

Bricolage: Lévi-Strauss vs. Coco Chanel

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Summary

The word 'bricolage' became known academically by Lévi-Strauss' book. He defined it 'the amateur-work applying only the materials in hand.' Looking back to the real history, the bricolage in modern times began rather professionally with the appearance of the new Middle Class. Between the two wars, it aimed radical Functionalism. However, it alienated the individuality like Communism and Fascism. After WW II, due to the shortage of man power, DIY -Do It Yourself- spread worldwide as a democratic lifestyle. Private home was born as the reverse of the industrial society of the modern times. DIY in home is free from the social dimension so that it can reread the concepts of the materials arbitrarily. The subjectivity breaks the static social structure as an unceasing 'paradigm shift.' In order to hold Structuralism at least in his theory, Lévi-Strauss had to confine DIY to the amateur world and to charge it the limitation of 'applying only the materials in hand' with the name 'bricolage.' The point of bricolage is not 'by amateur', nor 'only with the materials in hand,' but the rereading and reproducing the concept of materials. By the excess of the lifestyle proposals by industries, our lives are already full of odds and ends. We need now the professional bricolage designers who show us the direction or dream under that we should arrange our lives for ourselves.

Introduction

I visited the National Museum of Science and Technology in Milan. It has a full scale model of 'Air Screw' that Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) sketched. I tried to move it, but it did not fly at all. Is the design a failure? Certainly Not! It inspired the people at the time with the idea to fly in quite a different way than birds. Even now, it touches us and gives us the courage to dream to fly the coop of the age.

Also in Milan, I tried to sit on the original SELLA (1953, launched by Zannota Co. 1957-) by Achille Castiglioni (1918-2002) in his former studio. It is a cheap stool made with a bicycle

saddle, a steel pole and an inverted hemispheric base. It is so unstable and so pointed that no one can stay on it for a long time. However, it is housed in the collections of many museums and it sells worldwide for over thousand dollars.

Functionalism that tools should be designed to make them work best is the naïve, but obstinate belief. However, who has the right to define the function? For example, telephone companies design their phones to call easily. However, the charge is expensive. Beyond that, a daughter's talking with the boyfriend worries the parents. Castiglioni made SELLA for his own daughter to stop the long phone calls. Therefore, it dares to be hard to sit upon. SELLA makes us remember the pricelessness of family love.

Things in our lives are made for a known aim. If you get quite a new dream, there is no tool for it. If you wanted to fly in Renaissance, you had to invent a tool to fly for yourself. In addition, things in modern times are originally designed by industries for industries, not for us. If you want to stop your daughter's long phone calls, you have to make a stool hard to sit on by yourself. To shake free from the shackles of the age and retrieve our own lives, we have to do 'it' ourselves as DIY.

For this activity, we need friendly professional bricolage designers as our guide and pioneer like da Vinci and Castiglioni. However, is professional bricolage able to exist? Should bricolage be done only by an amateur? In this essay, we review the concept of 'bricolage' not only in Lévi-Strauss, but also in the real history and look for the possibility of a professional bricolage.

1. Bricolage in Lévi-Strauss

It was Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) who made us know the French word 'bricolage' academically. According to dictionaries like Larousse, 'bricolage' means just DIY. It is not a special word in French. However, when we dare to call something by the French word 'bricolage' in Lévi-

Strauss' meaning, it is not a normal DIY. It may be something so artistic that the common French do not call it 'bricolage' more.

Lévi-Strauss introduced the word 'bricolage' in the Chapter One of his *LA PENSÉE SAUVAGE* (1962).¹ Different from the common meaning of DIY, he dared to explain that the word 'bricolage' is derived from the verb 'bricoler' which means some incidental movement² and he gave the term 'bricolage' his special concept as amateur-work applying only the materials in hand.

People at the time thought that the natives are inferior due to their poverty of abstract concepts. His point of the book was that mythology is not less rational than science. He says that although their mythology is made with concrete concepts, it is not less rational than our science. According to his version, mythology is not the primitive step of science. Both are conjugate and the equal polarities of a way of acquiring knowledge.³ To depict this polarity, he had to emphasize the difference of the both poles in turn.

