to this issue. This would in any case obviate any need to create and then deploy anything subject-specific, because if we wholly accept the activity of design to be a deeply-located pluralist human activity, then the need to produce a foundational language might actually be at odds with the fundamental humanist quality of design. Meaning the search for foundational language is perhaps obscuring the designs greatest asset, this being designs human agility and adaptability, and its acceptance and tolerance for the humanly unknown. The alternative being a technically correct lexicography that reveals designs importance and structures but does so by disconnecting it from the vitality and complexity of its power source. Reductive systems of design methodology are suitable as management techniques but their very clarity is obscuring the clotted everyday experience of designers. ANT would see a muddy design methodology as a clearer representation of a muddy world and closer to its origins.

The later section of this thesis outlines some Actors them are strongly traced from Luxury Design. Their impact varies and can be amplified (or diminished) as they touch other Actors. It should not be a surprise that none of these items are design

issues. This is because this is not a design theory. ANT would say that that never-theless they are human issues, and that if we accept design as a human activity then these actors must bear on design. Their inclusion in this thesis is that although they have influence on all design is some way, in Luxury Design they are most specifically present. We could say they influence other non-design areas too. This is certainly true, but then that is a demonstration of the power and reach of these actors. That they have this quality can only mean that placing design exclusively within an Art & Design context does not provide a fully triangulated critique. ANT will trace design to-wards actors that may be more appreciated in other subject-study areas. Rather than a problem, this is actually more memetic of human lived-experience as having to firstly to consider a thing, and then consider another thing, and inevitably also its other or opposite thing as a simultaneous negotiation as the only way of navigating the world. This concept of binding yet balancing is the activity that actually makes Design difficult to do! ANT is only pointing out the agents that cause this difficulty can be traced to origins that are not currently considered as design problems. This would argue that ANT sees Luxury Design as the primarily the manipulation of these actors alone and not design issues. These actors are examined in, or at least some of them have been outlined in the last-section of the thesis. The list in not exhaustive and cannot be, as absolute origins exist only as ideas and perhaps as fallacies? Nei-ther can they be said to be permanent in their associations.

ANT freely acknowledges that this method is human and fallible but works to put the human as the central radius for enquiry while it interacts with the erratic orbits of these actors. From these associations, networks are made.

This is a methodology with a discernible history, which here below is brief, but expanded earlier.

For Foucault, structures that come into creation through intense associations are only identifiable as archaeological characters. This evokes Foucault's archeologically method. Then there is the forensic method of Locard who developed the original theory of identifying contact points of events through their traces. Foucault himself was drawing on the work of Nietzsche who was persistent in his opposition to theories of absolute truth, and more importantly to structures that offer truth only through morbid longings or intuitional permissions. He himself was drawing on Kierkegaards criticism that despair is the failure to reconcile the finite with infinite with the consequences of seeking a way out that is destructive via schismatic objects.

Furthermore, as these actors can persist or move or perish, then in a supercomplex world they could be as evanescent as quanta. They are often suggested by the overwhelming displacement of one entities categorical opposition to another, suggesting Derridas preference to offer no strongly delineated presence or absence. Additionally, ANT makes commentary that is generally suspicious of heroic language. This was Adoros concern too, particularly any method where the language became too saturated in emblematic authenticity. Then there is the situation regarding what our perceptions tell us of the real world which is Lacans model of our development of the touch-point network of our desires, which would include our relationship with luxury. Actor-Network-theory, too is a model of transient networks.

ANT has grown out of all these insights. It is historically founded. It is important to show that Actor-Network-theory is a palette of speculative analytical tools deployed as form of hermeneutics.

