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DESIGNING WORLDS

**National Design Histories in an
Age of Globalization**

Edited by Kjetil Fallan and Grace Lees-Maffei



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INTRODUCTION

National Design Histories in an Age of Globalization

GRACE LEES-MAFFEI AND KJETIL FALLAN

Design is simultaneously global, regional, national and local (Calvera 2005), and it has been so at least since the dramatic increase in intercontinental trade and travel in the fifteenth century. The Silk Road and the transatlantic slave trade are examples of the pre-modern and early modern globalization of commerce associated with the development of similarly global channels of communication about goods and their design and manufacture. Today, the cars we celebrate as ‘Italian’, for example, could just as well be designed by Britons and Brazilians and manufactured in Poland and Pakistan, on behalf of multi-national owners, for markets in Switzerland and Swaziland. But while design might be more global than ever before, it is still conditioned by, and in turn informs, its global, regional, national and local contexts at once. Technological developments, including the world wide web, digital cloud services and CAD/CAM, enable collaboration between automotive designers, for example, working anywhere from Delhi and Detroit to Dubai, but however well-travelled the designers themselves might be, they operate from within physical contexts in which local, regional and national as well as international factors are active.

While since the nineteenth century the national has been a dominant category for understanding culture and identity, as well as politics and economics and a host of other factors, in our own century, mainstream media and academic discourse alike have been preoccupied with globalization (Applebaum and Robinson 2005). Across the humanities and social sciences, international developments in higher education, the continuing influence of postcolonial theory, and the contemporary focus on sustainability, have all exerted an

influence on the ways in which design, particularly, is understood. Design historians have critiqued an existing bias in the field towards Western industrialized nations based on a definition of design derived from its separation from industrial manufacture. They (we) are now looking further afield in writing *Global Design History*, to use the title of a 2011 anthology (Adamson, Riello and Teasley 2011). In this work, national histories have been criticized as unsuited to a new global gaze in which contemporary society and historical narratives are to be freed from the geo-political straightjacket of nation states (Traganou 2011: 166). Arjun Appadurai (1996: 169) has even claimed that the nation state has become obsolete as a marker of identity construction. Is the nation simply imagined (Anderson 1983), a modern myth, as Ernest Gellner (1983) claimed? Or can this admittedly complex construction still be a valuable framework for histories of design?

The nation state is no longer the only socio-cultural or political-economic unit forming our identities and experiences, if it ever was, but national and regional histories of design have demonstrated cogent frameworks for the discussion of common socio-economic, cultural and identity issues. In the context of celebrations and moral panics alike concerning the impact of globalization, it is critically important to recognize that the much-vaunted global chains of design, manufacturing and commerce are still composed of national endeavours. *Designing Worlds: National Design Histories in an Age of Globalization* aims to rethink the writing of national design histories in light of the increasing attention to trans-, inter- and supranational understandings of design, past and present. With contributions from all five continents, it provides a timely examination of the historiographic and methodological value of national frameworks in writing design history. This introduction begins by examining how the dominant national paradigm has been challenged by the global as an academic, and mainstream, preoccupation, and then argues for the reconceptualization of the national within the global in design history before exploring the contribution of the chapters presented in this book.

The Nation and History Writing

The nation and the national have formed perhaps the most widespread and long-lasting paradigm in historical scholarship from its origins as an academic discipline in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century (Berger 2005: 631) to the late twentieth century. Because of the intrinsic relation between academic history and the political nationalism that gave rise to and consolidated the modern nation state, the national paradigm and the understanding of what constitutes a nation in history writing have long remained to a large degree implicit. Today, however, the awareness that nationhood does not always neatly coincide with the borders of the nation state necessitates a more reflexive historiography in

which more nuanced and contested perceptions and expressions of the national are brought to the fore. This book contributes to such developments by consolidating the academic endeavour of globalizing design history with the highly complex co-construction of national identity and material culture, exemplified by cases probing issues such as geopolitical shifts, migration, ethnic national minorities, transnational dialogues, international product flows, etc.

Umut Özkirimli's sound historiographic survey of writing on nations (2010) sees its origins in a 'primordial' understanding of the nation as a natural entity. Primordial nationalism is supported by a feeling of belonging and emotional iterations of national identity such as patriotism. The continued dominance of the nation as a category of understanding seems to support the idea that many people accept the nation as, if not natural, then somehow inevitable. Terms such as motherland, fatherland and homeland merge kinship and territory and underscore a 'sociobiological' understanding of the nation in which the heritage and temporal depth (Grosby 2005: 43, 11) form a macro correlative of the successive generations of a family.

It was only with the widespread influence of poststructuralist theory on the historical profession from the 1980s onwards that the primacy of the national as narrative and framework for understanding was seriously challenged. Across the humanities and social sciences this challenge took the form of a renewed interest in the national, not as a given or a convenient unit of analysis, but rather as a constructed entity. Scholarship on the nation focused on deconstructing its symbolic and representational aspects (Berger 2005: 650–660). Özkirimli groups three of the key writers on nations – Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm – in the 'modernist' group, which sought to dismantle the idea of the nation as natural or inevitable. This group instead revealed nations as constructs, the results of concerted engagements in the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1993) and imagined communities (Anderson 1983), albeit with a regrettable emphasis on high culture (Gellner 1983) and public discourses and practices, rather than everyday or demotic instances of the national. The undeniably influential theories of national identity proposed by Gellner, Hobsbawm, Anderson and others have been critiqued most notably by Tim Edensor for being too singularly focused on 'high' culture, ceremonial practices, state interventions and official life. 'What is missing' from their accounts, he claims, 'is a sense of the unspectacular, contemporary production of national identity through popular culture and everyday life' (Edensor 2002: 12). This has significant implications for recognition of the importance of design in communicating national identity, as we shall see below. Design extends to everything that is planned and/or made; design history enjoys therefore a broad area of enquiry, not limited to high or official culture, nor confined purely to popular culture.

Özkirimli then turns to ethnosymbolist approaches to the nation, including Anthony D. Smith's examination of the nation and ethnicities, before arriving

at ‘new’ approaches to nationalism characterized by the work of five theorists informed variously by postcolonial and feminist theory (on which, see also Blom, Hagemann and Hall 2004) and including, notably for the study of design understood as a demotic phenomenon, Michael Billig’s work on ‘banal nationalism’ (1995). Özkirimli adduces from his survey a synthetic approach which takes the best from the literature across the categories he reviews, to arrive at an understanding of the national as ‘neither illusory nor artificial, but [...] socially constituted and institutional, hence “real” in its consequences and a very “real” part of our everyday lives’ (Özkirimli 2010: 217). He closes his book with a call for greater collaboration between theorists of nationalism who all too often operate in an abstract mode with insufficient reference to specific empirical examples, and historians who ignore theoretical developments in favour of ‘descriptive narratives of particular nationalisms’ (Özkirimli 2010: 219).

Postcolonialism and the Nation

Poststructuralist approaches to understanding nations, and the detractors of this work, have been accompanied by work informed by postcolonial theory. Because the modern nation state is a recent construct, and one that was transposed and translated to the non-Western world as part of, and in the wake of, colonialism, its role in historical narratives has preoccupied postcolonialist historiography. Dipesh Chakrabarty, for instance, argues that ‘European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincializing Europe becomes a task of exploring how this thought – which is now everybody’s heritage and affects us all – may be renewed from and for the margins’ (Chakrabarty 2000: 16). The histories of modern non-Western nations are better understood by reading the reception and rethinking in these societies of colonial thought than by discarding it – the latter would amount to ‘postcolonial revenge’, a less productive strategy (Gandhi 1998: x).

Crucially, however, postcolonialist theory has also led to a renewal – and improvement – of the national paradigm in historiography. A key example is Partha Chatterjee’s critique of Benedict Anderson’s claim that colonial nationalism was inevitably based on European models. Chatterjee argues that this is a misconception caused by historians prioritizing the political realms of society over the cultural, and that a cultural history of colonial nations will reveal the emergence of modern national cultures independent of, or at least parallel to, the Western-dominated colonial state (Chatterjee 2010: 23–36). Similarly, and again based on examples from the history of the previously colonized world, Chatterjee dismissed as premature Appadurai’s call to move beyond the nation (Appadurai 1996: 158–177), arguing instead for

increased attention to historical processes ‘located on a different site – not the moral-cultural ground of modernity and the external institutional domain of global civil society but rather the ground of democracy and the internal domain of national political society’ (Chatterjee 2010: 176). Also, it bears mention that national narratives in non-Western societies such as India and China long predate the modern Western nation state and its historiography (Woolf 2006).

Taking Fernando Ortiz’s notion of transculturation as his example, Walter Dignolo has even critiqued postcolonial perspectives for their reliance on the national framework: ‘either you find a nation-state that becomes an empire (like Spain or England) or one undergoing uprisings and rebellions to become autonomous, working towards the foundation of a nation’ (Dignolo 2000: 16). In an effort to move beyond such dichotomies, however, it has been suggested that the marginalization of the colonized world is as much a product of postcolonialism itself as one of colonialism, in that the process of marginalization and separatism, at least in the case of the Arab world, ‘coincided with the self-conscious desire of the Arabs to disentangle themselves from the colonizers’ history, the history of the West, and to rewrite their independent national history and reconstruct their cultural identity’ (Akkach 2014: 70).

Although the modern nation-state is emphatically a nineteenth-century European construct, this book argues that national frameworks for design historical analyses can be highly rewarding also beyond the conventional geographies of the field. In fact, more than half of the chapters focus on previously colonized regions including Southern Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and Latin America. These case studies provide much-needed knowledge on the design histories of underexplored nations and regions, but more importantly, for our project, they also offer new and unique understandings of how design cultures are formed and operationalized in the complex and contested processes of forging societies, collectives, communities, institutions and identities. Whether they analyse how Brazil constructed an official national identity as exotic, yet modern at international exhibitions in the late nineteenth century, or how today design discourse in New Zealand grapples with ownership of Maori design traditions, these contributions all demonstrate not only that the design histories of postcolonial nations can benefit from a reflexive national framework, but also that they are crucial to the book’s aim of exploring how design culture in the modern world is shaped by the intersection of the national and the global. The African nations defined by the 1885 Berlin Conference are often thought of as haphazard. However, as shown in, for example, Marta Filipova’s chapter on glass as a national identity marker in what today is known as the Czech Republic, and Ariyuki Kondo’s chapter on the cultural exchanges between Europe and Japan during the Meiji era, international geopolitical developments have important implications for national design histories across the globe. Similarly, dipti bhagat’s discussion of how

international trade in second-hand clothing is integral to Zambian design culture illuminates Stina Teilmann-Lock's analysis of how 'Danish Design' has moved from signifying 'made in Denmark' to now implying 'designed in Denmark' (but made elsewhere).

From Nation to Nation: Other Alternative Approaches

Different scales of focus have been tested, most notably by the French *Annales* School (see, for instance, Braudel 1969), while social history, history of everyday life and micro history have tended to focus on other units of analysis, for example the family, the village and the region. More recent alternatives to the national paradigm have included comparative history and transnational history. An example of the former, which is relevant to the history of design, is Greg Castillo's 2010 examination of the significance of homes during the Cold War as demonstrations of the relative merits of socialist and capitalist societies and associated lifestyles. Castillo ranges comparatively across East and West, Soviet bloc and the US in tracing this argument through the material culture of the competing regimes and the discourses which surrounded it. And design historians will have much to gain from considering the work of the major Tensions of Europe project and the associated Making Europe book series, which applies a transnational approach to the study of how Europe and Europeanness have been constructed by and around people, ideas, knowledge and technology in constant movement across national borders (see especially Oldenziel and Hård 2013). This work is extremely valuable for elucidating and exemplifying the place of design and technology in understanding nations and their interactions. Ultimately, though, both comparative history and transnational history rely on the nation as entity and conceptual category, and therefore produce histories that complement rather than contest national histories. Also complementary are regional histories, whether of regions within nations, such as the study of *North East America* by Daniel Maudlin and Robin Peel (2013), or supranational regions such as Scandinavia (Fallan 2012).

Larger alternatives to the national paradigm include the growing fields of world history and global history. Design historical interventions in these categories include Victor Margolin's monumental *World History of Design* which combines a chronological arrangement with regional and national perspectives (Margolin 2015) and the anthology *Global Design History* (Adamson, Riello and Teasley 2011) which emphasizes an object-centred perspective as well as global connections and flows. The textbook survey *History of Design: Decorative Arts and Material Culture, 1400–2000* (Kirkham and Weber 2013) also aims for global coverage (albeit with the exclusion of Australia/Oceania in the first edition). Aligning the 'material turn' in the humanities with the desire

to move beyond the Western bias of most fields, Ruth Phillips argues that ‘It is no accident that a concern with materiality has accompanied the rise of global consciousness and the reframing of curricula and research in “world” terms – e.g. “world” history, art history, literatures’. Their congruence, she claims, is facilitated by the material turn’s friendliness to ‘critical analysis of alternative sensory regimes’ (Phillips 2013: 140). World histories of design, then, are alluring because things lend themselves to cross-cultural translation and understanding. However, a warning is sounded about world history from advocates of border studies, Tony Fry and Eleni Kalantidou, that: ‘The plural nature of design cannot any longer be gathered and contained within any homogenizing frame notwithstanding for a “world history of design” to be “manufactured” within design history’ (Fry and Kalantidou 2014: 6; see also Fry 1989). National studies may be too bounded by borders, but they are perhaps less prone to generalizing about the commonality of huge international regions than the project of world history.

Clearly, the historiography of recent decades demonstrates that there are multiple challenges to the national framework in the writing of history, and alternative approaches abound. Notwithstanding these highly significant and influential developments in historical scholarship, the national paradigm is far from discarded – if anything, it is resurging. Stefan Berger has pointed to the political turmoil following the end of the Cold War as a catalyst for this renewed interest in national histories: ‘The nation is about to return to the historical stage, as it is still widely identified as the most powerful community of memory’ (Berger 2005: 673). The new national histories are, however, significantly different from the homogenizing, monolithic narratives so prominent in traditional historiography:

Where the old national paradigms worked on the basis of ‘othering’ and inclusion/exclusion mechanisms, the new histories have steadfastly opposed excluding certain stories in order to make the overall story a homogeneous one. [...] The historical master narrative needs to be pluralized in order to arrive at more tolerant and playful forms of cultural identity. (Berger 2005: 678)

National histories have been portrayed as outmoded and static, for example by François Hartog, who has asked ‘How should we write national history without reactivating the patterns of nineteenth century historiography: that is to say, the close association of progress and the nation . . . or without presenting it as a paradise lost?’ (Hartog 1996: 112). Such worries, however, seem to be predicated on an outmoded and static understanding of the nation itself as analytical category. If the nation is instead conceived of as a dynamic, ever evolving entity – as an ‘essentially contested concept’ (Lorenz 2008: 30) – sidestepping the trap described by Hartog seems possible. As we argue in this volume, the national framework – although contested – remains a vital and rewarding organizational concept in the writing of history not in spite of its contested character, but because of it.

Globalized Nations

We live in an age of globalization. Globalization clearly has ramifications for the role of national frameworks and the experience of national identities. However, at the same time, ‘we live in a nationalized world. The concept of the nation is central to the dominant understandings of both political community and of personal identity’ (Cubitt 1998: 1). The increased mobility of people, products and information alike might be making the conceptual grid of nationality more complex than ever, but it is not eradicating it. According to Tim Edensor, ‘globalisation and national identity should not be conceived in binary terms but as two inextricably interlinked processes’, because ‘as global cultural flows become more extensive, they facilitate the expansion of national identities and also provide cultural resources which can be domesticated, enfolded within popular and everyday national cultures’ (Edensor 2002: 29). Similarly, Anthony Smith has argued that far from rendering nations, nationalism and national identities obsolete, globalization reinforces and recasts their roles in contemporary society (Smith 1995). Writing history today, then, should be less about pitching the global against the local, regional and national, and more a matter of exploring the interactions and influences between these different scales: ‘As each scale of observation and analysis is associated with specific cognitive benefits, the very principle of a variation of scales is more important than the choice of one single scale’ (Revel 2010: 59).

So far, we have briefly reviewed the diminishing dominance of the national paradigm, and a range of alternatives, to reach the current state of the art in the historiography of nations: recognition that the local, regional, national and global operate in dynamic simultaneity. It is from this position that we must now consider design and national identity.

Design and National Identity

Constructivist approaches to national identity have incorporated design culture in their analyses to some extent, but largely in passing and rarely with much new insight into the meaning and role of designed artefacts. In calling for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of national narratives, Stefan Berger insists that scholars from across the arts and humanities ‘need to study fictional, artistic, musical, visual and historiographic representations of the national pasts alongside each other’ (Berger 2008: 10). Few studies to date have, however, systematically incorporated design in such examinations. The material culture invoked in these studies has on the whole been restricted to that which can be said to have an explicitly symbolic function, such as flags, coinage, folk costumes, monuments, etc. (see, for example, Billig 1995). Whereas others have called for greater attention also to material culture with less overtly nationalist symbolism,

this remains a little explored venue (Smith 1991: 77; 2001: 7; Edensor 2002: 12). Edensor's critique of the work of Gellner, Hobsbawm, Anderson, Smith and Hutchinson as useful but ultimately neglectful of popular culture and everyday life as scalar practices is perhaps most pertinent as a call for greater design historical examination of national identity. In noting that 'The intimate relationships between people and the things they make (or used to make) become important signifiers of identity for national communities', Edensor recognizes that 'mass manufactured commodities are associated with particular nations, also often carrying mythic associations that connote particular qualities and forms of expertise' (Edensor 2002: 105). Therefore, the relationship between design and national identity is both extremely practical, concrete and material, and operates at the level of the public imaginary, myth and symbol: 'In the face of globalisation, commonly shared things anchor people to place' (Edensor 2002: 116). Designers are responsible not only for the livery and regalia of state and monarchy, and the flags, currency, stamps and other insignia of the public-facing nation; they also furnish our everyday surroundings with goods and services which are taken for granted and have been largely excluded from examinations of national identity to date. Yet, as historians increasingly engage with material culture, this regrettable lacuna is slowly being addressed.

In the introduction to his popular project *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, Neil MacGregor emphasizes the role of designed artefacts in narrating national histories in a global context: 'All round the world national and communal identities are increasingly being defined through new readings of their history, and that history is frequently anchored in things' (MacGregor 2012: xxv). For example, in some former colonies experiencing industrialization relatively late when compared with Western nations, design was considered an important 'way for countries on the periphery to come to terms with modernity, with the modern project, and not only in the realm of industry, but also in that of social organization' (Bonsiepe 1991: 252). Since Gui Bonsiepe wrote these words nearly a generation ago, the notion of a periphery, which implies a centre, has been challenged and a model of multiple centres is now more accepted as a way of understanding cultural difference on a global scale (Calvera 2005; Kikuchi and Lee 2014: 325). This position undergirds particularly the chapters in this book by dipti bhagat and Livia Rezende.

However, the intimate relations between design, designed goods and national identity are equally prominent in what are often termed 'post-industrial societies', where national industrial heritage and national design heritage become key identity markers. Examples abound in the UK, the first industrialized nation, where the Big Pit National Coal Museum in South Wales switched in 1980 from being a productive coal mine to part of the National Museum Wales. It has been successful in providing an immersive heritage experience for visitors from around the UK and internationally. Other examples include the UNESCO World Heritage site at Ironbridge in England, which is home to ten

museums commemorating the ‘birthplace of industry’ including, in addition to the Iron Bridge itself, the Coalport China Museum and Coalbrookdale Iron Museum among others (Ironbridge 2015). The negotiation of design heritage is seen, for example, in a region that is world famous for its design heritage – Scandinavia – as is demonstrated in the chapters that follow, by Stina Teilmann-Lock (on the legal implications of Denmark’s design heritage) and by Kjetil Fallan and Christina Zetterlund (on museological practice which challenges and usefully complicates an existing normative homogenizing narrative). Fallan has suggested elsewhere that ‘products clearly identified with national industrial heritage have become increasingly important identity markers in our time of “liquid modernity”, and their capacity to convey and evoke memories of *temps perdu* is more significant than ever’ (Fallan 2013: 81). A good example of the practice he points to is found in the remarkable popularity in contemporary New Zealand of collecting ‘kiwiana’ – objects seen as emblematic of recent national history and cultural identity (Bell 2013), as Claudia Bell elaborates in her chapter here.

However, design history has not only revealed how designed objects can function as national identity markers (Aynsley 1993); it has also provided sharp criticism of the same phenomenon, challenging the celebratory myths surrounding stereotypical national design icons (Jackson 2002; 2006). This essential anti-essentialist project has informed subsequent scholarship in the field such as Fallan’s revisionist collection of essays on Scandinavian design (Fallan 2012) and our joint work on Italian design. In the latter, Lees-Maffei has pointed out that a tendency to privilege the acts of ideation and design, rather than the processes of manufacturing, mediation and consumption, in determining provenance for goods persists, even in the light of widespread recognition of the global nature of contemporary design (Lees-Maffei 2014: 287 ff.). Critiques of the association of design and national identity and work in design history which has supported reductive or overly programmatic instances of such associations have been informed, to a greater or lesser degree by postcolonialism, discussed above. D.J. Huppertz has complained that ‘Whereas it is by now widely acknowledged that the histories of modernism and of colonialism are deeply entangled, design history has not properly explored this connection’ (Huppertz 2010: 33). Yuko Kikuchi and Yunah Lee have been similarly critical of the extent to which what they characterize as ‘Euroamerican’ design history has failed to integrate work from outside that region, such as the emerging scholarship on East Asian design history, and has also failed to take account of design histories in languages other than English (Kikuchi 2011; Kikuchi and Lee 2014). The problems associated with languages in design history writing will not easily be solved without significantly better funding for bi-lingual publication, massively increased linguistic capacity among design historians, or perhaps a technical solution facilitating translations of a quality suitable for academic work. In the meantime, design historians can continue

working on the more extensive coverage of design, variously defined, around the world, informed by the recognition of the impact of colonialism and postcolonialism alike:

the history of design is entangled with the history of colonialism, even if this appears to be deliberately avoided in most design history discourses. It was not just design in the colonial spaces that perpetuated or supported colonialism; design in the ‘metropolises’ made use of a seemingly unlimited supply of raw materials, contributed to the rise of consumerism and created demand for products that perpetuated the colonial system of exploitation of labour, extraction of raw materials and environmental destruction. (Pereira and Gillett 2014: 113)

Much work in this direction remains to be done and it is a promising project which should continue to yield rich results for understanding design. A recent example is Arden Stern’s study of how the hand-painted store-front signs in Lusaka, Zambia ‘are visually linked to globally dominant design practices’, yet ‘their creators simultaneously imbue graphics of diverse geographic, historical and cultural provenance with Zambian specificity’ through a process of domestication (Stern 2014: 406). Postcolonial approaches have informed many of the chapters in this volume in various ways and now we will turn to the contribution of this book.

The Contribution of this Book

Designing Worlds responds to the small currently published literature on global design history, and the difficulty of obtaining evidence to support work on this topic, by contributing an original and innovative reassessment of the role of national histories. The fifteen chapters which follow are written by senior and emerging scholars from a range of nations within all five continents. The geographic arrangement of the chapters is intended to make clear the importance of borders. Nations are not isolated; rather, they are contiguous with other nations. Several of the chapters show this explicitly, for example Zeina Maasri writing about tourist campaigns for Lebanon at the intersection of East and West, Nicolas P. Maffei on the Texas-Mexico border as a productive ground for mixed cultures and cuisines, and Grace Lees-Maffei on a transatlantic domestic dialogue, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. Comparative, transnational and border studies approaches provide design historians with ways of going beyond the regions which have received disproportionate levels of attention in the field. In this book, the USA is approached through its borders, in the chapters by Nicolas P. Maffei and Grace Lees-Maffei just mentioned, and in the chapters examining the constituent parts of the larger Americas (see below for a discussion of comparative approaches).

This book aims to overcome the ‘descriptive narratives of particular nationalisms’ characterized by Özkirimli as typifying the drawbacks of existing

work in history on nationalism (2010: 219). The authors of the chapters here articulate methodological and historiographic issues attendant upon the interface of design, its histories and the nation. For example, as can be the case with other types of historical research, one problem in writing national histories of design has been the lack of available sources. This applies to countries with highly developed design cultures and historiographies, just as it does to less well-known national design stories. Recently, an important archive in Germany was threatened with closure and dispersal, but in some nations design has not been archived or preserved at all because there is little tangible design infrastructure. As Fallan and Zetterlund argue in their chapter, the problem of ‘missing materialities’ is particularly pertinent when seeking to articulate the heterogeneity of national design histories to include ethnic, national and social minorities whose material culture has been neglected by state institutions. Patricia Lara-Betancourt addresses the scarcity of archives and infrastructure in relation to Latin America, while Deirdre Pretorius seeks evidence of an academic design community in the South African region. Recently, D.J. Huppatz and Grace Lees-Maffei conducted an international survey of the state of design history which showed that it was growing into new regions and nations (Huppatz and Lees-Maffei 2013), so this issue of missing archives and absent or emerging infrastructures is likely to become more prominent as design history develops globally.

In order to better understand the design history of the national within the global, the chapters in this book analyse different geographical areas. Authors examine the issue at the level of continents (Africa, and Latin America within the South American continent, or subcontinent of the Americas), supranational regions (Latin America, Scandinavia as represented by Norway and Sweden), transnational studies (Norway and Sweden; Japan understood through the eyes of an émigré German in Britain; the UK and USA in a domestic dialogue; hybrid food cultures in the USA and Mexico; returnees from Britain in Jamaica) and the nation state (South Africa, India, Lebanon, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and Brazil, among others). Some stories which are worth telling retain national boundaries, of course, but where a single nation state is the focus in this book, it is understood in relation to others, so that the representation of a nation on the global stage is the concern in Suchitra Balasubrahmanyam’s analysis of Ghandi’s Dandi March and Nehru’s Republic Day Parade as it is in Livia Rezende’s examination of Brazil’s national representation in international exhibitions of 1867 and 1904. Even where the focus is domestic national identity packaged for domestic consumption, as in the case of Claudia Bell’s chapter on Kiwiana, international comparisons are crucial.

What the chapters show us, collectively, is that the comparative method is essential for understanding the national. The treatment of South Africa here raises issues commonly raised in relation to other states establishing or refashioning national identities. In this book we see, for example, India’s articulation of

national identity in Nehru's Republic Day Parade and arguments about shifting national identities played out in Czech glass and Bohemian crystal. If we were to push the comparative method further here (which we have not done in order better to explore a range of approaches), Claudia Bell's analysis of 'Kiwiana' may be compared with US and Canadian 'Native American' beaded and other goods made in Taiwan and sold in indigenous shops, including those on reservations in the late 1960s and 1970s. And Zeina Maasri's study of Lebanese tourist campaigns might incorporate a comparison with Iran to give a more complex picture of the Middle East region. Comparative design history needs to demonstrate the dynamism of Ortiz' transculturation and Bhabha's hybridity; see chapters 11 and 14 for discussions of hybridity in the history of design.

In the opening chapter, dipti bhagat states at the outset, in response to the homogenizing generalization so often bestowed upon the vast and heterogeneous continent of Africa in media and public discourse, that she does not 'treat "Africa as if it were one country"; rather she recognizes that the "category", or the "sign" of Africa [...] persists'. She pays attention to 'supple conceptions of local, national, regional and long distance connections of the continent that became Africa'. Ultimately, bhagat argues, it is 'by highlighting the complexity of African engagement with other places in the world – an interaction which is often asymmetrical – involving objects and people, ideas, processes and intentions, design histories in / of Africa might throw off the shackles of its categories of Eurocentric exclusion and embrace an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship'.

Deirdre Pretorius continues this questioning project in her chapter 'Does Southern African Design History Exist?' She examines the region of Southern Africa rather than one of its constituent nation states. Her chapter therefore invites consideration of the process of detecting a cogent unit of study in geographic terms: if design history appears to be absent from the African countries, can we achieve greater critical mass by looking at a region, such as the Southern African region? Does that regional approach make more sense than a national one for nations where design history is not as prominent as it is elsewhere? Pretorius responds to this dilemma by seeking to determine a cogent unit of study in academic terms; if design history is largely obscured, where can we look for it? She demonstrates the value of detective work in higher education institutions, in the curricula, in journal coverage and in conference activity, to piece together evidence of a Southern African design history.

Our final chapter concerning Africa sees Jacques Lange and Jeanne van Eeden focus on the South African Nation. In discussing the role played by design and designers during key moments in that nation's history from 1910 to today, the authors demonstrate the impact of the paucity of documentary materials. Designers communicated 'different versions of nationhood' scripted by successive governments: 'Colonial legacies of visual stereotyping in terms of

race and national identity were found to be wanting, and a new, more inclusive and representative visual vocabulary was established that reflected and possibly helped to construct this emerging Africanization’.

In moving from Africa to New Zealand, we discover in Claudia Bell’s chapter ‘Resisting Global Homogeneity but Craving Global Markets: Kiwiana and Contemporary Design Practice in New Zealand’ how contemporary designers have sought to utilize Maori visual culture. Notwithstanding a consensus that Maori motifs should be reserved for Maori-made artefacts, ‘Maoriana’ goods are mass produced in Chinese and Taiwanese factories, thereby raising questions about heritage, authenticity and meaning. Bell shows the significance of quotidian demotic design for national identity in a way that responds to Edensor’s critique of the emphasis on high culture and public design in existing studies of nations.

Ariyuki Kondo continues the examination of ‘the idea of the national character of a nation’s art and design’ in his case study of the development of modern Japanese design in the Meiji era (1868 to 1912) in tandem with Nikolaus Pevsner’s ideas about ‘a new geographical historiography of art’ in which the nation is understood as a ‘self-conscious cultural entity’. Pevsner anticipated the ideas of Gellner and Anderson by several decades. Pevsner’s approach has contemporary relevance in being distanced from ‘the anathema of ultra-nationalism and racialism’, Kondo argues.

The nation, national identity and nationalism are all consciously and actively designed in certain circumstances. Suchitra Balasubrahmanyam examines the design of large-scale public events as instances of the construction of nationhood in the context of postcolonial reconstruction. Mahatma Gandhi’s Dandi March (1930) and Jawaharlal Nehru’s Republic Day Parade (from 1951) deploy similar design strategies in dissimilar ways to articulate ‘very different conceptions of India’. Nehru’s Parade instances the invention of tradition – by a diverse range of criteria – which has been so critical in fostering national identity (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1993). In comparing the two events, Balasubrahmanyam concludes that ‘If disobedience was the leitmotif of the Dandi March, then obedience and routinized falling-in-line was the organizing principal of the Republic Day parade’. This chapter suggests ‘a methodological shift which illuminates how design imagination and design praxis is deployed by agents who have hitherto not been considered designers, thus opening up a rich ground for fresh exploration in diverse global settings’. Furthermore, it points to ‘a reciprocal lens whereby the evolution of a particular strand of Indian nationalism in the context of the country’s colonial experience is revealed through design, and the examination of that strand in turn reveals design as a space and mode of action in the political domain’. Finally, by examining what Balasubrahmanyam calls the ‘afterlife’ of these two events, the chapter has implications for designers in that their agency is ‘transferred to new actors’ as ‘design is ever a work in progress’.

Moving to the Middle East, Zeina Maasri analyses promotional prints issued by the National Council for Tourism in 1960s–1970s Lebanon. Noting that the Tourism Council and its agents – graphic designers included – chose ‘to promote the country as a modern European-styled Mediterranean tourist destination’, she considers the implications of this strategy in the context of conflicting politics of nationhood and belonging in the Arab world. Maasri’s chapter uses the case study of Lebanon to present ‘new understandings of how design for the tourism industry intersects with processes of nation building and modernization in postcolonial contexts’ which ‘complicate a putative binary between the West and non-West in design historiography’. Lived experience rarely conforms to binary oppositions, and the Lebanon case deftly demonstrates what Jacques Derrida and Dominick LaCapra term supplementarity: ‘Supplementarity reveals why analytic distinctions necessarily overlap in “reality”, and why it is misleading to take them as dichotomous categories’ (LaCapra 1983: 152).

In turning to a region which has received a disproportionately large amount of attention in existing design historical scholarship, we examine Europe through the Czech Republic and the Scandinavian countries, and how these nations are managing their rich design heritage in a rapidly changing society. Marta Filipová pays attention to the development of perceived national, cultural and ethnic characteristics in design and the discourse surrounding that design. In her case study she shows how categories of understanding glass have been based on assumptions about Czech, Bohemian and Czechoslovak identities and the market desire for a perceived authenticity intimately relating design to specific national geographies and manufacturing traditions.

The idea of authenticity is key to the following chapter, ‘The Myth of Danish Design and the Implicit Claims of Labels’ by Stina Teilmann-Lock. The legal protection of design is a topic that reveals the continued significance of national frameworks. Intellectual property rights vary enormously in different national contexts, as legislation is deeply entrenched in the structures of national legislative bodies and processes (Pouillard 2011; 2013; Teilmann-Lock 2012; 2014; Gorman 2014). Consequently, Carma Gorman argues, ‘it is important – sometimes even essential – to study design from a national perspective’ (Gorman 2014: 270). Teilmann-Lock shows the category of Danish design as having been constructed by marketing professionals and design mediators both within and outside Denmark. She concludes by considering unsuccessful attempts to foster a European design identity, which have foundered in the face of persistent national cultures of design within Europe’s ‘design nations’. As such, her study is an example of how ‘local design cultures are both challenged and enabled by the increasing globalization of the marketplace’ (Fiss 2009: 3).

Staying in Scandinavia, Kjetil Fallan and Christina Zetterlund consider the methodological issues involved in challenging a ‘homogenized heritage’ through examination of ‘heterogeneous material cultures in Norway and Sweden’. Dipesh Chakrabarty noted at the beginning of the century that:

the question of including minorities in the history of the nation has turned out to be a much more complex problem than a simple operation of applying some already settled methods to a new set of archives and adding the results to the existing collective wisdom of historiography. (Chakrabarty 2000: 107)

Rather, it requires rethinking some of the fundamental tenets of historical scholarship. In Scandinavian design history, what surfaces as particularly poignant in this context is the field's almost symbiotic and rarely problematized relationship with modernism (in historiography and design alike). Questioning the absence of minority material culture in Norwegian and Swedish design history, Fallan and Zetterlund link these omissions to key features of Scandinavian design historiography such as the use of carefully selected national typologies and traditions to legitimize the modernist mission of much design discourse and design history throughout the twentieth century as well as to methodological challenges such as a dearth of archival material and the thorny issue of inclusion/exclusion in identity formations through 'border maintenance'.

The remainder of the book addresses the Americas. While Fallan and Zetterlund in part provide a comparative analysis pertaining to two nation states within the region of Scandinavia, Grace Lees-Maffei's chapter offers a transnational examination of two countries that are technically neighbours, albeit divided by the Atlantic Ocean. In 'A Special Relationship: The UK-US Transatlantic Domestic Dialogue' Lees-Maffei reviews the limitations of single-nation studies which fail to incorporate comparative or transnational analyses, and argues in favour of a more comprehensive adoption of comparative studies in design history. Comparative design histories are few (exceptions include Castillo 2010, mentioned above). Not only does comparative analysis help to alleviate the risk of erroneous periodization attendant upon extrapolating from a single nation case, and the tendency to assume as evidence of national identity trends which are in fact international or transnational, but it also provides a more accurate account of cultural development freed from the piecemeal disaggregated picture assembled through successive national histories. The call for transnational approaches is not new, but it is necessary in design history. As well as proposing that design history should be studied comparatively, and being based on the belief that national identity cannot be understood purely from within the nation (Lees-Maffei 2013), Lees-Maffei's chapter differs from much work on national identity in design which examines public manifestations intended for international audiences such as exhibitions, international fairs, parades and tourist posters and tourist wares. Lees-Maffei analyses instead a design discourse, domestic advice, which is intended for a domestic market and does not explicitly set out to communicate national identity. The fact that the treatment of the national is not explicit in these sources does not mean that it does not exist. Indeed, they are replete with guidance on consumption and other practices which can be read as evidence of the communication of national tendencies and identities.

Nicolas P. Maffei also examines design and the national in the USA through reference to one of the USA's neighbours, and returns to the issue of perceived authenticity, this time in relation to the case study of the imagery of Mexican-American food packaging and architecture. Border theory – the interdisciplinary examination of spatial, political, social and cultural borders – has been used as a way of thinking about the interfaces of nation states. Borders of various kinds condition many aspects of contemporary life, including the way in which design is understood. Maffei's historiographic survey identifies homogenization, harmonization and 'inauthentic authenticity' as key narratives in the writing on Mexican-American food cultures. Food design is an emergent field in design history; here the intersection of food and design is shown to be a 'cultural battleground where an asymmetrical power relationship advantages Anglo producers' and where the manipulation of so-called authenticity increases sales.

Like Bell's examination of 'mundane' design, Davinia Gregory examines a case study of demotic design, specified by customers and builders rather than designers and architects. Her chapter examines the forms of domestic architecture in twenty-first-century Jamaica and specifically the significance of classical columns. Clearly, the columns and porticos of classical architecture have been adopted in many nations around the world as symbolic of substance and rationalism, hence their regular use in the architecture of government and learning. However, in Jamaica such architectural forms denote a highly particularized relationship between homeland, the adopted home of immigrant destinations and the successful return to the native land for comfortable repose and reflection. Similar architectural features embody distinct meanings in specific geo-cultural, and in this case national, contexts. Gregory's chapter is also exemplary of the integration of subjectivity into the writing of design history (Fallan and Lees-Maffei 2015), a methodological approach which offers another dimension to the understanding of design and its histories.

In proposing 'A Global/National Approach to a History of Design in Latin America', Patricia Lara-Betancourt argues that replacing an emphasis on the 'only national' with an approach which encompasses the 'global and national' entails examination of the effects of assimilation and appropriation in 'sophisticated networks of trade, world exploration and cultural sovereignty' and recognition of how these processes impact upon local heritages. Lara-Betancourt shows Latin America shaking off a colonial identity in favour of a European-inspired modernity. While Asian and Middle Eastern nations were more circumspect in their responses to European goods, standards and ideals, Latin Americans associated their adoption with progress. She concludes her chapter by suggesting that European modernism may not have flourished without this Latin American adoption and that it was more accurately a global and transnational achievement: 'It is by focusing on this dual perspective that it becomes possible to appreciate the significance of the transnational interplay within a global stage'.

The final chapter details Livia Rezende's analysis of the ways in which Brazilian national identity has been communicated using materials and manufacture, design and consumption, through the case study of international exhibitions. Design historians within and outside Brazil have neglected to examine the artefacts by which Brazil represented itself internationally in these exhibitions because they pre-date the 'arrival' of modern design. However, since 2000, new work presenting a more accurate and heterogeneous picture of design in Brazil has emerged. Rezende's concluding call for 'a move from discipline territorialization towards the making of a design professional and academic practice that includes the wider material and conceptual production of the Brazilian population while connecting them to global experiences' echoes that of the preceding chapter.

Conclusion

Studies of the national in design must now place their subject within the contexts of the local, regional and global at once if they are to accurately reflect the processes by which design is produced, mediated and consumed in our century. In discussing several possible arrangements for the chapters within this book, we imagined ourselves circumnavigating the globe from Africa to Australasia, East and South Asia, via the Middle East and through Europe to the Americas. We hope you enjoy the ride.

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CHAPTER 1

Designs on/in Africa

DIPTI BHAGAT

Always use the word ‘Africa’ or ‘Darkness’ or ‘Safari’ in your title. Subtitles may include the words ‘Zanzibar’, ‘Masai’, ‘Zulu’, ‘Zambezi’, ‘Congo’, ‘Nile’, ‘Big’, ‘Sky’, ‘Shadow’, ‘Drum’, ‘Sun’ or ‘Bygone’. Also useful are words such as ‘Guerrillas’, ‘Timeless’, ‘Primordial’ and ‘Tribal’... Never have a picture of a well-adjusted African on the cover of your book ... (Wainaina 2005)

Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina, writing from Norwich, England, in 2003–2004, penned a quick fire email to the editor of *Granta* magazine, responding to the ‘Africa’ issue. ‘Populated by every literary bogeyman that any African has ever known, a sort of “Greatest Hits of Hearts of Fuckedness”’, the *Granta* Africa issue stirred Wainaina’s ire. For him the *Granta* issue offered ‘nothing new, no insight, but lots of “reportage” ... as if Africa and Africans were not part of the conversation, were not indeed living in England across the road from the *Granta* office. No, we were “over there”, where brave people in khaki could come and bear witness’ (Wainaina 2010). His email, a searing satire, was published by *Granta* in 2005. He goes on: ‘In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty ... Or it is hot and steamy ... Don’t get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: fifty-four countries, 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and warring and emigrating to read your book ... so keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular’ (Wainaina 2005). *Fuck Afrika I* an inkjet illustration (Fig. 1.1), by South African graphic designer Garth Walker (2008), pictures a similar parody: a crisp, ink outline of a compact 35mm camera with a brand name ‘AFRIKA’ in the top right, a comic book graphic star to indicate the flash

Notes for this section begin on page 38.

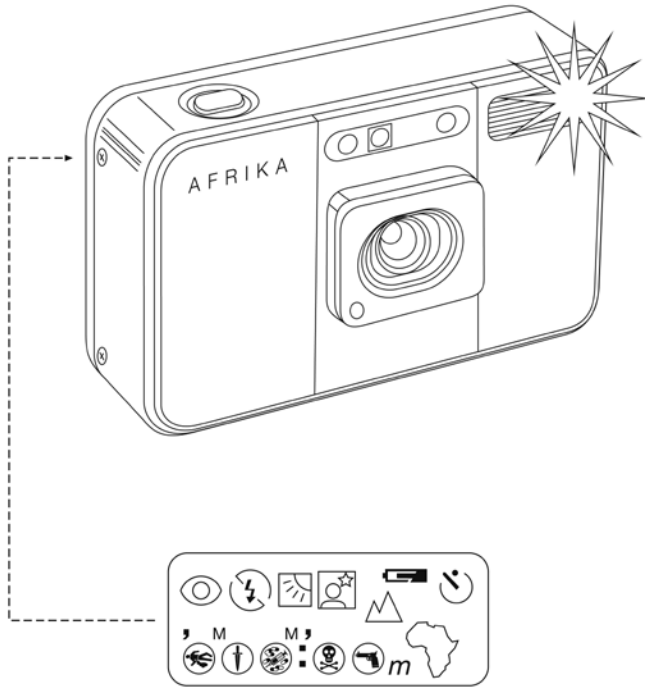


Fig. 1.1 *Fuck Afrika I*, Garth Walker 2008, inkjet print, reproduced here by kind permission of Garth Walker. Garth Walker's commercial work can be seen at www.misterwalker.net/ and his renowned experimental graphics publication 'I-jusi' at www.ijusi.com/.

and an inset diagram to reveal the icons describing the camera modes out of sight on the back of the camera. The icons in the inset for Walker's 'AFRIKA' camera reiterate the stereotypical images of Africa that Wainaina lists: a full sun, an outline of the continent, a gun, a skull and cross bones, a dagger, syringe and needles, a dead body.¹

The title of this chapter does include 'Africa'; indeed it shall endure throughout. Why? Not to treat 'Africa as if it were one country', but because the 'category', or the 'sign' of Africa, as Wainaina and Walker drive home, persists. It looms large. As an imaginative object, the continent is, as James Ferguson puts it, more than the sum of its localities (Ferguson 2006: 4). In popular discourse and media representations, as a name, an idea and an image and also as a subject for scholarly study, 'Africa' remains fraught, at times burdened with alterity. It is this very sign of 'Africa' that intrigues; its predicament appears to be a persistent consigning of Africa to further taxonomies: of hopelessness, of urgency, of inconvenience, of silence, of perseverance. In the neo-liberal frame of the universal 'global', Africa is un-modern, an anomaly, 'globalization's anti-thesis' (Bjørnsen 2008). The recent methodological shift in the humanities and social sciences to a 'global perspective' has meant that historians of the West

have made impressive efforts to directly engage with Africa's once ignored, now urgently implicit connections, with and across the Euroverse (Berg 2007; Desan, Hunt and Nelson 2013; Colley 2013). For design history, entangled by its Euro-American and ethnocentric historiography, the global – and Africa within that global – is an important project of inclusion and diverse representation (Teasley, Riello and Adamson 2011; Margolin 2005).

So, what is this place in the world that Africa occupies? How is the category of Africa understood as one through which a world is structured (Mudimbe 1988; Ferguson 2006; Mbembe and Nuttal 2004)? What might the relationships be between the imagined/constructed and the real – in writing and in life? For categories, arbitrary as they are, are historically constructed, impose rules and can structure how people live.² And how might design histories engage with work which has sought to unpick predominant images of 'Africa'? Distinctive to the field amongst other forms of history is its multi-dimensional subject matter: design. The multi-dimensionality of design is particularly illuminating if it is understood as object, process and intention, animated by tensions and ambiguities and by its histories as focused on exploring the 'translations, transcriptions, transactions, transpositions and transformations that constitute the relationships among things, people and ideas' (Fallan 2010: vii). These ways of thinking about the empirical work of design history suggest quite well how Africa might be written as a part of the world.

This essay is exploratory; magpie-like, I have sought what might be interesting or useful or instructive for design histories of Africa. I consider the 'global' in history's current focus; some historians, Africa scholars especially, are sceptical of the flattening impetus of recent discourses of globalization, and argue in favour of retaining a focus on Africa precisely because the category of Africa is constituted through a series of practices that come under historians' scrutiny. Through some examples of things, people and ideas in Africa, this chapter tries to write against the grain of what Africa is not.