As an analogy of mythology and science on the theoretical plane, he shows the contrast between bricolage and engineering on the practical one.⁴ He said that bricolage's universe is closed and that it has only materials in hand. In addition, the materials are heterogeneous because they are the contingent result of the previous construction and destructions collected or retained only on the principle that 'they may come in handy.'⁵ While engineering will find out something new from the known set and innovate it, bricolage does it only with such odds and ends. Bricoleur devises the usage of them, but never will enlarge nor renew them.⁶ Therefore, what bricoleur makes is prescribed only by the material, neither by the model nor by the use.⁷

Between the both poles of bricolage and engineering, art extends from 'folk art' to 'industrial art' by the ratio of the three factors; material, model and use.⁸ Lévi-Strauss recognizes the following things as close to his concept of 'bricolage'; so-called brut or naïve art, Cheval's Ideal Palace, the stage sets of Méliès, the castle of Wemmick in Dickens' Novel, miniature

models and primitive art.⁹

However, are such things our normal bricolages or DIY? We should understand that Lévi-Strauss introduced the concept 'bricolage' only in order to explain mythology, not in order to analyze bricolage itself. Although what he described on bricolage may be the character of mythology, he did not positively confirm the same on bricolage. We may rather think that what he calls 'bricolage' is just the work of the primitives, never like our real bricolage.

2. Victorian Age and Bell Epoche: Middle Class Bricolage

Let us look back at the history of our real bricolage. Before the modern times, there was no one but ourselves in a village. We had to do all ourselves as bricolage or the handwork of amateur; cooking, sewing, building and repairing. If an individual could not do it for him/herself well, anyone or everyone in the same village helped him/her and his/her family.¹⁰

Indeed in town, people lived by the division of work. Everyone should be some sort of professional, or else he would have no place in the society. Their best customers were the nobility. They used the professional craft products even in the Country House and showed the difference of the dignity to the folks in the neighboring villages. Due to this, the houses of the old Nobility were full of old things like museum or antique shop. There was no unity of mode, but only a farrago of anachronism.^{11 12}

With Imperialism, Exoticism came in. The nobility who got enormous wealth by colonial management brought bizarre foreign things into the mother land's high society to be proud of their ascendancy. However, these were in fact the bricolages of the foreign natives. During these times, the Orient Express began to run from Paris to Istanbul in 1883. A regular liner between Marseille and Yokohama in Japan went into service in 1886. Thus, Arabesque and Japanesque were in fashion.

At the same time, the Industrial Revolution was in progress. The people were involved in the money economy. They began to work for industries and to use the cheap mass product by industries instead their own bricolage. Industrial Revolution also yielded new 'Middle Class.' As the agents of the owners of the industries, they administrated the workers. They should be always more proper than any workers. Their characteristic moral was called 'Respectability.'

London's Artist William Morris (1834-96) inherited the enormous bequest that his father got through the boiling stock market by the Industrial Revolution. Although he was rich, he was neither of the nobility, nor of the people, but of the new Middle Class. When he married, he built the Red House (1859) in Bexleyheath, the suburban new residential area for the Middle Class, 12 miles east of London. He had neither a farrago of antiques nor of exotic arts in contrast to the nobility. However, since he was at least not of the common people, he would not bring the cheap industrial mass products in his new house.

Based on the faith of Middle Class' Respectability, he decided to make all interior of his house for himself completely. Against the exotic favored by the nobility, he took the motives from Celtic culture, the more historical and conventional in Britain. He opened Morris & Co. (1861-1940) and sold his original decorations. They caught on with the new Middle Class, even the old nobility. In him, bricolage and professional design did not contradict.

Under Morris's influence, many professional-bricolage organizations were born such as Birmingham School of Art (1885-), the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (London, 1885-1922), Deutscher Werkbund (Munich, 1907-49), Design and Industries Association (London, 1915-) and Bauhaus (Weimar, 1919-33). Although the Svenska Slöjdföreningen (Swedish Handcraft Society, Stockholm, 1845-; renamed as Svensk Form (Swedish Form), 1976-) was much older than the movement, it also incorporated the policy of the Deutscher Werkbund and the Bauhaus.

Around the same time, in the wake of the Salon des Artistes Independants (1884), “Secessions” were born in Munich (1892), Viena (1897) and Berlin (1899). As professional-bricoleurs, they were critical of (against) the conservative authorities. They were named as ‘Jugendstil,’ not only because they were young, but also because they published their activities in the magazine DIE JUGEND (1896-1940). They took too much arts and crafts into their works. As the result, their style was characterized as excess of decoration. Their slogan was ‘Einheit von Konstruktion und Dekoration (unification of construction and decoration).’

Steel, glass and concrete. These materials were epoch-making and changed the design of building and lifestyle. They enabled the bright enormous structure like the Crystal Palace in London (1851) and the Eiffel Tower in Paris (1889). They suited the curved design of “Art Nouveau” that used motives of plants and insects similarly to Morris and Jugendstil. Belgian architect Victor Horta (1861-1947) succeeded with Tassel House (1893) in Brussels and he also made his own home (1901) near it.