This grainy molecularity contrasts with traditional sociological method which is sited in Hegelian or Marxist backgrounds and produces highly refined crystalline commentary. This is an accepted method to examine the past but less so to examining the "now". Sociological method which is currently (but not originally) a Structuralist schema, is now a replica of the structures it was conceived to critique. Therefore, the structure and the critical structure have attained a relationship that exhibits mutuality. The likelihood is that by now, the nature of the sociological method has additionally gained the status of "Institutional". This does not invalidate Hegelian /Marxist concepts, but its language has acquired the burden of authority and authenticity. And consequently, would receive the condemnation of Adorno, to quote "...the more earnest the jargon, the more it mocks Kierkegaard's insistence on a unity of the sublime and the pedestrian" (Adorno, 1993 p33.) And if the structures of Now are, at any moment, moving into newer structures, or higher or lower importance or even simply dissolving from disuse or exhaustion, any methods that seems to concern itself with an ideology that insists the structure will remain unchanged would fail in its critique. It would be preferable therefore to find a method that critiques change itself through careful descriptions of conditions (the associations) that drive it. This is how ANT works. Either way, it seems no longer advantageous to critique the material world by remote concepts alone. There is just too much material world, and the consequences are that to encompass it the conceptual explanations get thinner, vaguer and stretched. Once non-human agency is added the explanations sound either shrill or very distant. The post-colonialists don't realise they've been colonized by objects

I would argue that all forms of design are nothing more than human activity in response to feelings and thoughts about their own human mortality, and refection on the changes that this makes in their lives. This being so, it is acknowledged that

change and the hopeful directing of that change is a core requirement of Being and mortal humans understand this. I change, therefore I am. Humans resist change when they feel the tools to manage change leave them isolated and paralysed within a community of stasis, leaving them no mechanism to evoke their potentiality, thereby denying the change that they want. They therefore cleave to any structure that tells them that their natural propulsive anxiety is unnaturally detrimental and must be avoided and must find instead determinate certainty in unchanging Luxury Objects that offer them a future that seems to calm, via dissociation, the liminal human into a quiescent agentic state relative to a corporate authority, while the consequence for the individual being that the denial of human affirmation becomes nihilistically directed inward as a self-harming longing for destruction.

The issue for this thesis has been that the design of Luxury is, in many ways, antithetic to any contemporary design thinking that explains what design is for. Simply put, Luxury has no interest in making the world a better place. Yet other design forms seem to have no discernable interest in this task either, so "making a better world" is dreadful conceit. And because of this, Luxury Design stands as a critique of contemporary design thinking. Bearing in that society's aspiration for luxury must condition that luxury, it must additionally actively condition any concepts of design. Indeed, it must condition the designer too. Jagozinski would point out that the designer and his education is likely to be culpable in this as it retools the benchmarks of design success. (Jagozinski, 2005). The "cool" of the designer is the sine qua non of any "Neo-Liberal Self". (McGuigan, 2014.)

AUTO-ENTHNOGRPAHIC REFLEXIVE STATEMENT

At this point I would point out that my personal status as Practitioner within Luxury Design allows certain auto-ethnographic insights that this thesis cannot encompass, yet I feel would benefit from inclusion. Personally, I feel I would like to take this concept of ANT into doctoral research to demonstrate the effectiveness of the method and reduce the academic preconceptions that Luxury Design is not real design.

The issue is also one of needing to collapse boundaries between practitioners, academics and researchers in the study of Luxury Design. Generally all these parties strongly wish to communicate there findings to each other yet obstacles still are apparent. Here from a 1982 commentary: "Neither exhortation nor goodwill on any sides is going to change the situation very rapidly or materially. Research findings will continue to be published in a traditional way, and attempts to translate them into designer's language will be rare and unevenly successful." (Purcell, A. T., Heath, T. 1982) And that was 1982. (see also Huber, A 2017)

Furthermore, the luxury designer who designs Luxury Objects, surely like all designers, aspires to objectivity in his work. However, unless this is done wholly outside of society or wholly disinterested in his own work, he must in some way transmit his attitudes or prejudices to the object he's designing. Again, this should be examined and further researched within the education of luxury designers. Or it would be if such a thing as existed. It is incredible that at time of writing there is no such undergraduate, let alone post-grad UK university course in this subject. I have yet to find a satisfactory answer to this other than many university design faculties think of Luxury Design is about Gold Taps. This is pitiful. I am writing this thesis in many ways to demonstrate this has no basis. I would remind the reader that Luxury Design is

offered as undergraduate courses in other European countries. Or are the French not real designers either? Luxury Design is highly dependent on dismissive attitudes by the academic consensus and is symbiotically needed for both to prosper. Luxury Design would not be attractive without condemnation. Luxury just turns aside to its many adherents, smiles and shrugs, saying "what do they know about anything" And the Colosseum cheers. Time, I think, for academic enquiry to engage properly.

