

## History of Architecture and Culture – 5

### Lecture 12

#### **Opposition to Industrial Arts and Production**

Like most styles and movements, industrial revolution too had opposition. Every moment is essentially an opposition to some other moment in the past. Similarly, industrial revolution also had opposition in the future. The most violent of these oppositions was led by a group called Luddites. General Ned Ludd and the Army of Redressers began to send threatening letters in early 1811 to manufacturers in Nottingham. Workers were extremely angry because factory owners lowered the wages and the factories were starting to replace the skilled labourers with unskilled labourers because of cheap labour. The advent of machines, what happened was the machines replaced most of the work that people did which meant that even the skilled people who were working did not find any work in the mechanized world. All the skill was replaced by machines, even the most unskilled of the labour, someone who nearly relied on physical brute force, not on any of the skills or talent that he possessed can perform the same thing a skill worker possess after the advent of machineries. What happened was, the skilled labourers were getting paid more. Factories saw that they cannot afford to spend so much money on skilled labourers while they can actually cheap unskilled labour and they replaced all the skilled labour with unskilled labourers leaving the skilled labourers out of work. This really made them very angry. What they did was, they started to break into factories and destroy machines. Typically the destruction was only aimed directly at the mills and factories but on a few rare occasions it extended to people as well.

They started destroying all the machines, all the technology, all the factory items, started setting them on fire. These mill owners started to complain to the government. The government responded quickly and forcefully. Immediate large reward was announced on any information related to the capture of the luddites. In 1812, they passed a law covering the destruction of machinery is a capital offense. The destruction of machinery was normal, then became a capital offense. It was that big a problem at particular point of time. What happened was, after they termed it as a capital offense and whenever there was an luddite movement, troops were sent into the areas and people were thrashed. In these clashes between the military and the luddites, about 20 people were killed and a lot more people were deported or exterminated from the country as well. Who were these luddites? Back in 19th century, they were the English textile artisans who protested against the newly developed labour-saving machinery. Actually what happened was the stocking frames, spinning frames and power looms were all introduced during the industrial revolution. These threatened to replace the artisans with less-skilled, low-wage labourers, leaving them without work. Hence, these people started to rebel against them.

Another important thing that we must note about this particular period is the Peterloo Massacre, which happened immediately after Battle of Waterloo, four years after that. Hence the name, Peterloo massacre was given to this particular incident. What happened was, workers started to make requests against the government to reduce government corruption, to increase wages and provide better working conditions for people and they also demanded universal suffrage. Universal suffrage means the right to vote or the franchise to vote for all people. Previously, the right to vote was only for the top category of people, they even demanded universal suffrage. Henry Hunt was a famous Orator at that particular point of time, he was an orator and political leader. Along with Richard Carlile, they arranged for a meeting at Manchester. The meeting drew a crowd of over 50,000 people which caused the magistrate to panic and they called in the military. The military along with their cavalry, killed several people, wounded several other people, they arrested several other leaders including Hunt, this came to be known as the Peterloo Massacre. This is the image of the Cavalry charging into the crowd. These moments led to the advent of the arts and crafts movement.

### **Arts and Craft Movement**

Arts and crafts movement is an art movement that aimed to promote a return to hand-craftsmanship and to assert the creative independence of individual craftspeople. Previously, what happened to the craftspeople was that they were working with all the talent and now with the advent of machinery, the craftsmen guild vanished. The entire guild of craftsmen became very very thin. These craftsmen joined hands, they wanted to promote the return to the hand craftsmanship, instead of machine craftsmanship. This was a clear reaction against the industrialist society. They also aimed for social and artistic reform. This example in England was followed by other countries, particularly in the U.S after the world war, The world war I.

William Morris (1834-96) provided yet greater inspiration to the period and the movement. He was simultaneously a romantic poet and dreamer, he was also a businessman, a political campaigner, he had an impressively forceful, practical character. He had great manual skill, he himself could design and execute work of outstanding beauty in wallpapers, in print, woven and embroidered textiles, and in book production he offered a living example of others of what they might achieve. People thought craftspeople have no future in this mechanised world and people started to have negative ideas about crafts people, not many people wanted to step into the industry. William Morris was an example of how people who were more inclined towards art, could make a living in this world too. He founded a firm to retail furnishings produced his own workshops, where craftsmen were given a free rein. He did not tell them what to do, how to do or where to do things, he gave them a free hand so that they could express their creativity in their own time and in their own ways and minds. In his workshop, all

the craftsmen employed were given a free rein. All the furnishings that they made were being sold in a firm. But eventually, the firm's products that were originally intended to brighten the lives of ordinary people, were too expensive to sell to any but the rich. This was an irony since the firm intended to brighten the lives of normal people not just the rich. After this, Morris had to set out to train as an architect, in the office of the eminent Gothic revivalist, G.E. Street. In that firm, while he was working with Street, also working in the same firm was Philip Webb. Another famous architect, a contemporary of William Morris.

Philip Webb was a lifelong friend of Morris, designed for him, the Red house which is regarded as the first fully integrated Arts and Crafts domestic environment. The Red house was intended to be William Morris's personal house but it also houses his craft, workshop, merchandise, it also housed a place to work, studio, everything. Philip Webb continued to work primarily as an architect. He and his contemporaries developed styles inspired by vernacular architecture. He also extended patronage to the Arts and Crafts movement, influencing many younger architects with the Arts and Crafts theory and arts and crafts movement. This is the Red house which Philip Webb designed for William Morris. Take a look at the landscape, the beautiful setting in which the building is located. Take a look at roof forms and also take a look at the different types of windows he has. There is a dormer window here, there is a circular small window here and a circular large window here, there is a rectangular window here and a further longer rectangle window over here. The positioning of the window is not just one above the other as we saw in Neo classical architecture. In Neo classical type of architecture, there is a window here and obviously, a window here. There should have been a window here but here in this building, the positioning of the windows is not as per previous known order, we will look into that in a bit. Let's just get into what is this building all about.