In the field of glass, Émile Gallé (1846-1904) and René Lalique (1860-1945) played active roles. They made novel crafts and accessories for the modern Middle Class who disliked stodgy antiques and jewelry. Czech illustrator Alfons Mucha (1860-1939) designed the posters (1895-99) for the most popular actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) in Paris. He also outfitted the interior of jeweler Georges Fouquet’s shop (1901) and sold the accessories linked to Sarah’s plays.

3. Functionalism of Jazz Age and Les Années folles

The excess of decoration of Morris, Jugendstil and Art Nouveau was the Middle Class’ need to fill the blank of their history and to make a bluff against the old nobility. However, the old nobility holding the Noblesse Oblige was killed by the ammunition of WW I, while the Middle Class who had produced the ammunition rose instead. Stopping to use a bluff, they began to

show their own favor and got more aggressive with Jazz and Tango. They began to chip the unnecessary decoration as the relics of old times.

A Vienna Secession participant, architecture professor of Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Otto Wagner (1841-1918) was pursuing the truth of stuff, skill and use. He made his motto “*artis sola domina necessitas* (art is subject only to necessity, 1885).”¹³ Also Chicago’s Architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) independently got the idea “form follows function.”¹⁴ Shocked by the skyscrapers designed by Sullivan in Chicago, Vienna’s Architect Adolf Loos (1870-1933) advocated more radical Functionalism with the word “ornament is crime (1908)”¹⁵ and accused decorative Vienna Secession.

French designer Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret’s pseudonym, 1887-1965) said “*une maison est machines à habiter* (a house is a machine to live, 1923).”¹⁶ Dutch painter Piet Mondrian (1873-1944) was a fundamental Functionalist and his misogynic theory was translated and published by the German Bauhaus (1925).¹⁷ According to him, things feminine or material are so tragically unbalanced between individual and universal that they spoil things male or universal.

However, the most active professional-bricoleur was Coco Chanel (1883-1971). She was born in rustic Auvergne, grew up in an orphanage and started her life as a *midinette* (sewer) in Paris. Although she was a love of a noble and although ladies should wear kitschy bonnets with Pompadour or Fontanges hair styles, she made simple straw hats (*Canotier*) for herself and put on them with short hair even in high-society. It came up in gossip at once. She opened her original hat shop in Paris and it became in fashion (1910).

In WW I, while the male designers were inducted into the army, Chanel embarked in the *couture* (tailor) business. However, the apparel materials were short by the war. Getting a hint from the wear of fishers, she dared to use folksy Jersey for her new easy dress (1916) and she put it on herself first before anybody. It sold well to the ladies who had to take charge instead

of the absent men. Chanel was recognized as the liberator of ladies from the stale restraint silk dresses and tight corsets that men would put on to ladies.

After WW I, Chanel was already so rich that she acted as a patron of the coming Avant-Garde artists like Picasso (1881-1963), Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Cocteau (1889-1963). She picked up perfume as the further business chance and made famous Chanel No.5 (1921). It contains a new artificial aromatic source 'aldehyde' that enabled the luxurious but tough scent similar to the image of Coco Chanel herself.¹⁸ She also sold Bijoux Fantaisie (Costume Jewelry) with Imitation Pearl¹⁹ and Poured Glass²⁰ (1924). The long necklace of Imitation Pearl became Chanel's lifelong symbol.

Her favorite materials were not Silk, but soft Tricot, Jersey and Tweed. She liked also familiar Straw, Ribbon, Shell, Glass, Base Metal and new inexpensive artificial things. The colors she preferred were Black and White. Her design was always simple and functional, but never cheap, rather feminine and dignified. Although she sometimes entrusted the parts of manufacturing to other designers and ateliers, all were subject to her thought and direction. She designed all originally for herself as a bricoleur.

However, under the Versailles Order, Communist and Fascist detesting the feminine and the individual were rampant, especially in the defeated Germany. In the Bauhaus, although the young exponent László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) was inherited the old ideal of 'complete man'²¹, a new Communist professor Hannes Meyer (1889-1954) set upon him with radical Functionalism and exiled him in 1928. Meyer brought down even the founder Walter Gropius (1883-1969) and took over the Bauhaus as the next director. Bauhaus deteriorated to radical Functionalism.