The meta-narrative that makes serious academic research into Luxury Design urgent as it is not Luxury Design in itself that is the problem.. Luxury may well be an absence of utility, or wasteful or vacuous, but the problem is that luxury is the evocation or representation of enormous societal longings. Very large number of society very, very much aspire to luxury. Consequentially it conditions much of social behaviour.

Surely, for this reason alone I would judge that these subject needs serious enquiry, which ANT could enlighten. This would be to "…define, investigate and demonstrate the importance of the term 'critical luxury studies' in the sense of critique. Critical luxury studies, we suggest, is to be differentiated from 'criticism' of luxury studies. While the latter presupposes a would-be 'unbiased' standpoint 'outside' the texts of luxury studies, critique adopts a view within the object of study" (Armitage & Roberts 2016).

And not just the objects, but the attitudes and modes of Being that are being transmitted by the Luxury Object. There is no point having a Hermes Bag if you can't have the petulance and impatience that goes with it. (There are other modes as well) The Luxury Object is there to unlock the permissions for certain behaviours. The aesthetics of these object merely transmit these permissions. Naturally, this is going to be expensive. The right to be petulant and impatient is not cheap. The critical main transfer from the luxury object to its owner is Moral Certainty, and the power to

act accordingly. The mythopoesis of the Luxury Object is to suggest the Golden Age never ended, and the owner has acquired lineage with the "blond beasts". Deluded heroism, yet still currently human.

However, Latours insistence of collapsing "us" as humans and "they" as objects into a situation of one single techno-anthropocene means the notice to quit our purely human existence has been served. Though Latour is not offering this as either positive or negative. Being anthropology it's an observed and reported event only. The puzzle is that Luxury Design seems to resist this drag. So possibly its adherents are using Luxury Designs many objects to distance themselves from the maw of this enveloping and reordering integration. This is not a puzzle if it's seen as just humans being anthropologically humans. It's even more obvious if we consider that imperfect humans might prefer to give up their human transience and temporality if they believe they could be more solidly real and beautiful like Luxury Design. The real paradox is that humans want to give up their transience for transcendence. Luxury Design powerfully re-enacts the Platonic Idealism of Forms to suggest that our earth-bound constructs are just projected shadows. The Real being a first-class lounge that we, as humans, have no access to. This being so, what can we aspire to?

Luxury Design offers a pathway to transcendence where we as humans set aside our role as "place-holders" of our own life, and instead of the striving to be better humans, aim high for the transactable nirvana of being better objects. And surely then as objects, we might finally return to the dream of a reconciliation with a deity. The "blind watch-maker "as it were, the original unmoved Rolex craftsman.

This is exactly what Actor –Network –Theory predicts. The dull mind rises to Truth through that which is Material.

Finally, ANT, and within the context of this thesis, shows that if we too are now equivalent with objects, then some objects have more meaningful for us because, like us humans, they now seem to seek meanings too, and contain within them echoes of immortality, yet seem, like us, to live off the perfume from an empty jar. Chanel perhaps?

Of all objects, those of Luxury Design are those we recognise as exemplars of what we long to be.

I would therefore propose Actor-Network-Theory as a rigorously academic and historical grounded Theory to advance meaningful critiques of Luxury Design.

CODA – CONTRIBUTION, VALUE AND PhD FOCUS

The Purpose of this study was to establish a basis on which to seek a better understanding of Luxury Design through ANT. Having developed a theoretic and conceptual underpinning to an advanced study, the author proposes that the development of this research further address the key actors: Luxury Designers, Luxury Design Clients and the Luxury Object itself. There is scope for a consideration of a triangulation between Actors to reveal hidden dynamic relationships.

It is important to locate the researcher in any research approach to understand motivation and the scope and contribution made by the study. Part of the motivation for the work is to bring the distinctive lived experience of the author into the development of scholarly work on Luxury Design. As a design practitioner with almost forty years experience in international luxury design of interiors and objects across a range of international luxury clients in Europe, USA and Middle East, that lived experience provides a foundation and context for the value of the study.

This study's contribution and value is that it fulfils a theoretical foundation for future developments in diversified conceptual and theoretical understandings of Luxury Design.

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