Africa and the Limitations of Global History

Writing in what Geoff Eley calls the 'din' of 'globalization talk' (Eley 2007: 161–162), African historian Frederick Cooper questions globalization as a concept and analytical tool (Cooper 2001). He acknowledges the validity of an underlying 'quest for understanding the interconnectedness of different parts of the world' (Cooper 2001: 189–190), yet remains (see also Cooper 2013) dissatisfied with the word 'global', as too singular, boundless in its claims to universality and unfeasibly planetary in scale; and with globalization as a presentist obsession with processual teleology that seeks to explain 'the progressive integration of different parts of the world into a singular whole' (Cooper 2001: 211). Here, Cooper detects the traces of modernization theory of the 1950s

and 1960s; yet its premise that postcolonial nations progress from traditional to modern, rural to urban, subsistence to industrial economies was discredited for its (first the West then the rest) ethnocentric tendency to propose a broad, large-scale process, seemingly ‘self-propelled’ and thus occluding historical detail and precise questions about people’s agency (Thomas 2011: 729–731; Cooper 2005: 113–117; 2001).

Cooper warns Africa scholars especially of a concept that emphasizes ‘change over time but remains ahistorical, and which seems to be about space, but which ends up glossing over the mechanisms and limitations of spatial relationships’ (Cooper 2001: 190). Rather, he argues for ‘historical depth’, ‘precision’ and particular alertness to the ‘time-depth of cross-territorial processes, for the very notion of “Africa” has itself been shaped for centuries by linkages within the continent and across oceans and deserts – by the Atlantic slave trade, by the movement of pilgrims, religious networks, and ideas associated with Islam, by cultural and economic connections across the Indian Ocean’ (Cooper 2001: 190). While he accepts that histories written as though contained in solely national or continental structures may be limited, he balks at the language of globalization that suggests the only container is planetary. David A. Bell also queries the effectiveness of placing past events in such ‘vast contexts’ (Bell 2013). Indeed, what happens to the analyses of power – and its limitations – in the flatness and abstraction of planetary scale, when the structure of Empire (for example, or ‘nation’) is replaced with universal ‘global flows’? What happens to national histories on which global histories rely? For the ‘global’ must depend on an inter-national or even local context to be made real or illustrative.

Words and definitions seem to matter. For James Ferguson, ‘The global, as seen from Africa, is not a seamless, shiny, round, and all-encompassing totality (as the word seems to imply). Nor is it a higher level of planetary unity, inter-connection, and communication’. Indeed, for Ferguson, writing about Africa’s place in the current neo-liberal, world order, Africa throws into sharp focus the inadequacy of the concept-word, and emphasizes rather the asymmetry and inconsistency of globalization:

Rather, the ‘global’ we see in recent studies of Africa has sharp, jagged edges; ... It is a global not of planetary communion, but of disconnection, segmentation, and segregation – not a seamless world without borders, but a patchwork of discontinuous and hierarchically ranked spaces, whose edges are carefully delimited, guarded, and enforced. (Ferguson 2006: 48–49)

Nevertheless, the ‘global turn’ in history – perhaps the striving for a ‘global approach’ or ‘global history’ collectively – has generated a huge range of studies, often opening up valuable new perspectives. Much work has been done to emphasize globalization as a historical phenomenon (Moyn and Sartori 2013; Desan, Hunt and Nelson 2013; Eley 2007), frame its chronologies (Hopkins 2006; 2002) and locate the historical roots of the concept (for a brief review, see Subrahmanyam 2007: 332). Historians and design historians have

variously deployed the ‘global’ as a meta-analytical category (e.g. to emphasize interconnectedness; Adamson, Riello and Teasley 2011), as a substantive scale of historical process, for example to focus on modes of circulation of goods, or imperial transformations (Bayly 2004), or, more innovatively, to consider the intellectual history of the conception of the ‘global’ as used by people in the time and place historians study (Moyn and Sartori 2013; Colley 2013). Some avoid this highly contested term – the ‘global’ – because of its need for definition and attendant perils (see the essays in Desan, Hunt and Nelson 2013): global histories and design histories tend, like their subjects, towards complexity and contradiction. Much ‘global’ history scholarship involving detailed, in-depth research seldom offers a seamless picture of ‘planetary communion’ (Ferguson 2006: 48–49); indeed, in this work, the ‘global’ is perhaps less scalar, more a way to connect empirical detail and larger processes or structures across two or more places or regions. In which case, can the study of flows, circuits, connections and power dynamics between two or more locations contribute to our shared grasp of ‘globality’ (a condition so complex yet so singular and vast in its inscription that it is doubtful if it should be applied at all)? Are these approaches best described as ‘interconnected history’, and thus is there a more ‘differentiated vocabulary’ to enhance thinking about specific, complex connections and confines in writing design history, and African design histories in particular (Cooper 2013: 284; 2001: 213)?

Towards Histories of African Design

For scholarship on Africa, these emphases on connections and confines have the potential to unravel dominant and enduring imaginings of Africa as being apart from the world, residual, a poor reflection of something else, to highlight instead the entanglements within and ‘embeddedness in multiple elsewheres of which the continent actually speaks’ (Mbembe and Nutall 2004: 348). ‘Multiple elsewheres’ are important: for current visions of the ‘global’ tend to focus on the expansion of European ‘modernity’, which is also temporally limited and fixes Africa’s inter-continental connections and diaspora in the Western hemisphere/ Atlantic Eurosphere. Lynn M. Thomas explains how Africa has been key to defining an image of the ‘modern’: as its antithesis, as a signifier of modern ills, as a sign of modern primitivism, as a site to test modernization theories, while modernity has reified the divide between precolonial, colonial and postcolonial histories (Thomas 2011: 727–733).³ The history of Africa’s long-distance connections is older, and differently sited, than its history of connections with Europe. Studies in historical archaeology have shown in nuanced detail how shifting patterns of coastal Swahili (East African) cosmopolitan culture between the tenth and sixteenth centuries grew out of alliances between local elites and foreign merchants (men, both) who negotiated trade in commodities from the



Fig. 1.2 Stoneware bowl with a thick green celadon glaze inside and out except for its unglazed centre and base (height – 7.6 cm, diameter – 18 cm); dated circa 1400–1500, Ming Dynasty, made in Longquan, China, found in Malindi, Kenyan coast. Malindi was a key entrepôt for Afrasian trade between China, Arabia and Africa, and Chinese celadons such as this one here were widely used as tableware in this part of Africa. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. Reproduced under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence.

southeast African interior beyond the coast (including iron, ivory, gold, timber, skins, slaves and tortoise shell) in exchange, in part, for Islamic, Chinese and later southeast Asian ceramics, key luxury imports of the Islamic Oceanic trade. Evidence of diverse consumption by elite men, women and children in Swahili societies of these imported ceramics – as tableware in public festivals, for display in intimate, honorific or ritual contexts or worn as personal ornamentations, including re-use – show the socio-cultural status of these ceramics in urban Swahili culture (see Fig. 1.2 for a fine example of Ming Dynasty Longquan Ware discovered in Malindi, Kenya). Alongside this, the limited evidence of these objects, either in agricultural coastal settlements or the continental interior that supplied raw materials for this coastal trade, suggests that urban Swahili elites carefully guarded and delimited the distribution of such luxury products (Zhao 2013; 2012). Swahili mercantile power was clearly large scale in its connections across the Indian Ocean – or to describe this connection in its own terms, the ‘Afrasian Sea’ (Pearson 1983)⁴ – and evolved over a long time, but it was also complex and contingent upon its particular geography and maritime climate, and the expansion of the Islamic world.

This example of Afrasian Sea trade in ceramics is a study of historical archaeology and is thus perhaps a little provocative for a design history that classically considered its subject to be ‘modern’ and ‘industrial’, serially produced (Pevsner 1936; also Teasley, Riello and Adamson 2011: 6; Lees-Maffei and Houze

2010; Margolin 2005), and thus European and ethnocentric. That ‘design’ was, and still is at times, deployed as a signifier of Euro-industrialized economies suggests that particular forms of power might have become lodged in the very definition of design: objects from Africa not described strictly as design by industry have all too often been labelled variously as curiosities, ethnography (Shelton 2000) or art. How can we study design in ‘precolonial’, ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ Africa when confronted with the fact that this use of design emerged in part from the history of what we are trying to examine – that is, the history of the so-called ‘first’ industrial revolution which has been shown to be wedded to Europe’s colonial expansion? A careful re-reading of postcolonial scholarship will remind us of a ‘deep suspicion of metanarratives that enfold global history into the history of the modern west’ (Moyn and Sartori 2013: 18). If Europe can no longer be studied in isolation (a key imperative of the ‘global’ turn in history), as the central place from which would materialize the stimulus for action in the rest of the world, then what do we do with the European and ethnocentric uses of design? Perhaps a way beyond this apparent impasse is less about re-defining design, more about engaging with the writing of design histories beyond this time limited, industrial Euroverse. Vilem Fusser’s essay on the etymology of ‘design’ (1995: 50–53) offers a playful, even ironic reflection; his essay is designed ‘to bring to light the crafty and insidious aspects of the word ‘design’ (53):

As a noun, it can mean, a ‘purpose’, ‘plan’, ‘intention’, ‘goal’, ‘malicious intent’, ‘plot’, ‘form’, or ‘fundamental structure’. . . . As a verb, ‘to design’ means, among other things, ‘to concoct something’, ‘to feign or simulate’, ‘to draft’, ‘to sketch’, ‘to shape’, or ‘to proceed strategically’. (Fusser 1995: 50)

Fusser is artful, cunning; and he concludes that ‘The word “design” has won its current central place in common discourse because we (seemingly correctly) are beginning to lose faith in art and technology as the source of values, and because we are beginning to look behind the word and concept of design’ (52). These thoughts have strongly influenced theorists such as Ben Highmore, who look to a universe of objects that design histories might examine (Highmore 2009). We might also take this as a mandate for deeper, longer histories of people, ideas, objects, intentions and processes, and their thoroughly entangled relationships; then we can engage with the worldliness of African life. Design history does not have to stand at the edge of Africa – which ‘we cannot yet determine’, or which has ‘not yet become’ – and perceive it as an ‘epistemological abyss’ (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004: 349). In any case, historical archaeology (in which Africanists are engaged in similar efforts to break the discipline out of Eurocentric definitions of an archaeology of ‘modernity’ and of ‘colonial encounters’, Schmidt 2006: 3–6), with its concern for objects as historical documents, is well aligned with design history’s place in a wider cultural history (see Fallan 2010).

Writing Africa's place into the world and its historical linkages with European expansion entails a challenge: how to counter images of Africa as 'un-modern' and detail time-depth, precise histories of dynamic – even if unequal – societies? An example comes in Jeremy Prestholdt's study of ordinary East Africans' consumption, during the mid-nineteenth century, of commodities like textiles, which influenced long-distance trade relationships – uneven/ asymmetrical ones – across both Atlantic and Indian oceans. Prestholdt describes the chain of links from foreign agents and local buyers in Zanzibar and the East African coast, to caravans of porters and their European leaders trading commodities with consumers and gifting them to local political elites in whose territories they traded or journeyed. Zanzibar's middlemen handled goods from ports in America, Europe and Asia, where products popular in East Africa were made, to trade for African copal, ivory and cloves. The East Africans' demand for textiles and in particular a diverse and changeable taste in textiles was shown to affect textile production, first in Salem, Massachusetts, and then in Bombay, India. Prestholdt shows how consumers' 'fashions' (described as such, and as 'like England' by a contemporary European trader) often rendered undesirable the cloth imported from America and India – local taste determined the weight of cloth or colour and even proportions and placement of stripes. Zanzibar artisans became deft at customizing cloth surpluses to meet the requirements of exacting customers, and inevitably, to add value. In the context of this complex and long-distance, if picky, market, Salem and Bombay both industrialized their cloth production, the latter in the 1850s and with investment from Indian, not British, capital (Prestholdt 2004). Not only were East African consumers not 'un-modern', their demand for particular textiles impacted on urban industry further afield. In a period before Britain effected colonial control in Zanzibar, these complex relationships reveal agency in multiple locations and reciprocity across long-distance connectivity, even if all actors were not equal. While this earlier work offers a limited discussion of how these textiles – of such significant quantity – were used (there is a tantalizing reference to elders wearing up to fifteen yards of cloth: 778), Prestholdt's later work includes a study of how locals in Zanzibar (still precolonial) took in and adapted imported Western commodities in ways that confounded Westerners yet exemplified local 'domestication', or naturalization of foreign goods (Prestholdt 2008).

National Design Histories of/in Africa

This wider, deeper African historiography is instructive, vital even, for the history of the continent and cannot be reduced to that of European arrival and colonial encounter. The pre-, colonial, and post- periodization forces false dichotomies and, indeed, works to privilege 'colonial', i.e. 'modern' history, which inevitably relies on the confines of the European documentary record

(see Reid 2011). In the immediate glow of independence, historians of Africa, keen to contribute to nation-building work across the continent, often focused on somewhat singular, precolonial pasts, projecting nationalism backward to locate an authentic African history. Richard Reid has suggested that some of this early nationalist historiography may have been 'naïve' (motivated by having been denied a history) or attended by 'political cynicism' (to wrest and secure power) (Reid 2011: 136; see also Ranger 2004). Yet, states and people that have existed prior to colonization cannot be overlooked. Reid (2011: 155) makes an urgent claim for the importance of deep, complex and plural precolonial African histories, as vital to illuminate present-day matters in the 'body politic' and social fabric of contemporary African nations.

Zimbabwe provides a salient example here. In the 1980s, the architectural ruins of precolonial Great Zimbabwe (dated from the eleventh to the fifteenth century) were valorized as the symbol of Zimbabwean independence. In particular, eight extant carved soapstone birds became vital to the new nation: about 40 cm in size, combining human and avian features and surmounted on metre-long pillars, these carvings had been excavated at the turn of the twentieth century, and while their original arrangement is unknown, these birds are understood to have once mediated royal power. From 1980 the image of the 'Zimbabwe Bird' (No. 1 as numbered by Matenga 1998) was widely used, appearing on the national flag, currency (see Fig. 1.3), airline livery and much more, including everyday popular goods like t-shirts, ties and tie pins, domestic clocks, etc. to celebrate a new nation. Named after the ruins of this urban kingdom and symbolized widely by the icon of the bird, Zimbabwe claimed an ancient African lineage that had been refuted until 1980: European travellers, British colonists and Rhodesian minority rule had worked to maintain their ideological claims on the land through a steady assertion that the ingenuity and splendour of the ruins could only imply foreign workmanship. Beyond this nationalist claim on Great Zimbabwe, Innocent Pikirayi's comprehensive archaeology of *Zimbabwe Culture* (2001) unhitched this agenda to combat colonial myths, and offered rather a complex history of ethnically diverse autochthonous culture of the whole plateau (including its long-distance trade in gold for Indian and Persian glass beads and Chinese ceramics via the Swahili coastal traders mentioned above). However, on a still narrower path of 'patriotic history', the Zimbabwean government initiated in 2003 a costly 'national heritage' ceremony to join two parts of a long separated soapstone bird (one fragment was returned from Germany). For many Zimbabweans this '[p]atriotic history elevates Great Zimbabwe, but also . . . empties it and devalues it' to 'just a piece of stone' (see Ranger 2004: 231–232). Locals who live around (for them a sacred) Great Zimbabwe are as excluded as they were by Rhodesian conservationists; those who sold hand-crafted curios are attacked for gratifying white tourists and thus impoverished; a costly ceremony insults a ravaged nation; and ruling party claims on Zimbabwean material culture are



Fig. 1.3 Proof coinage of Zimbabwe, 1980 and Zimbabwean One Hundred Trillion Dollars note, 2008. Proof coinage was issued in 1980 to celebrate Zimbabwean independence with the symbol of the ‘Zimbabwe Bird’ named thus at independence. The largest coin is for one Zimbabwe dollar. The one hundred trillion dollars note includes a small foil figure of the Zimbabwe Bird in gold on the bottom right. Issued in 2008, this note exemplifies a period of hyperinflation; Zimbabwean currency was abandoned in 2009. Author’s own photograph.

ethnically exclusive. The opportunity for precolonial Zimbabwean material culture to provide a sustainable, plural African identity today seems utterly lost to an increasingly troubled society and a morbid ‘body politic’ (Reid 2011: 155), which remains mired in anti-colonial rhetoric.

Certainly, the impact of less than a century of active colonization is still highly charged. ‘Africa’, as V.Y. Mudimbe has shown, as an invention, a category, was framed in large part through the history of slavery and colonization (Mudimbe 1988). Since then African historiography has developed a complex trajectory (for a summary, see Cooper 1994; Reid 2011); in particular, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* ([1978] 2003) influenced a sharp focus on the apparatus that collected, curated and classified knowledge of Africa. It is in this context that design histories have productively engaged with Africa, examining for instance an exhibitionary complex (Bennett 1988; 1995) of institutions, sites, images, people and objects of design and material culture that were shaped into world-wide displays of all varieties (human spectacles, pageants, ‘International’, ‘Empire’, ‘World’s Fair’) and museum collections (cabinets of

curiosities included) from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. This chronology parallels a 'new' colonialism in which Europe's encounter with Africa solidified through colonization. It was a new colonialism which was part of an increasingly bourgeois Europe – property owning, industrially-minded, entrepreneurial, market driven (Hobsbawm 1987) – that both underpinned colonial accumulations and was not unchallenged by the same colonies. The historiography unpacking imperial displays has been significant for examining the politics of representation: of Europe to itself, of 'others' to Europe, and of 'others' to themselves, where a national or continental European 'self' depended upon inscribing 'otherness' onto non-European objects, people and societies (Greenhalgh 1988; Mitchell 1988; Coombes 1997; MacKenzie 1999). In addition, these studies have been important for illuminating how intrinsic colonies were to being British, French, Dutch, or German, for nation building was co-constitutive with empire building.

After London's Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations of 1851, regular mass spectacles took place across the British Empire in various colonies and colonial nations (e.g. Johannesburg, 1936). Extending over vast acreages, lasting for six months to a year, these events boasted the privileged/protected extension of national trade (Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886), set up competition in trade between nation-empires (Franco-British Exhibition, 1908) or were founded on economic boosterism (British Empire Exhibition, 1924–1925), and drew in millions of national and colonial visitors to these edifying, entertaining fantasies of empire as peaceable, socially ordered, grand – an extension of nation. Such displays reified the ability of Britain – and other imperial nations – to conquer and rule. As Mitchell argued, 'Exhibitions, museums and other spectacles were not just reflections of this certainty, however, but the means of its production, by their technique of rendering history, progress, culture and empire in "objective" form' (Mitchell 1988: 7). In this 'system of representation', which 'set up the world as a picture' (Mitchell 1988: 6), African objects were presented as commodities, often raw materials for British industry (Woodham 1989), privileging British science, technology and industrialization as demonstrating progress and modernity. This strategy of display came to include, from 1886 in Britain, the display of colonial subjects, often contained within the exhibition grounds, dressed in 'authentic' attire to portray a racialized, 'primitive', timeless past, as a living sign of themselves, often set against European whiteness as a sign of civilization and modernity (see also Qureshi 2011).

While empires – and their exhibitions – operated within a particular spatial system crossing boundaries, they also imposed territorial borders or trading monopolies, sometimes damaging older connections, such as that across the Indian Ocean described above. Empires and their exhibitions were not quite so coherent or universalizing as to be described as 'global', nor were they unequivocal, and to circumvent the dangers of generalizing European

national aspirations and universalizing ‘coloniality’ and colonial contexts, the rigidity of such dichotomies as ‘self’ and ‘other’ has been mitigated by supplier ‘bricolage’ (Cooper 1994: 1528) of the complex or ambiguous practices of colonizer and colonized. Timothy Mitchell’s work on displays of Egypt in the nineteenth-century exhibitions reveals how Egyptian elites responded to images of themselves as ‘other’, criticizing some aspects of stereotyping, while allowing that it also played a role in validating new representations of themselves and Egypt. In becoming increasingly familiar with European images of Egypt, local ruling classes strategically aligned themselves with colonizers, and removed or altered from their self-presentations that which might be considered ‘other’ (Mitchell 1988).

South African displays in the colonial metropolis, and within its own territories, reveal a fragmented colonizer and multiple images and actions of colonized Africans. Wedded to local concerns about uniting Afrikaans and English speakers and its fledgling dominion nationhood, exhibition commissioners curated a distinctly national display for the 1924 Empire Exhibition in Wembley, London, and set out its colonial-vernacular, Cape Dutch pavilion as a European-but-not-English, hybrid sign of white permanence in the landscape of other African colonial displays. English-speaking commissioners equivocated over sending African ‘primitive’ dancers to the exhibition as living exhibits in the entertainment style of older, nineteenth-century spectacles. In the event, the dancers were omitted in favour of promoting a picture of successful white South African industry, and images of Africans as potential labour were carefully downplayed while ethnographic images of Africans were utilized to claim South Africa’s own anthropological expertise (bhagat 2011). In yet another arena South Africa’s white exhibition commissioners voiced concern about the prejudice and lack of hospitality experienced by Africans who had travelled to London to visit the event.

More clarity is required on what Africans thought of the structures of colonial identity being inscribed on them (inevitably Africa is contained within an imperial archive, even if it is read critically). In part, this can be seen in the example of the Johannesburg Empire Exhibition, where all established tropes of ‘othering’ African people, as living exhibits or as illustrative image, were employed by exhibition organizers – as labouring accessories to industrial displays, as spectacular dancers, as exotic ‘near extinct races’ – alongside new roles as theatre performers and as jazz musicians, playing African-American ragtime, swing and jazz for the evening events that formed part of the exhibition’s entertainment line-up (bhagat 2003; Coe 2001). More revealingly, Africans were present as visitors and as journalists to the exhibition. African journalists differed in their views about it: some aligned themselves with images of African labour as urban and part of Johannesburg’s dramatic capitalist success, while communist journalists strongly criticized the exhibition’s imperialist venture, condemning false representations of genuinely poor township living

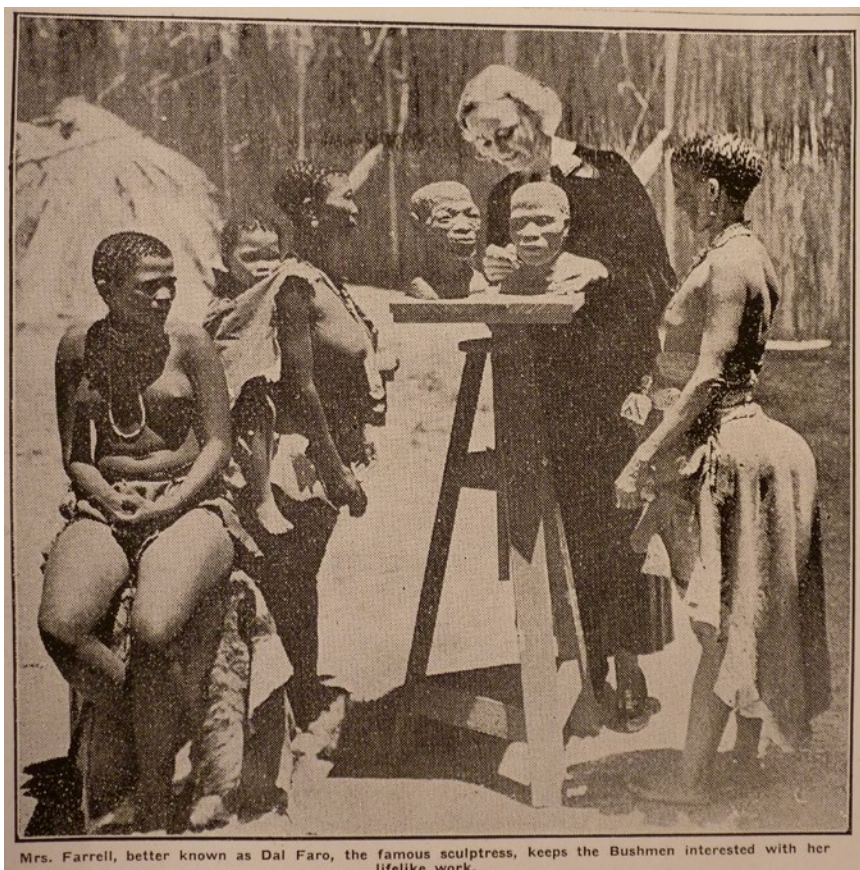


Fig. 1.4 South African press image showing a white South African artist working in the so-called ‘Bushmen’ exhibit at the 1936 Empire Exhibition, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Sunday Express*, 15 November 1936. A group of Khoisan people were brought to the Empire Exhibition by a game hunter, Donald Bain, to be displayed as examples of a ‘dying race’.

conditions and decrying the exploitative horror of the display of the ‘near extinct’ Khoisan (see Fig. 1.4), even while maintaining the image of Khoisan primitiveness, claiming it as a sign of South Africa’s (as the extension of empire) failure to civilize and distribute the fruits of its wealth (Coe 2001). While empire exhibitions presumed universalizing stories, the very form of such exhibitions, like the empires themselves, contained visions of empire that were created by multiple and fragmented metropolitan, as well as diverse colonial, discourses. Dissonant, local voices disrupted an empire-wide apparatus, shot through with conflict as between journalists of differing political allegiances or long-distance connections, for example, between African jazz musicians and African Americans (see Coplan 1985). African jazz performers in 1936 reinforced African exhibition visitors’ self-image as contemporary urbanites

and as connected to transatlantic racial politics, possibly more than they felt connected to the Khoisan as fellow countrymen.

An 'African Atlantic' (John Thornton, cited in Diouf and Prais 2013: 206) operated variously through its long history, for example, in the early twentieth century when African and African American intellectuals connected through political and intellectual alliances in European and North American metropolises at various Pan-African conferences (1900, 1919, 1945; see Diouf and Prais 2013). The implications of these long-distance linkages are important for writing Africa through its multiple elsewheres, and as much for Africa's postcolonial nation states as for colonial Africa. The past is not a foreign country in Africa: the Atlantic in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century was – and still is – traversed by container ships carrying huge bales of second-hand clothing from the West to markets across Africa. Press coverage of this world-wide trade in second-hand clothing paints quite the usual image of Africa – as wanting, lacking, put-upon by the West: 'All over Africa, people are wearing what Americans once wore and no longer want. Visit the continent and you'll find faded remnants of second-hand clothing in the strangest of places. ... The white bathrobe on a Liberian rebel boy with his wig and automatic rifle. And the muddy orange sweatshirt on the skeleton of a small child ...' (Packer 2002: 1). In much the same way as Prestholdt (2008) describes the nineteenth-century Westerner as being confounded when confronted by Zanzibaris dressed in Western fashions, Packer's image of Africans in Western dress reiterates colonial taxonomies of 'hybrid' African cultures as a sign of degeneration and semi-civilization; it is an image that Walker's AFRIKA camera might have shot.

In contrast to this, Karen Tranberg Hansen's study suggests instead a complicated industry. The sale of used clothing has a long history in Atlantic trade connecting London and the West African coast, since the eighteenth century. Hansen focuses on the 1990s and moves across the trade between north America, northern Europe and finally Zambia where she has intricately traced the varied effects of *salaula* (the Chibemba word for second-hand clothing, meaning 'to select from a pile in the manner of rummaging', Hansen 2004: 7; see also 2000) against numerous media claims that cohere around a motif of global trade destroying local industries. Hansen outlines more subtle combinations of a failing economy, cheap textile imports and subsequent Chinese owned re-direction of textile manufacturing to export cloth as reasons for the death of local industry. Beyond this, a complex economy of trade, skilled artisanry and discerning consumer choice developed around *salaula* (see Fig. 1.5), including the transport of bales of clothing, the construction of market stalls and tailoring to repair, alter, and transform *salaula* garments according to consumer taste. Consumers have come to view *salaula* as providing value for money, everyday fashion and 'incomparable' or 'not common' styles (Hansen 2004: 9). Hansen offers a salient comment about local and press coverage of this trade: 'The



Fig. 1.5 The used clothing market in Lusaka, Zambia, © Cordelia Persen, 21 February 2009. This image shows not only clothing stalls, but also Zambian's discerning choice and display of dress – from army surplus worn with trainers by the man on the left, the polo shirt worn with a wax print wrap by the woman stall holder in the middle of the picture, the bystander in a long leather coat on the right beside the car, to the man in orange tunic, khaki trousers and gum boots behind the car. Available at: <https://flic.kr/p/694Fw5>. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/>).

single most striking point about accounts of the negative effects of the second-hand clothing trade appearing in local and Western news media is their lack of curiosity about the clothes themselves and how consumers deal with them. In effect, in these accounts the clothes themselves are entirely incidental' (Hansen 2004: 9). A close look at what is actually happening in Africa reveals people, ideas, objects, intentions enmeshed in intricate relationships: design matters.

Conclusions

My aim here is to understand the worldliness of Africa. I have been less concerned with 'globalizing' Africa, or design history, and more interested in paying attention to subtle conceptions of local, national, regional and long-distance connections of the continent that became Africa. This is not to privilege any

state over other forms of human connection, but also not to over-emphasize vast, abstract conceptions of the ‘global’ over smaller, more contingent agencies of human connections. By highlighting the complexity of African engagement with other places in the world – an interaction which is often asymmetrical – involving objects and people, ideas, processes and intentions, I hope to show how design histories in / of Africa might throw off the shackles of its categories of Eurocentric exclusion and embrace an inter-disciplinary approach to scholarship. As Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall explain, ‘compartmentalization of knowledge undergirds the obsession with Africa’s uniqueness, and it feeds the overwhelming neglect of *how* the meanings of Africanness are made’ (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004: 350). By interrogating the pre-, post- and colonial material and design culture of Africa, and remaining attentive to the intricacies of periodization and often troubled national historiographies, design history can enhance the work of writing an ‘Africa’ different from ‘its Eurocentric pseudo-synonym, by turns taxonomic, by turns homogenizing’ (Tageldin 2014: 320), and may indeed work to write of the continent as a plural unity, as a part of the world.

Notes

I would like to thank Lorna Rosbottom and Dr Sabrina Rahman for their advice to me while preparing this chapter, and the editors of this volume for inviting me to contribute this chapter and thereafter for their patient, precise editing.

1. ‘Fuck Afrika I’ by Garth Walker was made in response to an invitation by David Krut Projects, South Africa, for *Drawing Show Designers and Illustrators*, 2008, an exhibition of twelve contemporary graphic designers and illustrators, 10 September–11 October, 2008 (see <http://davidkrutprojects.com/artworks/fuck-afrika-i-by-garth-walker-at-orange-juice-by-drawing-show-designers-and-illustrators>). I would like to thank Garth Walker for generously supplying an image of his work for this chapter.

2. Magnus Bjørnsen’s report for the Norwegian Council for Africa explains ‘Not only is the image of Africa as a continent only characterized by shortcomings and lacks deeply hurtful to many Africans. It is also an obstacle to the continent’s economic development. According to the report *Private Capital Flows to Africa: Perception and Reality*, Africa’s widespread negative image among investors had two consequences: Firstly, that the continent lost out on investments and secondly, that the funds which were invested in Africa, had a tendency to end up in short-term, high-risk ventures with developmental impacts substantially smaller than from “normal” investments’ (Bjørnsen 2008).

3. Lynn M. Thomas develops a detailed discussion of the ways in which ‘modernity’ can be addressed, not as a conceptual category to impose through analysis, but as a category to investigate how historical actors understand their modernity; she recommends, then, an historicist approach to investigating modernity (Thomas 2011: 734–740).

4. Research on ‘early modern’ African–Asian trade connections has recently sought to illuminate the agency of Swahili middlemen along the East African coast trading in commodities – the most significant being manufactured Gujarati cloth – confirming the Swahili as African, tracing their reach into Africa beyond the coast, and examining the failures of Portuguese traders to control this trade. (See Pearson 1998, who frames this large-scale trade as of the ‘African Sea and its coasts’ (9), to assert a study of it in its own terms.)

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CHAPTER 2

Does Southern African Design History Exist?

DEIRDRE PRETORIUS

There are numerous southern African higher education institutions, both public and private, which offer qualifications in a variety of design disciplines, including architecture, graphic, fashion, product, interior, ceramic, textile and jewellery design. The existence of these design qualifications indicates the need for students to have an understanding of southern African design history. However, no institutions in the region offer design history qualifications, few academics in these institutions self identify as design historians, and academic journals which overtly claim to contribute to African design history writing are scarce. Given the absence of design history courses and historians in the region one would be forgiven for asking the question, following Chipkin (2007): does southern African design history exist? The short answer would be yes, but with the qualifier that this history exists across a ‘dispersal of sites’ (Margolin 2002: 128) such as design, art history, visual studies, material culture, history, interdisciplinary studies, media studies, cultural studies and anthropology.

The aim of this chapter is to detect and outline a shape of southern African design history by examining how academic institutions form the field. This approach is informed by the design historiographical survey pioneered by Clive Dilnot (1984a; 1984b) and Victor Margolin (2002: 127–170). The development of design history in the USA and the UK is well researched and a number of excellent surveys exist. In 1984 two essays by Dilnot appeared in the journal *Design Issues* in which he reviewed the state of primarily British design history by firstly mapping the field, followed by a discussion of the problems and possibilities of design history. This was followed in 1988 by Margolin’s survey of

Notes for this section begin on page 58.

the development of design history in the USA from 1977 to 1987. In 2002 Margolin (2002: 127–187) extended his earlier essay and updated it to 2000.

More recently Kjetil Fallan (2010: 1–54) surveyed the development of design history with an emphasis on the development of an ‘industrial design history proper’ and Daniel Huppertz and Grace Lees-Maffei (2012) conducted a multi-national survey on the state of design history in the UK, France, Italy, Scandinavia, Spain, Turkey and Greece, the USA, Australia and East Asia. This was followed by Huppertz’s (2014) more in-depth examination of developments in Australian historiography and a review of the last quarter of a century of scholarship on Australian design history.

These surveys demonstrate a slow broadening in design history’s initial concern with only the ‘output of major industrialized, consumer-orientated societies’ (Woodham 2005: 257) to an ‘expanded geography’ approach (Huppertz 2014: 2007). However, no similar surveys have been conducted on African design history in general and southern African design history specifically. There are many possible reasons for this; these include the vastness of the continent and its complexity and diversity, its levels of economic and industrial development and a preferred focus on African material culture as ‘craft’, ‘art’ or ‘ethnic artefacts’, as opposed to design. For example, an ostensibly simple question such as ‘what comprises southern Africa’ is not straightforward or easily answered.

The United Nations (UN) scheme of geographic regions defines southern Africa as consisting of five countries (United Nations 2013), while the southern African Development Community (SADC) views the region as comprised of fifteen countries (Southern African Development Community; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.sadc.int/member-states>). For the purpose of this chapter the UN scheme, consisting of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland with the addition of Zimbabwe, is used. While the UN insists that its scheme is purely ‘for statistical convenience’ (United Nations 2014) there are connections between these countries which justify their being grouped together when it comes to detecting the design history of the region. Using the SADC scheme would also broaden the scope of this chapter to an unwieldy size.

The first connection is geographical proximity. Lesotho and Swaziland are enclosed by South Africa whereas Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe border South Africa to the north. This is an enormous region¹ spanning over 3,066,858 km², which is only slightly smaller than India (3,287,590 km²), the seventh largest country in the world. It has a total population of nearly seventy-five million people and a population density per square kilometre ranging from the sparsely populated Namibia (2.54 people km²) to the more densely populated Lesotho and Swaziland (both 68.1 people km²). The region is home to people who identify with a range of ethnicities and many languages are spoken; South Africa alone has eleven official languages. However, all the countries include English as an official language and this is one of the many legacies of British

colonialism in the region. As independent postcolonial nation-states, they are all relatively young, having gained complete independence only from the 1960s onwards.

South Africa is by far the largest in size, population and total GDP and has exerted a strong influence in the region. Namibia, for example, was directly controlled by South Africa from 1919 to 1990. Under successive Apartheid governments (1948–1994) South Africa came into conflict with many of its neighbours who supported the liberation organization, the African National Congress (ANC), but since 1994, when the ANC was voted into power, relations have improved. Despite such conflict the countries have historically collaborated with each other and continue to do so.

For instance, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) created in 1910 consists of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland, and with the exception of Botswana, all of these countries belong to the Common Monetary Area (CMA) which means their currencies are linked to the South African Rand (Krieger 2001: 787). People, goods, capital and ideas have always moved across the borders of the region, whether freely or illegally. This is evident in the earliest forms of material culture, such as rock art, which are widely dispersed throughout the region. Shared histories and relationships varying in terms of control, complicity, conflict and cooperation therefore bind the countries together and any design history of the region should be cognisant of these connections.

Huppatz and Lees-Maffei (2012: 311) offer a broad definition of design history as ‘the study of designed artefacts, practices and behaviours, and the discourses surrounding these, in order to understand the past, contextualize the present and map possible trajectories for the future’. For them, ‘design historians analyse [...] the material culture of everyday life and its production, mediation and consumption – to create narratives about the human condition’. The authors consider two differences which are important when asking what design history is, the first of which is based on John A. Walker’s distinction between ‘the history of design’ and ‘design history’ (Lees-Maffei and Huppatz 2012: 311). The history of design, they argue, is ‘a subject of study within design history’ which begins with the separation of design and manufacture due to industrialization which has resulted in design history being preoccupied with ‘the industrial era and . . . the output of Western industrialized nations at the expense of an adequate analysis of non-Western regions’ (2012: 311).

This narrow view of design history has been criticized by a number of authors including Turner (1995: 79), Pacey (1992) and Woodham (2005). For example, Pacey (1992: 217) criticizes the view of design history as a modern activity practised only by a professional elite as ‘misleadingly myopic’ and argues for the activities of non-professional designers to be acknowledged as design. This broadening of scope, he believes, will free design history from ‘a trap which it surely did not intend to set for itself, that of seeming exclusively

concerned with an activity associated with the industrialized, affluent West' (Pacey 1992: 217). In a similar vein I would argue that southern African design history cannot only be confined to industrially produced artefacts for mass consumption, but must also include artefacts and practices that are in southern Africa typically labelled as 'art' and 'craft', despite the many complexities around definition, boundaries and chronology that such a perspective entails.

The second distinction made by Huppatz and Lees-Maffei (2012: 311) concerns the offering of design history 'as contextual studies for design students, and design history as a discrete academic subject as taught in art history degrees and as researched by design historians'. The following survey touches on both these aspects, firstly by reviewing the provision of design qualifications in southern Africa and then by providing an overview of scholarship on southern African design history.

This overview of scholarship considers the output of postgraduate students at South African universities – as this is the only country in the region which offers visual studies and art history degrees at postgraduate level – and then refers to a selected number of academic journals and conferences which contribute to knowledge of southern African design history. In this way a southern African design history can be detected and outlined.

Due to limitations of space the role of academic and popular books, research centres, museums, libraries, archives, exhibitions, fairs, professional associations and government policy on the shaping of the field cannot be considered. Clearly, there is room for further work in this pressing area.

Design Qualifications in Southern Africa

The table shows the results of reviewing design qualifications offered in southern Africa.² State and privately owned institutions awarding undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications across eight design disciplines were considered, but not distance education institutions or those offering short courses. At undergraduate level all six countries offer diplomas or degrees in architecture: five of them in graphic and fashion design, four in product and textile design, and three in interior design. South Africa is the only country in the southern African region which offers ceramic and jewellery design diplomas and degrees as standalone subjects of study.

Swaziland is the only country which does not offer any form of postgraduate qualification in the design disciplines. In Lesotho and Botswana the Malaysian based Limkokwing University offers Honours degrees in Industrial Design and Visual Communication Design. The Polytechnic of Namibia and the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe offer Honours degrees in Architecture. At Chinhoyi University of Technology in Zimbabwe students can graduate with an Honours Degree in Clothing and

Table 2.1 Design qualifications offered at southern African higher education institutions

QUALIFICATIONS OFFERED	Botswana	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa	Swaziland	Zimbabwe
Undergraduate:						
Diploma, Degree						
Architecture	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ceramic Design				x		
Fashion Design	x	x	x	x		x
Graphic Design	x	x		x	x	x
Interior Design	x	x		x		
Jewellery Design				x		
Product Design	x	x	x	x		
Textile Design	x	x		x		x
Postgraduate:						
Honours, Master, Doctoral						
Architecture			x	x		x
Ceramic Design				x		
Fashion Design				x		x
Graphic Design	x	x		x		
Interior Design				x		
Jewellery Design				x		
Product Design	x	x		x		
Textile Design				x		

Fashion Design. In South Africa students can pursue Honours, Masters and Doctoral degrees in all the listed design disciplines.

In line with many other regions of the world no standalone design history programmes are found in any of the southern African institutions (Huppertz and Lees-Maffei 2012). The majority of undergraduate design programmes in South Africa include a first-year level course called generically ‘History of Art and Design’ which in the second- and third-year levels becomes more discipline specific, e.g. ‘History and Theory of Graphic Design’. However, this is a low credit bearing subject with no opportunity for postgraduate study. In some institutions, the ‘History of Art and Design’ subject offered to design students has undergone changes; for example at the University of Johannesburg it was renamed ‘Contextual Studies’ in the reconfigured Diploma programmes and ‘Design Studies’ in the newly introduced BA Design programme. This situation aligns with what Lees-Maffei and Huppertz (2012:311) describe as design history for the purpose of contextual study for design students as opposed to a separate academic subject as taught in humanities settings such as art history programmes.

South Africa is the only country in southern Africa where students can qualify with design, visual studies or art history degrees up to Doctoral level. Therefore, in the southern African region most scholarly research which can be described as design history has emanated from South Africa, particularly from Architecture, Visual Arts and Art History departments. Along with institutions

outside of Africa, Art History departments in South Africa have also seen a move away from the term 'Art History' to a preference for the term Visual Culture or Visual Studies with some universities opting to cover all bases with the nomenclature Art History and Visual Culture, or History of Art and Visual Studies.³ It appears as if Margolin's (2002: 147) contention that '[w]hat may ultimately open up once and for all the relations between different approaches to the visual is the concept of visual culture' has been adopted to some degree in South Africa.

Postgraduate design history scholarship in southern Africa is principally conducted in and about South Africa. A review of theses and dissertations delivered in Masters and Doctoral programmes in South African Design and Architecture, Visual Arts and Art History departments over the last twenty-five years shows that studies which can be classified as design history revolve around five clusters of interest. The first cluster relates to the role of colonial and postcolonial representational practices and includes monuments and heritage, museums and practices of display. The next revolves around architecture and landscape and includes studies of architectural identity, architectural firms, regional architecture and architectural ornament. Another cluster can be categorized as graphic design and includes South African graphics for social justice and human rights, protest and resistance, design language, advertising, comics and cartoons, print media, illustration and murals. The fourth cluster encompasses crafts, and includes primarily studies on ceramics and beadwork. Lastly, a more recent cluster of studies has emerged from design departments specifically around fashion, product, furniture and interior design, some of which offers analysis which is relevant to design historical understanding.

From the above it becomes clear that although design history is overtly acknowledged in the southern African academy only by way of the naming of individual subjects on undergraduate level, it can nonetheless be detected within some of the output of postgraduate students at South African universities. In the following section a number of academic journals and conferences are selected for review to ascertain their contribution to knowledge of southern African design history.

Academic Conferences

A number of organizations convene academic conferences which offer the opportunity to present design history papers. In South Africa the Design Education Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA) and the South African Visual Art Historians (SAVAH) host annual academic conferences. DEFSA was founded in 1991 and the hosting of conferences has been its most important function since its inception (Breytenbach 2009: 8). The DEFSA website (DEFSA; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.defsa.co.za>) holds some of the conference

proceedings from 2000 to 2013 and these show that DEFSA has tended to focus on teaching, learning and programme development issues. Only from 2007 have design history contributions started to appear on architecture, typography, fashion design and monographs of South African designers.

SAVAH 'is an organization of academics and professionals that seek to advance the professional practice of art history and visual culture in South Africa and to forge relations with practitioners from other disciplines and regions' (SAVAH; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://sava.org.za/?page_id=5). The organization was founded in 1984 under the name the South African Association of Art Historians and the first annual conference was held in 1985. In 2005 the current name was adopted to show 'a move to become more inclusive and to adapt to the changing role of our discipline in South Africa'.

A review of the SAVA conference proceedings from 1995 to 2013 reveals an ongoing interest in South African ceramics, monuments and architecture, and the art and representation of the San people. In addition to these key themes, papers on comics, printed media, and clothing and fashion have also been presented at SAVA. In recent years papers have been delivered on other countries in Africa including Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, Zambia, Senegal, Morocco and Malawi.

Two international design history conferences, namely, the biannual conference of the International Committee for Design History and Design Studies (ICDHS) and the Design History Society (DHS) Annual Conference offer the opportunity for scholars from Africa to participate, and for papers on African design to be delivered. However, such participation and contributions have been limited, as shown by statistics published on the ICDHS website (ICDHS; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.ub.edu/gracmon/icdhs/stats.html>). During the period from 1999 to 2012 only two participants from South Africa and one from Nigeria presented at the ICDHS conference. The conference proceedings and programmes available on the ICDHS website indicate that papers related to Africa were delivered in 2006 and 2010 and covered fashion, craft and visual cultures in South Africa, Mali and West Africa respectively.

The Design History Society explicitly aims at promoting 'the study of global design histories' and 'shaping an inclusive design history' (Design History Society; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.designhistorysociety.org/>). To this end its 2013 conference titled *Towards Global Histories of Design: Postcolonial Perspectives* was held at the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, India where papers were delivered on, inter alia, African textiles, car design, architecture and visual communication (NID 2013). It is difficult to locate all the programmes and conference proceedings from the DHS conferences as these are not kept on the Society's website, but from the available information it appears that before the Ahmedabad conference there were very few contributions from or on southern Africa.

The review of academic conferences shows that interest in southern African design history at local conferences has increased over the years; however, with regard to conferences convened by international organizations participation by southern African delegates and contributions on the region have been low.

Academic Journals

Because southern African design history exists across a ‘dispersal of sites’, each with their own methods, nomenclatures and journals, it is particularly challenging to trace the outline of this history. A number of English or bilingual academic journals, published in southern Africa and outside the region, contains articles which can be classified as southern African design history based on the theme, content and methodology of the articles.