After the Depression in 1929, luxury became the enemy of society. People regarded individuality as the selfishness of the egoist. Everyone should be satisfied with the cheap industrial mass products only for the functions. The graceful Chanel Suits has gone out, when the square Schiaparelli Suits like a military uniform has been instead in fashion (1933). In

addition, even the midinettes in Chanel's couturier went on strike owing to Communism (1936). In despair of the fashion industries, Chanel closed her couturier (1939).

4. Alienation and DIY

In O. Henry's short story "The Gift of Magi (1906), the wife had sold her hair to buy the platinum chain for her husband's watch, while the husband had sold his watch to buy the tortoise comb for his wife's hair as Christmas presents.²² Although the author admires these two as the wisest like the Biblical Magi, is this admiration warranted? Why did they have to show their love with so expensive presents despite their poverty even on the very day of Christmas? Does it happen to say that the truth of love can be confirmed only by money?

The Svenska Slöjdföreningen's chairperson Gregor Paulsson (1890-1977) was once one of the prophets of radical Functionalism. After WWII, he recognized that there is not only 'the functional dimension' but also 'the social dimension.'²³ For example, a chair is not only a tool to sit but also a symbol of some social position. Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929)²⁴ and Werner Sombart (1863-1941)²⁵ already studied luxury as the demonstration of power and love. Building, interior and fashion are not functional tools, but rather social symbols. Presents always should be bought for a high price. It is important that they have it, give it or get it socially. It is no matter whether they use it or not functionally. Even Functionalism was favored not because of the validity, but rather because of being the demonstration of the denial against the useless old Nobility.

Our lives are fretted by the social dimension. Already in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, social activist Karl Marx (1818-83) explained the problem with 'four alienations' (1844); alienation from product, work, human and humanity.²⁶ According to him, in the division of works, the product is not for the man who made it. Therefore, the work to make it is also not of him. For him, the others are only the means to live, no more his fellow. As well,

he is no more a fellow, but only the means to live for others.

German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) also depicted the same problem otherwise. According to him, the world is not ours in nature. Custom, language, thought, even our lives themselves are not of us. We are the alien thrown into the world and only parasitizing it. Far from being exploited, we are rather 'schuldigsein (owing)' for everything to the precedent time or the national society from the beginning.²⁷

Marx assumed that we had our own lives before the Industrial Revolution and argued that we should abolish the private property by the Social Revolution to stop the exploitation by the trick of bourgeois' money. On the other hand, Heidegger said that we should recognize the responsibility of owing and that we should pay back all by the contribution to the national society. In fact, many died with his book for German national society i.e. for Nazis in WW II.

In France, it is said that Lévi-Strauss' Structuralism has knocked down Sartre's Marxian Existentialism after WW II.²⁸ However, as Lévi-Strauss was in fact a spirited left-wing warrior before the war, his Structuralism is the direct descendant of Marxian Existentialism more than Saussure's General Linguistics. Heidegger asked our 'schuldigsein (owing)' for custom, language and thought to the national society and claimed us the payback. Sartre regarded the owing and the payback as the same basic mechanism of human existence and called it 'engagement (commitment).' Lévi-Strauss' Structuralism may be the 'engagement' swept out the human individuality like Communism or Fascism. It is the extreme result of human alienation and there is no room for subjectivity of any member under it. In his theory, the structure alienated from individual activities is fetishized and controls us.

British critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) was a Socialist, but independent of Marxism. In order to solve the problem of human alienation, he advocated the reinstatement of handcraft (1959).²⁹ Impressed by Ruskin, Morris also maintained that the best pleasure of humans is the one to make things.³⁰ He inherited the old ideal of 'complete man (ganzer Mensch)' from da Vinci

and Goethe that all humans have been given the various abilities to live inherently and that it is human well-being to give full play to his/her own abilities.³¹

Needless to say, the word DIY is the abbreviation of 'Do It Yourself.' However, the origin is not clear. According to a theory, it was British war slogan in 1945 under German air attack.³² Anyway, the slogan became well known after WW II in Britain suffering the rebuilding for a long time. The things to repair were so much while the men to work were so short, that there was no way but to do all themselves. Also the magazine DO IT YOURSELF was published in 1957 and it already boasted a 3.75 million monthly readership in 1961.³³ More than Britain, US kept the frontier spirit that people should make everything themselves from a long time. The DIY movement spread further to Japan and Europe with big DIY retailing chains as a democratic life style.