This building is recognized as one of the most important examples of 19th century British Architecture. Red house not only a family home, but also a background to his ongoing artistic work along with his contemporaries and his employees. Take a look at the interior of his Red house, please note the roof type, the bed, its steps, carpet, furniture. Take a look at the decor, the chairs again. Let's take a look at the plan of the house. Moving down to the ground floor, we have an entrance, the hallway, the sitting rooms on one side, the corridor opening towards the main central area which has a well. Across the hallway is the dining room and the dining room is accessible by the kitchen and the pantry, the dining room has a laboratory that can be easily accessed from these two places. The kitchen has a scullery and a kitchen court at the back. The hall has steps that lead to the first floor. On the first floor after the corridor there is a space for studios. Over here, hallway again followed by drawing rooms with short level difference, it also leads to bedrooms and servant rooms. The red house was L-shaped, two storeyed, high pitched roof made of red tile. The large-hall, dining room, library, morning-room and kitchen

were located on the ground floor, while on the first floor were the main living-rooms, the drawing-room, the studio and the bedrooms. The servants' quarters were larger than in most contemporary buildings, reflecting the ideas regarding working class conditions which lead Morris and Webb to become socialists in later life. They thought that when a person is working, the worker must be given good quality of life too, it's not just the employer who should take all the benefit of owning the company or the workers. It's actually the workers who make it possible and the workers should also be given due credit, that was Philip Webb's and Morris's idea, they later became socialists in their life. Even at this particular point of time, the embryonic idea had already started.

This is the original drawing produced by Philip Webb, we were talking about the windows in the earlier picture. The windows were positioned to suit the design of the rooms rather than to fit an external symmetry; thus, a variety of different window types are present, including - tall casements, hipped dormers, round-headed sash-windows and bull's eye windows. The architecture of Red House was inspired by styles of British design from the 13th century and Morris described the building being very medieval in its spirit. These windows were very different in each room because the windows had to look good from the interior of the room, not the exterior. Neoclassical architecture looks at buildings from an exterior point of view, doesn't care about what a room is going to have on the inside. If there is a window on the ground floor, the same window has to be repeated on the first floor. But, in this moment, the Red house, Philip Webb did not care about whether the window was repetitive from the exterior, he did not think about all that. What he thought about was the interior room layout and if the window would suit that interior. What kind of window would be suitable, how much amount of light to allow or restrict into the building? The kind of soft lighting and warm lighting were required for some demands. All these conditions were the most important things to Philip Webb other than positioning of windows from the exterior. That is why you see different types of windows and sizes of windows in particular.

The Arts and Crafts Movement was always as much as about ideology as about decorative art objects themselves. They didn't produce a large amount of art objects in this movement. They produced art objects, yes but not extensively. It's always about the idea, don't use machines, use handcrafts, use the free spirit of the human hand, art and craftwork by the people, that was the idea. This aspect was grounded in the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its application to the Industry. This helped Congresses in Liverpool, Edinburgh and Birmingham, in which many of the principal figures in the ACM took a larger view of the current state of the decorative arts. These people kept meeting regularly. The Arts and Crafts were produced in all media, most of it include metalwork, ceramics, glass, textiles and furniture. Architecture often provided a setting for a unified achievement in interior design. Arts & Crafts movement was not

technically, entirely an architectural movement. It was arts & crafts movement, like the name suggests. The main concentration lied in the Arts and Crafts field. A little more so in the creative fields like making furniture, by extension into the interior, the architecture is often just a setting in which a proper arts and craft interior can be made and all these products, all these metalwork, all these glass, ceramic works, furniture, textiles, embroidery, all these things can be showcased in that particular space. This is the main reason why architecture developed.

William Morris's Kelmscott Press inspired several adherents of the ACM to experiment with typography, with varied results. Painters contributed decoration to decorative art objects, though there was no identifiable school of Arts and Crafts Painting. You cannot claim that this painting was a part of the Arts and Craft movement but then, they still used the creative art objects, they still tried to use non-mechanized things, they tried to use things that were produced by hand, not by a machine. They kind of got the spirit of Arts and crafts movement but no painting can be clearly called an Arts and Craft movement painting.

Let us quickly take a look at different design principles by which Arts and Craft movement functioned. The first principle was that there was a general search for aesthetic design and decoration. A reaction against the styles that were developed by machine-production. They kept the form very simple, the form was simple without superfluous decoration. They also did not like that much decoration, hence they decorated it pretty simple. Tended to emphasize the qualities of the materials. Used in the vernacular, domestic, traditions including local arts, local handicrafts from the British countryside. They even tried to represent the Flora and Fauna from the British countryside. Most of the Designer-makers established workshops in rural areas so that they can stay close to vernacular architecture, they can stay close to the vernacular culture so that they can stay inspired easily. They were influenced by the Gothic Revival and medieval styles. They definitely used bold forms and strong colours in their work.

This picture denotes different produces from the Arts and crafts movement. Here we can see furniture wall partitions, floor partitions and even decorative motives.