What follows is a summary of the findings of a review of a sample of such journals drawn from the categories of design, art history, visual studies, material culture, history, interdisciplinary studies, media studies and cultural studies journals. The aim of this review is not to be exhaustive – many other journals could be added to the sample – but to indicate that the contours of a southern African design history become visible across and through the selected journals. The journals were scrutinized for articles dealing with and related to the design disciplines identified as being taught in southern Africa, namely architecture, ceramic, fashion, graphic, interior, jewellery, product and textile design. In line with my argument that southern African design history cannot be confined to the study of industrialization, mass production and professional designers, the review included hand crafted artefacts and the work of artists, craftspeople and non-professional designers.

Journals which focus on design are the first and most obvious place to look for southern African design history. However, apart from the Spring 2004 edition of *Design Issues*, which focused on South African design and visual culture, very few southern African design history articles appear in this US based journal or in the UK based *Journal of Design History*.

Image & Text (I&T) (Fig. 2.1 and Fig. 2.2) was founded at the University of Pretoria, South Africa in 1992 as ‘Africa’s first scholarly journal based at a local academic design and fine arts institution’ around the ‘common concern about the lack of published research sources, particularly in the field of South African design’ (Lange 2012: 6). Although founded as a journal for design, from 2011 it ‘has been repositioned as a multi- and interdisciplinary journal that orbits around the nexus of visual culture’ (*Image & Text*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.imageandtext.up.ac.za/index.php/about-image-and-text>).

From its inception a key concern of *I&T* was the move from ‘European- and North American-centric’ to Afrocentric approaches (Lange 2012: 8) and

over the years themes which have been addressed include design, craft, art, popular culture, the vernacular and indigenous, design education, stereotyping, advertising, identity, cartoons and comics, sustainability, ethics, architecture, and political graphics, mostly with a South African focus. Art History and Visual Culture Journals which concentrate on Africa include the South African focused journals the *South African Journal of Art History (SAJAH)* and *De Arte. African Arts, Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture* and the *Journal of Material Culture* all have a broader sweep over the continent.

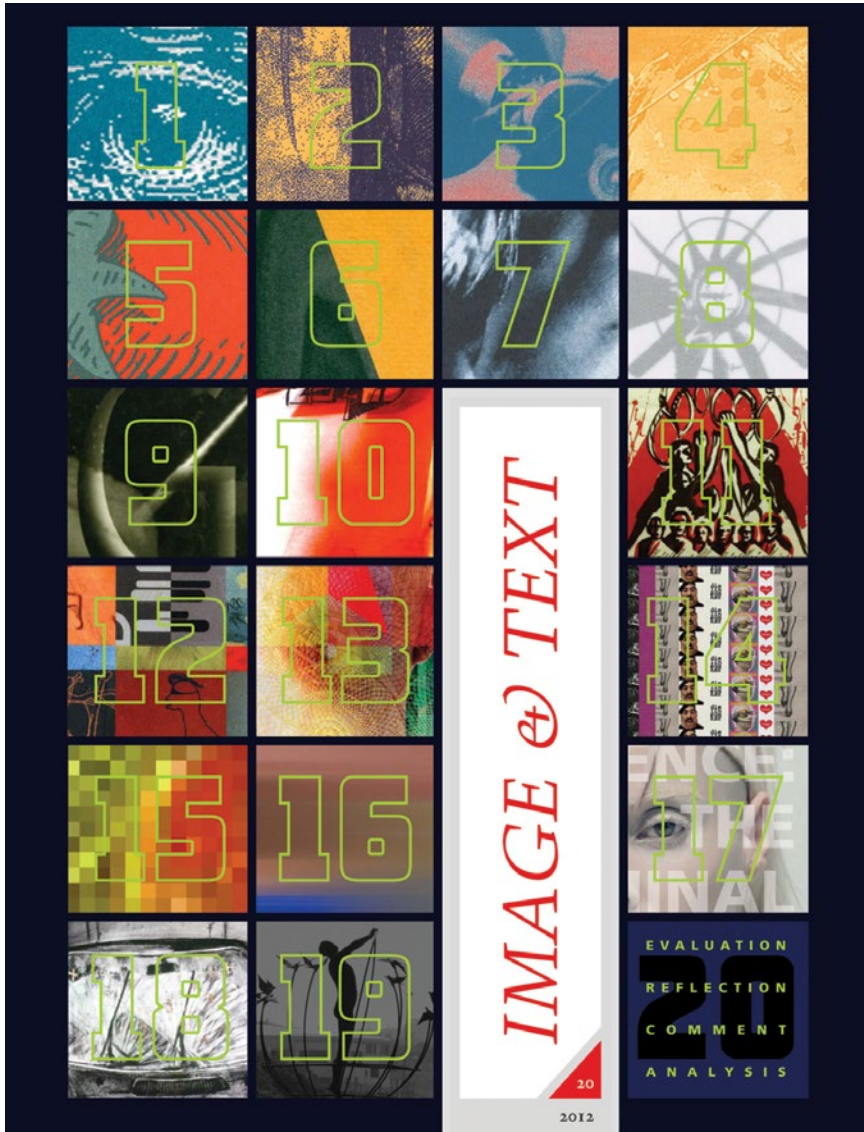


Figure 2.1 Cover of *Image & Text* 20, 2012. Image courtesy of *Image & Text*.



Figure 13: Cover and text spreads from *Image & Text* number 13 (2007). This is the first edition that is only published in digital format. Editor: Marian Sauthoff. Assistant editor: Jeanne van Eeden. Designer: Jacques Lange.

Figure 2.2 Page 19 of *Image & Text* 20, 2012. Image courtesy of *Image & Text*.

It should be noted that the *Journal of Material Culture* does not focus exclusively on Africa.

SAJAH is published by the Art Historical Work Group of South Africa and both the journal and group came into being in 1983 (*SAJAH*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.sajah.co.za/index.php>). Currently the journal aims to publish articles on a range of topics including art and architectural history and theory, aesthetics and philosophy of art, visual culture, film and photography and the history of craft. Contributions focusing on design have been made mainly since 2006, particularly with regard to architecture, building

and spatial planning, as well as national monuments, museums and heritage sites. The journal further includes papers on a wide range of topics including pottery and ceramics, graphic design, advertising, branding and media, landscape design and plants, ethics and intellectual property, furniture, illustration, historical maps, and colonial and postcolonial discourse. Although the focus is firmly on South Africa, articles dealing with Zimbabwe have appeared.

De Arte (Fig. 2.3 and Fig. 2.4) is published by UNISA Press in Pretoria, South Africa and contains articles on ‘visual arts, art history, art criticism and related disciplines’ (*De Arte*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from http://reference.sabinet.co.za/sa_epublication/dearte). As such it contains valuable information

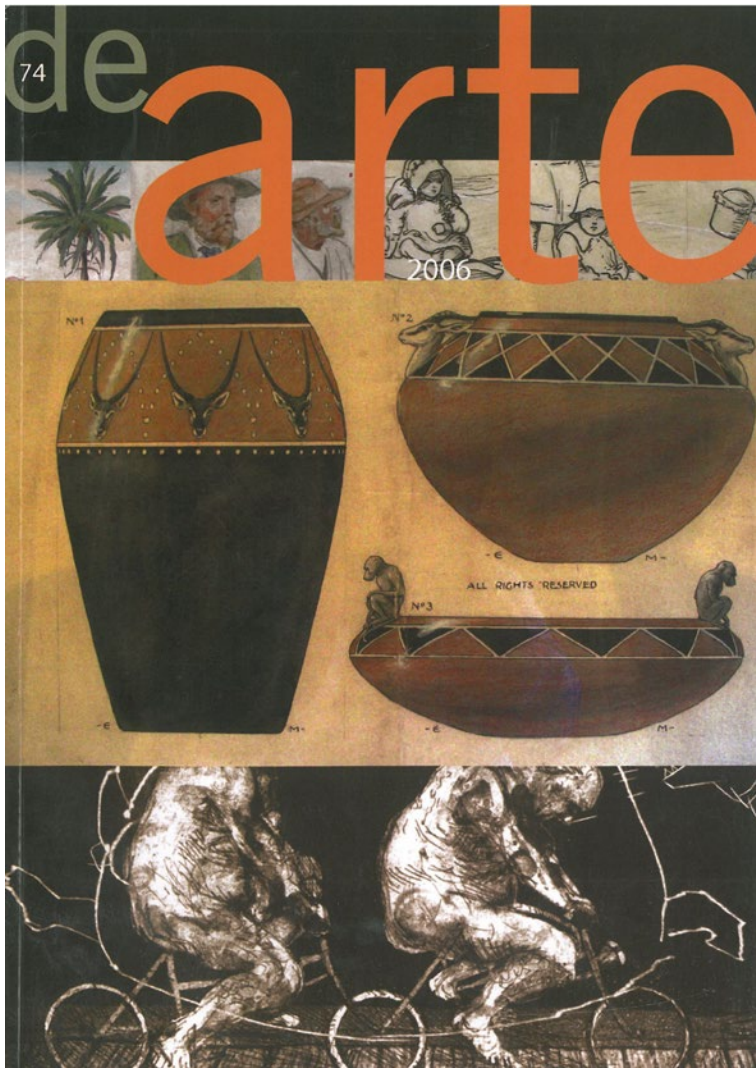


Figure 2.3 Cover of *De Arte* 74, 2006. Image courtesy of *De Arte*.



Figure 2.4 Pages 12 and 13 of *De Arte* 74, 2006. Image courtesy of *De Arte*.

on South African visual and material culture exhibitions and collections, as well as book reviews. It is particularly useful for its engagement with South African craft, including needlework, beadwork, weaving and ceramics, often written from a feminist perspective. Articles on architecture and architectural ornament further contribute to an understanding of South African design history. *African Arts* has been published since 1967, is based at UCLA (the University of California, Los Angeles) and covers ‘traditional, contemporary, and popular African arts and expressive cultures’ (*African Arts*; retrieved 22 August 2014 from <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/afar>). Article titles generally refer to ‘Africa’ although in a few instances a distinction is made by identifying countries (for example ‘South Africa’, ‘Ghana’, ‘Mali’, ‘Sierra Leone’), areas (‘Eastern Cape’, ‘Sub-Saharan Africa’), ethnic groups (‘Dogon’, ‘Makonde’, ‘Yoruba’, ‘Baule’) and language (‘Xhosa-speaking’). This type of emphasis on the African continent over its constituent nations or regions appears less in the African-based journals than those published and edited elsewhere. While ‘art’ rather than ‘design’ is the preferred term used in *African Arts*, articles are included on pottery and ceramics, beadwork, cloth and textile, fashion and clothing, metal art, decorative arts, and comics. The journal reviews books on, and collections, exhibitions and museums of, African art. Most of the collections, exhibitions and museums reviewed are situated in Europe and the USA with South African based collections and institutions occasionally appearing.

More critical in nature than *African Arts*, *Critical Interventions* ‘focuses on the arts and visual cultures of global Africa, which encapsulates African and African

Diaspora identities in the age of globalization’ and considers aspects such as ‘value and African cultural patrimony’ (*Critical Interventions*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.aachron.com/editions/critical_interventions/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=11). The journal has published a number of special issues of which *Fractals in Global Africa* (Issue 1 2012), *Transformations* (Issue 1 2010), *Africanity and North Africa* (Issue 1 2009), *Visual Publics* (Issue 1–2 2008) and *Is African Art History?* (Issue 1 2007) are particularly relevant to design historians. Pertinent topics include the influence of Western art education on expressions of culture in Africa, modernity, ownership of African visual culture, Pan-African manifestos and festivals, posters and textiles.

The Journal of Material Culture, edited by academics from the University College London, ‘is concerned with the relationship between artefacts and social relations irrespective of time and place and aims to systematically explore the linkage between the construction of social identities and the production and use of culture’ (*Journal of Material Culture*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from <http://mcu.sagepub.com>). Similar to *African Arts* and *Critical Interventions* the journal covers topics such as pottery, museum collections, heritage and monuments, but the emphasis on material culture, rather than art, allows it to broaden its scope to include themes such as domestic appliances and weapons. African regions covered include Saharan Africa, West Africa, South Africa, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Namibia, Botswana and Zambia.

History journals which contribute to southern African design history include *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, the *South African Historical Journal*, the *South African Journal of Cultural History* and *Southern African Humanities*, all of which are published in South Africa. No other history journals published in the region were identified which contribute to knowledge of southern African design history.

Kronos has been published annually since 1979, initially under the title *Kronos: A Journal of Cape History*, which focused on the Western and Eastern Cape areas in South Africa. Earlier editions are primarily of interest to the design historian with regard to research on archaeology and rock art, but later editions include a variety of topics including building and architecture, festivals, the automobile industry and industrial development, clothing, print media, propaganda and coverage of issues of representation in southern Africa. This development coincides with the transformation of the journal and its renaming in 2008 ‘to indicate its expanded regional focus to southern Africa as a whole’ (*Kronos* 2014). The journal focuses on ‘southern African history, visual history, social history, cultural history, history and anthropology’ (*Kronos*; retrieved 21 September 2014 from <http://www.scielo.org.za/revistas/kronos/iaboutj.htm>).

The *South African Historical Journal* commenced publication in 1969; however, design historical themes only started appearing in the past decade,

principally with regard to printing and printed media, museums and archives, town planning and some architecture. The *South African Journal of Cultural History* is published by the South African Society for Cultural History and a review of issues since 2001 shows that it includes studies on the material culture of the colonial period in South Africa. While the emphasis is on Afrikaner culture – and the link between Dutch colonialism, trade and consumption within the colonial Cape is made clear in many articles – contributions on other groups and time periods are also included.

Southern African Humanities is a journal of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum and originated in the Annals of the Natal Museum published ‘almost without interruption from 1906 to 2000’ (*Southern African Humanities*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from <http://www.sahumanities.org/ojs/index.php/SAH/about/history>). An online archive is available stretching back to 1970 and is useful to design historians especially with regard to ceramics and pottery, beads, stone-age material culture, metalworking, building and settlements, architecture and identity, memorials and other forms of material culture, not only in South Africa but also Uganda, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

Interdisciplinary journals offer a rich resource of southern African design history and a review of examples from South Africa, the UK and Botswana show a shared concern with architecture and town planning, heritage and museums, print media, material culture and craft. In addition design production is addressed by way of articles dealing with industrialization, labour, manufacturing and technology.

The oldest of the three journals reviewed, the journal of the Botswana Society, *Botswana Notes and Records*, has been published annually since 1969. It covers a wide range of subjects, including architecture and town planning, heritage and museum studies, media, publishing and handicraft with a focus on Botswana (*Botswana Notes and Records*; retrieved 21 September 2014 from <http://www.botsoc.org.bw/bur/bur01.htm>).

Social Dynamics is the journal of the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and has been published since 1975. The journal describes itself as covering ‘the full range of humanities and social sciences including anthropology, archaeology, economics, education, history, literary and language studies, music, politics, psychology and sociology’ (*Social Dynamics*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rsdy20>). While its focus is on South Africa, its coverage includes articles on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Themes addressed generally include colonialism, modernity, globalization and representation and identity.

One year older than *Social Dynamics*, the UK based *Journal of Southern African Studies* stretches back to 1974. The journal seeks to produce ‘fresh scholarly enquiry and rigorous exposition in the many different disciplines of the social sciences and humanities’ and covers ‘South Africa, Namibia, Botswana,

Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola and Mozambique; and occasionally, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and Mauritius' (*Journal of Southern African Studies*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=cjss20#.U_hBbsW1Y6w). Design history related topics only started appearing in the past decade and are structured around identity issues of race, class, and gender, modernity, the precolonial and colonial, culture and politics. The emergence of these topics can most probably be ascribed to the 'visual/pictorial turn' and the emergence of the academic discipline 'Visual Studies' which in turn influenced various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to consider visual culture seriously (Jay 2002: 267–268).

The last set of journals reviewed comprised Cultural and Media Studies journals. *Communicatio* is a South African journal for communication theory and research founded at the University of South Africa which in recent decades has welcomed contributions on visual communication (*Communicatio*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rca20#.U6vB8JSSw5A>). Its primary value for southern African design history is in the study of print media. A particular area of concern for *Communicatio* is health communication and numerous articles explore HIV and AIDS messages. *Critical Arts; South-North Cultural and Media Studies* is affiliated to the University of KwaZulu-Natal and contains studies which examine representations of San, rock art, election campaigns, mural art in South Africa and mass media and representation from a variety of perspectives, including postcolonialism and nationalism. The journal *Agenda* is published by a 'feminist media organization' of the same name which 'aims to achieve the goal of eradicating gender inequality and empowering women' (*Agenda*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from <http://www.agenda.org.za/about/vision-and-mission/>) and its value to design history lies primarily in contributions which study the relation of media to the representation of gender, commodification and consumption in Africa. The *Journal of African Cultural Studies* was so named in 1998 after being established in 1988 under the name *African Languages and Cultures* at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. The focus of the journal is on 'dimensions of African culture' and this includes, inter alia, an interest in the media, popular culture and culture and gender (*Journal of African Cultural Studies*; retrieved 23 August 2014 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=cjac20#.U7PEHpSSw5A>). The journal contains a few articles on cartoons, advertisements, clothing, monuments, textiles, and media in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and the East African coast respectively.

This journal review indicates that design historical research is being done about most of the sub-Saharan African countries, however not necessarily from within them, and shows the emergence of a number of common themes in the scholarship on southern African design history. The predominant theme

materialized as an interest in architecture and building and the related themes of monuments, museums and heritage. The next prominent theme revolved around graphic design and includes the study of political graphics and propaganda, advertising and branding, cartoons and comics and print media. Lastly, the study of 'craft' and 'art' such as beadwork, pottery, dress, furniture and cloth, appears to be preferred to studies of 'design', such as jewellery, fashion, interior and product design.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to answer the question whether southern African design history exists by examining how academic institutions form the field. A review of design qualifications offered in the region showed that at undergraduate level all the countries offer qualifications in architecture, five in graphic and fashion design, four in product and textile design, three in interior design, and one in ceramic and jewellery design and that most offer postgraduate qualifications in some of these design disciplines. The existence of these design qualifications would indicate the need for students to have an understanding of the region's design history. However, no postgraduate design history qualifications exist, and instead it was found that postgraduate design historical research is being conducted in some design and many architecture, visual culture and art history Masters and Doctoral programmes, primarily in and on South Africa. The overview of scholarship on southern African design history in the form of postgraduate output, academic journals and conferences shows that this history is found in a number of sites and brought to the fore the contours of a southern African design history shaped around architecture, monuments, museums and heritage, graphic design, and various artefacts from everyday life including beadwork, pottery, dress, and furniture.

While it has been shown that a body of southern African design history exists, albeit primarily with a South African focus, I would argue that access to this body of knowledge is hampered by its wide dispersal and compounded by the difficulty of accessing conference papers, by the fact that most postgraduate research remains unpublished and buried in institutional repositories, and by the low conference participation of southern African delegates to international design history conferences.

This then raises the question to what extent southern African design history is included in the curriculum of the design programmes offered at institutions of higher learning in the region. The barriers to accessing this knowledge would indicate that it is probably low, but further research is required to confirm this assumption. Such research would form part of a larger research agenda which is required to enable southern African design history to become visible.

At the outset I acknowledged that this first survey of southern African design history writing will inevitably be incomplete and much research remains to be done, particularly with regard to the design history content taught in design programmes in the region, and the role of academic and popular books, research centres, museums, libraries, and archives, exhibitions and fairs, professional associations and government policy in the development of the field. In addition, the history of design of the region can be made visible by publishing survey histories and readers and by increased contributions on southern African design history at design history conferences and to established design journals.

Notes

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1. All statistical information was obtained from the relevant country's page on Wikipedia.

2. The websites of the following institutions offering design qualifications were reviewed: Bulawayo Polytechnic, College of the Arts, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Durban University of Technology, Gweru Polytechnic, Harare Polytechnic, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Mutare Polytechnic, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, North-West University, National University of Science and Technology, Polytechnic of Namibia, Tshwane University of Technology, University of Botswana, University of Cape Town, University of the Free State, University of Johannesburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, University of Stellenbosch, Vaal University of Technology, University of the Witwatersrand, Walter Sisulu University and Zimbabwe Institute of Digital Arts.

3. For a South African perspective on the contested relationship between art history and visual culture studies see Lauwrens (2005).

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CHAPTER 3

Designing the South African Nation

From Nature to Culture

JACQUES LANGE AND JEANNE VAN EEDEN

There is to date very little published research and writing about South African design history. One of the main obstacles has been dealing with the legacy of forty years of apartheid censorship (1950 to 1990) that banned and destroyed a vast array of visual culture in the interests of propaganda and national security, according to the Beacon for Freedom of Expression (http://search.beaconforfreedom.org/about_database/south%20africa.html). This paucity of material is aggravated by the general lack of archival and documentary evidence, not just of the struggle against apartheid, but also of the wider domain of design in South Africa. Even mainstream designed material for the British imperialist and later apartheid government has been lost or neglected in the inadequate archival facilities of the State and influential organizations such as the South African Railways. Efforts to redress this are now appearing as scholars start to piece together fragments, not in order to write a definitive history of South African design, but rather to write histories of design in South Africa that recuperate neglected narratives or revise earlier historiographies.

This chapter is accordingly an attempt to document a number of key moments in the creation of South African nationhood between 1910 and 2013 in which communication design played a part. Our point of departure is rooted in Zukin's (1991: 16) belief that symbolic and material manifestations of power harbour the ideological needs of powerful institutions to manipulate class, gender and race relations, ultimately to serve the needs of capital (and governance). South Africa passed through various iterations of colonial

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domination before attaining monolithic control over the black majority population, which only ended in the 1990s with the emergence of democracy. We shall examine the official or sanctioned historiography of South Africa from 1910 to 2013 and show how selected myths of nationhood were employed for ideological purposes. We shall suggest that selected state institutions and government-sponsored initiatives created prisms through which successive South African 'imagined communities' were represented visually (Anderson 2006).

We shall not necessarily discuss these official discourses in terms of success or failure but, rather, we want to emphasize the vital role that communication design played in ideological activation. The manner in which South Africa was projected – from being a 'white' nation for white people to a post-apartheid state for a new multiracial constituency – corresponds to the change from colonial to postcolonial and global gazes. In attaining this status, a new visual language emerged that rejected the clichéd colonialist image of South Africa and explored its new, confident urban identity of the early twenty-first century. Sauthoff (2004: 35–36) argues that this 'capacity of visual domains to clarify cultural identity, forge a national consciousness, and contribute to the expression a national identity' encapsulates the way in which the 'new social, political, and cultural order is conceptually fixed and visually registered'.

As stated above, this chapter is not a national history of design, nor does it attempt to deal with issues related to the ontology or teaching of design history in South Africa. There has been a lack of a critical discourse in South Africa about these matters, largely as a result of inadequate documentation and ongoing debates concerning contested national histories. South African historiography in general has traditionally been divided into successive schools – British imperialist, settler colonialist, Afrikaner nationalist, and the revisionist – but only the latter started to incorporate broader social history in the 1990s (Visser 2004: 1). At that time, South African (cultural) historians started to interrogate issues such as identity, gender, memory, heritage, environmentalism, national monuments and museums, and leisure and tourism (Visser 2004: 17–19). Writing as a communication designer and a visual culture specialist respectively, we consider that writings on design could benefit from the interdisciplinarity ushered in by cultural studies during the latter part of the twentieth century. In particular, cultural studies scholars' interest in the operations of ideology and power by means of cultural practices (such as design) informs this chapter.

In order to investigate how communication design mythologized the nation and invested meaning in signifiers to invent the idea of the nation, we shall look at three key periods in South African history: 1910 to 1948, 1948 to 1990, and 1990 to the present.

A ‘White Man’s Land’, 1910–1948

The first colonial settlement of South Africa was undertaken by the Netherlands in 1652, but Britain became the dominant imperial power after 1815. By the late 1800s, what was once the vast, unspoiled domain of the San and Khoikhoi was ruled by white colonizers and worked by the descendants of their Malay (Coloured) slaves and Indian indentured labourers. Under British colonial rule, land previously populated by indigenous peoples became the Cape Colony, Republic of Natalia, Republic of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic. British domination was maintained until after the end of the South African War (1899–1902). After this victory by Great Britain, the imperative of nation building and conciliation between the English- and Afrikaans-speaking white people became a national priority. The Union of South Africa was declared in 1910 and after this, successive white governments enacted policies that gave control of the land and economy to a white minority, entrenched urban segregation, and controlled black movement (for example, the Natives Land Act of 1913). The declaration of Union facilitated the reinvention of the South African nation, constructed principally around the notion of modernization to counter connotations of backwardness (Rassool and Witz 1996: 359). Modernization, as a metaphor for the advantages of Western culture, stood as a powerful counterfoil against the colonial legacy of essentialist imagery, based on stereotypes of nature, by which (South) Africa had previously been represented. The period from Union until 1948 is characterized by the oscillation between images of nature/‘primitivism’ with images that asserted the advantages of culture/modernity; this rhetoric satisfied Western desire for the exotic, but simultaneously offered reassuring images of ‘civilization’ (Rassool and Witz 1996: 364).

One of the most influential bodies that shaped the Union was the South African Railways (SAR). With the South Africa Act of 1909, the formerly separate railway systems were combined into the government-controlled South African Railway and Harbour Administration (SAR&H) under the first General Manager, Sir William Hoy. The SAR controlled all the harbours, train services, motor bus services, and air travel, representing an effective monopoly related to travel to, in, and from South Africa. The SAR was not limited to transportation; according to Foster (2003: 661), as one of the main employers, it influenced almost every aspect of South Africa’s social and economic life. The SAR expedited the expansion of the mines and agriculture and facilitated the urbanization and industrialization that made the Witwatersrand the economic centre of South Africa (Foster 2008: 34–36). According to Foster (2008: 203), the first-generation Anglophile administrators of the SAR strategically aligned their policies with those of the Union government to illustrate the advantages of capitalism, imperialism, urbanization and modernization (Foster 2003: 661, 663).

The process of conceptualizing a new metanarrative of South Africa was, for the first time, largely a visual one. The SAR established a Publicity Department (SARPD) in 1910, under Mr A.H. Tatlow to deal with publicity in newspaper, magazine and book advertisements, guide-books, pamphlets, posters, and photographs (SAR 1910: 36). The purpose of the ‘publicity propaganda’ produced by the SAR was to disseminate visual material of ‘South African scenery and industries in all parts of the world’ (SAR 1910: 37) to stimulate tourism and industrial investment in South Africa (SAR 1911: 43). The SARPD employed photographers and graphic ‘artists’ to envision the new nation, and as British trends predominated in the first half of the twentieth century, most of these artists had strong ties with the English-speaking audience in South Africa (Sutherland 2004: 53). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, *The Illustrated London News* carried extensive advertisements by the SAR. The visual and written rhetoric centred on the myth of nature that tapped into the prevailing fashion for sunshine as healthy and restorative. South Africa, ‘the Empire’s sun land’ (Fig. 3.1), was accordingly promoted for its outdoor life, fresh mountain air of the veld, and escapism. But the ‘vast romance and inspiration of Africa’ (Fig. 3.1) was continually offset by reassuring images of modernity: ‘Few countries so perfectly blend the luxury of modern civilisation with primitive customs’ (*The Illustrated London News*, 9 October 1937); the SAR often used transport as the signifier of modernity that helped to create the myth of the modern South African nation.

The SAR also had vested interests in how (white) middle-class South Africans imagined ‘their’ country, and helped to promote a common white identity that was largely based on familiarity with, and entitlement to, the land (Foster 2003: 660). The SARPD documented the country visually and created iconic views that formed a conceptual prism through which notions of nationhood and the idea of South Africa as a ‘white man’s country’ were read (Foster



Figure 3.1 SARPD advertisements in *The Illustrated London News*. From left to right: ‘South Africa. The Empire’s sun land’, 28 July 1928; ‘Visit South Africa’s Riviera’, 12 September 1936; ‘South Africa’, 9 October 1937; ‘For speed and comfort’, poster published by South African Railways & Airways, circa 1934. Courtesy of Transnet Heritage Library.

2008: 40–42, 49, 86–87). These images included natural scenes such as Table Mountain, the veld, and the Drakensberg, but also cultural production such as so-called Bushman paintings and Cape Dutch architecture. These Cape Dutch gables became emblems of an idealized, romanticized white history, and were taken up by the ‘hegemonic official discourse of nationalism’ (Coetzer 2007: 174), forging a new social imaginary of white South Africa.

In 1947, the state-sponsored South African Tourist Corporation (Satour) was founded and its mandate was to publicize South Africa for the international market, whereas the SARPD continued to focus on the domestic market. Particularly during the apartheid years, Satour played a key role in projecting a positive view of South Africa and supporting the country’s policies.

The Anglophile nature of the South African Union began to change during the 1920s. The pact government in 1924 between the National Party and the Labour Party offered preferential treatment for white (Afrikaans) farmers and workers, especially in the SAR. The rise of Afrikaner nationalism during the 1930s brought to an end the solidarity that had existed between English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans during the early decades of the twentieth century (Foster 2008: 250). Afrikaner nationalism was supported by the founding of the *Broederbond*,¹ FAK (Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Organizations), and the ATKV (Afrikaans Language and Cultural Organization, the cultural arm of the SAR) in the 1920s, the recognition of Afrikaans as an official language in 1925, and the creation of a new national flag in 1928 (Fig. 3.2).



Figure 3.2 The South African national flag, 1928–1994. Image courtesy of South African Bureau of Heraldry.

The political history of this flag offers a representative narrative of this era in South Africa's quest for nationhood since it raises many questions related to imperialism, nationality, compromise, concession and imagined cohesion, which have been largely unexplored in the design discourse. South Africa used the defaced red and blue British ensigns as national flags after 1910 (Brownell 2011: 43–44). In 1925, the Union Parliament introduced a bill that paved the way for a new South African flag. The design process sparked emotional controversy and dissent between English and Afrikaans speakers regarding the inclusion or not of the Union Jack, as it was felt that this perpetuated British dominance (Brownell 2011: 46). A compromise was reached by making the orange, white and blue *Prinzenvlag* the basis of the design since it was considered to be non-political and probably the first to be raised in South Africa by Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. The Union Jack, the flag of the Republic of the Orange Free State and the *Transvaal Vierkleur* were positioned as flaglets in the centre of the white band as a gesture of compromised cohesion (Brownell 2011: 48). The Nationality and Flags Act of 1927 provided further concessions by allowing the Union Jack to be flown alongside the new South African flag, an arrangement that lasted until 1957. These compromises for the sake of cohesion seem to be a re-occurring metanarrative of South Africa's complex history as the terms represent a prism that reflects the win/lose, lose/win, or win/win scenarios for different interest groups at various stages.

The gradual Afrikanerization of government in the 1910 to 1948 era culminated in the victory of the National Party in 1948, ushering in the era of apartheid rule and the win/lose scenario of imagined cohesion where the majority black population lost the right to self-determination for more than forty years.

Communication Design under Apartheid, 1948–1990

Benedict Anderson (2006: 6) famously defines a nation as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'. The myth of the apartheid era mainly centred on the concept of nurturing the notion of the *volk*, the Afrikaans term for nation or people. The relevance of the term is an imagined identity or perhaps more accurately, a community of (self)interest, since it symbolically describes the rise of Afrikaner nationalism as a political ideology that excluded the realities of all South Africans. Three key aspects determined how this manifested itself in the political and communication design domains: language (Afrikaans), religion (Calvinism), and ethnicity (separation). In the late nineteenth century, the Rev. S.J. Du Toit proposed that Afrikaners were a distinct nationality with a fatherland² (South Africa) and their own language (Afrikaans) and that the *volk's* destiny was to rule South Africa. For more than forty years, the National Party built on this mythic tripartite

conception, which eventually resulted in the ostracization of South Africa from the international arena.

The Nationalist government implemented numerous apartheid policies, including the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Suppression of Communism Act, Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act and the Immorality Amendment Act. The most notable outcome was the establishment of *bantustans* (homelands) from the 1950s onwards as a means of segregating the black and white populations, which resulted in the forced relocation of vast numbers of people. The total land allocated for black people was 13 per cent, while the remainder was reserved for white South Africa to develop and prosper from the country's natural and mineral wealth. The government focused on its global gaze and appropriated the British imperialist model of modernity and rapid development in conjunction with what was considered morality within apartheid's ideological framework. The long-term goal was that the homelands would become autonomous states based on principles of ethnic self-determination and segregated development, and they had to develop their own visual identities by means of flags and heraldic and other symbols.

The Nationalists understood the power of the visual language and used it to entrench political dogma. The notorious *Broederbond* infiltrated all spheres of society and acted as government propagandists (and censors). The government invested heavily in acquiring influence over the media and publishing sector and produced mass propaganda to influence the mindsets and perception of the population – black and white. Government controlled the radio service and the country did not have a television service until 1976. Furthermore, the largest newspaper group, which controlled 90 per cent of all printed media, was privately owned but ran by powerful *Broederbond* members and was closely aligned to the government's interests (Venter 2013; Hydén, Leslie and Ogundimu 2003: 146).

During the 1950s, the official mythic discourse was propagated by government-sponsored journals such as *Panorama* and *Lantern*,³ which were targeted at a local white audience but also had a substantial international readership. According to Groenewald (2012: 61–62), *Panorama* failed 'to contextualise their relentlessly positive reportage, and [were] selective in their portrayal of cultural [and political] experiences within South Africa'. Much of the reportage and visual imagery focused on representing South Africa in terms of Western constructs of modernity and development, firmly rooted in the worldview of an exclusively white South Africa. In contrast, magazines such as *Drum*, *Bona* and *Zonk!*⁴ were targeted at a black readership, reflected the dynamic changes that were taking place among the new urban black South African communities. Peter Magubane maintains that '*Drum* was a different home; it did not have apartheid. There was no discrimination . . . It was only when you left *Drum* and entered the world outside of the main door that you knew you were in apartheid land' (Barlow 2006).

On 21 March 1960, a mass demonstration against apartheid pass laws erupted into a massacre of sixty-nine people by the police in the township of Sharpeville and resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency. In May 1961, South Africa declared itself a republic and left the British Commonwealth. In the same year, Nelson Mandela proposed the adoption of armed struggle to achieve liberation for the disenfranchised. Mandela and his Rivonia Trial peers were sentenced to life imprisonment for treason against the apartheid state in 1963. By 1966, the United Nations General Assembly had endorsed the cultural boycott against South Africa and in 1970 declared apartheid ‘a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind’ (*United Nations Juridical Yearbook* 1970: 53).

South Africa was plunged into an economic crisis and the government’s Department of Information aggressively responded by increasing investment in all available media resources to support local and international propaganda campaigns to manage the government and country’s reputation (Marsh 1991). So, for instance, publicity material produced during the 1960s and 1970s by Satour featured the obligatory images of sun, sea, sport and wildlife as ‘South Africa had to [continue to] appear as an invitingly outdoor, exclusively white country’ – a truly imagined community that was not aligned with reality (Grundlingh 2006: 110). Grundlingh (2006: 110–111) further asserts that as a tourist destination, South Africa was still principally associated with outdoorism, primitivism, wildlife and leisure. Satour’s promotional material was accordingly constructed around the mythic rhetoric of sunny skies, the romance of gold and diamond mines, adventure, wild animals in their natural surroundings, and the ceremonies, colourful dress and charming dances of the so-called natives.

The Soweto riots of 1976, partly a protest against the imposition of Afrikaans as a primary medium of instruction in public schools, led to further states of emergency and irreparable damage to South Africa’s reputation. By the 1980s, South Africa was at the precipice of a civil war and the Nationalist government had to embark on a road of negotiated transformation. But the government still implemented strict censorship, which had a direct impact on the design sector (Beacon for Freedom of Expression). Testimony to this is the fact that few examples of resistance and liberation struggle communication design still exist because most were destroyed by the police and the Bureau of State Security, leaving design historians with few archival resources to explore the history of this period. So, for example, between 1979 and 1985, protest posters that were printed in Botswana and smuggled into South Africa to display on walls were immediately ‘ripped down . . . by the security police’ (South African History Online a). The government also manipulated the demographics of the design profession by controlling access to tertiary education according to race. By the mid-1980s, twelve public higher education institutions offered design education, but these were segregated according to race with few granting access to people of colour.

Communication design produced during the apartheid era for mainstream discourse was stylistically comparable with what was being produced in Western countries. The principles of Modernism ruled – a perfect fit for Nationalist philosophies since the international ‘rules of form comfortably fitted the functions’ of the regime (Lange 2005). Van Wyk (2001, emphasis added) states that:

Design in pre-democratic South Africa was hardly reflective of its own space. The virtually exclusively white design fraternity kept their eyes firmly trained on the North. Bauhaus Modernism and its attendant philosophy of form following function dictated training and practice as designers strove towards the western aesthetic ... This ... echoed the unrealistic ideals of a regime that doggedly *denied its African context*.

The rhetoric of nation building as a theme was adopted by both politicians and commercial enterprises during the transition years between the late 1980s and 1994, but the sense of nationhood proved to be more elusive (Sutherland 2004: 57).

Today I Live in a Country of the Free: The Creation of the Rainbow Nation, 1990–2013

Nelson Mandela was freed on 11 February 1990 after twenty-seven years of incarceration, which ushered in an era of dramatic political reforms and setting South Africa on ‘a path of negotiation politics motivated by the new ethic of compromise and win-win solutions’ (Van der Merwe and Johnson 1997: 1). Accordingly, the multi-party Negotiating Council and later the Transitional Executive Council used one of the most important national symbols, the flag, to make bold statements about the country’s commitment to a free and representative society (Brownell 2011: 51–59). After almost a half century of liberation struggle, in April 1994 the previously disenfranchised majority participated in the first democratic election and voted the African National Congress (ANC) into power. On 10 May 1994, Mandela was inaugurated as president of the Republic under a new interim flag,⁵ designed by Fred Brownell. The new six-colour flag (Fig. 3.3) represented what Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu metaphorically described as the rainbow nation’s convergence of cultures, people and inclusive ideologies (Desmond Tutu Diversity Trust; retrieved 1 December 2013 from <http://www.desmondtutudiversitytrust.org.za/patron.htm>). What was previously a highly regulated and divisive national symbol now became a popular and unifying symbol of the people of South Africa (Brownell 2011: 61–62).

‘Rainbowism’ became the principal post-apartheid myth. Almost overnight, South Africa changed its international image from being one of the worst pariahs to becoming an example of peaceful transformation. The



Figure 3.3 The South African flag (1994, left), Coat of Arms (2000, centre) and National Orders (2003, right). Images courtesy of South African Bureau of Heraldry and The Presidency.

reality is, however, that this was accompanied by pain, concessions, compromises, disappointments and idealistic hopes for a brighter future. The poet Antjie Krog dismisses notions that the rainbow nation implies that everything is always perfect and states perceptively that ‘[t]he rainbow in the sky can only be formed with unstable and contradictory conditions . . . It must still be raining, but the sun must also shine . . . One should therefore refuse any pressure to reflect the Hollywood “Someday over the rainbow” . . .’ (Cunningham 2010). For designers, this posed many challenges since they were intimately involved in shaping the rainbow myth. The search for a new common South Africanness was, and remains, complex and largely illusory. The new South Africa consists of a tangled tapestry of heterogeneous cultures characterized by deep-seated racial, ethnic and religious differences, eleven official languages, extreme socio-economic disparity, and divisive ideologies that are often sites of struggle (Bornman 2006) and interference in the quest to attain the elusive state of nationhood.

Under the reconciliatory presidency of Mandela (1994–1999), radical change became part of the fibre of the country in pursuit of nationhood and the redefinition of identity. Mandela focused on fostering social cohesion and became the symbolic face of the country’s new ideals. This made him the most powerful and recognized visual icon of democratic South Africa, and indeed democracy worldwide (Du Preez 2013).

The communication sector was deployed to educate the nation regarding its new value systems, constitution, transformation policies and reconstruction programmes. It also contributed to an extensive rebranding campaign of almost everything that government controlled, ranging from geographic names to the identities of national sporting teams and corporate identities of state institutions and enterprises (South African History Online b). Examples include the restructuring of the country’s former four colonially-named provinces to nine, which required the design of new regional identities and symbols. This process was echoed in the strategic renaming of many towns, cities and municipalities to reflect their post-liberation identities – many reverted to their pre-colonial and pre-apartheid heritage. Visually, these identities manifested themselves mainly in heraldic traditions, but the symbolism was rooted in a South African

context, often resulting in curious fusions characterized by mimicry, cultural appropriation, quotation, eclecticism and surface (Sauthoff 2004: 37).

In June 1999, Thabo Mbeki became President and implemented a different and more pragmatic approach to nation building by focusing on economic growth and African pride. Mbeki also understood the important role that design could play in achieving his government's strategic goals. The Government Communication and Information Service was positioned within the office of the Presidency and served as a channel through which Mbeki engaged with the communication and design sectors. In 2001, the International Marketing Council was established, partly to create a consolidated strategy – *Brand South Africa* – with a consistent message that highlighted strategic advantages in terms of trade and tourism in a very competitive marketplace (Brand South Africa, <http://www.brandsouthafrica.com/who-we-are>).

Mbeki is best known for championing the African Renaissance, which focuses on a sense of continental pride and more specifically, the inclusive humanistic philosophy of *Ubuntu*, or human kindness. In 1999, Mbeki commissioned the redesign of the South African Coat of Arms (Fig. 3.3). It was based on a European heraldic structure, but the individual elements were clearly African. The central shield features two Khoisan figures, representing 'the beginning of the individual's transformation into the greater sense of belonging to the nation and by extension, collective humanity' (Mbeki 2000). The most unconventional element was the introduction of the motto '*!ke e: /xarra //ke*' (diverse people unite), written in the language of the now extinct *Xam* people. For Mbeki (2000), 'these words on our coat of arms . . . make a commitment to value life, to respect all languages and cultures and to oppose racism, sexism, chauvinism and genocide'.

In 2003, the country's National Orders were also redesigned (Fig. 3.3). The designers attempted to capture the essence of a new aesthetic that took cognisance of Africa and reflected the new spirit of the country through its designs, honouring its history through the renaming of the orders, as well as celebrating the country's indigenous materials (South African Government Online).

Government initiatives thus led the way in developing the official new face of the country's graphic symbology post-1994, but since the early 1990s, designers had already proactively established their own initiatives in pursuit of a visual language that reflected the emerging new society. Johan van Wyk (2001) states that: 'The elections of 1994 signified not only a political liberation for South Africa but also a cultural one. In its wake local designers could for the first time reflect the country's diversity without making an overtly antagonistic political statement and risking retribution'. Leading this dynamic era of exploration was Garth Walker, founder and publisher of the seminal experimental magazine *i-jusi* (Fig. 3.4), who said that: 'A new way of seeing was born – a new visual order to reflect a new social order. People were waking to



Figure 3.4 Covers and page spreads from various early editions of *i-jusi* magazine. Images courtesy of *i-jusi* and Garth Walker.

the possibilities of a visual language rooted in the African experience' (Van Wyk 2001). One of the key results of the *i-jusi* phenomenon was the development of a uniquely South African design process, based on documentary and bricolage (Lange 2013: 11; Sauthoff 2006: 14).

The outcome was a hybrid of cultural representation that combined images taken from nature, popular culture, everyday life, street signage, vernacular language and traditional crafts, thereby foregrounding vibrant urban culture as the new face of South Africa. The new approach was firmly rooted in Africa and the new aesthetic opted to honour spontaneity and imperfection, as opposed to Westernized ideals of balance and aesthetic perfection (Lange 2005). This urban culture is, however, not 'backward' or 'uncivilized', in the old parlance of colonial discourse – it merges the geometric forms of African decorative art comfortably with imagery derived from high-tech information technology.

One example of this is Walker's design of a typeface for the new Constitutional Court in 2003, which was built on a site that contains a historical fort and several prisons that had incarcerated people such as Ghandi



Figure 3.5 Façade of the South African Constitutional Court featuring the custom-designed typeface designed by Garth Walker. Image courtesy of Garth Walker.

and Mandela (Fig. 3.5). Walker studied archival material, signage and prisoner graffiti on cell walls, and the design solution speaks the visual language of the site and its fraught history (Sauthoff 2006).

Another seminal moment in South Africa's recent design history that channelled official mythic discourse in the interests of nation building was when the country hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2010. According to Asmal (2013), 'South African identity has been over-simplified ... Stereotypical images, and heated news reports have painted a deductive wash over a nation of incredible complexity and cultural diversity'. During 2010, a collective identity became more apparent, and the country's 'planning, economic, business, arts and advanced infrastructure were on display. South African cities replaced the savannah, world-class transport replaced the mountains, images of a nation united replaced those of crime, and organizational triumphs replaced those of corruption ... South Africa forged a *new, confident, urban identity* emerging from the World Cup' (Asmal 2013, emphasis added).

Conclusion

It is perhaps fitting to end this overview with the death of Nelson Mandela (18 July 1918–5 December 2013), as his lifelong struggle for a democratic South

Africa almost exactly paralleled the path to nationhood sketched in this chapter. The elaborately scripted and visual process of iconization that followed his passing introduced literally overnight a new era of discourse about how South Africans perceive themselves as a united nation.

The process of writing national histories is bound to be fraught with tensions and omissions, even more so in a country such as South Africa that has had an incredibly complex history. As alluded to previously, the absence of a proper design history discourse has been exacerbated by contested histories and a scarcity of visual and archival material.⁶ Already in 1988, the historian Smith (1988: 8) remarked that the decolonization of South African history had started to take place, ousting previous Eurocentric ideas and incorporating a richer social and more Africanized history. In this chapter, we indicated how successive state or government institutions ‘scripted’ different versions of nationhood that were executed, acted out and performed by designers in the visual domain. Colonial legacies of visual stereotyping in terms of race and national identity were found to be wanting, and a new, more inclusive and representative visual vocabulary was established that reflected and possibly helped to construct this emerging Africanization. This process is by no means over, as the imperatives of globalization continue to inform the contemporary South African ‘imagined community’ and challenge the need for indigenous and inclusive histories of the visual.