What we should pay attention to is that the DIY movement after the war was for women, especially for housewives at first. Men were killed in the war, or worn out with the rebuilding of the society. Therefore, women had to do all of affairs in home themselves. It just so happened that the new modern materials like plastics and vinyl were invented in the war and began to become popular after the war. Referring to pictures of the women's magazine BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS (FRUIT, GARDEN AND HOME as magazine for farmers 1922-, renewed for housewives 1924-), women hated the old dark brown houses and refreshed it into the modern bright white homes.³⁴

5. The Idea of DIY

Private home and DIY may be unexpected spin-off of the modern times. Before 19th century, a house was functional with a certain role in the society. From the nobility to the peasantry, all of the family should work together for the family business. Even steward and cook were often employed as a live-in married couple. In contrast, the modern men and women work as individual. They set

private home outside their offices and their children have to work more for neither father's nor mother's social occupation.

Privacy thrives in society as what is not social. As well, DIY thrives in the industrial mass products as what is not provided by the industries. Without the industrial society of the modern times, there were no private home, no DIY. The modern industrial society has yielded home DIY and it contains them as its own antithesis. In this meaning, DIY is the action to retrieve ourselves in private home against alienation or meddling by industries.

DIY is not the problem of color and figure, but of ideal. What women hated was a paternal house for family business where men and elders control young wives. In contrast, a white home was a symbol of the place only for love and child care, even if it were just a small room in an old apartment.³⁵ DIY has gone over worldwide as the symbol of the sound hobby of the democratic new family with longing for modern American life. It was taken for granted that also a husband should work for his own home 'together' at least every weekend.³⁶ Therefore, DIY was called also 'weekend job' or 'Sunday carpenter.'

Cooking, sewing, building and repairing. DIY is employed to drive the blatant industries away and to make their own private family as a sanctuary. Do It Myself gets the social meaning as an inversion in the social dimension. A thing made by DIY is free of any critique. The social meaning is important that it was made by a certain someone for a certain someone and the functional quality is of no matter.

Heidegger said that all things in our lives are tools for something ('Zuhanden') prepared by the national society. However, DIY is done in the home. Here we are free from the usage defined by others. All things that we have in home are not vanities in the social dimension, but only materials to live our lives for us. We can use them in any way. They may be already constructed as a system, but we can reconstruct them any time. We can also cast away or augment them as we choose.

It is like Deconstruction of Post-modernism. However, home is in nature the sanctuary form the social dimension. People are not bothered by the historical details there. To take something new in DIY is easier than the social Deconstruction with inevitable destruction. There is no opponent in home. Any failure is allowed in advance. We can try anything for our enjoyment. It is a home.

What is important is that the activity does not cease forever. An improvement reveals another inconvenience or disunity in the home. He/she has to work on it. However, when it is completed, he/she feels uneasy by finding other points in home. New materials in DIY retailers also stimulate his/her inspiration. Home is under construction forever, because DIY is the same as to live.

6. Lévi-Strauss' Falsity

Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) lived in NY since 1940 and returned to Paris in 1949. Could it be true that he did not know DIY yet in 1962? The pioneer of DIY retailer 'Lowe's' was founded in 1946 in NC and it had already 21 stores in 1962 in US. Also in France, 'Leroy Merlin' (1923-) was successful in DIY and it was therefore followed by 'Mr. Bricolage' (1964-) and 'Castorama' (1969-). At latest in 1964, the French word 'bricolage' meant the same as the English word 'DIY' absolutely, since a new DIY retailer named itself as 'Mr. Bricolage' in 1964.³⁷

Susan Sontag (1933-2004) said that interpretation is taming.³⁸ Lévi-Strauss would tame 'pensée sauvage' by naming it 'bricolage.' In *LE TOTÉMISME AUJOURD'HUI* (1962) published in the same year as *LA PENSÉE SAUVAGE*, he indulges our disposition to project our own adverse thought to others. With this concept, he argues that Totemism is only the illusion projected to the primitive and that it is in fact our own idea on the continuity between human and nature that Christianity can never accept. However, the same logic is available to his illusion of 'bricolage.' Real bricolage or DIY is rather of our own. Nevertheless, he cut of it from our common lives and projected it to the primitive. What in DIY is adverse for him?

What in DIY is incompatible with his thought?

By saying that 'pensée sauvage' is the same as modern science, Lévi-Strauss cuts off the former from us. An analogy consists in the parallelism where both worlds cross never. When Vladimir Propp's (1928) *MORPHOLOGY OF THE FOLK TALE* was translated in English and published in 1958, Lévi-Strauss criticized it emotionally. While Lévi-Strauss was studying the mythology of the primitives, Propp did it with our own folk tales. It made Lévi-Strauss angry and he said that Propp should do it with the mythology of the primitives and that he does not know the mythology, therefore Propp is of no use.³⁹

Is it a fair criticism? However, Lévi-Strauss did the same again after that. His pupil Pierre Clastres (1934-77) thought that the primitives are not primitive from the beginning, but they rather appeared first after the world modernization by refusing the modernization.⁴⁰ Irritated by the theory, Lévi-Strauss expelled him (1974). What does he find wrong with this? For example, Amish refuse any improvement of lifestyle. However, their faith against improvement consists in the antithesis of the modern times. Therefore, they exist only in the modern times.

Algebra has 'Field Theory.' In it, 'magma' is a simple closed structure where the result of an operation of any two elements of the 'magma' belongs to the 'magma' again. For example, a natural number is 'magma' in addition. A certain natural number plus a certain natural number makes only some natural number, never a negative number nor a fractional number.

If you put just a fractional number into the natural number's set, the answer of the addition of the elements may not be a natural number any more. It is not closed 'magma.' The heterogeneous element generates the heterogeneous element by every single operation like a domino line and makes the whole structure ultimately transform. If this model is applied to the human society and if it is claimed that the heterogeneous elements should be excluded to prevent the society from the 'blood pollution,' it is the Racism of Nazis. However, it was also the thought that Nazis had learned from Judaism.

American historian Thomas Kuhn (1922-96) researched the historical Scientific Revolution and found that there are two modes in science. The normal mode of science is only the puzzle of the uncovered rooms to solve with already known theories. However, it becomes stuck one day. Then, the abnormal mode is set in motion and the new theory is explored. With the new found theory, the new puzzle solving begins as the normal mode again. It is the 'paradigm shift.'⁴¹

Also bricolage is not the alternative of our engineering somewhere in another world, but it is done rather in the midst of our engineering. In the frontier of the engineering, there are no parts prepared for the experience that has never been tried before. Therefore, the challenging engineer always has to apply the tools and materials prepared for other aims by bricolage for his/her own aim. Much more, bricolage in home is done every weekend. Home is always under construction so that it has no static 'normal mode.' However, is there any paradigm in home?

The essence of bricolage consists not in the limitation of 'applying only the materials in hand,' but the rereading of the meaning of materials, whatever already in hand or newly purchased. Lévi-Strauss also referred the rereading of the meaning of materials in bricolage. However, charging the limitation of 'applying only the materials in hand,' he holds bricolage cheap. He said that it would never make more than the set of materials, even if the structure is totally reorganized by every changing.⁴²

Lévi-Strauss maintains that engineering thinking with pure 'concepts' is smarter than bricolage working with dirty 'signs' stuck by the concrete images of the real materials.⁴³ He said that sign is the combination of image and concept.⁴⁴ As well as common language, the combination of image and concept in sign is defined in the social dimension. However, bricolage is free from the social dimension. The social concepts given by the others are wiped away in advance from the images of the real materials. For example, in Chanel, Imitation Pearl does not belong to the social concept of imitation any more. For her, it is just a beauty.

As well as language, our concepts have the structure of ‘magma.’ Any operation of concepts makes only a certain known concept in the same set. However, in 1960’s, the real bricolage i.e. DIY takes anything in greedily and makes everything in home i.e. outside of the social dimension with rapidity. It is changing the game balance of the whole social structure as ‘paradigm shift.’ In order to hold Structuralism despite such a social situation, Lévi-Strauss had to confine the terrible DIY in the isolated primitive or amateur world with the burden of the limitation of ‘applying only the materials in hand’ as the name ‘bricolage.’

In the modern times, our society has no time to make a static closed structure. We accept a new element every day and our society is changing more and more. Even when we consider something, we refer only to the nearest relations of it, but never to the whole. At least in our society, a structure is quite an illusion. There is only a network of concrete relations or unique experiences spreading in time and space. It is changing dynamically part by part like the Ship of Theseus.

7. Professional Bricolage

Bricolage is the refutation against the controlling social structure. The real bricolage depends only on the materials and sneaks throughout the cage of the social concepts easily. By thinking only with images of the real materials, we can break free of the existing concepts. The real materials are pivots to turn the lifestyle from the social dimension to our own dimension. Although the professional-made was born in order to put off the cheap folk-made in previous times, the DIY-made is now popular in order to keep our own lives from the cheap commercialism.

However, industries are cunning as ever. They make their mass products pretend ‘home-made,’ ‘hand-made’ or ‘the original limited work by the artist him/herself’ in order to invade the private home as an intact market. Our age is full of the various proposals of lifestyles by fishy designers. Especially in Christmas season, many brands shovel money from the jingle-jangle

spree by selling us the vainly expensive odds and ends.⁴⁵ Our lives are now messier than the house of the nobility in the 19th Century.