Notes

1. Literally, ‘brotherhood’ – a clandestine (and all-male) Nationalist network of Afrikaans politicians, businessmen, academics, religious and community leaders, and media owners.
2. This paternal reference is historically relevant since (white) women were only given voting rights in 1930.
3. *Lantern* was published between 1951 and 1994, *Panorama* from 1956 to 1992.
4. *Zonk!* was first published in 1941, *Drum* in 1951 and *Bona* in 1956.
5. It was officially adopted as the permanent national flag in 1996.
6. See the special issue of *Africa Today* 52(2), dedicated to ‘African Electronic Publishing’ and in particular the article by Isaacman, Lalu and Nygren (2005: 55–77) on the digitization of a postcolonial South African archive.

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CHAPTER 4

Resisting Global Homogeneity but Craving Global Markets

Kiwiana and Contemporary Design Practice in New Zealand

CLAUDIA BELL

New Zealand's relatively short post-settlement histories, limitations associated with remoteness, and small population (4.4 million in 2013) have had implications for the development of a design culture. To construct a New Zealand design history into a national framework is to tell a unique story – and to comply with populist understandings of 'nation' as an imagined site implying 'unity, coherence and wholeness to those within a national space' (Allon 2012: 387), despite critiques (Perry 2012). This is not a tale of dazzling successes in the commercial design of a wide range of material artefacts, with our national style recognized internationally; or one of carving a prominent global niche of idiosyncratic designer items. It is a story of the narrative inherent in quotidian things as they articulate a country and its history. 'Everyday things are ... essential to the understanding of society and culture' (Fallan 2010: vii). This chapter is a cultural theorist's contribution to efforts to understand notions of design within New Zealand's contemporary consumer culture.

Throughout the twentieth century import restrictions came and went with changes of political leadership. Periods of import restrictions were aimed at developing the local manufacturing sector, to foster employment and contribute to Gross National Product (GNP). In a small population with few manufacturers, the consequence was that similar items were found in most homes. In the late twentieth century those remembered items (everyday ceramic ware, toys and logos of ordinary consumables like groceries and shoe polish) were considered kitsch: trivial or 'low brow' materiality imbued with sentimental familiarity and nostalgia. While never noted for their sophisticated

design, they were proudly ‘New Zealand made’. Today they have been identified as ‘kiwiana’ and reassigned: affirmed and celebrated as encapsulations of distinctive postcolonial nationhood. With globalization and the deluge of mass consumer items, the recasting and revival of kiwiana into the mainstream market can be explained as an eager search for items that convey a refreshed version of an assertive bicultural state. These goods have been described as ‘nothing if not humble artefacts of popular culture (that) have been taken to [possess] an added lustre, appearing simple and honest and reflective of a less pressured society’ (Barnett and Wolfe 1989: 15) than today. ‘These items are representative of New Zealand heritage in the popular imagination’ (Piatti-Farnell 2013: 7).

Meanwhile, new designers are striving to participate in international cosmopolitan design culture and e-commerce with the goal of creating items that express national distinctiveness, while simultaneously earning a place on the global design stage. Resistance to global homogeneity and determination to deliver uniqueness are key elements of both kiwiana and of contemporary design practice in New Zealand. Various formal government agencies and private enterprise initiatives are fostering and supporting new design and driving outputs. Creativity and design entrepreneurship amalgamate in continual attempts to rebrand a confident nationalism (Bell 2012a).

In the Beginning...

The story starts with a precolonial Maori population who arrived in about 1200 (Fairburn 2008) – late in world terms for first people. Sufficient access to good food allowed time for the creation of heavily decorated *toanga* – treasures – from local wood, flax, feathers, bone and *pounamu* (jade). No account of any New Zealand phenomenon can begin without acknowledging the narratives present in traditional Maori artefacts: *whakapapa* (genealogy), *Nga Tè Ahi* (attachment to place), and particular events are embedded in the objects’ rich design and decoration (Wilson 1987). The creation of items with such clear positioning in a specific locale contrasts markedly with the current fashion for a generic ‘global style’.

Nineteenth-century Southern Ocean sealers and whalers were accustomed to the comforts of tables, chairs and beds (Northcote-Bade 1971). They used bone and wood to make furniture and trinkets (Wolfe 1997). New Zealand was colonized by Britain in the mid- nineteenth century mainly for the development of agriculture. The early settlers felled massive *kauri* and other native trees to clear land for farming, using the timber to build and furnish their homes. There was no special style; the term colonial ‘simply denotes the furniture made and used by colonists’ (Northcote-Bade 1971:12). The sheer remoteness from useful resources called upon settlers to apply design skills

to solve the practical problems of everyday survival. The notion of ‘making something out of nothing’ was quickly established (Bell and Neill 2014).

In the mid-1930s the New Zealand government began to impose import restrictions, banning introduced factory-made goods, to encourage local manufacturing. The small populace – around 1.5 million at that time – impeded the capacity to sustain an extensive sector ‘of highly specialized and expert professionals to produce popular and high culture’ (Fairburn 2008: 44). The limited availability of goods from elsewhere meant the ability to innovate was valued. Local businesses, often originally back-shed enterprises, created everyday items. Some of these later grew into larger companies that eventually dominated the New Zealand manufacturing sector, such as Crown Lynn ceramics (Monk 2006; Bell 2012), and Fisher & Paykel, makers of household whiteware. With their modest beginnings founded by imagination and innovation, and a perceived feasible market niche, these and other enterprises became the mainstay of the quotidian products still recognized in New Zealand as intrinsic to the culture. Some may argue, with historiographical reflexivity, that such unassuming beginnings are a globally familiar story; that it is difficult to make a case for New Zealand ‘exceptionalism’ (Fairburn 2008). Australia, for example, produces a parallel history of design values (Jackson 2006). Nevertheless, New Zealand’s national mythologies rejoice in local innovation in geographic isolation.

New merchandise based on or decorated with old kiwiana imagery and design is currently saturating the home wares, design accessories and casual clothing markets. For example, original Crown Lynn ceramics are widely collected; new reproductions, and images of original wares as graphic embellishment, abound. Vintage roadside signage, company logos and handwritten menus and recipes have been snapped up, along with anything else that represents New Zealand natural or cultural heritage: native flora and fauna, local architecture (state houses, wooden villas). These objects convey a visual narrative, a reconfiguration of the historic within the contemporary, as a new genre of representation. The old goods and meanings are not forgotten: they have been resurrected and repositioned, and play a prominent part in national identity discourse.

Myths of National Character

The successful performance of those small manufacturing businesses reiterated particular notions in national mythologies. A key term in local lexicon is ‘Number 8 wire mentality’ which refers to any inventive solution achieved using non-traditional approaches and materials. Number 8 wire, a thickness measurement on the British Standard wire gauge, was a staple item in a rural society, its strength and flexibility lending itself to numerous ad hoc tasks. While

actual Number 8 wire is now 40mm gauge in the metric system, the concept of problem solving through the ingenious use of Number 8 wire is part of the national mythology that praises the 'can do' ethic of citizens. Another well-worn term is 'kiwi ingenuity' or 'good old kiwi ingenuity', a 'self-awarded belief in our own resourcefulness, especially with mechanical objects' (McGill 1989: 57). 'Kiwi ingenuity' is still applied to any story of successful local invention and manufacturing, especially those self-financed projects that begin very modestly, then develop into something larger, even global.

DIY (do it yourself) also has powerful resonance in national myths. Without the availability of specific expertise or materials for certain tasks it was normal for individuals to problem-solve for themselves – using that Number 8 wire mentality, of course. The results of such exertions were traditionally summed up by 'she'll be right!', a confident exclamation that the problem was solved. The result, however adroit, would be pronounced 'not bad, eh!' These values were associated principally with masculinity. Such attitudes meant that, for example, creating a business from a few improbable resources (saved because they might 'come in handy' one day) and almost no capital was an achievable proposition. These actions proved to the practitioners that all problems are better solved by figuring out what actually works, than by applying a cerebral theory (Bell and Neill 2014).

These qualities clearly stood the country in good stead as it developed a successful agricultural economy. They were also useful attributes for local designers aiming their products at the (small) exclusive end of the local market. A 2006 account of New Zealand design 'legends' constantly, and sadly, reiterates the obscurity of the individual designers; that New Zealand was an environment where designers and craftspeople 'struggled to convince New Zealanders of the validity and importance of their creative endeavours' (Lloyd-Jenkins 2006: 8). Many of them continued to generate original items 'in spite of widespread indifference and ignorance of their work' (ibid: 146). Perhaps strategies to develop a design culture in New Zealand in the new century, to achieve economic ends, might grant designers a new level of recognition for their contribution to the culture? (Elizabeth 2006).

The Struggle to Create a Contemporary Design Niche

With late twentieth-century globalization and new consumer needs, New Zealand's need for competitive capability-building strategies in the design of value-added products, services and brands was being challenged. Perhaps the well-established national stereotype could be mobilized to tell, through new products, the tale of 'our' uniqueness and 'our' common goals (Elizabeth 2006). In her campaign speech prior to winning the 1999 election and becoming Prime Minister, Helen Clark proclaimed 'we must unleash the creativity of our

scientists, researchers, designers and innovators in the search for new products that we can sell to the world for good prices' (New Zealand Labour Party Press Release, 31 October 1999).

In the 1950s New Zealand's GDP was sixty per cent above the average for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, and ranked fourth for economic competitiveness (after Switzerland, Canada and Luxemburg) (Yap 2011). Many of the children who grew up in that era – today's ageing baby boomer population – sentimentally recall the post-war period as an idyllic, innocent time (Bell 1996). The economy was buoyant, New Zealand boasted a generous social welfare system, home ownership rates were high, race relations were claimed by the dominant *pakeha* (white) group to be positive, and immigrants were mainly from the UK and Pacific islands. New Zealand defined itself not by importance or power on the global stage, but by an asserted egalitarianism – albeit inherently sexist and racist (Bell 1996) – and pride in 'their way of life' (Sinclair 1986: 88).

By 2009 this country had slipped to 22nd of the 30 OECD countries for GDP, rising to 19th in 2012. Manufactured goods for export are low on the list of key drivers of the New Zealand economy. After primary production (land based products) and tourism, manufacturing even for the home market is severely limited by high labour, transport and stock-holding costs, and by the competition of significantly cheaper imported goods. A high exchange rate and the tax system encourage investment in land and buildings over investment in productive activity. The pivotal impact of national economic policies, market conditions and societal conditions are all significant. The national story and local circumstances remain inescapable in this 'global age'.

The local manufacturing sector in New Zealand is characterized by many small companies in specialized industries. Some are lauded for their international success, creating diverse products such as Ecostore cleaning products, New Zealand Natural Premium Ice-cream, Fitzroy Superyachts, Icebreaker merino sportswear, 42 Below Pure Vodka and Kathmandu outdoor clothing and equipment. The last two, businesses with small local beginnings, were so successful globally that they were eventually bought by international conglomerates. New Zealand is rated 9th of the OECD countries for direct foreign investment. This is despite public opinion that fears the loss of promising companies and technologies, and loss of control of natural resources to offshore owners (Fabling and Sanderon 2014). 'Brands are born somewhere. Companies are born somewhere' (Bernstein, cited by Pike 2011: 7). The problem is how to make that somewhere here? Over the past decade that tradable sector has declined (N. Z. Manufacturers and Exporters Association 2014, www.nzmea.org.nz/Events.aspx). In short, economic and market forces are challenging opponents to fledgling designers.

In 1999 the Labour government began its nine-year leadership. As reflected in the quotation above, the new Prime Minister took on board the British

'Cool Britannia' project, with the new Heart of the Nation venture aiming at developing new products and creating fresh markets. Businesses trying to cultivate offshore markets had to sell not just themselves, but (the capabilities of) the New Zealand economy and brand 'New Zealand' (Molloy and Larner 2013). In the drive for export diversity, innovative design was a potential weapon for wealth creation, a means of arresting the economic downturn. International evidence supported this potential. For example, the Scandinavian countries, all similar in population size to New Zealand, have used design as a tool for profitability, innovation and business competitiveness. However, their proximity to large markets is advantageous (Yap 2011).

Surely, here in the remote southern ocean, brilliant design could overcome the tyranny of geography (Elizabeth 2006)? The Heart of Nation and allied projects have tried to reverse this, suggesting that isolation must give rise to fresh design approaches. Surely this would achieve an 'exceptionalism' (Fairburn 2008), with corresponding economic benefits. This notion ignores the inescapable influence of global media on local designers and consumers.

Government policy initiatives have aimed at developing the 'cultural sector', both for revenue and for national branding (Molloy and Larner 2013). The goal has been to coax those well-established national values of inventiveness into a more elite realm. The government-appointed Design Taskforce established in 2002 concentrated 'on building design-driven culture and capability within companies ... The Taskforce advised upskilling executives in the strategic application and management of design within their business' (Smythe 2011: 354). In 2003 the Design Taskforce produced a document, *Success by Design*, proposing designers as the (new) key to economic success and saviours of the homeland (albeit in conjunction with business leaders) (Elizabeth 2006). Various reports and conferences aimed to develop the design sector as a tool to diversify the New Zealand export economy, usually trying to work top down, from senior executives, with designers resting on or near the bottom rung.

Was this the time to write contemporary design into New Zealand's national story? The fashion industry became particularly buoyant, rapidly expanding from a small disconnected group selling to an inner-city urban clientele in 2000, to a large complex industry serving international markets. Along with the film industry, surely it could 'revamp New Zealand's international image ... rebranding New Zealand as a talented nation' (Larner, Molloy and Goodrum 2007: 381). Art and design schools proliferated; private providers became a new sector, alongside established universities and polytechnics. While many graduates have made great contributions to the local and international film and digital media industries, and numerous new products enhance local consumers' lives, efforts to net accolades for global design are ongoing. New Zealand has the highest tertiary brain-drain rate of any OECD country (Gibson and McKenzie 2012). The migration of the talented to better-paying work environments has not helped this sector nationally.

The 2007 recession made a deep impact, forcing previously successful retailers and manufactures of locally-made designer goods to close. In the fashion sector the survivors manufactured most of their garments offshore. South East Asian countries provide cheap labour to manufacture a vast array of consumer goods, including items designed here.

It is not possible to provide data about the economic contribution of the creative industries in New Zealand. Any attempt to map the fiscal state of this sector, for instance via data from Statistics New Zealand, is stymied. Because the numbers of participants is so small, and therefore potentially identifiable in any table of figures (for instance regarding income generated), that data is confidential to Statistics New Zealand, or in other words unavailable to researchers. However, there is ample material to demonstrate economic vulnerability, compared with other OECD countries (Yap 2011). Design policies of the past decade have failed to push economic performance back into the top half of OECD countries. Daniel Miller writes, 'it is clear that one of the key struggles of modern life is to retain both a sense of authentic locality . . . and yet also lay claims to a cosmopolitanism that at some level may evoke rights to a global status' (Miller 1998: 19). In New Zealand that struggle is a persistent one.

Example: The Home Furniture Contest

A 1981 study found that household furniture items are often 'special objects in the home', the owners' most cherished possessions. The authors concluded that relationships with objects contribute to the cultivation of a sense of self (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 2010). The selection of items used to create a personal comfort zone at home is driven by availability, along with the circumstances and aspirations of the purchaser.

Local markets for household furniture and accessories are utilized here, briefly, to illustrate the effects of some of the issues outlined above. Cosmopolitanism is perceived as sophistication: international physical mobility is now central to the lifestyle of many local consumers (Cohen, Duncan and Thulemark 2013). For the less mobile, travel remains a strong aspiration. Substantiations of mobility capital or objects that represent travel fantasies are now *de rigueur* in New Zealand middle-class domestic interiors. Such items are happily mixed with goods that extoll explicit localism.

The 2007 global economic downturn's collision with the strong New Zealand dollar meant that imported goods, already desirable, became far cheaper than items made here. A casual survey of merchandise available shows that copies of design classics are now readily available and affordable. That the original items feature constantly in international design magazines assures the purchaser – even of the fakes – of their aesthetic desirability and cultural cache. Such items are often priced under \$NZ100 (about 59 Euros, \$US50, or

50 British pounds). A local manufacturer of ‘designer’ goods has no possibility of displaying similar price-tags. New Zealand has very high costs for rent, utilities, labour, materials and transport, and fifteen per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on every transaction. Besides, a cheap price implies cheap goods, a designer told me, assuring me that lower sales are one cost of maintaining a place in the appropriate elite realm for such objects (Anonymous 1 2014).

Even prosaic mass produced chain store furniture, made either in New Zealand, Indonesia or China, and often with generous periods of interest-free payment, can barely compete. A particular retailer of both Italian and New Zealand up-market furniture, the latter slightly more expensive, told me that the cost of the Italian goods was in the design; the cost of the New Zealand goods was in the making. She implied a higher cultural capital in owning the Italian goods: ‘people love the status of Italian design’ (Anonymous 2 2014).

An interesting new enterprise, Rekindle, makes furniture using waste, including from the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. Their profile combines environmental and social issues (Fuentes 2012), an example of explicit sustainability. This non-profit enterprise creates something positive from an extraordinarily challenging event. Obviously the products have significant souvenir value, as they convey a major story about recent New Zealand history, and about ingenuity. Allegorically, they commemorate a natural disaster in which 181 people died, while symbolizing rebirth through the recasting of damaged materials. None of the furniture is available for less than \$NZ300, the cost of a simple square-sided stool. Similar-looking items made from ‘distressed’ recycled timber imported from Java cost significantly less. In mainstream culture there is little significant cultural capital in buying and displaying New Zealand made goods, even as singular as Rekindle’s, in the home or office. This is unhelpful to the development of a potential New Zealand design industry. New shops dedicated to local design do appear, but none has been notable for its longevity. *The Clever Design Store* (formerly *Cleverbastards*) website (www.thecleverdesignstore.com) offers diverse goods by New Zealand designers. It was founded in 2008 to showcase contemporary household products, jewellery, t-shirts, toys and handbags. The director acknowledged its limitations, including ‘the lack of physical contact between customer and product. Designer products that have a high level of craftsmanship still provoke a desire to touch . . . That cannot be replaced entirely’ (*Her Business Magazine*, <http://www.herbusinessmagazine.com/Lifestyle/Art++Design/Case+study+Clever+Bastards.html>). The site is a platform for over a dozen designers, mostly producing items for the home. Many of these goods include kiwiana references in their design (Fig. 4.2).

Another competitor for the New Zealand purchasing dollar – and ‘style’ – is Trade Me, the wildly popular online shopping site. There are constantly over 2 million live auctions. I just checked: today there are over 9,000 chairs for sale, ranging in price from \$1 to ‘buy now’ for \$NZ5000. Householders selling their



Figure 4.1 Chris Johnson's *Imprint Stool*, available through web outlet The Clever Design Store and from Yoyo Furniture, a Wellington shop dedicated to New Zealand design. Photo courtesy of Chris Johnson.

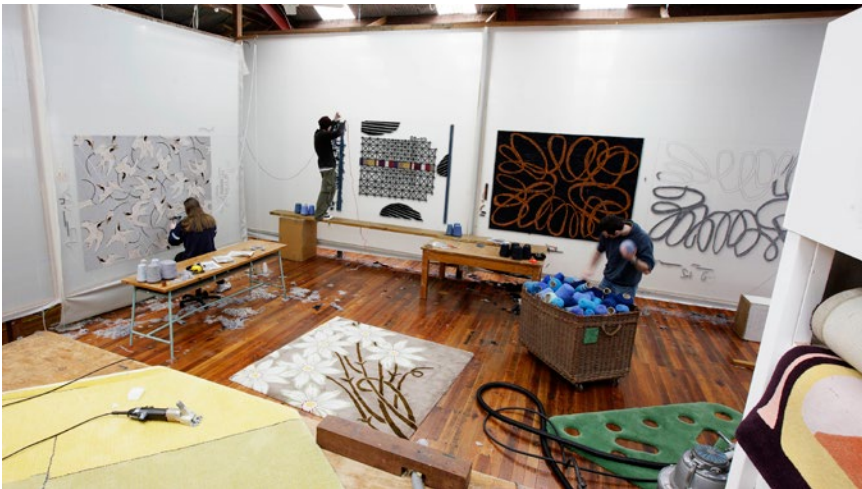


Figure 4.2 Work in process: a rug designed by Bing Dawe being handcrafted from wool at Dilana's Christchurch studio. Completed rugs: on the wall *Solo* by John Reynolds; on the floor *Clematis* by Tim Main, and *Meccano* by John Lyall. Photo courtesy of Dilana.

used goods do not have the overheads of a retail business, or tax, so prices can be extremely cheap. The purchaser may delight in having discovered something ‘vintage’.

There is also a craze, stimulated by television home make-over shows, to ‘upcycle’. This process adds ‘boho’ or ‘industrial’ chic to interiors, using items that might otherwise be discarded. This new market niche is not necessarily driven by ecological motives, but perhaps offers a means of creative self-expression, economy and of owning something unique (Nalewajek and Macik 2013). The



Figure 4.3 Moa Room, Paris. Photo courtesy of Moa Room.

irregularity of components, whilst making each item exclusive, makes it harder to commercialize. Design magazines support the trend as taste-makers. One writer advises that ‘it is now eco-friendly and cool to incorporate waste into design’ (Chan 2012: 46). The practice falls into the category of labour intensive handicrafts (Ordonez and Rahe 2012). Kiwiana or Maoriana references or decoration are often co-opted to correspond with current fashion.

Offshore, the Moa Room in Paris promotes and distributes the work of New Zealand designers to Europe. Products include Dilana artist-designed floor rugs handcrafted from New Zealand wool, various furnishings and accessories and lighting and furniture design by David Trubridge (Fig. 4.4), the ‘only New Zealand designer . . . to achieve a global presence’ (McCall 2014: 23). The Moa Room director says that when he started in 2006 he learnt an important lesson about European perceptions of New Zealand: ‘They knew so little that we might as well have been Patagonia’. Sporting success, sheep and the 100% PURE campaign have defined New Zealand in Europe to date’ (Robert 2011). Other attempts by various companies to market New Zealand design in dedicated retail spaces in New York, London and elsewhere have been short-lived (Smythe 2011).

Maoriana

‘Maoriland’, a direct reference to local indigenous people, was an early twentieth-century tourism brand identifier for New Zealand. Images of Maori were widely incorporated in promotional material, such as posters and postcards (Alsop and Stewart 2013). ‘Maoriana’ embraces any popular cultural items that incorporate images and symbols from traditional Maori culture. Maori imagery has long been popular on souvenirs for the tourist trade. Some early twentieth-century grocery items depicted Maori on their labels (Alsop and Stewart 2013). Today Maori imagery has been appropriated into commercial items to create something of a bicultural pastiche. Maoriana delivers a prescription for designers and makers to explore the opportunities of new products. The consumer landscape, physical, metaphorical and symbolic, Goodrum explains, is a key location in the construction of meaningful identities. New fashionable outputs from the local creative industries offer ‘a rich seam from which to mine a range of debates over processes self-signification and cultural construction of identity’ (Goodrum 2005: 23–25).

Most New Zealanders are aware of the long-standing notion that for any cultural image and design to be Maori, it should incorporate a Maori referent, and should be created by a Maori artist (Waaka 2007). But this stance is by no means unanimous. Maori motifs are included across genres by non-Maori, including the mass manufacture of ‘Maori’ souvenirs in Chinese and Taiwanese factories. Efforts to enforce or monitor this, in order to empower Maori artists



Figure 4.4 Lights by David Trubridge. Photo Courtesy of David Trubridge Design.

and craftspeople, have been controversial and ineffective (O'Connor 2004). In a study focusing on the use of Maori imagery in merchandise, one design magazine editor suggested that 'it is a really promising vehicle for a kind of New Zealand nationalistic expression that properly embraces biculturalism' (Bell 2012a: 281).

The use of Maori elements is widely apparent on new consumer goods, decorative home wares, clothing and accessories in particular. Merchandise in expensive shops or ‘showcase’ pieces in the shops at major museums, as well as the cheapest items in ubiquitous \$2 shops, draws heavily on New Zealand Maori and kiwiana motifs. The imagery has a strong presence in the fine arts, and even in bodily inscriptions: kiwiana and Maoriana tattoos have become the new ink fashion for both locals and tourists. The labels Esther Diamond and



Figure 4.5 *Aroha* (love) baby blanket, appliqued recycled wool, featuring a tiki and piwakawaka (fantails) by Rona Osborne for Native Agent. Photo courtesy of Rona Osborne.

Native Agent (www.nativeagent.co.nz) were perhaps the first two to take Maori imagery into new textiles, both companies working with well-known local Maori and Pakeha artists to embellish – and therefore define – their products.

Traditional Maori *tiki* images turn up recast as everything from clocks (TikiToki – get it?), designs on tote bags, beach towels, home wares, furniture and clothing. This symbolic biculturalism indicates appeasement in the discourse of national unity, a situation not borne out politically. The artists and craftspeople, Maori and Pakeha, making these items, have found a market niche in which to place their artefactual representations of nation. Through this work they are dislodging the polarization of local ethnic discourse between conservative assimilationist and bicultural ‘politically correct’ positions (Bell 2006). They may be described as revisionists re-stating the identity of a nation. The items they create contribute to the *bi*-cultural economy. This encompasses not just design, production, circulation and sales, but also ‘a highly-localized aesthetic restyling of the everyday life of the collective of consumers’ (Bell 2012a: 284). This aesthetic is quintessentially local, challenging the deluge of homogenous goods now flooding the New Zealand market. Maori, Pakeha, new immigrants, the gift market to New Zealanders residing overseas, and international tourists are keen consumers of this merchandise. Political interrogators may challenge the use of Maori design by (often) non-Maori makers, but this appears to be no deterrent to buyers. That objects with Maori decoration have become so mainstream is testament to a (re)valuing of the local, a gleeful expression of cultural distinction.

Conclusion: Creating and Consuming Identity

Kiwiana and Maoriana show that mundane design is a nexus of New Zealand cultural identity. As Lyall observes, ‘depictions of New Zealand (within New Zealand) depend on recognition, which comes about by the replaying over and again of particular images and ideas about what should visually represent us’ (Lyall 2004: 107).

Design culture is not necessarily elite, but everyday (Fallan 2010). Plainly, the local creative industries, and the purchasers of their products, are playing a substantial role in the maintenance and expression of national identity. The recasting of traditional vernacular kiwiana into the everyday retail sector has vastly expanded cultural representation. Consumption of the new merchandise reiterates a shared understanding of nationhood. In this way positive, populist ideas of nation are sustained and affirmed. Creating designs that accentuate localism reiterates the maker’s sense of place, showcasing both personal and national identity. This is a site for negotiation of ‘the large scale structures of political economy and the small scale (but also social) histories of intimate life’ (Highmore 2002: 296).

This chapter builds on the understanding that practices of both construction and consumption are intensely cultural (Bourdieu 1984). It illustrates the decisive impact of national economics, market conditions and societal character on design practice. Subscription to the ideas embedded in the objects demonstrates that any notion of a superseded nation state is debunked. Embedded in these items are selective historical narratives, symbols of a banal nationalism (Billig 1995) that by its global preponderance is by no means redundant. In these objects creativity, consumption and nationality intersect. Kiwiana and Maoriana are sites referring to particular historical, geographical and political foundations which have moulded and continue to mould citizens' subjectivities.

According to Spoonley (2005), a majority sense of group self-identity has taken a long time to develop in New Zealand. Political and legal strategies towards reconciliation between the different groups are a feature of postcolonial culture in New Zealand. Hence these new kiwiana and Maoriana material items might be considered as artefactual declarations of a new postcolonial era, a confident form of identity assertion. The construction of idiosyncratic features of 'Kiwi culture' is a convenient circumvention of historic tensions, a veiling of internal stresses, and an identifiable part of the drive of a decolonized nation to create an identity (During 2005). The enthusiastic persistence of the imagery seems to fulfil the need for a secure point of reference, marking national difference in the face of the risk of anonymity in contemporary postmodern society (Kessous and Roux 2008). Kiwiana and Maoriana deliver a distinctive semiotic underpinning of a nation's traditional myths.

This exploration of contemporary design in New Zealand, and its place in the national narrative, shows, for everyday consumers, a prioritizing of vocabularies of local distinction, over attempts at joining a global design culture. Kiwiana and Maoriana are too highly localized to compete with, for example, Italian and Scandinavian design products. That is the aspiration of the successive new 'hot' designers featured in glossy magazines and weekend newspaper supplements. Designers are absent from the national narrative, compared with, for instance, successful international sports people, film industry achievers or business entrepreneurs. There is ongoing frustration at the limitations to trying to create new global design brands (Smythe 2011; Yap 2011).

Rather than resist a reiteration of national history in favour of a sophisticated, albeit homogenous, global gaze, the geo-political straitjacket of the nation state remains intact, with occasional cheerful restyling. The continuing incorporation of kiwiana and Maoriana into everyday material culture does nothing to address the desperate search for new export markets to fulfil, or the goal of developing a strong design culture. Nevertheless, as powerful expressions of localism in the early twenty-first century, their place in the narrative of historic style is assured. Populist attitudes to materiality which explicitly represents the nation have undoubtedly advanced to a new phase.

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CHAPTER 5

Creativity within a Geographical-National Framework

From Modern Japanese Design to Pevsner's Art Geography

ARIYUKI KONDO

The idea of the national character of a nation's art and design, and the stressing of the validity of a geographical-national framework in the historiography of art and design have been denigrated and disparaged for some time. This is partly due to the fact that such an idea of and approach to art/design historical enquiry actually held a racist complexion before and during World War II in many countries, and inevitably reminds us of racist nationalism in action. However, should the validity of such an art/design historical approach and interest be completely denied or considered taboo because of its association with past nationalism and racialism?

Living as we do in a rapidly globalizing age, an age in which, in various countries, multi-racial communities are appearing and yet antagonizing each other within particular geographical-national frameworks, there can be no better time than now to direct our attention toward how people have acted under certain cultural, social and political circumstances within such frameworks. Taking the development of modern Japanese design in the Meiji era (1868 to 1912) as a concrete example, this chapter argues that it is still, even in today's cosmopolitan society, entirely appropriate to take a serious look at a geographical-national framework as a means of exploring the captivating world of human creativity in art, architecture and design, and it can also be a convincingly valid approach for the historiography of art and design.

Notes for this section begin on page 106.

Westernization of Japan in the Meiji Era

The notion of national character strongly attracted the attention of Japanese architects and designers in the period from the 1860s to the first decade of the twentieth century. This was an ambivalent, intuitive reaction to the ongoing Westernization of their homeland. In the Meiji era in particular, Westernization was perceived as the only effective way of raising the standards of Japanese architecture and design in order to reach contemporary global standards set by the dominant world powers. Following the decision of the central government in Japan in 1859 to open Japan to foreign trade and diplomatic relations, mainly with Western superpowers such as the USA, Britain, the Netherlands and France, Japan entered a new era of Westernization in which globalization of technology, industry and design was aggressively pursued by both the public and private sectors. Accordingly, underscoring the imminent need to catch up to the technological level of the Western world, Western building technology and architectural styles attracted wide interest and rapidly spread throughout Japan. Such technology and Westernized styles of architecture were first introduced in military buildings, then in a number of government-operated public ‘role-model’ factories. The designs were made by foreign engineers who had been invited to Japan by the central government. Many of the state-owned, state-operated factories were constructed in the 1860s and early 1870s: one of these was the Tomioka Silk Mill (1872) in Tomioka, Gunma (registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014), designed by the French engineer Auguste Bastien, under the supervision of fellow French engineer Paul Brunat.

Before long, an extremely eccentric application of Western design was to be found in *Gi-Yōfū* architecture: quasi-Western-style architecture, an eclectic architectural style creatively combining imported Western elements with traditional Japanese construction techniques and decoration. Such architecture was designed by master carpenters, deeply versed in traditional building techniques peculiar to Japan, whose lack of formal training and knowledge of genuine Western-style architecture freed them to be bold in intermingling Japanese and Western elements. Such a practice reminds one of Samuel Pepys Cockerell’s Neo-Mughal design for Sezincote House in Gloucestershire, England (1805–1812), in which elements from Indian architecture were combined ostentatiously in a Neoclassical style.

Fearless and quirky interpretation of Western-style architecture started to appear in Japan in the latter half of the 1860s and reached its peak in the 1870s. Among such masterpieces of Japanized Western design are the Tokyo Tsukiji Hotel for Foreign Travelers in Tsukiji, Tokyo (1868); the Mitsui-gumi House (subsequently the First National Bank) at Kaiun Bridge in Nihonbashikabutochō, Tokyo (1872) (Fig. 5.1); the Mitsui-gumi House in Surugachō, Tokyo (1874); Kaichi Gakko Primary School in Matsumoto, Nagano (1873); and the Tsuruoka Police Station in Tsuruoka, Yamagata (1884). Whilst such



Figure 5.1 Kisuke Shimizu II, Mitsui-gumi House at Kaiun Bridge, Tokyo, Japan (1872). Photo courtesy of Architectural Institute of Japan, Tokyo, Japan.

interpretations of Western architecture were earnestly pursued and resulted in a series of rather eccentric examples of eclecticism in provincial cities, authentically Western architecture was designed in the capital city of Tokyo and other large cities by foreign technical advisors to the government, amongst whom were Josiah Conder from Britain, Jean Giovanni Vincenzo Cappelletti from Italy, and Hermann Ende and Wilhelm Böckmann, both from Germany (Itō, Ōta and Sekino 1976: 184–186).

Conder contributed most to the development of modern Japanese architecture. He was born in 1852 in London, and, following his study at the University of London, worked for the famed Gothic revivalist William Burges. In 1877, when he was twenty-four years old, he was invited by the Japanese government to be one of its foreign technical advisors, and in that capacity taught architecture at the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo.

Tatsuno in London and the Issue of National Style

Josiah Conder's first students graduated from the Imperial College of Engineering in 1879. Amongst them was Kingo Tatsuno, who was sent to Britain the following year as a government-sponsored student. In London, while studying architecture at the University of London, Tatsuno worked

for the architectural firm of Conder's former employer, Burges, a practicing architect, who undertook the task of teaching Tatsuno, albeit for a short period. Whilst studying in Britain, Tatsuno is said to have been very open, sociable and energetic, and having an avid desire to absorb both the spirit and principles, as well as the technical design and construction skills, of the latest styles of Western architecture (Azuma 2002: 191–210).

What most captured Tatsuno's attention while he was studying in Britain seems to have been the issue of national style. In Britain, by the late nineteenth century, the matter of a style emblematic of Imperial Britain had long been widely discussed and debated. As Francis Goodwin noted, when the plan for rebuilding the Houses of Parliament in either a Gothic or Elizabethan style was announced in the mid-1830s, 'for civil purposes, public or private, the town hall, exchange or senate-house; the Greek, Roman or Italian styles are universally admitted to be applicable' (Clark 1950: 153); yet there were also people who believed that 'Gothic was essentially an English style' and therefore 'the national style' (Clark 1950: 154). By the late 1860s, Gothic, which had originally emerged in northern France in the twelfth century, had come to be widely considered to be the national style of Britain, and this notion led to the triumph of Victorian Gothic Revivalism. Unlike the parliamentary competition in the mid-1830s, in which the style of the buildings was to be, according to guidelines set by the Select Committee, 'either Gothic or Elizabethan style' (House of Commons 1835: 4), there were no specific instructions favouring any particular style in the designated competition for the Royal Courts of Justice held in 1866–1867. Yet William Burges and ten other renowned architects who had been invited to compete all used the same style: Gothic. The stylistic uniformity of the submitted competition designs suggests that, by that time, Gothic had been fully recognized as the national style of Britain, emblematic of the national character.

Among Tatsuno's various perceptions whilst in Britain was his observation that, in the course of the 'battle of styles' between Neoclassical and Gothic, architects of that time were keen to define a style emblematic of the national character, whilst the origin and authenticity of the style were not considered important. Upon his return to Japan, Tatsuno was appointed Professor of Architecture at the Imperial College of Engineering, succeeding his former supervisor, Conder, and in the first examination he gave to students in 1885 he asked them to explain what elements should influence the formation of a national (Japanese) architectural style, a question almost identical to one on his first examination at the University of London on 21 June 1880 (Azuma 2002: 198–200).¹ Today Tatsuno is not necessarily considered a theoretical architect, yet his interest in the issue of national style in architecture demonstrates how straightforwardly the British emphasis on the search for a national style, as a cultural entity, had influenced his own approach toward the development of Japanese architecture.

The 1910 Debate: Japanese National Character as Expressed in Architecture

Throughout the Meiji era, government-trained architects like Tatsuno were given a number of splendid opportunities to execute large-scale enterprises of national importance. In the course of advancing Westernization in Japan, the Japanese government decided to take active steps to bring foreign influence and Western style into the Japanese architectural scene: thus, a new interest in the national character of Japanese architecture started to attract the attention of many Japanese architects. The question of how a modern Japan could rise from the acceptance of outside influence in order to assert its own architectural identity in the midst of such Western rivals as Britain, Germany, France and the USA, *viz.*, the subject of the geography of Japanese architectural design, attracted a growing number of designers and architects.

In the latter half of the Meiji era, even more diverse views of the national character of Japanese architecture arose. Kikutarō Shimoda, a former student at the Imperial University (originally established as Tokyo University in 1877 and renamed in 1886, absorbing the Imperial College of Engineering), who had dropped out to study in the USA and subsequently opened his own firm in Chicago, was keen to define the national style of Japan as a mixture of Western elements and authentic Japanese style. After returning to Japan, Shimoda later came to strongly oppose the erection of the new Diet Building in an entirely Western style, proposing instead a new style which he termed *Teikan-heigō shiki*, i.e., 'Imperial Crown Eclecticism'. The style was essentially a unique and audacious combination of a Westernized Neoclassical external facade and a Japanese-style roof reminiscent of that of a Japanese shrine/temple or donjon (Fig. 5.2). Conversely, Chuta Itō, a nationalist architect who taught a course on Japanese architectural history, the only course taught in Japanese for architectural students in those days, at the Imperial University of Tokyo (changed from the



Figure 5.2 Kikutarō Shimoda's design submitted for the competition for the Imperial Diet of Japan (1919) evinces his 'Imperial Crown Eclecticism'.

Source: K. Shimoda, *Shisō to Kenchiku*, Tokyo: Tokyo-dō, 1928. Photo courtesy of Waseda University Library, Tokyo, Japan.

name Imperial University in 1897), severely criticized Shimoda's eclecticism as 'a national disgrace' (Itō 1937: 99–100), and instead insisted that the origins of Japanese architecture were to be found in other parts of Asia.

In 1910, the Architectural Institute of Japan held two open forums, both chaired by Tatsuno, in order to debate the issue of 'the national style of architecture for the future Japan' (Yatsuka 2005: 124–125), inviting the leading architects of the time to present their various views as to how the national character of Japan should be expressed in architecture. Some claimed that an eclectic style, blending Western and Japanese elements, would be emblematic of the national character of modern Japan (Ōkawa 2012: 45). Some insisted on the necessity of using every architectural style ever created to formulate a national style based on an aesthetic taste that had been expressed throughout the history of Japanese architecture (Ōkawa 2012: 45). There were also those who simply contended that Western styles should be adopted as the national style of Japan (Ōkawa 2012: 45; Yatsuka 2005: 137). Another view was that the national style should be derived from the aesthetic preferences of the majority of people (Ōkawa 2012: 45; Yatsuka 2005: 120). In addition, there were pundits who stressed the role of the *Zeitgeist* in the formation of a new national style of architecture, and functionalists who defined the basic principle of architectural beauty to be merely a mechanical representation of 'gravity' and 'structure' (Ōkawa 2012: 45). As for Tatsuno, his attitude toward the active contemporary adaptation of Western styles, the state of which he had compared to 'an international exposition', was strongly affirmative; and he was convinced that a national style for Japan would emerge in the course of time in a society highly receptive to foreign styles of architecture (Tatsuno 1990: 405). The diversity of opinions expressed throughout the debate, and the fact that a clear consensus in regard to the stylistic manifestations of the national character of Japan could not be reached, clearly show that national character, as it expresses itself in art, ought to emerge with a widened, not narrowed, sense of national possibility. The ultimate conclusion thus was that the pursuit of national character and the formation of a national style could not be arbitrary, i.e., this is Japanese, and let no Japanese try to do otherwise.

Japanese Industrial Design in the Age of Westernization

The same conclusion was reached in the course of searching for the national character or style native to the geographical-national framework of Meiji Japan in the domain of industrial design. However, whereas in architecture Westernization was perceived as the only effective way of reaching the standards set by Western countries, in design the exchange was reciprocal, as there was a craze for *Japonisme* in late nineteenth-century continental Europe. *Japonisme* became a matter of interest first among young artists who saw in its thread of

exoticism a key to revitalizing the dreary state of the Western art scene at that time, and sooner or later this led to the rise of *japonisant*. There was also interest in Japanese art and design in Britain. For instance, the British government decided in 1876, a few years prior to Tatsuno's dispatch to Britain by the Japanese government, to assign Christopher Dresser, an industrial designer and design theorist, later a renowned advocate of Japanese design and culture, as an envoy to Japan in order to conduct an extensive survey of both traditional and contemporary Japanese design and decorative art.

The wide-ranging Western interest in Japanese art and design, from the government down to individual print and craftwork collectors, created the possibility of a potential market for Japanese industrial products. Hence, when the invitation for the 1873 Vienna International Exposition was received by Japan in 1871, it was only natural for the Japanese government to collect 'traditional' Japanese handicrafts, with which the Japanese heritage in arts and crafts could be easily associated, as articles to be displayed at the exposition. Even when it was decided to include large-scale showpieces in anticipation of their strong appeal to Westerners (Mori 2009: 22), all the selections were related to Japanese art-cultural heritage. Amongst them was a golden *Shachihoko*, a decoration in the shape of a fabled fish with a leonine head and a tail pointing skyward, taken from the top of the roof of the donjon of Nagoya Castle (see Fig. 5.3). It was the consistent policy of the Japanese government to employ international expositions as occasions to promote Japanese industrial art products and the notion of oriental exoticism: thus, even the Japanese pavilion was built in an ultra-exotic manner that awkwardly compounded the wooden structure of a Shinto shrine with a Japanese garden. In the Viennese exposition, the industrial policy of Japan, aimed toward expansion of an international demand for Japanese 'traditional industrial' art products, was cordially received, and many of the objects displayed were purchased by Westerners. Even the pavilion and the garden, with all its trees, were sold to the Alexander Park (Mori 2009: 25), a British trading company established by Dresser, who himself played an indispensable role in the conclusion of this sale. Thus, in response to the high demand for delicately produced Japanese design overseas, the Japanese government's promotion of Japan's seemingly primitive, but nevertheless skilfully made, traditional arts and crafts came to be considered a profitable enterprise.

The newly affirmed state undertaking in industrial art and the discussion which followed were driven chiefly by two factors: 1) increasing self-confidence among Japanese government officials and craftspeople in the level of Japanese craftsmanship as an art-cultural heritage with several hundred years of tradition; and 2) high expectations for the economic impact of Western demand for Japanese industrial art products (Hirayama 1925: 2–4; Kinoshita 2005: 52–54). The former was accompanied by a government scheme for tracing the art-historical identity of Japan through a history of Japanese arts and crafts and

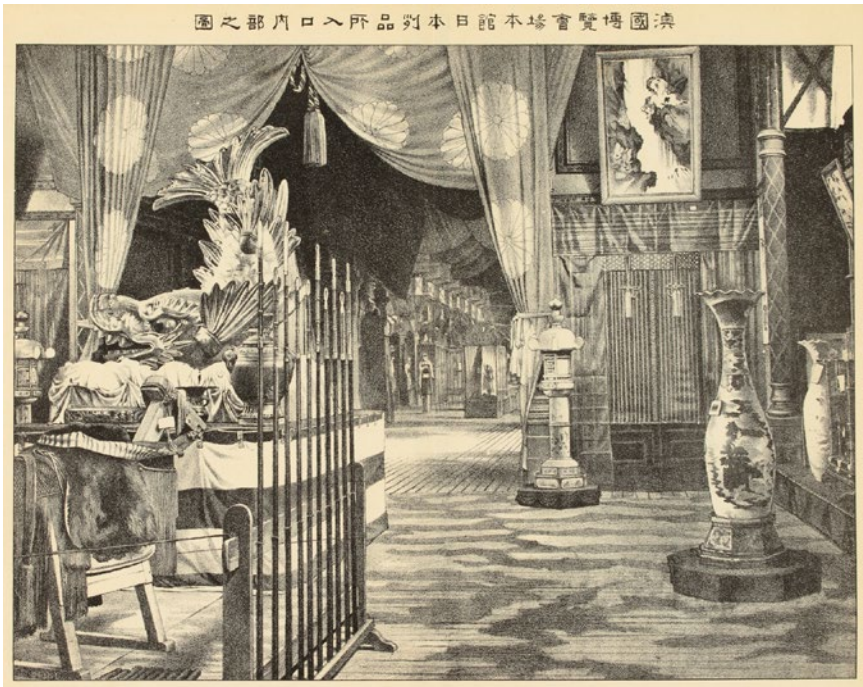


Figure 5.3 Japanese exhibits at the 1873 Vienna International Exposition. Source: Y. Tanaka and S. Hirayama (eds), *Oukokuhakurankai Sandou Kiyou*, Tokyo: Haruo Mori-yama, 1897. Photo courtesy of Waseda University Library, Tokyo, Japan.

through preservation of traditional Japanese handicrafts, which had already led to the promulgation of *Koki Kyubutsu Hozon-kata*, the specialized law for preserving antiques and ancient artefacts, in 1871. The Japanese government of this time was confident that the beauty of Japanese arts and crafts and industrial art met international standards and that the government would therefore make a handsome profit out of the export business of Japanese industrial art products and designs.

Before long, however, the ‘Japaneseness’ of Japanese traditional arts and crafts and industrial design, underpinned by the fashion for *Japonisme*, became *passé*, as Japanese backwardness in the area of industrial design gradually became conspicuous after the initial success at the Vienna International Exposition. In this predicament, the modernization of Japanese industrial art production was vigorously pursued, and individual manufacturers were positive about adopting new Western technology and methods of corporate management. The necessity of producing designs which met contemporary Western needs for and in daily life was stressed. As had been stated in 1897, in order to export Japanese crafts the Japanese industrial art world had to conform to international standards of usage, robustness and uniformity of design (Mori 2009: 65–66). It was, however, the fact that Japanese exhibits were received unfavourably at the



Figure 5.4 Candle stand with chrysanthemum design in black lacquer, an example of Japanese design for Western lifestyle, mainly produced in the late 1870s and after. Photo courtesy of The Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo, Japan.

1900 Paris International Exposition that revealed that closing the gap between Western standards of design and the under-developed state of Japanese design had become a most pressing issue for the Japanese government. For designers, the question of how Japan could assert a modern national identity in design which expressed the Japanese character, while still conforming to Western standards of manufacture and usage, came to be the focal point of their attention. In 1901, the *Dai-Nippon Zuan Kyōkai* (Great Japan Design Association) was founded, and beginning in the late Meiji era Japanese government-supported apprentices in the fields of design and decoration were dispatched to Western countries (Mori 2009: 81).

What is of the utmost interest to observe at this stage of development in the history of Japanese design is that the search for a Japanese character

in industrial art and design had not – as might be expected – resulted in any extreme nationalism driven by racist impulses and emphasis on national heredity and heritage. Just as in the case of Japanese architecture in the late Meiji era, the pursuit of national character in industrial design, although defined within a geographical-national framework, was never chauvinistic. For designers actively involved in the front lines of Japanese design at the time, there were mainly three possible approaches in their search for expression of national character: 1) rigorous study and adaptation of Western precedents; 2) an eclectic approach, blending Western and Japanese elements; and 3) formulation of a national design based on aesthetic taste expressed throughout the history of Japanese traditional arts and crafts (Matsuoka 1914: 7). A new group of designers also emerged, at the tail end of the Meiji era, who refused to blindly follow current trends and acceptance of dominant Western standards of design; instead, they thoughtfully selected from the wisdom of Western forefathers of industrial design (Tuchida 2008: 91–98, 128–131). Amongst them was Kenkichi Tomimoto, the first ‘living national treasure of Japan’,² who returned to Japan in 1910 from Britain, where he had studied the art of William Morris (Fig. 5.5) (Tuchida 2008: 95–96).³

National Character of a Nation as ‘a Self-conscious Cultural Entity’

By observing the tireless application of architects and designers of the time to the study of how the national character of Japan could be expressed in design in response to the rapid Westernization of Meiji Japan, it can be seen that their quest for the ‘Japaneseness’ of Japanese design led, not necessarily to the reinforcement of nationalism in design driven by a nationalistic/racist impulse, but to diversity of creativity within a geographical-national framework, all in the desire to manifest the national character of Japan through artefacts. It was Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902–1983) who, from an art/architectural/design historian’s point of view, distinguished between the idea of a national character expressed in a nation’s art and nationalism/racism in action. In his BBC Reith Lecture series entitled ‘The Englishness of English Art’, broadcast in 1955, Pevsner eschewed the idea of national character expressed in a racist/jingoistic fashion in favour of the idea that national character expressed through art is not necessarily rigid, narrow or dogmatic in claiming equivalence between a nation’s racial heredity and its art.

When Pevsner presented ‘The geography of art’ as the opening lecture of the series, taking as his subject a new geographical historiography of art concerning ‘national character as it expresses itself in art’ (Pevsner 1956: 11), he meant by ‘national character’ the character of a nation as ‘a self-conscious cultural entity’ (Pevsner 1956: 185), not the evidence of a racial community.

(14)



ウイリアム・モリスの話

(上)

富本憲吉

サウスケンシントン博物館の裏門から這入つて二階に上つた左側の室を通つて左に廻つた室が諸種の圖案を列べてある處と記憶します、私は其處で初てモリスの製作した壁紙の下圖を見ました。

ウイリアム・モリス五十二歳頃の肖像



初めて見た時から勿論大變面白いものであると考へて居りましたが、追々と見なれるに連れて、たまらなく面白く考へました、真面目な、ゼントルマンらしい、英吉利風な作家の、けだかい趣味が強く私の胸を打ちました。
「手で製作した面白み」が機械の音で追々と亂されて行く事を、餘り人々が注意して居なかつた時代に熱心な良い趣味の復活を美術工藝の上に盡力して呉れた人は實にウイリアム・モリスであります。

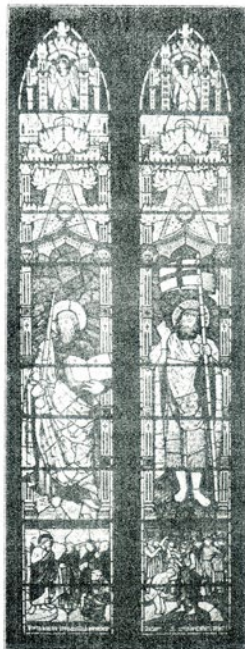
モリスは千八百三十四年の春、英國エセックスのワルサムストウと云ふ處で生れました、

古風な田舎

の大きい森や寺の尖塔が誰れにも持つ事の出来な、い彼れ特別の趣味に非常な影響をあたへた事と思はれます、又千八百五十二年オックスフォードのエクセタール大學に入學しました、其の事と其の時モリスの周圍に居た友人が彼れの製作と特有な趣味に關してモリスの一生中を通じて重大な問題の一つであらうと考へます。

今から六十年程前のオックスフォードには、謂ゆる近世主義が未だ充分に芽ささず、又市街にも古風な面影が少しは残つて居りました、コウ云ふ事

が中世紀を夢みて其の味のある色彩をねらつたモリスの趣味に幾分の影響をあたへた事と思はれます、彼れが「古い美くしい建物や風景の壊れて行くのを惜しむた話の中に「英國中で最も美くしい立派な此のオックスフォードの町と近郊が無智な思慮なき人々の手に見る影もなく汚がされた、自分の知り出してから三十年の中に無法な目に遇つた美しい古い此の町の爲めに自分はかなしむ、若い人々に良い書物や博物館の様に貴い氣持を教へて



聖ペルセウスのステインド・ゾラス 人物 ウイリアム・モリス 作

居る古い街の面白みが追々消滅して行くのを見るに忍びない」と云ふて居ります、ルアンやアマアン其の他の佛國にある古跡を稱賛し、之れが保存に付いて種々な意見を公表して居ります。

消え去らうとするゴシック期の氣持を復活し様と企てたモリスは古い寺院の色遣子の窓を通じて來る光線、聖壇の表象的な彫刻像、灰色した建築材料の面白みの研究に、熱心な長い時間を費した事でしょう。

其他オックスフォードの大學時代に有名なバアン

Figure 5.5 Opening page of Kenkichi Tomimoto's article on William Morris, published in two parts in the art journal *Bijutsu Shinpō* in February and March 1912.

Pevsner 'had been exposed' to the idea of the national character of art by 'the majority, if not all, of his early teachers' (Harries 2011: 486), one of these teachers being Pevsner's supervisor at Leipzig University, Wilhelm Pinder. In Germany, 'as early as the latter half of the nineteenth century', interest in the

national character of art throughout history had already taken on ‘an increasingly racist complexion’ (Harries 2011: 486; Whyte 2013: 21, 45). Pevsner, however, purposely downplayed the impact and roles of regionalism, race and national heredity. Writing in 1956 in the introductory chapter of the published version of his lectures, *The Englishness of English Art*, Pevsner stressed that, while being aware that ‘nationalism has had such a come-back in the last twenty years, and that new small national states have appeared and are appearing everywhere on the map’ (Pevsner 1956: 11), ‘nation, as a self-conscious cultural entity, is always stronger than race’ (Pevsner 1956: 185). This view must have reflected Pevsner’s intense concern regarding his own transnational background and upbringing. Pevsner was a German-born Russian Jew ‘who had no great desire to be Jewish’ (Whyte 2013: 4). Baptized in the Lutheran church, he was certainly an ‘outsider’ in the Jewish community in Germany. Although he hoped that ‘the National Socialist reign would be short and that life in Germany would soon, somehow, return to normal’ (Whyte 2013: 7), it has been noted that, even in the early 1930s, Pevsner was politically sympathetic to the National Socialists, professing to be ‘a Nationalist’ in May 1933, several months prior to his dismissal from his academic post at Göttingen, and publishing a paper with pro-National Socialist sentiments in March 1934 entitled ‘Kunst und Staat’ for the German nationalist journal *Der Türrner* (Whyte 2013: 5–8).

Pevsner was highly conscious of and insecure about being ‘different’, not only in his native Germany in the early 1930s, but also in Britain, where he was exiled during World War II. The sense of insecurity he felt about being a ‘stranger in a strange land’ led him naturally to oppose discussing ‘the coming together of the nation from its racial origins’ (Causey 2004: 167), and also to separate analysis of national character in art from a view which held race and art to be inseparable.

Pevsner denied the validity of race, national heredity and racial heritage, and instead valued the idea of a nation or national framework as ‘a self-conscious cultural entity’ as noted above.⁴ As for the influence of racial components on English art, for instance, Pevsner asserted that ‘racial origins help little’ (Pevsner 1956: 184). Taking the case of eighteenth-century English painter William Hogarth as a notable example, he stresses in *The Englishness of English Art*, referring to Dagobert Frey’s mention of Hogarth, that ‘it is rare that in an individual artist his racial status is of use in explaining his art’ (Pevsner 1956: 184), and that the racial status of Hogarth, of whose Englishness ‘there can be no doubt’ (Pevsner 1956: 20), does not explain his art at all; for ‘his name is Saxon (hog-herd), but the place of his origin in Westmorland is “an area of the Celtic retreat”, and his anthropological type and that of his sister are “in the direction of an anglo-mediterranean type on a Celtic-West English-Welsh substratum”’ (Pevsner 1956: 184).

By refusing to consider racial status in discussion of the national character of a community as ‘a self-conscious cultural entity’, Pevsner held that a

geography of art is still a valid art-historical method/approach in an age of rapid communication. No matter how globalized the world would become, with various wireless communication tools keeping 'everyone all the time in touch with all other parts of the world' (Pevsner 1956: 11), and no matter how powerful a force science would become in society, divisions between nations as self-conscious cultural entities would not and will not be readily dissolved.

Through 'the geography of art', Pevsner came to show his listeners and readers that the national character of art cannot be arbitrarily determined and narrowly defined in a nationalistic or racialistic way; instead, a nation as 'a self-conscious cultural entity' expresses its character in deep and diverse artistic possibilities. Such an approach is not only applicable to the art-historical study of English art and design: the validity of Pevsner's view was, as we have seen, confirmed in the state of Japanese architecture and design during the Meiji period, the age of rapid Westernization in Japan. While nationalism in artistic creativity could have been reinforced in response to foreign influence, *viz.*, the implacable impact of artistic/design activities in Western countries, what many Japanese architects and designers in those days actually came to realize was the diversity of creativity that in fact lay within their geographical-national framework, from rigorous imitation of Western architecture and design and eclecticism in both Japan and the West to aesthetic nationalism driven by a national/racial consciousness, all in search of design (whether architectural or industrial) inherent in Japan. The essence of 'the geography of art' in the context of modern Japanese design, as with the Englishness of English art that Pevsner observed, was that the Japaneseness of Japanese architecture and design was not and need not be arbitrary.

Conclusion

Pevsner maintained that one merit of history was and is that 'it tells us how great men have acted under certain circumstances' (Pevsner 1966).⁵ Pevsner acknowledged the role that knowledge of the past can play in development in contemporary society. Today, living in an even more globalizing age, which is, in some ways, more racialistically orientated than that of 1955–1956, when Pevsner first introduced his idea of 'the geography of art' in his own version of the historical study of English art and design, we see the rapid rise of multi-racial communities and societies within geographical-national frameworks everywhere. In such an age as our own, art/design historical enquiry based on a geographical-national framework or on Pevsnerian art geography, which evokes the character of the geographical-national framework of a cultural entity, not of a racial community, is an approach more crucial than ever to be employed in the historiography of art, architecture and design. This approach shuns the negative baggage of racial consciousness in favour of untrammelled creativity

in ‘a self-conscious cultural entity’. It stands aloof from racial conflict and is free from the anathema of ultra-nationalism and racialism.

Notes

1. For Tatsuno’s own view on the elements that influence the formation of the national architectural style of Japan, see e.g., Tatsuno (1990: 402–405).

2. The ‘living national treasure of Japan’ is governmental recognition of someone as an individual with intangible cultural skills, in accordance with the provisions of The Act on Protection of Cultural Properties of Japan.

3. In 1912, for instance, Kenkichi Tomimoto published an article on William Morris in *Bijutsu Shinpō*, consisting of two parts. See Tomimoto (1912a; 1912b).

4. Inevitably, it is totally anachronistic to aspire to found a sovereign state for one race whilst taking no account of the significance of cultural and/or religious values and being insensitive to human rights. In the region of East Asia, Communist China’s insistence on Chinese ethnocentrism at the expense of multi-racial, democratic, independent Taiwan and the rise of nationalism and ethnicism in Japan are twenty-first century cases in point.

5. In 1966, Pevsner made conference notes on the meaning of teaching art history in schools and colleges of art, adding some further handwritten notes to a handout which he had earlier prepared for a meeting of the ‘Art History and Liberal Studies’ panel of the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (NCDAD). The notes are now held in the special collections of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, USA (Nikolaus Pevsner Papers: Box 21, Folder 7).

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CHAPTER 6

Imagining the Indian Nation

The Design of Gandhi's Dandi March and Nehru's Republic Day Parade

SUCHITRA BALASUBRAHMANYAN

The rhetoric of nationalism gained momentum in India in the first half of the twentieth century as the anti-imperialist movement to achieve political independence from the British intensified. It continued in a different form after independence in 1947 as the task of nation building became the main preoccupation. Design was harnessed powerfully, in both the colonial period and after, to concretize and make visible the abstract notion of 'nation', making nationalism an indispensable lens for a fuller understanding of design in modern India. Equally, design becomes an indispensable lens through which to examine the ways in which nationalism is reified in a globalized Indian present.

Scholars have explored this theme from diverse disciplinary perspectives, revealing the manner and modes in which the 'nation' has been manifested in India's visual and material culture and shaped by it. They have examined domains as diverse as print media, textiles, advertising, handicraft, national exhibitions, documentary films, television programming, museums, architecture and the planning of cities and industrial townships (Guha-Thakurta 1992, 2004; Jain, K. 2007; Kalia 1994, 1999, 2004; Lang, Desai and Desai 1997; Mathur 2007; McGowan 2009; Pinney 2004; Roy 2007; Tarlo 1996; Trivedi 2007). This chapter approaches the theme from the perspective of political practice to unravel the ways in which design is harnessed in mass mobilization and statecraft, viewing political leaders as designers. It focuses on two spectacles: M.K. Gandhi's Dandi March and Jawaharlal Nehru's Republic Day Parade, two events chronologically placed on either side of that historic event, India's independence.

Notes for this section begin on page 123.

The Dandi March was devised and staged by Gandhi in 1930 to mobilize Indians in an expression of resistance to the colonial order and the Republic Day Parade, an annual ritual staged from 1951 onwards, as a celebration of India's political sovereignty. At the heart of the design of both events is the imagination and animation of a viable national identity and their designers, Gandhi and Nehru, employed similar design devices. Yet, the way in which these devices were developed and deployed point to two very different conceptions of India, two distinct sets of intended outcomes that finally result in two different modes of longevity in the globalized present.

The Dandi March

Central to Gandhi's political practice was *satyagraha* or 'firmness in truth', a mode of non-violent civil disobedience which he conceived in South Africa in 1905 to mobilize the local Indian community to protest against the injustices perpetrated by the Transvaal government. Later, on his return to India, he launched a series of *satyagrahas* on issues such as indigo farmers' rights, working conditions in textile mills, unjust legislations and iniquitous taxes levied by the British government and social inclusion for India's marginalized communities. The Salt Satyagraha of 1930, of which the Dandi March was the dramatic component, centred on a protest against the tax on salt. It was Gandhi's largest mass mobilization, involving the participation of hundreds of thousands of women and men all over India.

The Dandi March was carefully and strategically designed. This chapter focuses on six principal design aspects of the event: the choice of the issue – salt; deciding the publics it would reach out to – Indians, the British, and an international audience; choosing a mode to animate the issue – the march; the timing; the route; and, lastly, the composition of the marching group. Through these, the contours of the India of Gandhi's imagination come into view.

In December 1929, at its annual session at Lahore, the Indian National Congress resolved to fight for *purna swaraj* or complete independence from British rule. A few weeks later, on 26 January 1930, a formal pledge of independence was read out and the responsibility for mass mobilization to achieve this goal was vested in Gandhi. In mid-February, Gandhi decided to focus on the exploitative Salt Law as the issue around which to mobilize people.

India was one of very few countries where the State had monopoly over salt manufacture and sale. In 1930, the British government levied a 2400 per cent tax over the wholesale price of locally manufactured salt in order to create a market for salt imported from Britain. It was a time of rising prices and falling wages and as a result the burden of the tax fell heavily on the poorer sections of Indian society (Phadke 2000: 142; Weber 1997: 81–84). As

an object of everyday use, salt provided a common rallying point across caste, class, religious and regional identities that made up the diversity of India. Its cultural associations in both Indian and Western traditions as symbol of all that is critical to human survival and exalted in human relationships (as reflected in myriad proverbs in many Indian languages and English) made it possible to take the campaign of breaking the Salt Law beyond the political plane to generate tremendous ethical and emotional appeal the world over.

Gandhi's colleagues were horrified at what appeared to them as a trivial issue on which to base a fight for *purna swaraj*; many Congress leaders thought a nationwide breaking of land laws or forming a parallel government were more forceful options. But this was no flight of fancy. Trained as a lawyer, Gandhi knew that the penal sections of the Salt Law were not severe and large numbers could therefore be persuaded to participate. The law offered a number of options for breaking it – manufacturing salt, possessing illegally manufactured salt, selling or buying it and even exhorting to sell or buy it were all breaches of the law. Thus people could participate in a variety of ways, it was replicable all over the country and the campaign could be localized and customized according to regional constraints. For instance, in inland areas where salt could not be manufactured, salt from the coast could be bought or sold.

Then came the question of animating the issue. Gandhi chose to march to the seashore to collect sea salt, combining the emotive power of salt as a symbol with another equally powerful one, the march. He had already led a long march in South Africa in 1913 where he and 2221 people marched from Charlestown to Volksrust to protest against the Immigration Act. Now, he declared he would march out from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to break the Salt Law, never to return till *purna swaraj* was attained. He likened it to Moses leading his people to the Promised Land, the Hindu Lord Rama leaving his kingdom to honour a promise made to his father and Gautama's *mahabhinishkramana* or 'great departure' in search of the enlightenment which eventually made him the Buddha. Gandhi could easily have made a quick march from Ahmedabad, his base in western India, to the nearest seashore on the western coast of India but he chose Dandi, a place sufficiently far away so the march would become a long-drawn out spectacle generating wide publicity. As he wrote later, he wanted 'world sympathy in this battle of Right against Might' (Gandhi 1999: 13).

The route was plotted by Gandhi's colleague Vallabhbhai Patel, strategically taking the march through all the areas south of Ahmedabad where the Indian National Congress was well established, ending at Dandi, a village to which some of Gandhi's South African colleagues belonged. The departure date, 12 March, was chosen such that the 241-mile distance between Ahmedabad and Dandi would be covered in twenty-five days of daily walking instalments of about ten miles so that the march could be concluded on 6 April. This was a significant date as it marked the start of

National Week, which had been celebrated since 1920 to commemorate an earlier *satyagraha* against the Rowlatt Act (a legislation which curtailed civil and political rights) in 1919. Thus, layers of intertextual and interdiscursive references were built into the design elements that went into constructing the Dandi March.

Finally, the composition of the contingent of marchers: Gandhi selected members of the group mostly from among the residents of Sabarmati Ashram to represent the diversity of Indians. The seventy-eight men who accompanied him were among those who were most committed to the Gandhian way of life, purposively drawn from all the provinces of India and including Muslims, 5 May Christians, and high and low caste Hindus, from ordinary and well-to-do family backgrounds.¹ Women were not included in the main group of marchers;² however, he selected his colleagues Abbas Tyabji, a Muslim, and Sarojini Naidu, a prominent woman Congress leader, to replace him as leader of the group in the event of his arrest.

The group set off from Sabarmati Ashram at dawn on 12 March. The group's cultural diversity was visually unified by elements from the Gandhian ethos. The marchers all wore *khadi* (unbleached, hand spun, hand woven cotton) giving the contingent a distinct appearance and corporate identity that marked them apart from other Indians. For the preceding decade, Gandhi had relentlessly promoted hand spinning and weaving and had made wearing *khadi* mandatory for anyone choosing to join his movement. *Aparigraha*, abstaining from accumulating material possessions, was another of Gandhi's mandates; so all seventy-eight men carried the barest personal possessions. They ate the simplest food at every village halt on the way and began each day of the march with an all-faith prayer to communicate the value of the simple life and equality of all faiths in a land of rampant poverty and religious strife.

The group reached Dandi on 6 April where they picked up handfuls of dried salt from the seashore, thereby breaking the law. Thousands of men and women joined them along the way to Dandi; simultaneous marches, with many variations, took place all over India to numerous places on the country's southern, eastern and western coasts and the Salt Law was broken on the same day in all the variety of ways the legal provisions afforded. The world press reported the event on a day-to-day basis and newsreels depicted the marchers in cinema halls. The infringement of the Salt Law continued over the following weeks and Gandhi was arrested on 5 May 1930, as were about 90,000 *satyagrahis* over the next months. In early 1931, Gandhi was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine as Man of the Year, a measure of the international impact of the event.³ This was the anatomy of the design of the Dandi March. The event, as it was assembled and visually presented, revealed the India of Gandhi's imagination. This was a courageous India, where religious differences and social hierarchies were acknowledged but transcended through joint participation in a protest against an imperial power symbolized by a law which exploited the poor and

the rich alike. In a land where clothes, food and personal belief set apart communities in appearance and lifestyle (see Tarlo 1996), the Gandhian lifestyle, adopted and exemplified by the marchers, was how he imagined everyday life in an independent India – a life of equality, freedom, simplicity, self-determination and cooperation.

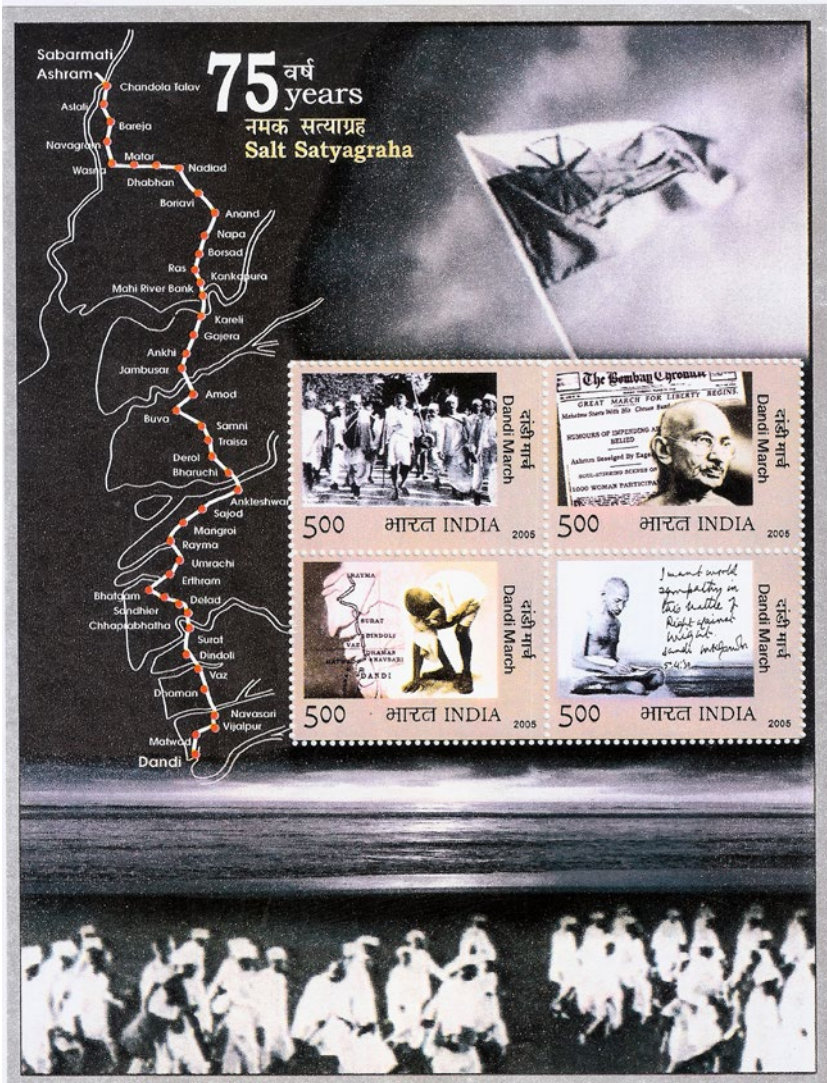


Figure 6.1 Miniature sheet of four postage stamps released on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Salt Satyagrah in 2005 depicting Gandhi leading the march, the route, newspaper coverage of the event and his message. The photograph at the bottom shows the visual appearance of the group. Photograph by the author.

The Republic Day Parade

We turn now to the Republic Day Parade to examine the orchestration of the event along the same six principal design elements focused upon for the Dandi March: the issue – celebrating India's independence from the British and the adoption of a new Constitution of India and thereby, the creation of the new republic; deciding the publics to reach out to – national and international; choosing a mode to animate the issue – the parade; its timing; the route; and the composition of the marching group.

The Dandi March was designed to mobilize the mass of Indians in a movement for complete independence from British rule. Independence was finally achieved seventeen years later in August 1947. Gandhi was assassinated in early 1948 and the task of nation building was taken over by his colleagues, some of whom we have met in the preceding pages. Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister and the process of articulating nationhood in a written Constitution, which had commenced in 1946, became the main preoccupation. After four years of discussion and debate, India gave herself a new Constitution in 1950 and the sovereign and democratic Indian state came into existence. In a public address, Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel (who had crafted the route for the Dandi March) observed that 'the day on which India attains republican status would be written in letters of gold in its history', when 'all traces of foreign rule' were erased and Indians became 'in law and in fact [their] own masters' (quoted in Masselos 1996: 190). But which day in the year could be designated to bear that honour?

As mentioned earlier, the Indian National Congress had formalized its resolve to fight for complete independence through the pledge read out on 26 January 1930. From the following year onwards, the day had been celebrated as Independence Day. However, real independence, with a transfer of power, took place on 15 August 1947. So 26 January could no longer be celebrated as Independence Day. Yet it held too much political significance to be simply set aside. Therefore, it was chosen as the day for the official adoption of the Constitution, linking the inauguration of assertion against colonial rule with its conclusion in the attainment of the status of a republic. From then on it came to be celebrated as Republic Day. It was a momentous occasion and the task before the political leaders of India was to devise a way to first re-consecrate the day and then honour and celebrate it.

On the morning of the first Republic Day celebrations in 1950, India's first President took oath of office in the presidential palace in the capital New Delhi, promising to uphold the Constitution and subsequently swearing in the Prime Minister and his cabinet of ministers. Similar ceremonies took place in the provinces where governors took oath and swore in chief ministers and their cabinet colleagues and the provinces became states in the new republic. In the afternoon, the President drove to Irwin Stadium where he was received by the

Minister of Defence, who in turn ceremonially introduced him to the chiefs of the army, navy and air force. The President raised the national flag and bands played the national anthem. He then took salute at a march past of the armed forces and a fly past of air force planes.

A differently articulated Republic Day Parade took place the following year on the first anniversary of the republic, becoming the principal mode to animate the birth of the Indian republic and articulate national identity and nation building. Although the event underwent modifications over the next several years, its defining elements were already in place in the first couple of years. These elements were visualized largely by Nehru, which is why this chapter regards him as the designer of the event. Nehru's writings offer a clue to understanding his approach. While in prison in 1942–1946, he wrote *Discovery of India*, in which he anticipated independence, already planning the new nation, dreaming of giving India the 'garb of modernity' without letting go of her glorious past (Nehru 1986: 50). He wrote, 'Traditions have to be accepted to a large extent and adapted and transformed to meet new conditions and ways of thought, and at the same time new traditions have to be built up' (Nehru 1986: 53). These lines offer a framework to examine the Republic Day Parade, as he visualized and designed it, as an adaptation and transformation of traditional national commemorations, thereby forging an annually reiterated new national tradition.

Thus, on 26 January 1951, the ceremonies began in the morning and at a new location, Rajpath, where it has been staged ever since. The setting was no longer a sports stadium but a landscape replete with symbols of state. Rajpath (formerly Kingsway) is a ceremonial stretch of road linking the presidential palace, Rashtrapati Bhavan (formerly Viceroy's House) with India Gate, a memorial to Indian soldiers in the British Army. As in the previous year, the President arrived in state, unfurled the flag, the national anthem was sung and contingents of the armed forces marched down Rajpath saluting their commander in chief. In their new setting, the celebrations began to take on the character of a spectacle.

Gandhi self-consciously linked the Dandi March to earlier, if mythical, marches; the Republic Day Parade ironically drew from colonial rituals and, perhaps inevitably, from Congress party models of anti-imperialist mobilization. The setting and military presence were reminiscent of the Imperial Durbars such as the one in 1877 organized in Delhi to proclaim Victoria as Empress of India and repeated in 1903 and 1911 to announce Edward VII as Kaiser-i-Hind and George V as King Emperor of India. Native princes and chiefs were invited to ritually express their allegiance to the reigning sovereign. The morning flag hoisting, accompanied by a rendition of the national anthem, harked back to pre-1947 Independence Day celebrations. Then, 26 January celebrations began with *prabhat pheris*, or morning processions, of Congress party activists winding their way through the streets singing patriotic songs, eventually gathering at a

central spot, usually the party office, to raise the Gandhi-designed national flag and sing the national song, *Vande Mataram*.⁴

While the structure of the parade drew from earlier models and began with references from the immediate past, its destination harked back to earlier glory. The parade marched down Rajpath and wound its way northwards through the city ending at the Red Fort, the seventeenth-century seat of power of the Mughal Empire. Other allusions to erstwhile empires lay in the national symbols showcased on the occasion. Replacing the spinning wheel in the pre-independence flag was the Ashokan wheel, a symbol appropriated from the two-thousand-year old Mauryan Empire, and the four lions from the Ashokan pillar became the crest of the state of India. Thus the parade to celebrate the new republic became a montage of intertextual references to various configurations of erstwhile empires and a just-concluded anti-imperialist struggle.

The following year, Nehru's government consciously and explicitly set the celebrations apart from national day celebrations of other countries by adding a cultural pageant to the military display. A Ministry of Education note of 1952 stated that this was done to communicate that 'this young Republic values cultural progress no less than military strength' (quoted in Singh 1998: 92), transforming the parade from a military ritual to one that served to symbolically unite the new republic by drawing its culturally diverse population into a meaningful 'new tradition'. To set the tone, art exhibitions, music and dance festivals, literary gatherings and sports meets were organized in the days preceding the parade.

The addition of the cultural pageant was made at a time when the process of reorganizing existing British-demarcated provinces into states was underway. It was a period of tension when linguistic and regional assertions were making their presence felt and rendering the visual communication of a viable, cohesive national identity, while simultaneously making space for cultural multiplicity, became urgent. Planning for the next year's parade, Nehru wrote to the Chief Ministers of states in late 1952 explaining that the 'concept of this procession and exhibition and everything else should be to demonstrate both the unity and great variety and diversity of India' and that this could happen if 'states participate in these Delhi celebrations and take some responsibility for them' (quoted in Singh 1998: 98). Each state was invited to send a tableau representing some distinctive feature of its people, performing arts, crafts and architecture, displaying India's rich diversity of regional costumes, dance forms and music along with dioramas and models of famous monuments. While representatives from the different states participated in their traditional costumes, the parade was enlarged to visually showcase the 'garb of modernity' of the newly constituted state. Nehru suggested that a part of the parade display could depict 'the Grow-More-Food campaign' with a tableau representing the abundance of food and that farmers winning state competitions for agricultural production



Figure 6.2 View of cultural floats displayed at the Republic Day Parade, 2013. Photograph by Sondeep Shankar.



Figure 6.3 The Indian Army's BrahMos cruise missiles displayed at the Republic Day Parade, 2013. Photograph by Sondeep Shankar.

should be invited to Delhi at the government's expense to participate in the parade (quoted in Singh 1998: 98). Later, representations of dams, power plants, the launching of satellites and atomic power plants found a place in the parade. On the fiftieth anniversary of the republic in 2000, a specially commissioned

float featured a large replica of the Constitution propped up on three pillars labelled 'democracy', 'legislature' and 'judiciary'.

Nehru was equally clear about the audience for whom this display was being put on. He visualized it as a cultural festival designed to make an impact on national and international audiences, 'to impress not only the important representatives of foreign governments who witness the parade but also hundreds of thousands of our own people, to whom the Republic Day celebrations should be both a source of joy and pride and an aspiration' (quoted in Singh 1998: 95). Each year a foreign head of state was invited as chief guest, invariably chosen in keeping with current realpolitik. At the first ceremony at Irwin Stadium it was Indonesian President Sukarno, Nehru's comrade in the Non-Aligned Movement of postcolonial states coming together to counter Russia and the United States; in 1961 it was Queen Elizabeth; and in 2007 Vladimir Putin.

Thus, the Republic Day Parade was a new tradition which symbolically brought together the industrial and the cultural, the past and the present, hand-crafts and the machine. At the same time, it communicated powerfully to two very different but equally important audiences that Nehru wished to reach, the local and global. To his citizens he communicated the new programmes undertaken by the State to rebuild India and its concrete achievements through these initiatives. Simultaneously, he wished to underline that the arts were equally central to the Republic and represented its linkages to a glorious past which was to be the fountainhead for a flourishing future. To his global audience, the Parade communicated a resurgent India determined to bring material and cultural prosperity to her citizens and asserting herself as an independent nation free of her colonial masters. An estimated 200,000 people witnessed the procession in person; a live commentary was broadcast on radio to millions of listeners all over the country and in the 1980s, live telecasts brought the event visually into people's homes and with it, the idea of becoming and being Indian in modern India.

The Afterlife of the March and Parade

On 12 March 1931 Gandhi left Ahmedabad for Dandi again to explain to the people his pact with Viceroy Irwin after his release from prison. He left on the same day, by the same route. But this time he went by car and reached Dandi in two days. There was no public participation, no persuasive speeches and no religious imagery. For Gandhi, salt and the march to Dandi had been chosen to fulfil a particular set of historical circumstances and once the situation had changed they no longer had any relevance and had outlived their usefulness. In fact, when the movement was restarted in 1932, centred again on disobeying the Salt Law, contemporary accounts noted the lack of enthusiasm. There have

been subsequent, largely unsuccessful re-enactments by Indian politicians and activists of all stripes seeking to cash in on the symbols of Gandhi's *satyagraha* to further their own particular agendas.⁵ But the event lived on in ways that its designer had neither intended nor anticipated, when its appeal lay in interpretative re-enactments. I will examine two examples which speak of the meaning that artists at two different locations outside India saw in that event of 1930 and which contribute to its afterlife.

Fiona Foley is a contemporary artist from Australia. Her art draws from her life as an indigenous woman from a community whose culture has a living memory of its colonization by the English. Her work both reflects her connection to her aboriginal identity and challenges Australian culture to reread history to reveal moments of strength and empowerment. In April 2005, at a group show entitled *Out There* at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich, Foley joined seven other renowned artists to create site-specific outdoor works. Foley's contribution was *Dandi March (rowing boat, khadi bags, salt)*. On display in an open wooded field were 241 white, salt-filled bags, one for each mile that Gandhi walked. Four bags stood separately with the words SALT, BRITISH, KHADI and GANDHI in red. Nearby, a small red rowing boat was placed upside down as a metaphor for maritime trade routes and the coast of Dandi. Uniting these elements was a paisley motif mown directly into the grass, pointing to the Norwich shawls which adapted the motif from shawls sent by colonial officers in India to their wives at home.⁶

Joseph DeLappe is a performance artist and art professor whose work inquisitively engages with issues of memory, politics, history, physicality and the virtual. He believes that it is essential for him, as an artist and as a citizen of the world, to engage in and challenge the norms and expectations of the digital present and the larger cultural context.⁷ In 2008, in his *Re-enactment: The Salt Satyagraha Online*, he walked the 241 miles of the original march, starting his performance on 12 March and ending it on 6 April, at Eyebeam Art and Technology at New York and on Second Life, the web-based virtual world. He walked on a treadmill customized for cyberspace such that each step he took controlled the forward movement of his avatar, MGandhi Chakrabarti, on Second Life, thus enabling a simultaneously real and virtual re-enactment. For those twenty-five days, he interacted with visitors from all over the world who had logged onto Second Life in their various avatars. He told them about the march, answered their questions and some of them joined him on the walk in cyberspace just like the many who joined Gandhi in 1930. The route in Second Life took him to digital simulations of Tiananmen Square where MGandhi Chakrabarti came face to face with a tank, Guantanamo Bay Detention Centre and a 'Palestinian Holocaust Museum' still under construction, evoking contemporary conflicts and human rights abuses. The last day was at a virtual Dandi memorial. The following year, DeLappe performed *Gandhi in Prison on Second*



Figure 6.4 DeLappe on treadmill with Gandhi avatar in background. Photo by Laurie A. Macfee, courtesy of Joseph DeLappe.



Figure 6.5 Gandhi avatar at Dandi monument with other avatars. Photo courtesy of Joseph DeLappe.

Life, re-enacting Gandhi's days in prison after the Dandi March to the accompaniment of readings from Torture Memos of the Bush era.

The examples show that both the Dandi March, the symbol of salt in particular, and the larger context of the Salt Satyagraha become available to everyone as human beings with agency, responding to their time in the way Gandhi responded to his. The Dandi March's anti-establishment intent seems to invest it with a motive power which spirals outwards in its impact. These interpretations of the Dandi March reflect the changing contours of India and the world, and India-in-the-world where invoking that event of 1930 offers an expanded space for protest and the expression of human agency in the global present.

If the Dandi March opens an international space for contemporary interpretation outside of itself, the Republic Day Parade, with its continuing preoccupation with the idea of projecting the Indian nation, offers space for political expression within itself. Again, we examine two examples for insights into the unfolding dynamic of the event through reconfigurations of the military and cultural segments of the parade from within and without. The idea of the cultural display as 'a moving pageant of India in its rich diversity' bore within it its own contradictions. Nehru's enthusiasm was institutionalized into government guidelines to the states for proposals for tableaux scrupulously emphasizing authenticity and seeking assurance 'that the selected dance is a genuine folk dance and the costumes and musical instruments are traditional and authentic' (quoted in Jain, J. 2007).

An officer of the Sangeet Natak Akademi (the national institution for the preservation of dance and musical forms) who has been associated with the Republic Day Folk Dance Festival preceding the parade reveals the limits of such bureaucratic safeguards. According to him, as time went on, dancers at these festivals were often urban, sometimes college students and even actresses, who rehearsed in Delhi to create 'folk' dances for the festival. State governments allotted money for buying new costumes for troupes representing them in Delhi; officials who either had no idea of local traditions, or could not care less, bought the wrong fabrics and colours in an effort to make the state's presentation attractive. Ironically, dance historians use images from these annual festivals to illustrate their books on Indian folk dances, which in turn become academic sources for reference (Jain, J. 2007).

To add to this, Nehru also wanted to give India 'the garb of modernity' and through industrial and scientific projects improve the quality of everyday life in India. The Nagas, Santhals and Bhils whose culture he found 'so attractive' have modernized and urbanized. But state tableaux, in search for the chimera of 'authenticity', present them in romanticized depictions as 'children of nature' with forest backdrops, often derived from colonial anthropological archives (Jain, J. 2007).

The transformations in the military display show a different inward trajectory. In late 1962, India and China went to war which ended with a humiliating conclusion for India. In the parade of 1963 soon after, both the military and cultural displays were cancelled and replaced with a civilian procession of Prime Minister Nehru and his cabinet colleagues, political representatives from different states, chancellors, deans, professors and students of Delhi University, a thousand representatives of the national trade unions, two thousand women and four thousand children in a show of national solidarity. In contrast, in 2000, India's conflict with Pakistan in Kashmir was manifested in victory tableaux accompanied by displays of the weaponry which won the battle. In each of these situations, the military segment of the parade was used to compose a narrative of the nation as a cohesive entity, united against threats from outside (Roy 2007: 83; Jain, J. 2007).

But what of internal dissension? Through all the intervening decades there have been many moments when different regions of India have resisted the state and their resistance has even taken the form of armed struggle, often to the point of threatening secession. However, the script of the parade, by definition, does not permit space for this kind of expression. It would amount to an existential crisis if it did. The Republic Day Parade, and the deeper power structure in which its design elements are embedded, domesticates the human being with agency into obedient citizens and passive spectators who buy tickets for a place in the audience. Designed to be repeated annually to the same script with greater and greater degrees of inauthenticity, it lives on in an ever-tightening entropic spiral. In celebrating the nation in the form of a scripted bureaucratic ritual of obedience, with its references to empire, the parade offers no space for interpretation or expression, pointing to an increasingly intractable Indian state. The only way its space can be entered is by disruption in the form of demonstrations, and boycotts of official Republic Day celebrations. As a result, the parade now takes place under elaborate security arrangements and the President takes salute in a transparent bulletproof enclosure. A day whose origins lay in anti-imperialist protest is now the site of protest against the very idea of nationhood that it seeks to symbolize and celebrate.

Conclusion

Placing the Dandi March and Republic Day Parade side by side reveals that they share many structural elements – both were varieties of marches designed, in content and form, as symbolically coded performances alluding to historical events and images in order to reach out to domestic and international publics. The diversity of India and Indians was central to the way both were imagined. The juxtaposition also reveals the fact that the two events diverged dramatically in the way these design devices were deployed. If the Dandi March was

visualized as a one-off event, the Republic Day Parade was designed as one that that would be repeated annually. While the Dandi March was coded with the quality of each-according-to-his-own-capacity, the Republic Day parade was designed so that replication was achieved by bureaucratic diktat and reproduced at the state level with holographic exactitude. Flowing from this is the important difference in the location of Indians on the axes of participation and spectatorship. For the Dandi March, people were imagined as participants in the creation of a preferred future; the Parade regarded people as performers and spectators, and in both roles as recipients of a state-imagined preferred future.

And what conception of India did each embody? The composition of the marching contingent to Dandi pointed to India's social, religious, regional diversity but visually united in *khadi*, their differences dissolved and resolved in a fellowship of the simple life and self-sufficiency. More importantly, diversity was coded into the event in a completely different way with the possibility of varied participation, each according to his or her ability. In the Republic Day Parade, diversity was visually emphasized, made explicit in dress and dance, with participants ostensibly united by their citizenship of the new state. If disobedience was the leitmotif of the Dandi March, then obedience and routinized falling-in-line was the organizing principal of the Republic Day Parade. In these last two aspects lies the nature of longevity of the two events.

The accounts and analyses of the design of the two events explored in this chapter pose several provocations for the writing of national design histories in a global context. First, it suggests that design historiography might be productively expanded if it were to move beyond normative notions of design as manifested by existing categories such as industrial design, visual communication, fashion and so on. By exploring a domain such as political practice and statecraft the chapter suggests a methodological shift which illuminates how design imagination and design praxis is deployed by agents who have hitherto not been considered designers, thus opening up a rich ground for fresh exploration in diverse global settings.

Flowing from this is a second provocation: how may design history illuminate political design as well as the politics of design in colonial and postcolonial settings? The chapter has attempted to explore the ways in which design is implicated in the visualization of the notion of 'nation'. It offers a reciprocal lens whereby the evolution of a particular strand of Indian nationalism in the context of the country's colonial experience is revealed through design, and the examination of that strand in turn reveals design as a space and mode of action in the political domain.

Lastly, in exploring the afterlife of the two events, this chapter opens up a discussion within design scholarship on the agency of design and designers in the global present. It suggests the contingent nature of agency in the two case studies, yet points to the ways in which agency is transferred to new actors, or is seized by them, in response to the exigencies of the global present. In so doing

it throws fresh light on the essential iterative nature of design as ever a work in progress.

Notes

1. The South African march of 1913 was a mass upsurge of all who were adversely affected by the Immigration Act. The Dandi March, in comparison, was deliberately designed and strategically crafted as symbolic communication.

2. Women were not included since Gandhi felt that their presence would give him unfair advantage over the British who would feel constrained about taking decisive action against a group which included women. For details about the selection of marchers see Weber (1997: 90, 104–109).

3. For a detailed account of the Salt Satyagraha see Weber (1997) and for an analysis of Gandhi's communication strategy see Suchitra (1995).

4. See Masselos 1996: 191–194 and Roy 2007: 71–75 for detailed discussions of the Republic Day Parade's colonial and anti-imperialist lineages.

5. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi re-enacted the march in 1991.

6. Details of Foley's artistic approach retrieved 16 March 2014 from <http://www.ndoylefineart.com/foley.html>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiona_Foley. Images of Foley's work can be seen at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lwr/28695845/in/set-647026>

7. Details of DeLappe's artistic approach retrieved 18 March 2014 from <http://www.delappe.net/words/artists-statement/>. Daily accounts of DeLappe's Salt March can be viewed at <http://saltmarchsecondlife.wordpress.com/2008/03/>

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CHAPTER 7

Troubled Geography

Imagining Lebanon in 1960s Tourist Promotion

ZEINA MAASRI

At the turn of 1969, a peculiar advertisement appeared in *The Economist* issue of 27 Dec.–2 Jan. (Fig. 7.1). The ad featured two attractive young women posing fashionably in a prototypical Mediterranean beach setting on a perfectly sunny day. Their shimmering golden bikinis further intensify the sunshine while evoking the futuristic glamour of the day. Here's an image that would get anyone in the northern hemisphere dreaming of escape – at least from the December freeze. The country advertised is one where you can enjoy the much-desired sun, beach and associated fun, in utmost modernity.