They say ‘buy this and your whole life change at once.’ If things in the life make a linkage (“Zusammenhang”) as Wilhelm Dilthy (1833-1911) said⁴⁶, just a one thing may be able to become the trigger to change the whole life by the domino effect. However, it is ourselves all the same who makes it the trigger and changes the related things by DIY. If you have bought it and you do nothing, then nothing will change.⁴⁷

They say also ‘buy this and show your style.’ For example, to buy Chanel is the approval for Chanel in the social dimension. Putting Chanel on yourself is the demonstration of your subjective ‘commitment’ for the ideal of the individual beautiful person. However, is it the alienation or exploitation of the human subjectivity? If you have your own opinion, you should show it by yourself, not by approving someone else’s.

However, far from it, the bricolage products by professional designers sell in fact only for ‘potlatch’ or the conspicuous consumption.⁴⁸ The buyers have no interest in the epoch-making function or meaning that the designers invented. For them, such products are only collections. For example, for what reason does a fine hotel buy Castiglioni’s SELLA? Does it have a daughter who loves long phone conversations? What is important for the hotel is only that the hotel has the famous modern design stool.

Nowadays, due to the excess of the power of product, our society already has been saturated. Therefore, every industry will try bricolage in order to break the existing market and to get their position in it. Especially in electric wares, new standards are proposed unceasingly and the products become stale at once although they work yet. Here, the constant breaking the structure is our game.

Then, are any more designers uninvited? I do not think so. The unceasing proposals by

industries are done in nature for the industries themselves, not for us. Then all the more, we have to do bricolage to reread the meaning of everything and to reorganize all under our own subjectivity. Here, the professional-bricolage designers like da Vinci, Chanel and Castiglioni give us ideas and courage. They design not form and color of product, but new direction or new dream under that we should arrange our odds and ends. However, the work should be done by ourselves, as ever is the case, with bricolage.

¹ Lévi-Strauss, Claude; *LA PANSÉE SAUVAGE*, 1962.

² *Ibid.*, p.26.

³ *Ibid.*, p.21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.40. However, this is an account on art originally; in addition, his observation may have confusion about three factors. He counts as three accidental chances effecting art in another page 39; the occasion, and the execution and the destination. We do not know whether they are exactly the same as the model, the material and the use. As we discussed before, it is said generally that Functionalism advocates the pursuit for the truth of stuff, skill and use against historical.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.39.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.22, p. 33, p.40.

¹⁰ See, for example, Wilder, Laura Ingalls (1867-1957); *LITTLE HOUSE* series, 1932-43. These depict her frontier life in 1870-85.

¹¹ De Musset, Alfred; *LA CONFESSION D'UN ENFANT DU SIÈCLE*, 1836, part I, ch. IV: "Pour donner une idée de l'état où se trouvait alors mon esprit, je ne puis mieux le comparer qu'à un de ces appartements comme on en voit aujourd'hui, où se trouvent rassemblés et confondus des meubles de tous les temps et de tous les pays. Notre siècle n'a point de formes. Nous n'avons donné le cachet de notre temps ni à nos maisons, ni à nos jardins, ni à quoi que ce soit. On rencontre dans les rues des gens qui ont la barbe coupée comme du temps d'Henri III, d'autres qui sont rasés, d'autres qui ont les cheveux arrangés comme ceux du portrait de Raphaël, d'autres comme du temps de Jésus-Christ. Aussi les appartements des riches sont des cabinets de curiosités ; l'antique, le gothique, le goût de la Renaissance, celui de Louis XIII, tout est pêle-mêle. Enfin nous avons de tous les siècles, hors du nôtre, chose qui n'a jamais été vue à une autre époque ; l'éclectisme est notre goût ; nous prenons tout ce que nous trouvons, ceci pour sa beauté, ceci pour sa commodité, telle autre chose pour son antiquité, telle autre pour sa laideur même ; en sorte que nous ne vivons que de débris, comme si la fin du monde était proche. "

¹² Some like Robert Venturi (1925-) regard the farrago of different ages and countries as the characteristic of Post-modernism. (See Venturi, Robert; *COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTION IN ARCHTECTURE*, 1966. *LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS*, 1972.) However, as cited above, the farrago was inevitable rather in the pre-modern poor productivity. Far from it, the farrago without unity was their pride of the long history and the

wide territory of the family.

¹³ Wagner, Otto; MODERNE ARCHITEKTUR, 1885, 3rd ed. 1902, p.95.