This is Lebanon as represented in the 1960s and early 1970s by the Lebanese Council for Tourism, a then newly established state agency. Shortly after the appearance of the ad in *The Economist*, a Mr and Mrs Robertson wrote a letter of complaint in the English periodical the *New Statesman* questioning: 'Why is a colour ad for the Lebanon running in last week's *Economist* posed against the Fraglioni of Capri?'¹ Their public inquisition illustrates how this ad might have stirred some confusion in the tourism imaginary of a Euro-American public to whom it was addressed, assertively expressed here at least by the distrusting couple.

The Economist ad and ensuing response provoke a series of questions concerning Lebanon's tourism publicity at the time. To begin with, why would the Lebanese state, by way of its Tourism Council and its agents – graphic designers included – choose to promote the country as a modern European-styled Mediterranean tourist destination? And second, what does this image mean in a context of conflicting politics of nationhood and belonging to the Arab world?

Notes for this section begin on page 139.



Figure 7.1 Advertisement for Lebanon in *The Economist*, 27 Dec.–2 Jan. 1969–1970. Designed by Mona Bassili Sehnaoui for The National Council of Tourism in Lebanon.

To answer these questions and untangle the politics that lay in the production and circulation of this ad, I shall take a close look at the promotional prints issued by the National Council for Tourism in 1960s–1970s Lebanon. My study unpacks the discursive and aesthetic implications of graphic design by examining the tourism prints through two intersecting frameworks, that of global modernity and that of postcolonial nation building. My analysis relates the tourism prints first to the modernizing agenda of the state and its desire to position Lebanon on the global map of emerging mass tourism, particularly the one flourishing on the European side of the Mediterranean basin from the French Riviera all the way to the Greek islands. Moreover, the Lebanese state in the 1960s was keen on developing its tourism sector as it grew to become one of the main national industries. As I will discuss, the Tourism Council sought to substitute an older imaginary of Lebanon as a regional mountain summer resort with images of modernity on the Mediterranean coast. At the outset, this approach could be situated within a modernizing framework of the Lebanese state that looked towards the ‘developed’ West for a tourism model to emulate. However, the lens of global modernity becomes complicated once Lebanon’s colonial history, its creation as a nation state and ensuing national identity politics are brought to the fore. Accordingly, I move to critically interrogate the

politics of a Mediterranean geography of belonging, especially in light of its antagonistic relation to contemporary politics of Arab nationalism. My study links the purported Mediterranean geography back to a dominant imaginary of Lebanon expressed in the discourses of the country's most influential nationalists. I argue that Lebanon's 1960s–1970s tourism prints, as mass-mediated modern artefacts of visual culture, contributed to the discursive formation of a Lebanese subjectivity premised on separatism from the Arab context, endorsing as such a Westernized cosmopolitan character of the nation and its people.

Lebanon as a Summer Resort for the Arab East

Summer vacationing became a common practice in the newly formed state of Lebanon during French colonial rule (1920–1943). Referred to as *estivage*, from the French root *été* (summer) or *villégiature* (*village*), this designated the geography of Mount Lebanon as a summer resort. The touristic practice, very much inscribed within the era's European travels to the colonies, encouraged foreigners living in the region to flee the heat of the summer on the coast or in the Arabian hinterland and retreat to the freshness of the Lebanese mountains (Kfoury 1959: 276). Lebanon as a summer resort was encouraged by local authorities in coordination with the French Haut Commissariat (al-Hassan 1973: 31–32; Kassir 2003: 363–369) and promoted as such by related travel enterprises. Mount Lebanon had its share of idyllic representations in guides such as the 1925 and 1928 editions of *Guide de Villégiature du Mont Liban* as well as in the famed colonial travel posters of the period as part of the campaign 'Liban et Syrie, Pays de Villégiature' (Kassir 2003: 364–365; cf. Ghazzi 1997).

The practice of summer vacationing in the Lebanese mountains was also taken up by an affluent Arab community, namely from Egypt, Palestine and Iraq, who took seasonal summer residence in Mount Lebanon. Facilitated by the new transportation networks, the trend gained currency in the 1930s and 1940s, rendering Mount Lebanon a summer destination for the wider Arab East including a domestic influx of wealthier Lebanese incoming from the coastal cities (Kfoury 1959: 276–278; al-Hassan 1973: 31). Thus *estivage* met its Arabic equivalent of *istiyaf*, from the root of the word *sayf*, meaning summer.

The post-independence Lebanese state, recognizing the importance of this growing economic sector, began to consolidate its efforts to develop, regulate and promote Lebanon's tourism. *Al-mufawwadhiya al-'amma lil'siyaha wal'istiyaf* (The General Office of Tourism and Summer Vacationing), founded in late 1948 as part of the Ministry of Economy, was the first serious government initiative of the sort. Promotional prints published by the General Office further entertained the tourist imagination of Lebanon as a mountain summer resort. One such poster, which can be dated to the early 1950s, is a case in point. The image



Figure 7.2 Poster ‘Lebanon, the summer resort of Arab countries’. C. early 1950s. Designer anonymous. The General Office of Tourism and Summer Vacationing. Size: 70×100 cm lithography. Collection A. Bou Jaoudeh.

is a painted scene that captures an idyllic moment of a cool afternoon in the quietude of the Lebanese mountains. An inviting table of fresh fruits, coffee and an earthenware water pitcher are set in the context of an outdoor porch of vernacular Lebanese mountain architecture and complemented by the cool shades of a vine tree. The composition is aesthetically akin to the practice of landscape painting in modern art in Lebanon at the time, which was culturally intertwined with nation building (Scheid 2005: chapter 3). In an intricate interplay of text and image – and here I am borrowing Roland Barthes’ analysis of ‘Italianicity’ in the Panzani ad (1977: 34) – the title anchors the symbolic connotations of ‘Lebaneseness’ in the painted vista (ibid: 37–41). Set in Arabic calligraphy it reads: ‘Lebanon, the summer resort of Arab countries’.

L’Estivage se meurt, vive le tourisme

On 12 September 1955, an article with the headline ‘L’estivage se meurt, vive le tourisme’ (summer vacationing is dying, long live tourism) appeared in the

Francophone magazine *La Revue du Liban*. The author, Jean-Prosper Gay-Para, a renowned figure behind many of the flourishing tourism services and business establishments in Lebanon at the time, declared the end of an era of mountain summer vacationing. In this article, and in more that followed, Gay-Para appeals to a public of Lebanese readership to press for a paradigm shift in the local tourism economy from a 'monotonous traditional' practice to a modern one in tune with a burgeoning international tourism industry (Gay-Para 1962: 49–50).

Gay-Para presents four important reasons why this shift ought to occur. The first, he claims, is new means of transportation. Affluent Arab visitors travelled by land to spend their summers in the Lebanese mountains. Now, with commercial air travel they could go anywhere in Europe, which presented serious competition that threatened Lebanon's main tourism clients. However, air travel, Gay-Para encourages his readers, should motivate Lebanon to reach out to new tourists beyond the Arab region. The second reason concerns the appeal of the beach as a new summer resort, gaining in popularity compared with the mountains. Beach holidays offered modern and trendy leisure activities such as sunbathing, swimming and other water sports. The third pertains to the development of hotels and the growth of the hospitality services, particularly in the coastal capital city Beirut, serving emerging business related travel to Lebanon. Finally, Gay-Para concludes that the emergence of a modern youth culture in the coastal cities, less conformist than in the mountain villages, promises 'adventures'. Gay-Para's prescient advice begins to explain the modern girls on a beach scene in *The Economist* ad. The 'Lebaneseness' of the mountain resort and its appeal to an Arab public, as we saw in an earlier poster, was replaced with the modernity of the beach and the 'adventures' that it promises to an international public. This wider public is summoned by the mere act of placing an ad in a periodical like *The Economist*.

The General Office of Tourism and Summer Vacationing is generally credited with having paved the way for Lebanon's tourism sector, through the institution of new policies and the planning of major projects in the 1950s. It established tourism information offices, a tourism police, a school of hotel management, and refurbished archaeological sites, building the first ski resort in Lebanon and a landmark casino, among other modern European-modelled leisure activities. These projects already indicate a desire to share in the rising global tourist economy of the mid-1950s. Lebanon joined the International Federation of Tourism, and the Chairman of the Lebanese Tourism Office, Michel Touma, presided over the International Federation from 1955 to 1956. Studies suggest that the tourism industry grew to become one of the pillars of Lebanon's national economy (Kfoury 1959: 278–282). While the Office of Tourism played an important transitional role in transforming the Lebanese tourism economy, it was, however, the National Council of Tourism in Lebanon (NCTL), a governmental organization borne out of administrative

restructuring in the early 1960s, which strove to locate Lebanon on the global map of mass tourism, as I shall discuss below.

Mobilizing Graphic Design: Communication Strategy and Aesthetics

The NCTL was founded in 1962 with the aim of developing and modernizing the tourism sector in Lebanon, with the following stated objectives: to establish new tourism facilities and activities including tourism targeted at youth markets; to promote tourism and to research and study the tourism market (al-Hassan 1973: 47). A significant budget was allocated to the promotion of tourism abroad, which was performed through offices opened by the NCTL in major tourist markets mostly in European cities, in addition to one in New York and another in Cairo. Writing in 1973, Hassan al-Hassan, director of what was to become later the Ministry of Tourism, reproaches the NCTL for having largely neglected the Arab market (al-Hassan 1973: 52). His criticism can be corroborated by the abundance of promotional communication in foreign languages (Italian, German, English and French) and the complete dearth of Arabic. Breaking with its predecessor's Arabic slogan 'Lebanon: the summer resort of Arab countries', the NCTL rearticulated Lebanon's tourism image and discourse to a largely European public.

Initially the NCTL outsourced the creation and production of most of its important publicity material. The Council commissioned professional photographers, including renowned international ones such as the travel photographer Fulvio Roiter, to document what it outlined as the main attractions of Lebanon. Roiter's photographs were first published in a 1967 book, *Liban: Lumière des siècles* (Lebanon: the Light of Centuries), complemented by the text of Max-Pol Fouchet – another acclaimed travel writer – and produced in Switzerland. The photographs were also used in a poster series for Lebanon, which was produced by Draeger printers in Paris, yet another famed European establishment.

In the late 1960s, however, the NCTL set up an in-house graphic design department to handle all its promotional publications. The Council chose Mona Bassili Sehnaoui to spearhead this new venture. Sehnaoui had just returned from the USA, where she earned a Bachelor Degree in Communication Arts from the University of Arizona. She was the first academically trained graphic designer to set up a practice in Lebanon. Throughout her four-year tenure at the NCTL from 1969 to 1972, Sehnaoui furnished the youthful image and modern aesthetic that Gay-Para advocated and that the Council sought to achieve in positioning Lebanon on the international circuit of tourism. Like anyone trained in the USA or Europe at the time, she knew the formal guidelines of graphic modernism.

The advocates of the ‘Swiss School’, otherwise known as ‘International Modernism’, in the 1960s set out clear guidelines of what qualified as ‘modern’ and ‘universal’ graphic design (McCoy 1994). Sehnaoui used an underlying modular grid to lay out graphical elements especially in text-heavy multi-page publications, sets her texts in modern sans-serif ‘neutral’ typefaces like Helvetica and its derivatives, resorts to graphic shapes based on basic geometry, and finally ensures an abundance of white space in the composition to assert the desired minimalist modern aesthetic. Sehnaoui also began to create a graphic identity for the NCTL – another modernist design manoeuvre born out of the keen spirit of systemization particularly favoured by large corporations of the time. She designed a logo – still in use today with minor alteration – revising an older calligraphic expression of the word ‘Lebanon’ in Arabic previously used by the Council. And she created a set of graphical elements that were systematically applied across a wide range of printed matter, which the NCTL employed in its interface with the public.

Nonetheless, Sehnaoui’s initial training in Fine Art drawing and painting² distinguished her work from the rational austerity of the ‘Swiss School’ and its standardizing effect (cf. Good and Good 2001). While modernists favoured the ‘objectivity’ of modern photography over hand-drawn illustration (Moholy-Nagy 1999), Sehnaoui relied heavily on her own drawing skills, using a variety of techniques to interpret and express her subject matter. Her more illustrative approach personalizes and humanizes the modernist machine aesthetic. Moreover, Sehnaoui’s work for the Council can also be qualified as up-to-the-minute in the fashionable sense of the term. Her flashy colours, graphic motifs



Figure 7.3 Series of leaflets containing touristic information using as a graphic system a newly designed calligraphic logo for Lebanon. Designed by Mona Bassili Sehnaoui for The National Council of Tourism in Lebanon. C. 1970. 18×10 cm (closed). Collection of the designer.

and some of her display typography are reminiscent of 1960s youth pop culture, namely the incorporation of psychedelic graphics into mainstream trends. The NCTL stationery she conceived in flashy fuchsia pink and orange catches the eyes like a huge psychedelic lollipop, as do a number of her tourism posters and brochure covers (Fig. 7.4). In that sense, her graphic design affinities are more akin to her New York contemporaries, the Push Pin studio and Milton Glaser who, inspired by the graphic upsurge of a youthful counter culture, began to challenge the Swiss legacy in mainstream graphic design practice in the USA (Aynsley 2004: 152–155).

Generally, Sehnaoui's design approach endows her tourism prints with an aesthetic that expresses a particularly modern, youthful and fashionable Lebanon; when once asked about her vibrant colour palette, she responded: 'these were the Mary Quant years' (Sehnaoui 2013). Thus, the British icon of 1960s fashion is recalled in Sehnaoui's discussion of her own graphic work. The intersection of style culture across design disciplines is particular to the late 1960s period (Jobling and Crowley 1996: 214) but also telling of a context in Beirut in which the 'Mary Quant years' resonated. This brings us back to *The Economist* ad in the way that it foregrounds a certain style of fashion photography, particularly how it stages two women striking active glamorous

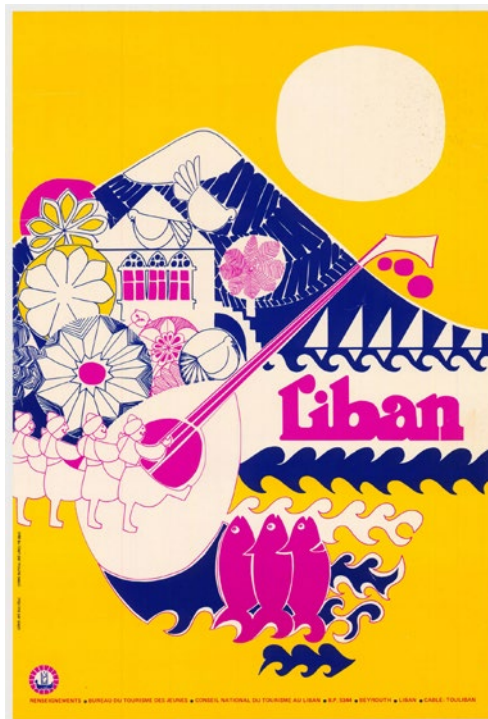


Figure 7.4 Poster 'Lebanon'. Designed by Mona Bassili Sehnaoui for The National Council of Tourism in Lebanon. C. 1969. 34×50 cm. Collection of the designer.

poses. Samir Kassir writes of Beirut in the 1960s as the Arab capital for the assimilation of the latest European fashion, where young girls paraded in mini-skirts on the busy commercial streets of Beirut and in the universe of imported and local magazines that adorned the city's many bookshops (2003: 445–455). Here, the modern myth of Beirut as the 'Paris of the East' seems to find some degree of materiality at least in terms of fashion, an aspect that Sehnaoui and the NCTL seemed to be keen to project.

Global Tourism on the Mediterranean

The geographic turn from the mountain to the beach in Lebanon was concomitant with a particular interest in the Mediterranean as a modern leisure site in emerging mass tourism. The seductive images of a languorous yet modern beach culture spread from St Tropez, Cannes and Nice to Capri. Nations on the margins of the French and Italian Riviera sought to carve a space on their shores to welcome the flourishing Mediterranean tourism economy. Lebanon was no exception. The history of tourism promotion in countries such as Greece and Spain indicates transformations in image rhetoric and tropes corresponding to those experienced in Lebanon at the time (Emmanouil 2012; Pelta 2011). These studies also concur that the new touristic image is inscribed within modernizing frameworks, mostly state-led, seeking to challenge perceptions of Mediterranean societies as Europe's traditional 'other'. In his comparative study of the development of mass tourism in Spain and Tunisia in the 1960s and 1970s, Waleed Hazbun observes how the rising popularity of 'sea, sun and fun' eventually led to the standardization of a generic form of Mediterranean tourism defined by northern European tastes (2009: 208).

The Lebanese case is perhaps no different than that of Spain, Greece and Tunisia in the standardization incurred from efforts to modernize the tourism sector and appeal to a northern European public. Yet, there seems to be more at stake in Lebanon's geo-touristic turn towards the Mediterranean, which is not only constrained by the global tourism economy. Unlike Spain and Greece, which form part of Europe, Tunisia and Lebanon's Westward-looking Mediterranean tourism complicates their cultural and political belonging to the Arab East. In Tunisia, beach tourism was seen as part of President Bourguiba's Western-oriented modernization and criticized as such by the more conservative and religious communities (ibid: 213). In Lebanon, the case differs slightly, due to the country's multi-sectarian political structure, ruling Christian elite and ensuing complicated identity politics, vis-à-vis its ties to the Arab and Muslim East since its formation. As I will discuss in the following section, the shift from mountain to coast bespeaks more than a story of global modernity when examined in light of a genealogy of discourses of Lebanese nationalism.

Lebanon: The Switzerland of the East

Lebanon, as a modern nation state, is the result of colonial partition of the Middle East in the aftermath of World War I. Historians of modern Lebanon agree that, at the time of partitioning, the Christians – predominantly Maronites of Mount Lebanon – were the only community that saw in Lebanon a sense of national identification, an extension of their initial Christian refuge into a viable modern homeland in the wider Muslim Arab East. Meanwhile, the vast majority of Muslims and a significant community of other non-Maronite Christians were voicing objections to the separation incurred by the newly formed state and expressed Syrian or Arab nationalist identification (Salibi 1993: 169; Traboulsi 2007: 80–85).

As such, ensuing Lebanese nationalist discourses, articulated particularly by an elite of Christian intellectuals, are premised on a tight correspondence between the modern Lebanese nation and its embryonic political geography – Mount Lebanon. Hence, the ‘Lebaneseness’ of the mountain summer resort in the tourism advertisement discussed earlier in this chapter projects more than a touristic vista. Here, tourism meets politics. ‘Lebanon, a summer resort for the Arab countries’, as the title promised, is not outside political inscriptions of the imagined nation. As a matter of fact, Lebanon’s early nationalists envisioned Mount Lebanon’s touristic promise as integral to nation building (Kassir 2003: 364; Traboulsi 2007: 92–93). In his 1924 book *Pour faire du Liban la Suisse du Levant* (Making Lebanon into the Switzerland of the Levant), Jacques Tabet presented the central arguments for developing Lebanon on the model of the Swiss Alps. He elaborates on the touristic potential as part of a triad of political and economic conditions common between the two countries. Like Switzerland, Lebanon – by way of its mountains – provides a climatic, aesthetic, therapeutic and leisurely escape for the Arab East. His views were shared by a like-minded group of nationalist intellectuals, of which he formed a part, united around the Beirut-based *La Revue Phénicienne*. The ‘new Phoenicianists’, as they were known, had been involved in developing tourism in Mount Lebanon through the Syro-Lebanese Touring Club, which they took part in founding in 1920 in close collaboration with the French mandate (cf. Khoury 2008). Tabet’s treatise propelled and justified a wave of related political and economic policies, which would popularize the discourse of similarity under the myth of ‘Lebanon, the Switzerland of the East’ (Traboulsi 2007: 92). Appropriating the image of Switzerland in conceiving Lebanon’s national identity was part of a political desire to evoke Lebanon’s particularism in the Arab East in which the mountain geography played an important role. However, the same desire, I shall demonstrate below, has engendered another nationalist discourse linking Lebanon to ancient Phoenicia and mobilizing an altogether different geography: that of the Mediterranean.

Lebanon: The Cradle of Civilization

Similar to nation-building processes elsewhere in the world, modern nationalist discourses incorporate genealogical narratives of ancestry that justify the existence of the newly formed state. This is what Benedict Anderson describes as one of the three paradoxes of nationalism: ‘The objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists’ (2006: 5). In the case of Lebanon, it was the resuscitation of glorious Phoenicia that played a foundational role in the articulation of a Lebanese nationalist discourse, which justified the expanded territory of the new nation and aimed to distinguish the Lebanese from the Arab context. In his study of the formation of a Lebanese identity in 1920s Lebanon, Kaufman traces the phenomenon of what he refers to as the ‘Phoenician myth of origin’ (2014). He observes how Lebanese intellectuals, informed by a nineteenth-century French orientalist interest in ancient Phoenicia as an extension of Western land on the Mediterranean, reclaimed Lebanon’s Phoenician ancestry. In doing so, Kaufman argues, nationalists constructed a Lebanese genealogy linked to the West and severed ties to the Arabs. The foundational text of Youssef al-Saouda, one of the key intellectuals to which Kaufman refers, is important to cite in the context of our discussion. Al-Saouda reminds us in his 1919 book *Fi Sabil Lubnan* (For the Sake of Lebanon) that the Phoenicians were the forefathers of Western culture and civilization and its disseminators in the Mediterranean basin (Kaufman 2014: 61–62). In making his case for Phoenician ancestry and Western genealogy, al-Saouda offers an allegory of Lebanon as ‘the cradle of civilization’. The latter image is of particular relevance to a discussion about the intersection between nation building and the geographic imaginary in tourism promotion, as I mentioned above. However, al-Saouda’s discourse summons another Lebanese subjectivity, excavated by way of the country’s Mediterranean geography and history as an addition to that of Mount Lebanon.

Lebanon as ‘the cradle of civilization’ is a recurrent trope across all the promotional prints issued by the NCTL in the 1960s. Al-Saouda’s words are echoed almost verbatim in the introductory texts of Lebanon’s tourism brochures and guides. One of them, for instance, opens with the following text: ‘Lebanon, with its 200 Km of coast, stretches along one side of the Mediterranean shore and has always been a site where East meets West [. . .] The Phoenicians, considered the ancestors of the Lebanese, lived by the coast [. . .] At the height of their civilization their alphabet spread across the Mediterranean basin’.³ The back of the same brochure (Fig. 7.5), and that of several similar ones, features a cartographic map of Lebanon with a North–South locator that situates the country in a Mediterranean geography. The latter is graphically rendered like some generic ancient mythological map of the world. The reference to a Phoenician–Mediterranean heritage is hard to miss and is capitalized on as a touristic attraction. The ‘cradle of civilization in the world’ is visually materialized through

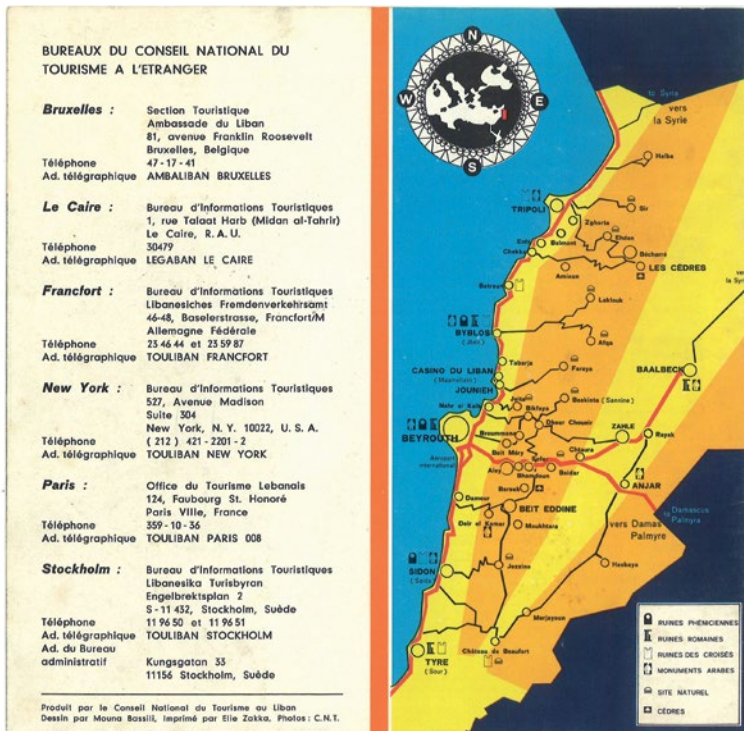


Figure 7.5 Back cover of a tourism brochure with a map of Lebanon and a North-South locator framing the Mediterranean Sea. Designed by Mona Bassili Sehnaoui for The National Council of Tourism in Lebanon. C. 1970. 21×23 cm. Collection of the designer.

highlighting Roman and Phoenician archaeological sites at the expense of the relatively more recent Islamic or Arab cultural heritage of the country's major cities. The centrality of the Roman ruins of Ba'alback in touristic imagery of Lebanon constitutes a particular case in point. In his study of popular culture and nationalism in Lebanon, Christopher Stone examines how the Ba'alback International Festival established in the mid-1950s transformed the ancient Roman ruins into a symbolic representation that stands for modern Lebanon.

Stone draws on Partha Chatterjee's theory of the 'classicization of tradition' in postcolonial nation building (1993) to demonstrate how the festival founders, in close correlation with the Lebanese state and associated nationalist intellectuals, claimed cultural connection to the ancient site (Stone 2008). With highbrow international performances by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra (1959), the Royal Ballet (1961 and 1964), the Opéra de Paris (1962), and Miles Davis (1971), among others, staged in the majestic ruins of Ba'alback, the Maronite national elite was keen to project, in Stone's words, 'a westward looking nation that had reclaimed its original Phoenician role as a cultivator of culture and civilization' (Stone 2008: 32).

Ba'alback indeed gets the lion's share in promotion for Lebanon particularly since the foundation of the NCTL in 1962. Unlike preceding campaigns featuring inanimate majestic ruins, as was the case in French colonial travel posters, in the Council's posters the Ba'alback site is always actualized and animated by the festival. I would add to Stone's argument that this particular imaging of modern Lebanon, in and through the Ba'alback site, was inscribed within a larger discursive framework taking shape across all the tourism promotion by the NCTL in the 1960s and through the early 1970s. While Lebanon was being articulated as 'the cradle of civilization' in the mid-1950s in the modern re-appropriation of the Ba'alback site, it was similarly and, I argue, more widely articulated in the 1960s' touristic turn towards the Mediterranean coast. Here, we see that the beach site in *The Economist* ad tells us more than a tale of global modernity. After all, the Mediterranean basin was Phoenician territory par excellence. With this I turn to Michel Chiha, another member of the 'New Phoenicianists', astute banker and key francophone nationalist intellectual whose linkage between the ancient Mediterranean Phoenician world and a purported modern 'Lebanese universalism', I shall argue, discursively informs Lebanon's tourism promotion in the 1960s.

Lebanon's Mediterranean Universalism

Geographic determinism provides the cultural and economic argument for Michel Chiha's modern Lebanon (Traboulsi 1999: chapter 2). He was influential in defining a liberal economic model for Lebanon that is organized, like that of old Phoenicia, around free trade and exchange across the Mediterranean basin. Chiha retains as such, in a post-independence framework, al-Saouda's discourse of unity between mountain and sea in the imagined geography of the nation (Traboulsi 1999: 21) outlining accordingly the state's economy policies. However, Chiha diverges from al-Saouda and his colleagues in *La Revue Phénicienne* who identify Lebanon, by way of its ancestral mountain, as a Christian refuge and homeland. His 'Phoenicianism', Fawwaz Traboulsi asserts, foregrounds a distinctly cosmopolitan cultural discourse of multi-sectarian coexistence in the Mediterranean narrative maintained by the economic interest of a 'people of merchants' (ibid: 45–46). In his seminal 1951 public lecture 'Lebanon in the World', Chiha transposes al-Saouda's foundational concept of Lebanon as the 'cradle of civilization in the world' from its historical framework to a contemporary understanding of 'Lebanese universalism': 'Our mission in the historical world meets up with our mission in the geographical setting [...] Our Calling for Universalism begins with the Mediterranean, when the Mediterranean was the world' (Chiha 1994: 136).

It is through the words of Chiha that the map of the Mediterranean on the back of the tourism brochures reveals its subtext. In its geographic finitude and

reference to old-style aesthetics the map graphically represents a return in time to the Mediterranean as ‘the world’. Affixed on the back of a modern promotional pamphlet, it acts as a seal of authenticity that claims historical anteriority to the promotion of Lebanon as a contemporary object. It implies visually ‘... since antiquity’. Like Ba’alback, the Mediterranean here is culturally reclaimed within Lebanon’s national narrative and actualized as a modern site of cosmopolitan leisure.

Conclusion

The touristic shift from the quietude of the mountain resort catering for an Arab public to that of a globally tuned-in seascape is not simply the effect of modernity’s standardization of the tourism industry on the Mediterranean. As I have demonstrated, the two images are modern constructions that are shaped by two distinct, yet linked, discursive moments in Lebanon’s nation building process. Once viewed through this lens, the change in landscape reads from ‘Lebanon, the Switzerland of the Levant’ to ‘Lebanon’s Mediterranean Universalism’. Both statements articulate a Western oriented Lebanese subjectivity. However, the discourse of the latter lay at the crux of a modern cosmopolitan subjectivity centred on the coastal capital city Beirut, rather than the parochial nationalism of Mount Lebanon (Hourani 1976).

The distinction between the mountain and the city in the articulation of a modern Lebanese subjectivity brings us back to Gay-Para who had early on pleaded for the move to the coastal city as a space for new leisure practices open for adventures. Interestingly, towards the end of his article Gay-Para sums up his arguments in a symbolic premonition: ‘After Ba’alback, Beirut should be the next Geneva of the East’. Gay-Para here endorses Stone’s argument of Ba’alback constituting a symbolic representation of a modern cosmopolitan Lebanon. However, in Gay-Para’s discourse Ba’alback, is already a thing of the past. Beirut, on the other hand, is the future. After all, the quintessential expression of Lebanese cosmopolitanism in the 1960s revolved around ‘Beirut (not Lebanon), the Paris (not Switzerland and not Geneva) of the East’.

Consequently, this chapter reveals how graphic design is implicated in the discursive articulation of nationhood, in the way that a hegemonic conception of the nation is materialized in, and circulated through, chosen images, graphics and aesthetics. The case of Lebanon presents us with new understandings of how design for the tourism industry intersects with political processes of nation building, modernization and globalization in postcolonial contexts. It demands new questions and transcultural frameworks that complicate a putative binary between the West and non-West in design historiography. Rather than looking for the ‘Lebanese’ as a reified form of non-Western national identity in design, it is more pertinent to ask what the ‘Paris of the East’ looked like

in the aesthetic and cultural materialization of a particular discourse of nationhood in Lebanon.

(P.S. could someone please tell Mr and Mrs Robertson that it was not the Fraglioni of Capri that *The Economist* ad staged! With some imagination they should be able to see a chimera of Brigitte Bardot on the [Lebanese] Riviera. I am referring here to Bardot's sultry 1956 film debut in '... And God Created Woman' set in St-Tropez and to her domestically hailed visit to Lebanon ten years later.)

Notes

The author wishes to express special thanks to Mona Sehnaoui, for opening her archive and for sharing memories of her early career as a graphic designer, and to Paul Jobling, Khaled Malas and the editors, Kjetil Fallan and Grace Lees-Maffei, for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

1. The director of Touristic Promotions in Lebanon responded to this enquiry in the *New Statesman* on 23 January 1970, reassuring the couple and English readers that this is indeed a picture taken in Beirut, Lebanon.

2. During her residency in Alexandria, Mona Bassili Sehnaoui attended the Sylvio Bicchi Academy from 1957 to 1960 and trained in tempera technique in the studio of an Italian painter, based in Alexandria, named Sebastì. In 1962 she joined the Fine Arts programme at the American University of Beirut for two years before moving to complete her studies in Communication Arts at the University of Arizona, Tuscon in 1964.

3. Translated from French by the author.

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CHAPTER 8

Czech Glass or Bohemian Crystal?

The Nationality of Design in the Czech Context

MARTA FILIPOVÁ

For over a century, ‘Czech’ and ‘Bohemian’ have been attributes ascribed to various glass objects which come from today’s Czech Republic. These terms have often been used as synonyms to describe the same geographical, historical or national origins of utility or decorative glass. Yet they are not identical because they carry significance provided mainly by the political context in which they have appeared. Glass can in this sense be seen as a pertinent example of how academic, popular and consumer awareness of design has relied on the understanding that design and its interpretations are framed and influenced by the geopolitical circumstances in which the very objects or theories were created.

Many design exhibitions and publications have explicitly addressed specific historic moments. One of the latest volumes on Czech glass, *New Formations, Czech Avant-Garde Art and Modern Glass from the Roy and Mary Cullen Collection*, maintains that exhibitions are witnesses of their times, as they highlight previously unknown or inaccessible works as well as novel political, historical and geographical areas to new audiences (Srp et al. 2011: 9). At the heart of this exhibition’s catalogue is the Cullen Collection which features not only the works of now more or less well known avant-garde artists from Czechoslovakia, like Karel Teige, Jindřich Štýrský or Toyen (aka Marie Čermínová), but also a collection of Czech modern glass, consisting of moulded and blown vases and other glass objects. Focusing on the period between 1900 and the 1930s, it contains ‘more than three hundred superb pieces, mostly of ornamental glass, and documents the stylistic development of Czech glass during this critical period’ (Mergl 2011: 266).

This period, i.e. the beginning of the twentieth century, is often identified in art and design literature as the height of Central European modernism, in which local responses to the international modern movement took different national forms (Mansbach 2001; Wilk 2008; Benson 2002). In this context, the contributors to *New Formations* discuss Czech glass as an established category alongside those of the Czech avant-garde and Czech modernism. However, Czech glass, and Czech design, are misleading concepts with serious limitations. They suggest that there is an inherent and permanent quality and character to the works, which is related to the national or cultural identity of the Czechs. This understanding of Czech art and design and Czech national identity is static; it disregards the historical and political complexities that affected the notion of a cultural and national consciousness in Bohemia.

While it has now been acknowledged that the Czechness of Czech modernist art and avant-garde is flawed – for it is impossible, as well as redundant, to discriminate specially national features – the concept of Czech design seems to be more resilient. One important factor is commercial, as Czech design can be used as a brand name, yet there are also historical, political and cultural reasons for retaining the notion of national specificity in design.

This chapter examines Czech glass and the construction of a political identity in design, whether national, cultural or ethnic. Glass is here understood as indicative of more general trends in the interpretation of local, regional and national design in the global context, and as a concrete example of the impact of the specific geopolitical circumstances on our understanding of the authenticity of this phenomenon. I focus on theoretical and historical aspects rather than stylistic and aesthetic developments in Czech and Bohemian glass and design. The culturally and nationally specific features of glass and design in the contemporary context require examination of the convoluted and contested history, interpretations and institutions of what is today the Czech Republic. A careful study of such politically charged narratives of glass aims to unpack the myth behind Czech, Bohemian and even Czechoslovak glass and point to the continued importance of national contexts in which design appears. At the same time, the case study of glass from Bohemia points to the legacy of international modernity, which is largely responsible for establishing the nationality of design. The text therefore aims to highlight the existence of the globally accepted narratives in which nationally specific items have become a successful commodity as well as a subject unchallenged for a long time.

Designing Czech Identity

Regular references to ‘Czech design’ and ‘Czech glass’ by designers, scholars and traders alike assume an inherently Czech aspect to design and glass. Design therefore becomes a form of tradition that can be preserved, revived and

even invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984). It is a complex of collective values which have either survived from the past or have been recreated in the present with a particular significance (Hobsbawm 1984; Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 26–44). This tradition is an invention of nineteenth-century national and ethnic recoveries of various groups, in this case of the Czech national revival movement. Such traditions of art and design can contribute to a sense of unity and connectedness among groups of people by reminding them of their common heritage. Glass, which has been produced in Bohemia for centuries, has been identified with such a heritage. Its long history and national and international recognition meant that manufacturers, traders, designers and scholars have accepted it as embedded in local traditions and have, therefore, ascribed to it qualities fitting economic, cultural and political goals in different periods. The ‘Czechness’ of Czech glass has thus become a constant in the



Figure 8.1 Vratislav Hugo Brunner, A glass with Prague motives, 1922, The Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, inv. no. 86.506. Photo courtesy of The Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.

ever-changing historical and political circumstances that the geographical area, from which it is believed to have originated, experienced. Czech glass has appeared in a number of diverse ideological contexts such as the national revival, democratic systems and communism.

Moreover, close connections between the notion of design, constructed as a modernist concept, and the modernist interpretation of nations and nationalism become apparent. Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith have shown that nations are inventions of modernity which mobilize popular consciousness in order to cope with modern conditions and political imperatives (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984; Anderson 1991; Smith 1998: 224). Arts and crafts formed part of a shared cultural heritage and were an important vehicle in such modern myth-making.

Simultaneously, the idea of design underwent a conceptual transformation as a result of industrialization and the creation of new states during the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Design is often understood as a product of modernity, or modernist ideology, and can be linked with the historical period of rapid industrial development, technological innovation, rejection of the old and desire for creating novel forms.

To understand the codification of nationally, historically or regionally specific design in relation to Czech and Bohemian glass, I need to review some oft-used terminological, historical and geographical references (Agnew 2004; Sayer 1998; Pánek and Tůma 2009). 'Bohemia', or the lands of the Bohemian crown, frequently refers to a region in Central Europe dating back to the mediaeval kingdom of Bohemia which survived as a legal entity, in modified form, until 1918. The first Slavic groups, to which the Czechs belonged, arrived in the area of Bohemia in the sixth and seventh century, but they were far from the only ethnic group in the region. A substantial German minority shared the territories of Bohemia with the Czechs in various political entities for centuries: medieval kingdoms, the Habsburg monarchy, of which Bohemia was part from the sixteenth century, and the interwar republic of Czechoslovakia.

Mobilization of national consciousness amongst many ethnic groups across Europe in the nineteenth century significantly changed the cohabitation of the two ethnicities. Small nations that were often part of multi-ethnic and multi-national states were especially active in defining and redefining their identities in order to gain political recognition and, in many cases, autonomy. Finns, Norwegians, Romanians and Scots sought to define their national geographical boundaries as well as their cultural traits (Facos and Hirsch 2003). In the Habsburg monarchy, Hungarians and Poles started recovering their respective histories and cultures in order to emphasize their position within the Empire (Crowley 1992; Muthesius 1994; Schneider 2006). Hungarian efforts successfully led to the Austrian compromise of 1867 in which Hungary was given a number of privileges, including an autonomous parliament and various ministries.

In Bohemia, too, Czech political, cultural and intellectual leaders started reassessing local history for evidence of authentically Czech language, art and heritage in order to secure greater independence from the Austrian authorities. Institutions including theatres, public offices, academic and educational societies and institutes started using the Czech language, and new journals, newspapers and books promoted a wider use of the language at all levels of society.

This language-based nationalism influenced many aspects of subsequent interpretations of the history and geography of the Czech nation and of art and design. ‘Czech lands’ is sometimes used as a synonym for Bohemia but it is, in fact, an even less fixed concept referring to the territories inhabited by Czech speakers. The status of the Czech language as a mother tongue was both mythicized and sanctified through its resurrection and codification during the national revival of the nineteenth century, and through emphasis on its historical pedigree (Sayer 1998: 107).

Other forms of tradition, especially the arts, became markers of the historical and cultural independence of the Czechs in the nineteenth century. The political, ethnic and cultural competition of the nineteenth and early twentieth century between the Czechs and Germans in the Czech lands therefore impacted the way art and design was interpreted. The notion of authentic Czech art and applied arts (and later design) became increasingly important, as it contributed to the sense of historicity and long-lasting legacy of the Czech nation in the geographical area of Bohemia. The origins of the regionally and culturally specific references to glass as Czech or Bohemian can therefore be traced back to this potent period of the Czech national revival of the nineteenth century.

Czech, Bohemian, or Czechoslovak: The Histories and Geographies of Glass

Even today, publications and exhibitions use the notion of Czech glass as a historical, cultural, economic and geographical category, which is often replaced or mixed with Bohemian and even Czechoslovak attributes. *Czech Glass 1945–1980: Design in an Age of Adversity* is a pertinent example (Ricke 2005). Otherwise critically aware of the political and historical influences on glass in this region, the author of the introduction refers to Bohemian glass, Czechoslovak glass and Czech glass almost interchangeably and without acknowledgement of the subtle, yet important differences. Readers are left to infer underlying distinctions between Bohemian glass (glass from the geographical region of Bohemia, inhabited by both Czechs and Germans), Czech glass (produced by Czech nationals or speakers), and Czechoslovak glass (a concept that appeared after World War I, used to refer to a politically affected notion that glass received both in the interwar republic and the post-World War II communist state).



Figure 8.2 Vase, manufactured by Johann Lütz Witwe, Klášterský Mlýn, 1908. Roy and Mary Cullen Collection. Photo courtesy of The Museum of Fine Art, Houston.

The geographically denominated glass, deemed as Czech, is often referred to as coming from the ‘heart of Europe’, at the ‘cross-roads of European trade routes’ (Petrová and Olivie 1990: 12). It is not a coincidence, however, that the main glassworks were concentrated in the border regions of Bohemia, which had a substantial German population (Fig. 8.2). Geographical notions are supplemented, therefore, by history. Until the radical expulsion of the Germans after World War II, glass factories in, for instance, Karlovy Vary (or Karlsbad in German) in eastern Bohemia, and Jablonec, Harrachov and Kamenický Šenov in the north of Bohemia, were mostly owned by Germans who controlled the economy in these border areas (Ricke 2005: 27; Newhall 2008: 13–28). Czechs were often employed as factory workers until 1938 when they were pushed inland after the annexation of Sudetenland by Germany. The term ‘Bohemian’ thus contains not only a geographical reference but also an acknowledgment of German ethnicity in the territory.

Between World War I and II, during the era of the democratic Czechoslovak state which officially united the Czechs and Slovaks, glass – just like art, language

or the concept of a nation – adopted a new political dimension when it was linked with the adjective ‘Czechoslovak’. The artificial Czechoslovak identity referred to the new composition of the political state, aimed at promoting the joint interests of the two Slavic groups and creating a single majority to outnumber the substantial Germans and Hungarian minorities. The joint Czechoslovak identity was based on the belief that the Czechs and Slovaks had lived together in a particular location and were connected not only by the redrawn political boundaries but also by the idea of a shared and geographically-determined history and culture (Smith 1991: 117).

Predominantly Czech politicians, linguists, historians and art historians looked for proofs that the Czechs and Slovaks had been in close contact during the centuries leading up to the events of 1918 or that, indeed, they were members of a single ethnic group. Yet despite the frequent use of Czechoslovakism in various political and cultural contexts, especially in the 1920s, the concept was synonymous with Czech identity, and marginalized the Slovak one. Period discussions of Czechoslovak history or language overwhelmingly referred to the Czech context, while histories of Czechoslovak culture were often limited to the Czech-speaking territories. This emphasis on the Czech element in the new Czechoslovak identity, which included prioritizing Czech art and design, was a part of the construction of the Czechoslovak myth which consisted in the promotion of a vision of Czechoslovakia to international audiences as a modern, democratic state of a single nation (Orzoff 2009). Although initially accepted by few Slovak politicians, such a view represented a Czech position and benefitted from the lack of equivalent resources in Slovak. Eventually, it led to a dissatisfaction on the part of the Slovaks and to an increase in nationalistic sentiments calling for Slovak autonomy.

Similarly, the category of Czechoslovak glass, used by historians, journalists and art critics, was predominantly limited to the glass production of Bohemia, even though there were many glassworks in Slovakia. Czechoslovak glass can therefore be understood as a purely artificial and politically motivated concept. According to Susanne K. Frantz in *Czech Glass*, ‘after hundreds of years of foreign domination it is understandable that a population seeks to be identified as a national group’, which translated into the need to create a sense of Czech (Czechoslovak, or even Bohemian) glass (Frantz 2005: 15). Such an approach was in fact part of a more general trend in Czech historiography and echoed an established belief that the Czech nation suffered for hundreds of years under oppression of external powers, whether Austrian, German or Soviet. The idea that the Czech nation was victimized, strongly promoted in the Czech national revival of the nineteenth century, was also defended during the interwar period by, for instance, President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, as well as in post-World War II communist rhetoric (Pynsent 1994). This justified an emphasis upon those aspects of the Czech character (and art and design), which may be interpreted as uniquely Czech, to prove that the Czechs, despite the external

adversities, managed to retain an independent identity that constituted their nationhood.

National traits of design had therefore already been established during the interwar period and the ‘Czechness’ of Czech and Czechoslovak glass had long been emphasized as one of the constituents of national identity. In 1933, Alois Metelák, an architect and glass designer, described the national qualities of glass, in which ‘each nation imprinted some of its soul and its sentiments. Italians [imprinted] their lightness, French their elegance, Swedes their seriousness, Germans their technical perfection’. For him, Czech glass was typical of the sense of colour, harmony of shapes, liveliness and, like all glassmaking, it grew out of local traditions and the homeland (Metelák 1933: 5). Thus national stereotypes were projected into analyses of contemporary and historic artefacts which were compared, as much as nations, for their originality and timeless features.

The Postwar Political Mosaic

After World War II, changes in the political and economic system of Czechoslovakia affected the construction of the notion of Czech (and Czechoslovak) glass. Czechoslovak manufacturing was turned to heavy industry, which impacted the production of consumer goods, including glass. A number of glassworks in the border regions of Bohemia were closed down and many workshops and factories faced decline. This began immediately after the war primarily because of the forced expatriation of ethnic Germans from the Sudetenland and the nationalization of the glasswork trade. Moreover, a centralized monopoly for foreign trade, Skloexport, was created in 1947 to facilitate the export of glass (Franz 2005: 30).

The almost exclusive identification of glass as craft, prevalent in the nineteenth century, underwent a transformation: glass objects, especially monumental sculptural and architectural pieces, were increasingly classified as products of design and fine art rather than craft. Accomplished glass sculptures had already begun to appear between the wars when the split in glassmaking started becoming prominent. At the same time, craft making carried with it connotations of the production, however skilled, of pre-industrial society, and the nineteenth century industrialization of the factories in Bohemia gave birth to a new category of utility glass. In the twentieth century, it was produced en masse and became highly commercial, yet, a number of artists, designers and theorists in the interwar period tried to introduce aesthetic values into everyday objects. The commercial orientation continued in the 1950s, when glass industry manufacture grew even more conservative, hand production decreased and a number of specialized schools in the border regions closed down (Ricke 2005: 31).

National and international institutions, especially museums and exhibitions such as world's fairs and expos, played a key role in promoting glass as having authentic Czech qualities, and establishing Czech glass as a distinguished and sought after design category. Czech and Bohemian glass had been displayed and sold to the world at international art and trade exhibitions since the nineteenth century. The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London featured an extensive and influential collection of glasswork from Bohemia; the Parisian expositions universelles of 1879, 1889 and 1900 displayed Moser glass from Karlovy Vary, while a 'tastefully arranged and beautiful exhibit' of glass from Bohemia was shown as far as at the International Exhibition in Launceston, Tasmania in 1891 (Tallis 2011: 202; Anon. 1891: 3).

The prominence and importance of glass displays continued into the twentieth century with Bohemian and Czechoslovakian participation at the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition of 1904, Paris (1925 and 1937), Brussels (1935) and others. Glass contributed to the promotion of the small emergent nation at these important international events, it represented 'the most important tradition of national creative production' and informed 'the wider public about Czech glass and its benefits' (Langhamer 1992: 112).

The political role of glass exhibitions became especially prominent after World War II and the communist coup of 1948 that strengthened Soviet influence over Czechoslovakia. Postwar expos became crucial places where encounters between so-called east and west took place. They provided opportunities for states on both sides of the Iron Curtain to showcase their achievements and to learn about other countries' production. The politically tense 1950s were a particularly important decade for the formulation of a concept of Czech and Czechoslovak glass which still persists today. On the one hand, glass further developed into a successful commercial and exported product, while on the other, it became a more liberal and artistic medium. As the latter, it was not meant for mass production or consumption and after Stalin's death in 1956, a certain degree of free artistic input was allowed, and some artists and designers travelled abroad to encounter the work of others (Wasmuth 2005: 86).

Understood as both utilitarian and studio/art glass, Czechoslovak glass appeared internationally for the first time since World War II at the 11th Triennial in Milan in 1957. This was a carefully orchestrated presentation, prepared by the communist authorities and a small selection of coordinators, of how modern Czechoslovak glass should be marketed to international audiences (Havránek et al. 2008). The display emphasized artistic quality and won several prizes (Nováková 2012). The exhibition category of so-called industrial products, under which design was most often classified, was given not just an economic or material role but also an aesthetic and cultural one.

Design thus became a part of the socialist myth and a tool of political and cultural propaganda during the Cold War (Crowley 2000; McDonald 2010; Castillo 2010). Czech or Czechoslovak glass served as an expression

of the communists' soft power, used to attract and entice audiences (Nye 1990). International exhibitions therefore provided a great opportunity for propaganda and the subtler politicized agendas contained in art and design objects. Together with other articles of industrial design, glass was assigned a 'special political promise', because it was seen as having the potential to improve living standards at home and to bring back hard currency as a successful export item (Giustino 2012: 189). It also served as proof of the high quality of local design and workmanship which was still affordable for the ordinary people of Czechoslovakia. According to a contemporary commentator in a Czechoslovak communist journal that echoed the official position, the high quality of the objects of everyday use, including utility glass, influenced and demonstrated how demanding and educated the common, working-class folk of Czechoslovakia were (Spurný 1958: 3).

At post-World War II exhibitions, 'Czechoslovak glass' was developed into a recognized brand that was presented internationally as a successful achievement of the communist state and its workers. Manufactured from local resources and embedded in a long national tradition, glass was presented as 'the most truly Czechoslovak of all artistic media' (Wasmuth 2005: 87). This agenda became apparent at the Brussels Expo of 1958 and at the Czechoslovak Glass Exhibition in Moscow the following year. In Brussels, especially, Czechoslovak glass received much appreciation and recognition. Apart from the obligatory showcases of industries and trade, the Czechoslovak entry consisted of displays of design directly recalling the legacy of interwar modernism. This so-called Thaw Modernism of the Khrushchev era was, nevertheless, marked by a contradiction in that it tried to create a modern civilization that differed from Western capitalism, while also accepting models and standards from global Western modernity (Crowley 2000: 145; Péteri 2004: 114). In the context of an international world's fair, the Czechoslovak state apparatus adopted a Western, modern exhibition model to promote the products of its socialist manufactures and studios.

The Czechoslovak artistic exhibit at the 1958 Expo therefore conformed to this marriage of the so-called Western and Eastern. By reconnecting with international modernism in, for example, the architecture of the Czechoslovak pavilion, the exhibition also presented new cinematic and performance techniques, including 'The Magic Lantern' and the 'Polycran'. Small-scale glass objects and utility glass, such as vases, plates and crystal, were for sale or available to order from the Czechoslovak export office. Collective achievements in socialist glassmaking and production were emphasized more than the designers of these objects (Wasmuth 2005: 90–91). This was a result of the previously mentioned post-World War II reorganization of the glass workshops, the establishment of artists' societies and the creation of a trade monopoly, which stressed the collective input into glass making.

Subsequent expos and international exhibitions mostly repeated or refined the narratives of Czechoslovak glass that were established so strongly in the

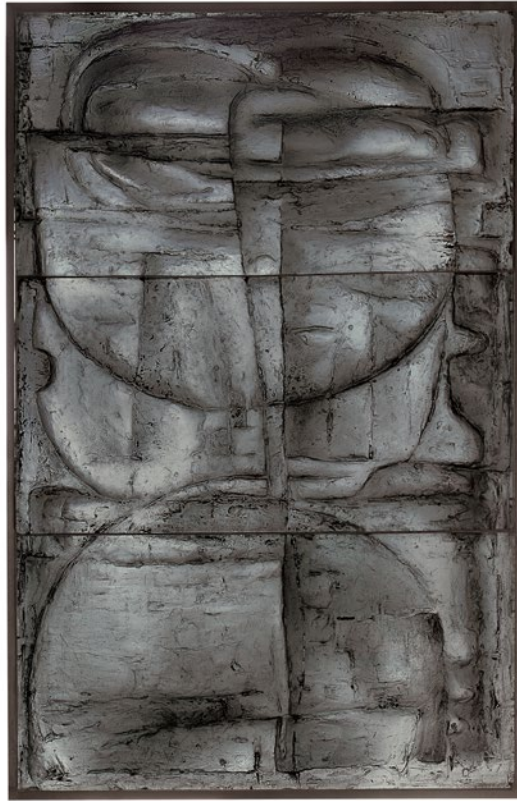


Figure 8.3 Stanislav Libenský – Jaroslava Brychtová, *A composition in grey*, 1965. The Museum of North Bohemia, Liberec. S3331. Photo courtesy of The North Bohemian Museum, Liberec.

1950s and glass continued to be influenced by politics. Yet, a certain stagnation occurred in the 1960s; utility glass designers ceased experimentation in order to meet the state production quota (Ricke 2005: 127). Studio artists, on the other hand, continued working with monumental art and combinations of materials and abstraction. Participation at expos and world's fairs therefore remained crucial for artistic confrontation, the exchange of ideas and the establishment of contacts.

The brief attempt at the democratization of communism in the mid-1960s, the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 also influenced the way in which Czech and Czechoslovak glass was presented. At the 1970 Expo in Osaka several monumental glass pieces contained a direct political message. The now established artistic duo Libenský – Brychtová displayed a glass relief, 'The River of Life', featuring people being carried away by a stream of water which bore footprints of Soviet military boots (Petrová 2007: 337; Langhamer 1992: 187). This piece evoked sympathy and international

recognition for the couple, and persecution from the Czechoslovak communist authorities.

The normalization that followed the few liberal years of the late 1960s meant that participation at international exhibitions was limited and carefully orchestrated. However, the representative feature of glass remained to dominate both international and domestic markets. In Czechoslovakia, artists and designers often worked on apolitical commissions for state-paid public buildings, such as hotels, factories or theatres (Petrová 2007: 845).

Although the political events of the second half of the twentieth century impacted the presentation and content of Czechoslovak exhibits abroad, the notion of Czechoslovak and Czech glass remained largely unaffected. Following the Velvet Revolution of 1989 and the creation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1992, however, glass manufacturers in Bohemia underwent another substantial transformation. The large national companies and the communist era monopoly were terminated and factories were privatized or returned to their original owners. Yet, some of the large share-holding companies created in the Czech Republic in the early 1990s fell victim to the post-1989 volatile economic climate. Simultaneously, small and large producers of 'Czech glass' re-emerged. Utility glass once again became an important export product, as well as a popular tourist purchase.

Conclusion

The making of Czech, Czechoslovak and Bohemian glass as both an object and a notion has for a long time been linked to the domestic national tradition, established in the period of modernity and national revivals in Central Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Narratives concerning glass produced in interwar Czechoslovakia, deemed as a modern and democratic state, were reinforced for political and export purposes after World War II when glass, both studio and utility, became an export commodity and thus a political tool. The geopolitical, historical and cultural circumstances that helped to form the idea of Czech glass have been closely linked to the attempts to consolidate a strong sense of national identity for both domestic and foreign audiences for more than a century. Even today Czech and Bohemian glass function as important domestic brands and popular tourist souvenirs.

Contemporary exhibitions of glass, usually in Prague, contribute to the popularity of Czech glass among general and specialized audiences. In 2012 and 2013 alone, the Museum of Decorative Arts held seven exhibitions in Prague that upheld the concepts of Bohemian and Czech glass, understood as cut glass produced in the geographical territory of Bohemia and the artistic and studio production of Czech artists in the post-World War II period respectively



Figure 8.4 Glass as a touristic attraction in Prague, photograph, 2014. Author's collection.

(exhibitions). While the complex history and the political background of the concepts' development may not seem important in the current context of the globalized design market, both the adjectives Czech and Bohemian carry significance that contributes, perhaps unconsciously, to the aura of uniqueness and authenticity of such glass. This case study has revealed how ideologically charged national design histories can be and how careful attention to the particular political and cultural context in which they have been construed is needed. As such, the concepts of Czech and Bohemian glass serve as pertinent examples of the continuous importance that design history as well as the commercial sphere place on the construction of specificity, authenticity and permanent features of design, which are so closely intertwined with the political history.

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CHAPTER 9

The Myth of Danish Design and the Implicit Claims of Labels

STINA TEILMANN-LOCK

Until the 1950s Denmark was internationally respected only for its fairy tales and its bacon. But from the 1950s onwards design came to constitute another source of worldwide recognition. Today, fashion is a successful branch of Danish design: it produces the largest annual turnover and the greatest export of any of the creative industries in Denmark. And one thing that characterizes the many different styles of Danish fashion is that they all come with the labels 'Danish Design' or 'Designed in Denmark' sewn onto the clothes or attached to the price tag. Similar labels may be found on clothes from Sweden, Britain, France, and Italy as well as from numerous other Western countries where clothes have been designed – though not manufactured. And, supposedly, the unspoken proviso of the epithet affixed to the name-tags of the clothes is: 'though manufactured elsewhere'. As such, fashion is symptomatic of a general tendency: labels reading 'Made in Denmark', 'Made in Sweden', 'Made in Britain' (and so forth) have become rare. Particular sets of rules of national and international trade law govern the marking of the 'country of origin' of products (WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin, 15 April 1994, Final Act of the 1986–1994 Uruguay Round of trade negotiations). Within the EU, the country of origin refers to the country where goods are 'wholly obtained' or 'where they underwent their last, substantial, economically justified processing or working in an undertaking equipped for that purpose and resulting in the manufacture of a new product or representing an important stage of manufacture' (Council Regulation [EEC] No 2913/92 of 12 October 1992 establishing the Community Customs Code, Art. 24). Against this background,



Figure 9.1 Label in shirt by Danish children's clothes brand 'Wheat' (2014). Photo by the author.

the 'Designed in ...' labels constitute a new and ingenious way of linking designs with nations.

During the twentieth century design has become a central element in the national identity of many European countries. Thus categories such as 'British Design', 'Italian Design' and 'Danish Design' have acquired a certain mythic status in the rhetoric of both business and culture. This is similar to Swiss watches

or Scotch whisky: no individual or brand is identified but the national modifier works to collective advantage (Lock 2007). The particular status of design in relation to a nation is usually reflected at the level of national trade policy and cultural policy – although in Europe also on a supra-national level (Thomson and Koskinen 2012). For example, in Britain it has long been government policy to promote British design in order to stimulate economic growth and enhance social and cultural development, with design seen as a ‘national asset’ in several respects. This began in the mid-nineteenth century with the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace (1851), followed by the founding of a permanent show-case for the industrial arts in the Victoria and Albert Museum (1857), and a series of design-related laws (Teilmann-Lock 2012: 220–222). The link between design and nationhood grew stronger in the twentieth century. In 1945, when the newly established Council of Industrial Design was preparing the Britain Can Make It Exhibition (1946), the President of the Board of Trade, Stafford Cripps, declared that ‘Design is a factor of crucial importance to British Industry today’ (Darling 2001–2002). More recently, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, presenting the 2011 Budget, declared that ‘Britain is open for business: so this is our plan for growth. We want the words “Made in Britain, Created in Britain, Designed in Britain, Invented in Britain” to drive our nation forward’ (Osborne 2011). Design plays a pivotal role in the global economy: thus declares one of the conclusions of the Creative Economy Report 2008 commissioned by the United Nations agency UNCTAD (The Design Commission 2011–2013; UNCTAD 2008: 129–132).

A similar development has taken place in Denmark where design has also played a central role in policies of nation-building. An example is a 2007 Government White Paper entitled *DesignDenmark* affirming that ‘Denmark has a tradition for good design, which is internationally renowned. Danish Design was an international trendsetter in the 1950s and 1960s and helped pave the way for international commercial successes in furniture, fashion and hi-fi design’ (The Danish Government 2007). The focus of this chapter will be on how ‘Danish Design’ as a category has been exploited to both shape and promote a national distinctiveness, within Denmark and abroad. As such the label ‘Danish Design’ is a kind of claim borne by products that are pronounced as Danish; it is an attribution to particular goods of particular qualities and their associated prestige. And as Grace Lees-Maffei has argued, such attributions originate as much from the international reception of goods – ‘the way in which mediating discourses can make a mythical national identity’ – as from the self-representation of manufacturers (Lees-Maffei 2013: 291). Thus in the writing of the history of Danish design – as in the writing of any other national tradition – we should be aware of the fact that the national modifier is reflexively imposed. Some of the most influential manifestations of national brands have come into being in the narratives of fellow-nations (ibid.: 300f). Furthermore, we should be aware of the legislative frameworks that govern the usage of national brands.



Figure 9.2 Photo depicting ‘Swiss Made’ print on TAG Heuer watch. Photo by flickr user Roy Niswanger under a Creative Commons BY-ND 2.0 license.

For example, in Switzerland, the predicate ‘Swiss Made’ on watches is governed by strict national rules (‘232.119 Verordnung vom 23. Dezember 1971 über die Benützung des Schweizer Namens für Uhren’, retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/19710361/index.html>). The phrase ‘Swiss Made’ seems to be the first such national designation, arising, in English, in response to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia of 1876, at which there seemed no way to distinguish American products from others (Wälti 2007). Thus, reflexively, again, it was reception in a foreign country, or the need for clarification in exports, that motivated a legal enactment of national branding. That it was in response to the Centennial Exposition helps to explain why a nation with four official languages should use a fifth language, English, to brand its products. There is a further aspect of specific interest to design historians: the phrase was not to be hidden on the back where such labels usually belong but was incorporated into the face as an element of the design. The phrase selected was ‘Swiss Made’ rather than ‘Made in Switzerland’ because the nine letters plus one space could be disposed symmetrically around the numeral 6, and thus they remain as a constant element in Swiss design.

Countries of Origin

‘Danish Design’ was a term first applied to identify and celebrate Danish modernist furniture in the mid-twentieth century (Hansen 2006). Today,

'Danish Design' continues to be a strong unofficial 'brand' in the promotion of Denmark's identity. The clothing industry, including children's fashion, has joined this national branding. However, there is a crucial difference between what 'Danish Design' meant fifty or sixty years ago and what it means today. An item labelled 'Danish Design' used to imply 'Made in Denmark'; nowadays, however, Danish contemporary design is produced in China, India, Poland or elsewhere, but hardly ever in Denmark. In 2012 alone, three celebrated 'Danish Design' companies, Georg Jensen, Royal Copenhagen and Fritz Hansen were either bought up by foreign investment firms or outsourced their entire production overseas (Bolza 2012; Investcorp 2012; McGwin 2012; PMR 2012; Hedebo 2012).

In the post-industrialist economy most design companies have seen it as economically sound, or even a condition for survival in a global market, to move production to so-called 'low-cost countries'. And the development is not restricted to Denmark and Danish design. In Britain, for example, the Burberry brand – despite its heavy brand reliance on 'Britishness' and its appointments by royal warrant to the Queen and the Prince of Wales – has been closing down factories in Wales and Yorkshire and has moved much of its textile manufacturing to China (Gould 2009). The reliance of Italian manufacturers on Chinese (legal and illegal) immigrant workers in the production of designs that are 'Made in Italy' has become widespread. An example is the production of traditional fine fabrics in Tuscany: commentators have remarked on the 'non-Italian' nationality of labourers making these goods (Donadio 2010).



Figure 9.3 Packaging for Georg Jensen candle holders, 2010. Photo by the author.

Though such a new division of labour may spark protests, design companies tend to be unwilling to give up their national label. Nowadays, the lack of any physical connection to a country does not disqualify a design product from being, say, Danish, British or Italian. What has happened is that the category of nationality has changed its function. It has moved from affirming a Romantic myth of origins to contributing to a myth of globalization that conceals the place of manufacture and promotes the country of ideation as the criterion of nationality. And, as will be argued, the new type of national self-representation and national myth-making could not have taken place apart from the conceptual framework of intellectual property law, in particular copyright and design law.

Legal protection of design has been a high priority in Europe since the 1990s; new European legislation has come into being with the purpose of strengthening the protection of intellectual property rights in design (Directive 98/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 1998 on the legal protection of designs). But in the process of enhancing the categorization of design, internationally, as an object of copyright and design law, the law has helped to change the way we think about design, and about the origin and provenance of a design.

Intellectual property law makes a sharp conceptual distinction between the intangible ‘design’ and the physical instantiations of the design. Under copyright law the ‘work’ of design (or ‘applied art’ as it is termed under copyright law) is the object of protection. A ‘work’ is an intangible entity that refers to that which is an author’s or creator’s original expression in some tangible medium, say a ‘literary work’ as manifest in a book, an ‘artistic work’ as manifest in a painting, a ‘work of design’ as manifest in a chair, and so forth. Under design law it is the design’s ‘appearance’ that is awarded protection. Thus the definition of a ‘design’ by EU law reads ‘the appearance of the whole or a part of a product resulting from the features of, in particular, the lines, contours, colours, shape, texture and/or materials of the product itself and/or its ornamentation’ (Directive 98/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 1998 on the legal protection of designs, Art. 1).

Under intellectual property law, a design is always an immaterial or intellectual conception: this is what the law protects. Thus in this dualistic framework of thinking the design exists independently of the process of its materialization, including the making of its prototype. Such a total separation of the ‘design’ from the physical circumstances of prototyping, production and distribution now also prevails in the relevant ‘expert’ discourses (economic, legal, academic) on ‘design’. And this is what enables us to think of a product as an example of Danish design even though it was manufactured in, say, China, and perhaps, in the entire chain of distribution, never touched Danish soil. What ‘Designed in Denmark’ signifies is that there is a Danish designer or company (itself a nebulous category dependent on what? Passport? Place

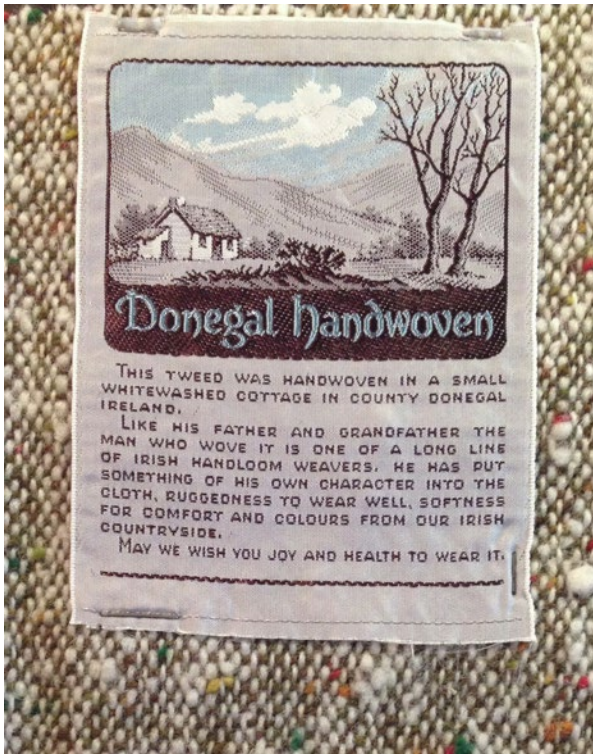


Figure 9.4 Label in Donegal tweed, 1959. Fabrics of a similar type but with a different provenance are often referred to as ‘donegals’ with lowercase ‘d’. Photo by the author.

of birth? Address for taxation purposes?) who owns the design as a piece of intellectual property: it is irrelevant where the physical copies of the design came into being and by whose handiwork.

Of this movement towards a dualistic way of conceptualizing design, intellectual property law has been a marker as well as a mover. Traditionally, design products would be naturally linked to a geographical place, either a city or a region. It lies in the names of many fabrics: cashmere, denim (de Nîmes), damask, suede, and so forth. After the rise of the nation state the bond was adopted and sustained at the level of the nation. It would be understood on the international market that a pair of ‘Italian’ shoes had been designed, prototyped, produced and exported from Italy according to Italian ways and standards. The designer would also be a skilled craftsman and the maker of the prototype, and the value of any design would be estimated according to the value of tangible products for sale. However, today the law promotes the estimation of design according to its value as an ‘asset’ in the national ‘economy of knowledge’ and as a token of ‘cultural capital’. We might say that the valuation and currency of design have shifted. And the designer has become a creator of intellectual

property. In this domain it is the law itself that is facilitating the promotion of a national myth where designs in their capacity as intangible assets are valued on the globalized market. The change in valuation of design from tangible ‘product value’ to intangible ‘asset value’ has been ongoing throughout the twentieth century; the use of licensing as a means of creating value in the design sector is indicative of this (Stewart 2005).

The immaterial rights in design have extensive material consequences for design products. Intellectual property law divides design into two classes of things: original products and pirated products. This remains a fundamental conceptual division (Teilmann-Lock 2006). Against this background, the label ‘Designed in Denmark’ is the semiotic marker of a new way of perceiving authenticity. Materially speaking the difference between authentic and pirated goods may not be substantial: both are typically made in low-cost countries. It has even been seen that the same factory makes both (Staff Apv v. Marc Lauge A/S. The Danish Maritime and Commercial Court, 25 January 2008). Regardless of the fact that there may be little or no material difference between an authentic branded shirt and a fake one (unlike that between the real pearl and the fake one), the distinction between them created by the global intellectual property rights regime has huge material effects (OECD 2008; 2009), not only in the economic turnovers that they generate. At Europe’s borders the customs authorities stand ready to catch imported pirate goods and whatever they catch is taken away and destroyed in secret places to prevent anyone stealing what may look like valuable originals (European Commission 2013). On this account, massive quantities of what bears a striking resemblance to Arne Jacobsen Series Seven Chairs, Rolex watches, Louboutin stilettos, Isabel Marant garments, and much more, are destroyed every year. While ‘each society, each generation fakes the thing it covets most’ (Jones 1994: 94) – and the desire today is for branded goods – each society also has to perform its own rituals for sustaining the crucial distinction between ‘authenticities’ and ‘fakes’.

Danish Design: Made in Denmark

In the 1950s the works of Danish designers became famous all over the Western world under the labels ‘Danish Design’ or ‘Danish Modern’. Within these labels were comprised the products of a group of furniture designers and architects including Finn Juhl, Hans Wegner, Poul Kjærholm, Børge Mogensen, Poul Henningsen and Arne Jacobsen, most of them graduates of The Royal Danish Academy of Art’s furniture school founded in 1924. Kaare Klint was the charismatic leader who taught his students the importance of craftsmanship and first-rate materials combined with a simple and functionalist idiom. Accordingly, the furniture that became known as ‘Danish Design’ shared a number of characteristics: it was handmade in Danish workshops; the materials were

natural – solid wood, leather, canvas and the like; its appearance and lines were plain; and the furniture was shaped in accordance with ergonomic principles. American consumers welcomed ‘Danish Design’ in the early 1950s following a travelling exhibition, *Design in Scandinavia* (1954–1957), organized by The Danish Arts and Crafts Association and its Scandinavian sister organizations (Guldberg 2011: 42–48; Hansen 2006: 401–436).

In the USA ‘Danish Design’ became synonymous with the idea of a modern, democratic and ‘natural’ lifestyle. Danish furniture makers had themselves contributed to the making of such a narrative in the marketing of their goods. Sales catalogues and promotion material were full of references to the ‘Danish’ or, occasionally, ‘Scandinavian’ values of quality, good taste, simplicity, social harmony and so forth. The ‘Danish’ (or ‘Scandinavian’) ‘way of living’ was inscribed in these pieces of furniture (Guldberg 2011: 48–55).

However, the coming into being of the notion of ‘Danish Design’ was in effect the result of interplay between the marketing by the various promoters of Danish design (marketing professionals, government officials, designers’ organizations and others) and labelling by the foreign press. What came to be known as ‘Danish Design’ was not altogether representative of design in Denmark. In fact, as Kjetil Fallan has pointed out, it amounted to a number of ‘privileged relatively exclusive objects intended for an elite audience’ (Fallan 2014: 2). In the 1950s only a marginal cultural elite within Denmark would dream of furnishing their homes with what we now designate as ‘Danish Design’. Symptomatically, the Danish press was very keen in the 1950s to consult a visiting American journalist on the question of this ‘Danish Design’: what was it that the American newspapers and journals were so excited about? The American press had been quick to apply the term ‘Danish Design’ with its positive connotations of the welfare state, democracy, a high standard of living and so forth. And the success of Danish design might never have happened without this stereotype. Without it, perhaps, only the individual careers of two of them, Finn Juhl and Hans Wegner – whose works were by far the most popular in the USA – would have entered into international design history (Hansen 2006: 377–387).

Already at the 1939 World’s Fair in New York the American and British press had coined the concept of ‘Swedish Modern’ which referred to Swedish handicrafts of the time: furniture, pottery, textiles and so forth, but also sometimes more broadly to a ‘Scandinavian’ aesthetics in design. By the 1950s ‘Danish Modern’ and ‘Danish Design’ had become the more prominent labels (Hansen 2006: 392).

Such expressions as ‘Swedish Modern’, ‘Danish Modern’ and ‘Danish Design’ should be understood in the context of the exhibition culture that began with the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. World’s Fairs and later expos have been venues of international trade where design has been linked to nations and particular

examples of design have been promoted to the status of national emblems by the joint efforts of official promotion and the reception and celebration of such items in the media.

The appeal and magnitude of the concept of 'Danish Design' became clear when unauthorized copies started to be marketed. As a result of its commercial success American furniture makers began, in the 1950s, to market their own 'Danish-Modern' or 'Danish-Design' (as well as 'Scandinavian Modern' and 'Scandinavian Design') furniture., as seen in for example the furniture catalogue *Danish Modern and Beyond: Scandinavian Inspired Furniture from Heywood-Wakefield* (Baker 2004). This is the usual paradox of success: a dilution of the concept of 'Danish Design' was the consequence of its popularity. Measures to protect the label 'Danish Design' were called for by the Danish producers. In principle, anyone marketing non-Danish furniture under the label 'Danish' could be reported to the Federal Trade Commission for a misleading trade description. Even so it was not until 1968 that a ruling established that the labels of 'Danish Design' and 'Danish Modern' were to be attached only to designs originating in Denmark. By that date, however, the labels had started to designate period reproductions (Hansen 2006: 462–466). Yet in the years when 'Danish Design' was most successful in the USA the label was used without any restrictions. Accordingly, in 1959, the Association of Danish Furniture Makers introduced a quality seal with the text: 'Danish Furniture Makers' Control'. Furniture carrying this seal was guaranteed to have been made in Denmark, in accordance with the best Danish craft traditions and experience ('Furn-tech – Dansk Møbelkontrol', retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://furn-tech.dk/>).

Danish Design: Designed in Denmark

Thus, the first myth of 'Danish Design' – 'Danish Design' as 'Made in Denmark' – had made its contribution to Danish national identity. 'Danish Design' became a label that celebrated the idea of design – as a material product – originating in a particular national culture, contributing to an international image of a national cultural identity. Today, 'Danish Design' has changed its denotation. It is no longer an endorsement of the idea of cultural origins. Rather, the designation has become a 'brand', a sign with a somewhat contingent relationship to the design to which it refers. Danish design products have lost the implicit physical attachment to the country that defines their status. Our idea of a design is no longer confined to the physical copies of the design. We tend to think of design in a mediated form: what comes out of the designer's imagination, what is positioned in the abstract 'hall of fame' of design, what belongs to a particular lifestyle. To a great extent, today, a design is perceived as an 'intangible entity'. Accordingly, 'Danish Design' is no longer promoted in a material way

as 'hand-made in Danish workshops'. Today, the term 'Danish Design' is an unofficial brand. Danish design has a name because there was 'Danish Design'. Indicative of this is, for example, the page dedicated to design on the official website of Denmark, where it is declared that 'For some years, contemporary Danish designers have been standing in the shadow of the time-honoured brand, Danish Design'. And then this 'overshadowing' is actively extended: it is pointed out that 'Industrial design, furniture and aesthetic objects have always been some of Denmark's biggest exports. Famous Danes include: Børge Mogensen, Finn Juhl, Hans Wegner, Arne Jacobsen, Poul Kjærholm, Poul Henningsen and Verner Panton who are known throughout the world for their design classics' ('Lifestyle: Design', retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://denmark.dk/en/lifestyle/design/>).

Once again a presentation of Danish design inevitably becomes a retrospective presentation of 'Danish Design', of this group of designers that became so famous that they continue to incarnate Danish design. A similar effect arose from the exhibition *Ikon* which took place in New York in 2007. On show at the exhibition were the works of the most renowned manufacturers of Danish design. And the majority of the products happened to be works made in the 1950s: the 'timeless' design icons by Arne Jacobsen, Poul Henningsen and Poul Kjærholm (Hartz 2007). Perhaps the designs do transcend time, but the label 'Danish Design' seems not to: at the *Ikon* exhibition it was almost a historical label, despite its express purpose to display the offerings of current Danish design.

The question of labelling Danish design is not merely theoretical. It is also a commercial problem for the Danish design industry. As is clear from the promotion material from the manufacturers of 'Danish Design' – Fritz Hansen, Louis Poulsen, Le Klint, Carl Hansen and others – the old furniture, the 'classics' of Wegner, Juhl and Jacobsen, continue to constitute the major share of their selections. And a recent trend has been to launch 'new' products from the archives of the 'Danish Modern' designers, designs that have gone out of production and even some that have never been put in production: hidden treasures of 'Danish Design', for example, the re-launch in 2012 of CH162 and CH163 by Carl Hansen & Son and Montana Furniture's rediscovery and launch in 2003 of Verner Panton's Tivoli Chair from 1955. In the Danish design industry profits are still earned on the 'initial' Danish Design (Dreehsen 2008). The highest praise that can be given to a contemporary designer in Denmark seems to be that he or she might be an heir to the great tradition (Rimmer 2013: 82–96). Young and talented Danish designers such as Louise Campbell, Kasper Salto and Cecilie Manz have been promoted as the new generation of suppliers of 'Danish Design'. Each of them makes distinctive and celebrated works – often in continuation of Danish design tradition – but together they do not constitute the sort of 'movement' that would make them suitable as carriers of the emblematic status of 'Danish Design'. The inclination

to fit them into the category of 'Danish Design' comes only from the fact that there has been 'Design Design'. As such 'Danish Design' works as a diachronic category.

The Claims of Labels

'Danish Design' exists, despite the physical detachment of the design products from Denmark. Insofar as Denmark was once a great 'design nation' it must be possible for Denmark again to be 'known worldwide as *the* design society', as proposed by the Danish Design 2020 Committee (Danish Enterprise & Construction Authority 2011: 48). In Denmark, as in other Western countries, national trade policy is a key circulator of the concept of 'Danish Design'. Design has been given a major role in the quest to achieve economic growth in Europe. We used to have design that grew out of Danish culture. In the knowledge economy, design is an asset. Whereas in the 1950s some very talented designers created the possibility of 'Danish Design', today the marketing strategy of Danish design is geared to co-opt whatever talent is available. And the emphasis has shifted from the Romantic myth of origins, the isolated designer working somewhere in Denmark with natural Nordic materials. Now 'Danish Design' is a global brand dedicated to the most profitable means of linking cheaply produced and rapidly moving commodities to any designer who might – at any stretch – be called Danish. The questions remain: is Danish Design an active part of Danish culture, shaped and directed by Danish people with a financial, social and cultural investment in the well-being of Denmark? Or has 'Danish Design' ceased to exist as an active force, the term being now only a label (a highly marketable label) to be exploited by global capital for its profit, albeit with incidental benefits still accruing to the Danish nation?

There have recently been calls for a more authentic relationship between design and nationhood, a resistance to globalization and outsourcing. 'Design Nation', founded in 2012, markets tables, kitchen utensils and other products that are 'made in Denmark' from Danish materials, including 'Danish maple, crafted from Danish wood' (Petersen 2006). Other examples include Streetcommander which produces knitwear and kilts for modern men on the Danish island of Falster, Normann Copenhagen which launched the '100% made in Denmark' furniture series 'New Danish Modern' in 2009, and Sløjd [woodwork], a small company run by the cabinet maker Morten Høeg-Larsen, who produces cutting boards made of Nordic wood with the precise geographical origin inscribed on each board. In Britain, a movement is dedicated to reviving the traditional sense of 'Made in Britain' (and not in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's way where 'Designed in Britain' and 'Made in Britain' are marked out as 'assets'). There are trade promotion initiatives such as 'Still made

in Britain' that advance 'all types of British goods and manufacturers carrying on a proud British tradition' (Still Made in Britain, retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://www.stillmadeinbritain.co.uk/about-us.html>) and support products of British provenance, made by a 'skilled craftsman using the finest materials' (Make it British, retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://makeitbritish.co.uk/about/>). At the London Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 2012 it was the latest fashion to be 'Made in Britain' (Armstrong 2012).

Yet another sign of a move towards a more authentic relationship between design and nationhood may be seen in the phenomenon of 'insourcing' where Western companies 're-patriate' manufacturing from overseas, typically in reaction to transport costs and problems with quality and labour conditions abroad (Stewart 2013: 1). Meanwhile it may be that the 'elsewhere' in which design products have been manufactured in recent decades may be undergoing a change. Recent developments on the Chinese design scene indicate that more original 'designer' products may be coming from there in the future (McGuirk 2012: 34). Since 2004 it has been official Chinese policy to turn manufacturers in China into Chinese brands on the global market (Justice 2012: 113ff). In that case the label 'Made in China' will attain a fundamentally new meaning. The whole paradigm of 'Made in' versus 'Designed in' will be undone when China starts boasting of the fact that products are made in China, that is, when 'made in China' implies 'designed in China'.

There are also changes underway in Europe as to the rules concerning labels naming the 'country of origin'. The European Commission intends to make indication of origin obligatory: 'Manufacturers and importers shall ensure that products bear an indication of the country of origin of the product or, where the size or nature of the product does not allow it, that indication is to be provided on the packaging or in a document accompanying the product' ('Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on consumer product safety and repealing Council Directive 87/357/EEC and Directive 2001/95/EC', art. 7 [1], 2013, retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013PC0078>). The purpose of the proposal is to help consumers 'to identify the actual place of manufacture in all those cases where the manufacturer cannot be contacted or its given address is different from the actual place of manufacture' (Proposal 2013, art 7 [1]). While hitherto many companies have used 'made in' labelling voluntarily, it would now be obligatory for labels either to specify a country of origin of products that are either 'wholly obtained' or have undergone 'substantial transformation' outside the EU, or to have labels indicate when products are 'Made in the European Union'.

The European Commission has tried to introduce obligatory 'Made in' labelling for a number of years. Yet member states have been reluctant. To the design nations of Europe the 'Designed in' label's way of linking designs with nations is preferable to labels that point to non-European elsewheres or to



Figure 9.5 Label in tunic by Danish fashion brand Margit Brandt, 2013. The brand existed in the 1960s and 1970s and was relaunched in 2005. Photo by the author.

no nation at all, the European Union. In this matter of origins the European Commission appears to have underestimated the strength of the link between design and nation and the value of design for the national identity of European countries. Likewise, design historians may have been seduced by the rhetoric of globalization and have thus overlooked the continuing importance of the nation-state with its laws, its export policies and its promotional practices.

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Altering a Homogenized Heritage

Articulating Heterogeneous Material Cultures in Norway and Sweden

KJETIL FALLAN AND CHRISTINA ZETTERLUND

Visitors to the Swedish pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939 would have been met by an introductory photo-mural showing a group of confident, young blond people gazing steadily into the future. In the emerging welfare state this group is approaching the future with the certainty that they belong and will be taken care of. The future is theirs, modernity belongs to them. It is the future of a solid democratic and modern welfare state aiming to harness the entire population into a large, inclusive and harmonious middle class. In this narrative, present as much in Norwegian as in Swedish design history, design is portrayed as democratic, in the service of the many, as building a modern egalitarian society. Yet, it is not just the future that belongs to the ideal citizens represented in the photo-mural but history as well. It is their history that has been privileged in scholarship. The result is a narrative producing and reproducing a self-understanding amongst the population of being part of relatively egalitarian but also homogenous societies in terms of gender, class and race/ethnicity.

This sanctioned history thus obscures the considerable heterogeneity of Nordic societies, past and present, and relegates a wide variety of alternative cultural practices and subject positions to the margins. There is a need to question the homogenized heritage of Nordic design and analyse it further through approaches within design historical scholarship articulating heterogeneity by applying perspectives of gender, class and ethnicity (or through an intersectional perspective). In this chapter we focus on how dominant design history discourse hides the fact that material cultures of ethnic minorities are

a homogeneous Nordic identity has been created and sustained. Our discussion starts with the open-air heritage museums which have served as an historical anchoring point for the modern Nordic identity, and which can also be said to be a distinctly Nordic invention. In this narrative the rural farmer has been ascribed a vital role. We analyse how a certain material culture identity is created at the open-air museum and how these museums are now facing difficulties in refreshing this identity. We then move on to discuss the design culture of groups that historically have been excluded from these narratives and analyse examples demonstrating the many challenges of devising a more inclusive approach to design history.

Harnessing Heritage

When the nation state as a political and cultural concept in its modern form emerged in nineteenth-century Europe, creating a history of its people was considered paramount in legitimizing the new construct. Both academic scholarship and popular presentations were enrolled in this endeavour, each contributing to establishing national histories as the prevalent genre (Berger and Lorenz 2008: 10). In the Nordic countries, the open-air museum, featuring full-scale versions of carefully selected elements of past material culture, became key institutions in defining this history. The independent farmer was made the primary historical subject in these narratives, marginalizing other figures like the more numerous paid farm hands, fishermen, sailors, dockers and maids. In 1881 King Oscar II's collection of vernacular architecture (transposed) from rural Norway was established in Oslo with the intention of showing the evolution of traditional Norwegian building types since the Middle Ages. Inspired by the Norwegian scheme, the Stockholm museum Skansen opened in 1891 after an initiative by Arthur Hazelius. Skansen would subsequently become the model for many open-air museums all over the world (Rentzhog 2007).

As a stage upon which – often quite literarily – the history of the nation and its people was played out, these museums assumed a political function as generators and guardians of national identity and purveyors of its historical legitimacy. A very good example is found in Sweden in the early twentieth century. In 1912 the government set up a housing committee tasked with improving the dire living conditions of people of little means. In one of its publications the committee claimed that new housing types for this population group should be based on historic houses exhibited at Skansen, finding there an aesthetical ideal that in the eyes of the committee was not tarnished by the current taste for 'frillery from abroad' (Zetterlund 2012). Today there is a greater socio-economic diversity of buildings exhibited at Skansen, but the housing committee clearly referenced the rural farm buildings so venerated by the urban bourgeoisie.



Fig. 10.2 Interior view of the eighteenth-century Morastugan – the first building to be relocated to Skansen, forming a key part of the museum from its opening in 1891. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Stockholm Stadsmuseum.

Today it would perhaps be somewhat more difficult to dismiss something as ‘frillery from abroad’, given the intricate geographies of contemporary manufacture and because more complicated national identities are making it difficult to distinguish domestic production by style. Yet, this is an undercurrent in history writing and identity construction. For example, in 2000 the Swedish government published a report evaluating its design policies. Under the heading ‘A Democratic Tradition’ one can read how ‘Swedish furniture designers and interior architects have often . . . preferred blond and light interiors. Yet, there has been, and still exist, those who wanted to protest against this so called “Swedish design” and instead promote other traditions’. This tradition of the ‘other’ is defined as ornamental folk art, or designs influenced by kitsch and popular culture, the baroque shapes of Southern Europe and glowing colours as in Eastern Europe (Ljungh et al. 2000: 190).

Just how difficult it is to embrace what is considered ‘foreign’ to the conventional national narratives is equally evident in current attempts by the open-air museums to alter their practices. In 2000–2001 the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History (Norsk Folkemuseum) rebuilt a 1865 apartment building, *Wessels gate 15*, originally located in downtown Oslo, as part of the museum’s large open-air exhibition space at Bygdøy, south-west of the city centre. Over the following years, the building’s eight apartments were furnished



Fig. 10.3 View of the exhibition interior *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* in the *Wessels gate 15* apartment building at the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History (Norsk Folkemuseum). Photo: Anne-Lise Reinsfelt. Courtesy of Norsk Folkemuseum.

with domestic interiors representing a broad range of time periods and social segments, from *A Doll's House – 1879* (furnished according to Henrik Ibsen's own scenographic descriptions), via *The Cleaning Lady's Home – 1950*, to *The Architect's Home – 1979*. The most contemporary interior, however, is *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002*, opened to the public in June 2003.

This latter exhibit is remarkable in many ways. Its appearance in a museum perceived by many as celebrating a sanctioned version of national identity and tradition can be read as an attempt at modernizing the institution's image and political significance. But whereas the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History has had a permanent exhibition on Sami culture – the Sami are an indigenous people whose homeland cuts across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia – since 1958, its first effort at including by far the largest group of 'new' minorities in its narrative of national identity appeared only in 2003.

The domestic interiors on display in *Wessels gate 15* are intended to 'tell stories about daily life, living conditions and furnishing customs in Oslo from the late 19th Century to 2002' (Bing et al. 2011: 24). Although these exhibits are less pristine and elitist than those one would find in museums of decorative art, walking through the building nevertheless feels like a history lesson in good taste and social aspiration, until, that is, one arrives in the Pakistani apartment. All the other apartments showcase a kind of interior design that in one way



Fig. 10.4 View of the exhibition interior *Modern Living – 1935* in the *Wessels gate 15* apartment building at the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History (Norsk Folkemuseum). Photo: Anne-Lise Reinsfelt. Courtesy of Norsk Folkemuseum.

or another is to be regarded as commendable or exemplary, varying from ‘respectable bourgeois’ and ‘cheap avant-garde’ via ‘flapper fashionable’ and ‘mid-Century modern’ to ‘working-class hero’ and ‘student savvy’. Against this background, *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* stands out as an addition rather than an integrated continuity. The ‘addition’, writes Wera Grahn, ‘is a familiar practice of exclusion . . . removing [the minority’s] history from normal history, making it a subordinate clause’ (Grahn 2011: 47).

This impression is confirmed when taking art and design history students to see the exhibitions in *Wessels gate 15*. Whereas exclamations signalling recognition, respect, admiration – envy, even – are the norm as we work our way through the other apartments, their reaction to the Pakistani interior is dominated by expressions of astonishment, disbelief, ridicule – horror, even. As this group has been socialized into possessing relatively specific aesthetic preferences and cultural capital, *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* becomes for them a version of the infamous ‘chamber of horrors’ from the early days of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Frayling 2010). Norwegian art and design history students may not be ‘average’ visitors – if that term makes any sense – in fact their shared reaction reveals the homogeneity of the group and how a restricted aesthetic norm keeps being reproduced in formalized education and criticism. Yet, the museum reports similar responses from the general public too, including worries that the exhibition is denouncing Pakistani interior decoration practices as ‘bad taste’. The curators’ answer to such feedback,

however, is that ‘the aim has not been to show good or bad taste (whatever that might be) but to show a snippet of reality’ (Pareli 2004: 63).