¹⁴ Sullivan, Louis; The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered, LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE, Mar. 1986.

¹⁵ Loos, Adlf; ORNAMENT UND VERBRECHEN, 1908.

¹⁶ Le Corbusier; VERS UNE ARCHTECTURE, 1923, p.73.

¹⁷ Mondrian, Piet; Le neo-plasticisme, Galerie L'Effort Moderne, 1920; Die Neue Gestaltung: Das Generalprinzip gleichgewichtiger Gestaltung , DIE NEUE GESTALTUNG, 1925.

¹⁸ However, it was not the first perfume using aldehyde. See Mazzeo, Tilar J.; THE SECRET OF CHANEL No.5, 2010.

¹⁹ Imitation Pearl of the age was made with a glass ball painted artificial resin especially in the island Mallorca since 1920 because of the confusion in the Spanish main land by 3rd Rif War (1920-26).

²⁰ Poured Glass was the special product of Maison Gripoix (1869-).

²¹ Moholy-Nagy, László; THE NEW VISION: FUNDAMENTALS OF DESIGN, PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ARCHTECTURE, 1930.

²² O. Henry; The Gift of Magi, THE FOUR MILLION, 1906.

²³ Paulsson, Gregor; DIE SOZIALE DIMENSION DER KUNST, 1955.

²⁴ Veblen, Thorstein; THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS, 1899.

²⁵ Sombart, Werner; LIEBE, LUXUS UND KAPITALIMUS, 1912.

²⁶ Marx, Karl; Erster Manuskript, ÖKONOMISH-PHILOSOPHISCHE MANUSKRIPTE, published 1932.

²⁷ Heidegger, Martin; SEIN UND ZEIT, p.280-289.

²⁸ Sartre, Jean-Paul; CRITIQUE DE LA RAISON DIALECTIQUE, 1960. Lévi-Strauss wrote LA PANSÉE SAUVAGE as the critic of the book.

²⁹ Ruskin, John; Lecture III: Modern Manufacture And Design, THE TWO PATHS, 1959.

³⁰ Morris, William; The prospects of Architecture in Civilization, 1880, HOPES AND FEARS FOR ART, 1882, ch.5. Read, Herbert; ART AND INDUSTRY, 1952, p.41-44.

³¹ As the word symbolizing the ideal of 'complete man,' Goethe's quotation is famous; "who does not love music is not a man, who loves music is a half man, who plays music is a complete man."

³² However, I cannot find any poster of the slogan yet.

³³ Oram, Scott; Do-it-Yourself in the 1950s, Anthropology @ suite 101, 29 Mar. 2010, <<http://scott-oram.suite101.com/doing-it-yourself-in-the-1950s-a220910>>.

³⁴ Oram, Scott; Constructing Contemporary, INTERIOR DESIGN AND IDENTITY, ed. by Mckellar and Sparke, 2004.

³⁵ See the musical LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, stage 1982, filmed 1986. It is based on the film of the same name in 1960 and the background is LA's skid row in 1960.

³⁶ Oram, Scott; Homemaking, DIY and 'Togatherness' in the 1950s, Anthropology @ suite 101, 1 May 2010, <<http://scott-oram.suite101.com/homemaking-diy-and-togetherness-in-the-1950s-a232325>>.

³⁷ That the retailer's name was not 'Monsieur Bricolage' or 'M. Bricolage' as genuine French, but 'Mr.' of English shows that the bricolage movement in France was influenced by the DIY in Britain and US.

³⁸ Sontag, Susan; Against Interpretation, AGAINST INTERPRETATION, 1966.

³⁹ Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Structure et Forme, Cahiers de l'Institute de science économique appliquée 9, 1960, pp. 3-36.

⁴⁰ Clastres, Pierre; La société contre l'État, 1974.

- ⁴¹ Kuhn, Thomas; THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION, 1962.
- ⁴² Lévi-Strauss, Claude; LA PENSÉE SAUVAGE, 1962, p.29.
- ⁴³ Ibid., p30. Although Lévi-Strauss used the word 'transparent,' the meaning is Kant's 'pure,' i.e. containing no experimental.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p28.
- ⁴⁵ See also the movie JINGLE ALL THE WAY, 1996.
- ⁴⁶ Dilthey, Wilhelm; DER AUFBAU DER GESCHICHTLICHEN WELT IN DEN GEISTESWISSENSCHAFTEN, 1910.
- ⁴⁷ However, if you have bought it, the industry has already accomplished their goal in the social dimension. It does not care about the after.
- ⁴⁸ Veblen, Thorstein; THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS, 1899.