But what really sets *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* apart from the other interiors in *Wessels gate 15* is how this exhibition seems to be primarily defined by the (fictitious) dwellers’ ethnicity, whereas the other interiors are defined by categories such as social class, occupation, economy, etc. So, although Pakistanis in Norway are as different as other Norwegians in terms of social and economical distinguishers such as education, disposable income, cultural capital and taste, *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* comes, by the way in which the narrative is told by the museum, to represent an entire ethnic group rather than a specific socio-economic stratum as do the other interiors. The exhibition’s introductory wall text does acknowledge the heterogeneity of Norwegian-Pakistani home cultures: ‘the exhibition does not attempt to show how all Pakistanis in Norway live. Pakistani homes vary as much as Norwegian homes, according to the background, taste and means of those living there. This is just one example’. But because ‘the background, taste and means’ of the fictive inhabitants are not in any way expressed, as they are in all the other interiors, this disclaimer becomes something of an empty gesture. The ethnicity of the majority population is rarely, if ever, articulated or made relevant, whereas it often becomes the defining feature of minorities. The same mechanism is at work when Sami craft is always expected to primarily express an innate ‘Sami-ness’ (Guttorm 2004: 58–60).

In a sustained effort across many media (exhibitions, television, publications) at diversifying the representation of the material culture of Caribbean diaspora in Britain, Michael McMillan has argued for the need to account for its great variety and tensions formed along axes like geography, gender, generations and class to avoid such stereotyping and essentialism (McMillan 2009a; 2009b). Lacking the complexity of McMillan’s work, the ethnic and aesthetic stereotypes presented in *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* can be seen as emblematic of massive challenges faced by museums charged with communicating the (design) histories of ethnic and national communities (Peressut and Pozzi 2012). The result is often, according to Olav Christensen, ‘oversimplification and a dearth of nuance in issues of “us” versus “them”, or inclusion and exclusion . . . [M]useums far more commonly present national and ethnic communities as closed and restricted rather than as open, inclusive and dynamic’ (Christensen 2013: 164). The result can all too often become a reductive rendering of history and of material culture, petrifying rather than challenging stereotypes of ethnic and national identities.

‘Othering’ is an efficient way of enhancing certain traits in the dominant narrative. Rather than infusing Nordic design history with much-needed heterogeneity, the Pakistani interior accentuates the homogeneity of the master narrative. As such, it can be considered an exercise in what Fredrik Barth calls ‘boundary maintenance’, a crucial feature of identity formation even

in poly-ethnic societies (Barth 1969). The ‘otherness’ of *A Pakistani Home in Norway – 2002* is also testament to the suggestion that the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History is perhaps not so much representing a history of Norway as a history of Norwegian historical identity.

Normative Materiality

In the catalogue for the *Swedish Modern* exhibition at the 1939 New York World’s Fair, the concept ‘folk art’ is mentioned as being kept alive by the farming population. Stemming from ‘outside sources’, it had over the centuries been re-shaped ‘in accordance with the needs of the people, their character, and the natural conditions prevailing in the part of the country in which they lived’ (Stavenow et al. 1939: 11). This definition of the national handicraft tradition is still very much present in the heritage museums today, underpinning and anchoring the national identity. Handicraft organizations such as The National Association of Swedish Handicraft Societies and The Norwegian Folk Art and Craft Association were vital in establishing and mediating this conception of national craft traditions and making them a staple of Nordic design histories.

Ethnologist Charlotte Hyltén-Cavallius reveals how folk art was perceived as independently developed, with limited influences from other cultures. The folk craft was seen as being the product of a domestic condition with regional differences concerning climate, natural resources and aesthetic preferences. A specific Swedish logic was articulated where certain materials, quality and techniques were defined as ‘authentically Swedish’. Cotton was perceived as foreign, whereas wool and linen were considered appropriate. Synthetic colours were not allowed; natural dyes were encouraged. Crochet was considered lazy as it could be made in a semi-reclining position. It was perceived as a sign of low working morale. Therefore it had to be opposed by the advocates of the ‘authentic Swedish’ (Hyltén-Cavallius 2007). Formulated at the turn of the twentieth century, this understanding of the ‘authentic’ is still, to a large extent, a prominent point of reference in defining Swedish handicraft. This line of reasoning is not only present in Sweden; it crops up repeatedly also in Norway. In the 1960s, Norwegian designers and theorists argued against the widespread use of exotic timbers in Scandinavian furniture design on the premise that these were foreign and unnatural, instead championing locally available materials as more ‘appropriate’ for Scandinavian design (Fallan 2011: 34–36).

Sustaining and formulating this authentic heritage became an issue for the Swedish government in the early twentieth century. In 1918 a governmental report outlining a national support system for Swedish handicraft was published (Hyltén-Cavallius 2007: 115). Here we find the same historical narrative as in

the *Swedish Modern* catalogue: farmers were crafting the tradition. In the 1918 report a system was formulated where the craft of the Sami were placed outside the handicraft tradition defined as eligible for support. The Sami constituted 'an indigenous population whose homeland cuts across national boundaries' and was therefore fundamentally unstable and a poor fit with the distinctly national framework of governmental structures. The report ascribed 'significant cultural values' to Sami craft but considered it unable to progress in relation to modernity, and therefore ineligible for subsidies. Removed from 'its natural habitat' it would lose all its relevance. Sami craft, with its limited and 'primitive' materials, would be reduced to a curiosity with no value beyond the realm of tourist craft, and would thus be vulgarized (Holmquist et al. 1918). This view of Sami craft corresponded completely with the contemporary and enduring official national policy on Swedish-Sami relations where the Sami people were to live parallel to, or outside, modern society in order to preserve their 'traditional lifestyle'. Sami craft was, along with the Sami people, to be kept outside modernity, not to 'sip from the cup of civilization' as this would ruin their traditional lifestyle (Sjögren 2009). Later efforts at coining national policies for craft heritage and practice would include Sami craft, but always as a separate category. In this practice of monitoring 'the tradition', the treatment of Sami craft is a direct parallel to the 'border maintenance' (Barth 1969) exercise identified in the Pakistani interior discussed above.

Even though there is some horn craft represented in the *Swedish Modern* catalogue, Sami material culture has been virtually ignored in Nordic design history. This can to a large extent be explained by its sustained categorization as 'primitive', or 'non-modern', and therefore not in compliance with design history's conventional bias towards industrial manufacture, applied art and aesthetic innovation in the modern sense. A rare exception to this ignorance is renowned Swedish design historian and critic Ulf Hård af Segerstad's 1971 book on Sami craft. His admiration and respect for the subject matter is palpable, as is his struggle to make it fit the conventional categories and approaches of his art historical training. In line with earlier views on Sami craft, Hård af Segerstad asserts that in order to remain relevant and vital, it must move from 'folk craft' to 'art craft' in a development modelled on the history of domestic craft in Scandinavia a century earlier (Hård af Segerstad 1971: 96–99). Although obviously well meant, and perhaps quite progressive for its time, today his recommendation appears 'colonialist' or at least patronizing as it implies imposing on Sami culture and Sami practitioners a Western/white conception of craft and aesthetic value: 'White aesthetics has perpetuated understandings of art which have marginalized minorities, while at the same time creating myths of purity and disinterestedness' (Heith 2012: 159).

Even publications emphatically avoiding the now oft-made conflation of design and industrial design, such as art historical treatments of pre- and

non-industrial design (normally using the nomenclature of applied art, decorative art, folk art, etc.) have found little or no space for Sami design culture (Hopstock 1958; Hauglid 1977). Not even Peder Anker, former director of the West Norway Museum of Decorative Art, makes any mention at all of Sami craft in his recently revised book, purportedly updated to reflect ‘what has happened since [the publication of the previous editions in 1975 and 1998] in the research into and perception of Norwegian folk art’ (Anker 2004: 8). He thus seems to apply an ethnic rather than a geopolitical definition of what is ‘Norwegian’ – a definition which should be problematic to twentieth-century historians of any nation.

Sami representation in the exhibition histories of Norway’s three decorative arts museums (est. 1876, 1887, 1893) is equally scarce. The National Museum of Decorative Arts in Trondheim staged a major show on historical Sami craft in 1971, and then a smaller travelling exhibition on contemporary Sami craft in 1985. In the catalogue of the latter event, the continuing craft tradition is presented as a defence mechanism against all the hardship and exploitation suffered by the Sami under colonial rule and ‘an activity important for the preservation of Sami culture’ (Teigmo Eira 1985).

In his study of museum exhibitions of Sami culture, Stein R. Mathisen has argued that the objects on show are usually selected based on their distinctiveness, their difference from majority culture, thus simultaneously homogenizing, aestheticizing and ‘exotifying’ Sami culture:

Although the artefacts are collected from a large geographical area, one is still left with the impression of a homogeneous culture without significant local variations. Correspondingly, it is difficult to ascertain the temporal origin of the selected artefacts. It is all placed in some sort of ‘ethnographic present’, where time, periodization or development are not significant factors in understanding a cultural condition. This unclear temporal and geographical contextualization of Sami culture gives the impression of ‘mythical time and mythical expanse’. (Mathisen 2004: 16)

Mathisen concludes that these exhibitions are problematic for two reasons: firstly, they ‘construct and mediate images of cultures as homogenous, static and belonging to the past’, and, secondly, ‘because the narratorial perspective itself stems from a colonial situation’ (Mathisen 2004: 22).

Mathisen points towards current difficulties in dealing with cultural representations of differences in the Nordic countries. However, a significant academic discourse on understanding Sami culture in a postcolonial perspective is now developing in the Nordic countries. This discourse has in turn directed attention also to the material cultures of other minorities whose belongings and domestic environments have been not only ignored in the writing of history, but even systematically eradicated. One such group is the Roma minority, which has long been subject to control and exclusion.

Missing Materialities

In September 2013, the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* revealed that the Swedish police had been making a register of Roma people (Orrenius 2013). In a file marked ‘vagrants’ 4000 individuals – including children – were registered. Five months earlier, the Vice-Chairman of the Norwegian right-wing Progress Party suggested banning Roma people from Norway (Zaman 2013). These are just two of many incidents and part of a long, often brutal, history of control and exclusion, jarringly at odds with the perceived values of Nordic societies (Aronsson and Gradén 2013: 3).

In early twentieth-century Norway camps for the detainment of these ‘vagrants’ were established. The most famous camp was Svanviken work colony in Eide, between Kristiansund and Molde, on the west coast of Norway. Opened in 1908 and operative until 1989, the camp was run by the Norwegian Vagrant Mission. Travellers and Roma people were detained here to be ‘re-programmed’: no value was given to old traditions; instead they were to be ‘integrated’ in Norwegian majority culture. They were not allowed to speak their own language within the camp. Carefully monitored by the wardens, the inhabitants were to learn how to become productive citizens, including finding ‘honest work’, to become a part of modernity as defined by the majority. This control continued after the inhabitants left the camp, e.g. through threats to take away their children – an effective way of making the former detainees comply with the rules. Between 1949 and 1970 thirty-seven per cent of the camp inhabitants were sterilized, a practice resulting from a 1934 law regulating voluntary as well as forced sterilization of Roma people (Bastrup and Sivertsen 1996). Similar laws and practices were widely used as methods of control in Sweden. According to Etienne Balibar the nomad undercuts the power of the state and its possibility of forming collective subjects:

To ‘territorialize’ means to assign ‘identities’ for collective subjects within structures of power, and, therefore, to *categorize and individualize* human beings and the figure of the ‘citizen’ (with its statutory conditions of birth and place, its different subcategories, spheres of activity, processes of formation) is exactly a way of categorizing individuals. Such a process is possible only if other figures of the ‘subject’ are violently or peacefully removed, coercively, or voluntarily destroyed. It is also always haunted, as it were, by the possibility that outsiders or ‘nomadic subjects’, in the broad sense, resist territorialization, remain located outside the normative ‘political space’ in the land of (political) *nowhere* which can also become a *counter-political* or an *anti-political* space. (Balibar 2009)

In order to avoid this threat of the anti-political space ‘the nomad’ had to be controlled and excluded. Several initiatives to enforce this policy were established throughout the Nordic countries. In Sweden, Roma people were forced nomads. Due to laws and local practices Roma people were not allowed

to stay more than three weeks in one place. This made it difficult for the Roma children to attend school, for instance. These local practices against permanent settlements have made traces of Roma material culture scarce – a fact that has contributed to its eradication from Nordic national identities as well as from design history writing (Grahn 2011). Large institutions such as Nordiska museet do have some material about Roma people and Travellers. However, most of it is produced about Roma and Travellers, not by them. The same applies to the recent exhibition at Oslo Museum, *Norvegiska Romá: Norske sigøynere* (*Norvegiska Romá: Norwegian Gypsies*), which opened in September 2014 (Halland Rashidi 2015). As a result, there are but few objects in the collections that reflect and document Roma design and making practices.

Yet, despite these attempts at eradication, in the first part of the twentieth century traces of individuals and also of their material practices were recorded in official documents such as governmental reports (Linders et al. 1923). One such example is a governmental report from 1923, *Proposal for a law concerning the treatment of vagrants*, containing an appendix on an ‘inquiry into the manner of living of Travellers and Roma people’. Here Travellers and Roma people were mapped with the help of the police. Alongside reports on characters and living conditions is an account of incomes where coppersmithing and other metal work are mentioned as common professions, as well as basketry, brush making and paper flower making (Linders et al. 1923: 2). Clearly this production could be made part of a Swedish craft and design history yet this has not been present in design historical or applied art institutions.

However, there is one notable exception to this absence: the jewellery artist Rosa Taikon. The daughter of a goldsmith trained in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, she attended Konstfack University College of Art, Crafts and Design in the 1960s. She developed a jewellery practice that combined traditional Roma craft with the visual and material language of modernist art. Her work was, and still is, being exhibited in large art and craft institutions. Rosa Taikon has had solo exhibitions at The Röhsska Museum in Gothenburg and at the National Museum in Stockholm. In the autumn of 2011 the Nordic Museum in Stockholm staged an exhibition showing not just her jewellery but also her longstanding work for the rights of the Roma people that she undertook with her sister, the famous author and human rights activist Katarina Taikon. Rosa Taikon was the first in her family to gain a wider recognition by national institutions for her craft. Yet, her inclusion highlights the absence of her references, the Roma tradition, within the institutions. It is an absence that calls attention to the principles for writing Swedish craft and design history. Here a homogeneity has been constructed and the intellectual bourgeoisie has been the assumed design historical subject of modern design history writing (Zetterlund 2012). However, institutions are beginning to formulate the material culture history of Roma people. Recently, a collaboration was initiated between Roma organizations, the Swedish History Museum and



Fig. 10.5 Pagod, silver ring by Rosa Taikon. Photo: Karolina Kristensson. Courtesy of Nordiska museet.

the Multicultural Centre with the aim to materialize some of the historical sites in Stockholm. By archaeological excavation of former Roma campsites alongside collecting life stories, the project aims to demonstrate the presence of the Roma people in the Stockholm area. Perhaps the White Paper on abuses and rights violations of Roma during the twentieth century published by the Swedish Government in March 2014 will speed up this process of creating a material presence (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet 2014: 8).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have sought to demonstrate how design history in two Nordic nations has harnessed heritage in constructing national narratives based on a distinctly normative nativism and been impaired by missing materialities, conjuring up particular images of Norwegian and Swedish design. As such, the

master narratives have produced a literature that is succinctly described by Lisa Banu, in her postcolonial critique, as ‘normative design history’ (Banu 2009: 315). The apparent harmony and homogeneity of Nordic design history, then, must be challenged, because, as Partha Chatterjee reminds us, ‘behind the gesture of universal inclusiveness is hidden a more subtle game of exclusions’ (Chatterjee 2010: 156). We hope to have revealed some of these subtle games, in particular as they relate to design history’s role in formulating what is commonly referred to as the Nordic Model (Brandal et al. 2013). We have shown how the Nordic welfare states have controlled and continuously excluded difference, and how the normative notion of modernity that has been vital in formulating a Nordic design identity presupposes an exclusion of otherness in its construction. Like other strands of historical scholarship in the Nordic countries, design history has ‘always had an integrative task. This has led to the overemphasizing of the homogeneity of society and the uniformity of historical experience’ (Aronsson et al. 2008: 281). Design history then becomes a vital platform for discussing and altering the notion of a homogenized past that underpins current nationalistic discourses.

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A Special Relationship

The UK–US Transatlantic Domestic Dialogue

GRACE LEES-MAFFEI

Globalization behoves us to produce internationally situated investigations in which national design histories are understood within international contexts. Clearly, nations are not isolated entities; rather, they engage in multidirectional dialogues, with neighbours, friends, influencers, trading partners and enemies. Given the importance of intra-national liaisons it is surprising, not to say concerning, that so many academic studies of design are bound by national borders. While the scholarship of globalization and national studies each raise methodological questions of coverage, treatment and representativeness, we need not choose between them. There is a third way: transnational design history, meaning design history which recognizes that design is not bounded by the borders of nation states, and that it is necessary to examine more than one nation and the relationships between nations to better reveal even national histories of design.

Is it not the case that to truly understand what, if anything, is distinctive about a nation, we must leave it, perceive it from a distance, appraise it from a conceptual Archimedean point? Italian design, for example, is a myth as much constructed in the design stores, magazines and galleries of London, New York, Paris and Sydney as it is in the designs studios, factories and small- to medium-sized businesses of Milan, Florence, Turin or Rome (Lees-Maffei 2014). Clearly, national studies may not only be written from outside the nation in question, or written by foreigners. But, design historians should more often undertake the greater work involved in transnational studies, supra-national regional studies (studies of more than one nation within a defined region) and/

Notes for this section begin on page 206.

or comparative studies, in order to better reflect the ways in which design is, and has been, conceived, produced, mediated and consumed. Just as designed spaces, objects, images, processes and behaviours are capable of communicating national identity, so a characteristic of globalization is the wider exchange of people, ideas, goods and services across national borders.

The consumption and mediation in one place of goods, images or ideas produced in another is a rich seam for historians of design and culture (Lees-Maffei and Houze 2010: 465–510). When people move, they undergo a process of acculturation or ‘transculturation’, as Fernando Ortiz put it in describing Cuba particularly (1995 [1940]: 98). Ortiz’ concept of transculturation can be applied to the movement of goods, images and ideas which requires a process of acculturation on the part of producers, consumers and mediators. In his monumental work of postcolonial theory, Edward Said (1978) has critiqued the transcultural practice of ‘Orientalism’, characterized as exoticized representations of a generalized middle- and far-‘East’. Said’s orientalism is literary, but designed objects have been just as much the objects of orientalism, from the ‘Chinoiserie’ of the eighteenth-century British potteries’ willow pattern, inspired by Delft blue variations on Chinese ceramics, to the mid- to late nineteenth-century trend for ‘Japonisme’. Also highly relevant for a transcultural and/or transnational design history is Homi K. Bhabha’s (1994) postcolonial notion of ‘hybridity’ as a dialogue between colonizer and colonized, rather than a binaristic and inflexible relation of centre and margin. More recently, Marwan Kraidy (2002; 2005) has defined ‘hybridity as a space where intercultural and international communication practices are continuously negotiated in interactions of differential power’ (2002: 317). He notes that this understanding of hybridity is informed both by critiques of cultural imperialism, which allow for hybridity as a form of ‘resistance to domination’, and warnings that ‘hybridity and domination are not mutually exclusive’ (Kraidy 2002: 317). A tendency to celebrate cultural hybridity as a form of transnational or multicultural communication needs to recognize that the implicated nations are often engaged in unequal power relations.

Design is an excellent channel for symbolizing and mediating national identities, and much work on national identity in design examines visual and material culture which explicitly projects national identities. Here transnational design history is explored with reference to domestic advice literature – defined as textual and visual representations of the social and material home in etiquette, homemaking and home decoration books – a body of material intended for domestic readerships which does not explicitly communicate national identity. Domestic advice books are replete with ‘real ideals’ (Lees-Maffei 2013) about the consumption of designed goods, spaces and services which communicate national tendencies and identities. Yet, while there is a burgeoning literature on nationalism and national identity, and a growing body of scholarship on domestic advice, the two have rarely been brought together satisfactorily.¹ Analysis reveals that domestic advice books published in the UK

and the USA exemplify transnational patterns of influence as US domestic advice developed through a transatlantic domestic dialogue with the UK, via published words about how homes should be designed, decorated and inhabited. This literature, based on English as a shared language, has been mutually informative and mutually constitutive. Proceeding from the position that national identity cannot be understood solely from within a given focal nation, this chapter argues that transnational or comparative design histories are better fitted to understanding national identity in design and the transnational nature of design and its histories.

Ideal Homes? National Identity, Homogeneity and Diversity in US Domestic Discourse

Just as manners are markers of national identity – in that the people of different nations display different behaviours, as do people from different regions, whether sub- or supra-national – so advice literature has been a tool in the formation of national identity. Domestic advice literature constitutes a semantically rich genre of discourse in which the conceptualization and realization of the physical home, its production, consumption and mediation, are bound up with larger homes: the home nation and the nation state. These degrees of home are conflated in domestic advice which seeks to provide normative, shared designs for living in articulations of domestic practices which have been or are intended to be naturalized, if not as local, regional and national customs, then certainly as generally accepted patterns of behaviour.

For example, Sarah A. Leavitt (2002) has discussed the role of homemaking literature in Americanization (which should more accurately be termed ‘US-ization’), the process of acculturation which turns immigrants into US citizens. Leavitt explains that lace curtains were seen in the 1930s as a symbol of aspiring to join the middle class, and as a decorative detail employed by immigrants, or the ‘lace-curtain Irish’:

To domestic advisors, and to increasing numbers of Americans who encountered and learned from them, lace curtains represented the past, the unsanitary, stuffy, frilly, nineteenth century. The modern twentieth century, the age of efficiency kitchens and sparse furnishings, would welcome only those women who embraced the new ideals about American decoration. (Leavitt 2002: 96)

With reference to domestic discourse, Leavitt shows how lace curtains came to function as a metonymic symbol for immigrant domesticities, old Europe within the modern USA. The micro domesticity of the home and the macro domesticity of the nation are fused in domestic advice discourse which presents the home as a microcosm of the nation. We can see the American Dream, meaning the US Dream, depicted throughout the genre of domestic advice

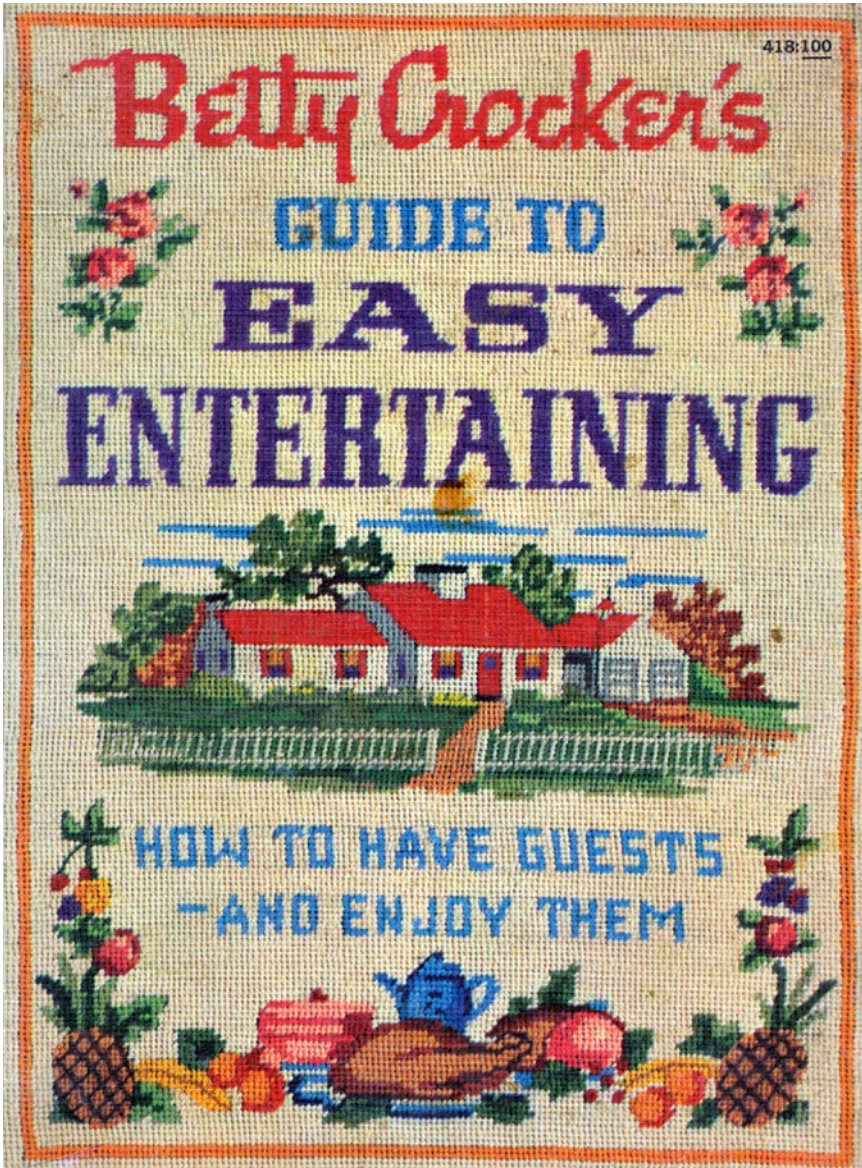


Figure 11.1 Cover, *Betty Crocker's Guide to Easy Entertaining: How to Have Guests – And Enjoy Them*, New York: Golden Press, 1959. Illustrated by Peter Spier. Courtesy of General Mills Archives.

literature as published in the USA. See, for example, Fig. 11.1 in which it takes the form of a red-roofed home set in landscaped garden with a white picket fence and a turkey (perhaps for Thanksgiving) alongside other indicators of plenty and hospitality, represented with the appearance of needlepoint tapestry on the cover of a book by General Mills' invented celebrity chef, Betty Crocker.

The national emphasis becomes problematic when it precludes adequate recognition of international or transcultural influences. A focus on homemaking literature as constituting the home nation can lead to a tendency to address cultures other than a dominant, normative mainstream (USA, in this case) only when those cultures appear in the form of immigrants and can therefore be claimed as US citizens, albeit the ‘other’ within the USA. For instance, the US character of some practices, such as outdoor living, promoted in home decorating books is asserted rather than comparatively demonstrated (Leavitt 2002: 85). Relatedly, domestic designs influenced by modernism appear in a single-nation frame as more associated with the USA than they might in a transatlantic, transnational study which takes account of their European roots in, for instance, British Arts and Crafts, Dutch De Stijl and German functionalism, and recognizes the role of European émigrés in promoting modernism in the USA (an influence so pronounced as to have attracted the satiric gaze of Tom Wolfe [1981]). Finally, although the early influence of European sources on US publications is mentioned, Leavitt’s statement that ‘Domestic advice manuals originated in the 1830s’ (2002: 9) refers only to the US case. It obscures several hundred years of advice published in Europe in response to modern tendencies such as individualism, industrialization and urbanization (Elias 1994 [1939]) and three hundred years of transatlantic interchange between the UK and the US (Maudlin and Peel 2013).

Leavitt is not alone in presenting a single-nation history of US advice; others include John Kasson (1990), C. Dallett Hemphill (1999), Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English (2005 [1978]) and Lynn Peril (2002). Sue Currell’s analysis of self-help and the USA in the 1930s consigns ‘the complex transatlantic crossings in self-help traditions’ to a footnote in order to focus purely on the USA (Currell 2006: 141). McHugh (1999) presents her analysis of the variable visibility of housework in sources as diverse as nineteenth-century advice books, Hollywood movies and later experimental films as one of ‘American Domesticity’ rather than domesticity *per se*. Insights into the US condition/psyche/dream are thereby implied, a promising marketing strategy for accessing the US book-buying market and American Studies curricula. In fact, McHugh’s claims for the American-ness (or, rather, US-ness) of the cultural artefacts she examines are not made explicit and must therefore be assumed to be based on the location of cultural production rather than the transnational flow of ideas and ideals via transatlantic publishing activity and the international distribution and exhibition of Hollywood studio movies, for instance.

The studies mentioned above characterize the erstwhile American Studies project of determining ‘what has been unique about the American experience’ (meaning the US experience) (Campbell and Keane 1997:1). Towards the close of the twentieth century – aka the ‘American century’ (Edwards and Gaonkar 2010: 1; Ellwood 2012) – the notion of US exceptionalism was increasingly criticized as privileging dominant groups, promoting assimilation over pluralism

and failing to engage in transnational comparison. American Studies scholarship has focused on the USA to the almost entire exclusion of the many nations spread across the continents of North and South America, in a manner which ‘compounded earlier imperial gestures’ by asserting ‘a particular nation-state’s claim to the powerful historical concept of “America”’ (Radway 1999: 6–7).² In response, Radway prescribes ‘bifocal vision, a capacity to attend simultaneously to the local and the global as they are intricately intertwined’ and ‘a relational and comparative perspective’ (1999: 23–24).

Reflecting the intervening ‘transnational turn’ in American Studies (Tyrell 2009), Radway et al close a recent American Studies anthology with a section on ‘Internationalization and Knowledge Production about American Studies’ (2009: 567–604). Therein Liam Kennedy promotes the study of the state (meaning government) rather than the nation as a solution to the problems resident in the European view of the USA and describes how Americanists, or scholars of the USA, have sought ‘to dislocate the nation as an axis of focus’ through examination of ‘the transnational, the post-national, the transatlantic, the Black Atlantic, the circumatlantic’ (Kennedy 2009: 574). Robyn Wiegman itemizes the internationalization of American Studies as: (1) ‘explicating the project of empire in US national-state formation’; (2) ‘rethinking identity formation as a material effect of the transnational history of US empire’; (3) border studies refuting ‘notions of inside and outside that make nation formation distinct from the transnational circulations of people, goods, labor, culture and knowledge’; (4) diaspora studies, ‘the intersection of African American and African Studies’; (5) comparative studies ‘to decenter the US from its universal representation as the quintessential national form, thereby locating operations of culture in cross-national formulations that are multi-national in scope’; (6) ‘the relation between the national and the international in the modes of knowledge production at work in American Studies as a global scholarly enterprise’; and (7) ‘collaboration and comparative analysis’ in the context of ‘identificatory refusal with American American Studies’ (Wiegman 2009: 581–583). Finally, Donatella Izzo cautions that ‘the opening of national frontiers and the erasure of national labels often seem to operate as a unilateral assumption theorized as a universal intellectual need from the vantage point of a privileged position within a strong institutional apparatus’ (Izzo 2009: 597). She points out that this practice entails an ‘unacknowledged premise authorizing (and indeed enforcing) the reduction of multiplicity to unity’ (598):

We should not delude ourselves as to the actual existence of an ‘outside’ of American Studies that is not always already coextensive with the inside, at the very moment that it is co-opted into its disciplinary field, drawn into its apparatus, and geared to its institutional mode of operation. However much we may intellectually and politically foster a recognition of cultural diversity inside the US and an awareness of its manifold world transactions, we’ll be still tautologically differentiating and enlarging *the same* field. (Izzo 2009: 598)

She counsels treatment of the nation as a historical and political category, and a non-hierarchical approach to accessing ‘the historically specific “otherness” of each individual other’ (599). The transnational turn in American Studies is now established (Edwards and Gaonkar 2010; Fluck, Pease and Rowe 2011; Bieger, Saldívar and Voelz 2013).

Scholarship in the design history of the US (Meikle 1985; Margolin 1988) echoes the broader currents of American Studies in a shift from the articulation of an ‘American’ aesthetic in design (Meikle 1979; Bush 1975) to revisionist work which shows the so-called ‘American’ aesthetic to have been ‘a transatlantic collaboration that embodied the contradictions of modernity’ (Maffei 2003: 369). But writing on national identity in design more generally has tended to communicate convergence around national tropes, rather than tracing divergence within national identities, and the same critique can be levelled at writing on domestic advice. National identity is the place we come together: in celebrations of our winning sports teams, in rituals of state leadership such as presidential swearings-in and royal coronations, in national holidays. But even while US national identity in particular is predicated upon ethnic diversity, the normalizing function of domestic advice discourses – which tends to mean that a white middle class ideal is published for white middle class readers to follow – has not allowed the close relationship between the physical home and the nation as home which underpins domestic advice literature to reflect the longstanding ethnic diversity of the USA, and the increasingly multicultural nature of the UK population since 1945. In turn, the few academic studies of domestic advice have replicated the selective representations of national identity found in the source material and have overlooked cultural diversity.

How might this impasse be overcome? We can borrow from reception theory (Iser 1974; 1978) and feminist literary theory (Ardener 1975; Showalter 1979; 1981; 1986; Lerner 1979) the understanding that gaps and silences in domestic advice books are semantically rich: what is not said is as powerful as what is said in creating ideals which subjugate certain groups and voices. Emma Ferry’s (2003) analysis of British home decoration literature is an exemplary design historical application of this method for better understanding gender. The approach may be extended still further to national identity in design and design discourse: because ethnic diversity is ignored in mainstream media treatments of domesticity, an analysis which reads between the lines to understand how race/ethnic and cultural diversities are encoded in domestic advice discourses may be fruitful.

An example of such work is Dianne Harris’s *Little White Houses* (2013). Harris examines houses and their representations, including textual and visual sources from mass market magazines, trade journals and catalogues for what they tell us of race in the USA and its construction through building and domestic practices in an era when all-white housing

developments typically excluded working-class, African-American and Jewish families. Harris confirms that postwar mainstream mass-market publications depicted only white families and presented whiteness (broadly conceived) as normative, to the extent that non-whites are virtually invisible in these sources. Harris sees whiteness, and therefore race, encoded in ‘words such as informality, casual lifestyle, leisure, individuality, privacy, uncluttered, and even clean’ (Harris 2013: 60). She perceives whiteness in the aerial perspective and axonometric views employed in architectural drawings published in magazine articles, advertisements and trade brochures, where ‘no viewer is defined or specified, because the assumed viewer is white and middle class, an assumption of unitary/collective identity that suppresses alternatives’ (Harris 2013: 89). Slavoj Žižek’s notion of ideological cynicism is invoked to suggest that post-war US citizens were both aware of the ways in which economically valuable whiteness was instantiated in their homes and at the same time regarded ‘themselves as entirely unracialized, their spaces as race-neutral’ (Harris 2013: 13).³

But, by consulting only ‘white’ media sources rather than analysing *Ebony* magazine (founded in 1945), for example, or other publications that might have revealed more about postwar ethnic diversity, Harris has demonstrated the difficulty of finding meaning between the lines of domestic advice discourses. The risk is one of reproducing the ideological bias of mainstream media source material, so that a book critiquing whiteness in postwar US domestic advice furthers the discourse of whiteness. This approach is, I suggest, more limiting than the retrieval and analysis of sources outside the mainstream media, which speak more directly from and of the constituencies of interest. Among a small number of valuable examples (Chambers 2006, Leslie 1995), Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn’s analysis of ‘Prescriptions for Interracial Conduct from the 1960s to the 1990s’ (1999) makes a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding of the ways in which US ethnic diversity was addressed in a wide range of twentieth-century advice discourses, from mainstream Hollywood movies to etiquette guides for black and white readers respectively. Lasch-Quinn’s account of the awkwardness, inconsistency, optimism and latent prejudices of this material is a model for design histories attentive to diversity in national identities.

Thus far, one methodological faultline has been discerned: the homogenizing normative ideals promoted in domestic advice books have (with a few very useful exceptions) mainly produced analyses which, however well-intentioned, have not adequately addressed the divergent nature of nations and national identities. Now I will turn to a second, related, methodological issue in the writing of national design histories using domestic advice: international interactions and the significance of transnational contexts.

Hybridity at Home: A UK–US Transatlantic Domestic Dialogue

While the cultural homogeneity of the domestic advice genre and its failure to reflect the diversity of the national markets into which the books were published has been replicated in analyses of domestic advice, the single nation emphasis in the domestic advice genre has not precluded trans- and multinational analyses, of which there are several notable examples.

Historical sociologist Norbert Elias produced the first extended transnational analysis of domestic advice. He articulated ‘figuration sociology’ as a model in which individuals or ‘personality structures’ are conditioned by ‘social structures’ such as etiquette. Having worked in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Ghana, Elias understood that in order to analyse the structural place of individuals within society, it was necessary to examine more than one society. In *The Civilizing Process* (1994 [1939]) he used etiquette books published in Britain, Germany and France to trace increasing interdependence between individuals and states in Europe over the past four hundred years. International trade requires the maintenance of good relations with a wide range of people, and a generally acceptable standard of behaviour. Elias argued that societies become more civilized as the centralization of state violence influences individuals to increasingly internalize social codes of self-control and politeness. He regarded the apparent increasing informality of twentieth-century social relations as an external impression that obscured the internalization of restraint, or ‘controlled decontrolling’ (see Wouters 2007: 231).

Advice literature has been proposed as useful in understanding social interaction and international relations. Arthur M. Schlesinger Snr’s *Learning to Behave* (1968 [1946]) closes with a postwar panegyric on the role of etiquette literature as a *lingua franca* for improving international relations and maintaining world peace, in that it could help people from different countries to understand and show respect for one another.⁴ Schlesinger traced a history of US etiquette books beginning with the influence of European (and especially English) advice on emergent US advice, in the form of imported copies of British and French advice books being sold and otherwise circulated by the early settlers. Subsequently, copies of the imported titles were printed in the USA, before adaptations were published to combine European influences and American needs and preferences. According to Schlesinger, it was not until the 1830s that a desire to cast off ‘imported superfluities’ of behaviour led to the production and consumption of distinctly US advice books.

Just as European codes of conduct reached a flamboyant apogee (Davidoff 1973; St. George 1993), books articulating specifically US manners were concerned with more basic living conditions in the new world. Following Lydia Maria Child’s *The American Frugal Housewife* (1829) among other examples, Dr A.W. Chase’s books for pioneers advised on making frontier country

habitable (e.g. Chase 1873). Like Schlesinger and Hemphill (1999: 131), Linda Young agrees that the emergence of particularly North American or US modes of behaviour distinct from European habits did not remove an evident interplay between European and US mid-twentieth-century advice texts. But Young makes the important distinction that ‘the growth of genteel etiquette in the United States encompassed one important condition that did not apply in Britain or its colonies: democracy. How could a system of manners grounded in class distinction have a place in a republic of equal citizens?’ For US citizens, etiquette was a route to ‘middle classness more than aristocracy’ (Young 2003: 151). This insight derives from Young’s comparative method. Whereas Schlesinger and Hemphill focus on the USA over the *longue durée*, Young’s study rather extends geographically from the USA to Britain and Australia. Schlesinger’s book remains an exemplary national study, in which the first section traces complex international influences and the closing part returns to transnational considerations, but Young’s fully comparative transnational method contributes another dimension of understanding didactic discourses in all three of her focal nations.

Young’s is one of several valuably transnational studies of advice which are more or less Eliasian. Jorge Ardití’s *Genealogy of Manners* (1998) applies Elias’s long view of changes in the social infrastructure to a comparison of France and England,⁵ and Cas Wouters’ comparative studies of etiquette in the Netherlands, France, Britain and the UK in the twentieth century (1995; 2007) counter Elias’s model of controlled decontrolling through examination of the dynamic relations between various classes, and between the sexes. Along with these properly transnational, multi-national and comparative studies of domestic advice, single nation studies are most effective when they are enriched and made more meaningful through the integration of the transnational capacity of domestic advice, as in Schlesinger’s book. The ideas and ideals of home communicated in domestic advice books are not static, even though they may be seen to amount to a set of traditions. Rather, they are constantly negotiated, in a balance of tradition and modernity (Lees-Maffei 2001) in which the genre collectively takes on board new, including international, practices and discards the outmoded, point by point.

Penny Sparke has recognized reciprocity in the ideas and ideals of domesticity disseminated in US and UK publishing: ‘Through the last decades of the nineteenth century, strong links were established between British and American [decorating] publications as editions of key texts appeared on both sides of the Atlantic’ (Sparke 2003: 65). She cites Charles Eastlake’s *Hints on Household Taste* of 1868, which was enormously influential in the USA on its publication there four years later, and notes the correlation between the titles published collectively by Macmillan in Britain as the ‘Art at Home’ series and the US writer Clarence Cook’s influential manifesto about aestheticism in the household *The House Beautiful* of 1878. Sparke observes that ‘publications of

the 1870s and 1880s on both sides of the Atlantic shared a commitment to the concepts of good taste, good workmanship and the importance of “art” in the home’ (Sparke 2003: 65). This convergence continued into the twentieth century (and persists today), so that many titles – including for example US doyenne of manners Emily Post’s *Etiquette* (1922; 1927) and British writer Shirley Conran’s *Superwoman* (1975) – were published more or less simultaneously in the UK and USA and the intertextual references which advice writers routinely make to the work of other advisors and existing works of advice are as likely to be transatlantic as they are to reference material from the same nation (Lees-Maffei 2013: 5). A concern for currency has led advice writers to use contemporary idiomatic expressions which may indicate varying levels of transatlantic influence, such as the increasing Americanization (US-ization) of the language used by Lady Troubridge in her successive books (Lees-Maffei 2013: 18–19).

This dialogic publishing activity reflects similarly convergent domestic practices in the UK and the USA, and in the transatlantic relationship between the US and Western Europe. For example, as a leading exponent of the application of efficiency studies and Scientific Management to homemaking, Christine Frederick (1920 [1919]) exerted a transatlantic influence as well as a national one. Designer Margrete Lihostsky acknowledged her debt to Frederick in designing the first fitted kitchen, the ‘Frankfurt Kitchen’, for public housing in that German city in 1926 (Lees-Maffei 2013: 123). Frederick also influenced leading US etiquette writer Emily Post in her recommendations about designing domestic spaces with a view to ‘saving steps’ as this diagram of ‘An Ideal Kitchen Arrangement’ (Fig. 11.2) from Post’s book *The Personality of a House* (1948) makes clear.

This rational domesticity also underpinned the consumer movement on both sides of the Atlantic which responded to the spread of consumerism seen in, for example, the identification of new consumer groups such as the teenager in the UK and the US (Abrams 1959; Life 1959). The consumer movement also responded to unease about the spread of consumerism and informed discourses of domesticity by introducing consumer education (see, for example, Fig. 11.3) and the tropes and techniques of rationalism (Lees-Maffei 2013: 26).

The shared project noted by Schlesinger, Young, Sparke and others continued into the twentieth century in a dialogical process characterized in part, but not exclusively, by Americanization/US-ization. For example, in discussing the promotion of modernism by the BBC from 1912 to 1944, Julian Holder concludes:

While considerable effort by Modernist design reformers was being put into influencing consumer behaviour, American films, music and products were forming much of the public’s taste. [...] The voice of the BBC as the ‘Voice of the Nation’ was unable to combat the Americanisation of British taste during this century. (Holder 1990: 142–143)

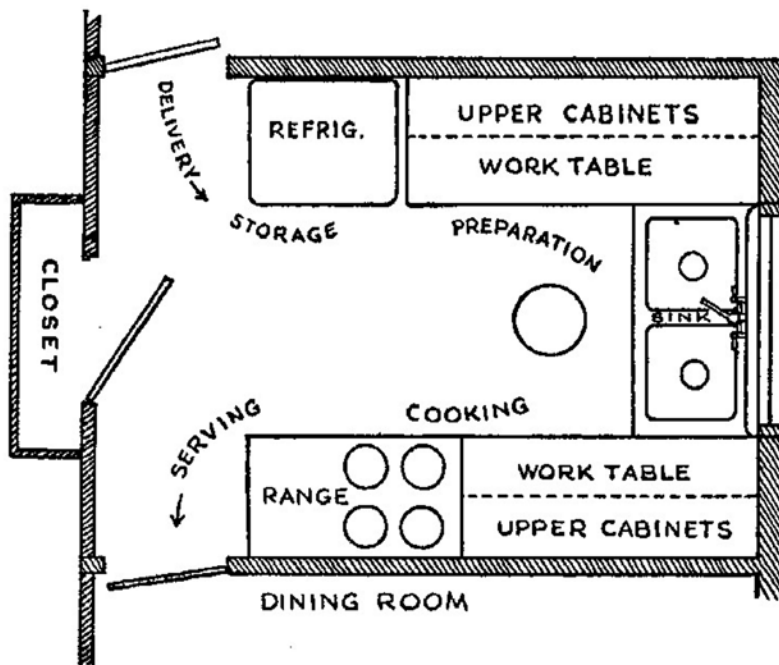


Fig. 137

AN IDEAL KITCHEN ARRANGEMENT

Figure 11.2 ‘An Ideal Kitchen Arrangement’, illustration by Stephen J. Voorhies, Fig. 137 in Emily Post, *The Personality of a House*, fourth edition 1948 [1930], New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, p. 398.

Americanization/US-ization was a concern for domestic advisors writing on issues ranging from youth culture to consumerism, and from the increase of US brides in the British aristocracy (Cannadine 1990: 347) to the use of informal US conversational idioms. British advice author Pam Lyons insisted that ‘even in younger circles, “Hi” is definitely “out”!’ (Lyons 1967: 451; Lees-Maffei 2013: 155). In caricaturing the discomfort felt by the British in the face of US informality in a humorous advice book authored by a British aristocrat, the Duke of Bedford, illustrator Nicolas Bentley represents a US citizen as overly familiar in his use of informal language (‘Hi-ya’), his use of nick names (‘Johnny boy’), his dispensing with the formal necessity of a third-party introduction and following an entirely different sartorial code, not to mention his pungent and prominent cigar.

In turn, US advice authors were self-conscious about what they regarded as distinctly American habits. Californian teachers, Betty Allen and Mitchell Pirie Briggs, reflected in *If You Please! A Book of Manners for Young Moderns*: ‘It seems to be a part of the American philosophy to welcome variety and change. In



Courtesy Dow Chemical Company

- A GOOD way to plan the arrangement of your room is to try out different placements with model pieces of furniture. Remember that in addition to sleeping, you will use your room for dressing, grooming, studying, hobbies, and perhaps entertaining friends.



EVERY TEEN-AGER SHOULD HAVE . . .

- . . . a corner he can call his own.
- . . . a place where he can have privacy and quiet.
- . . . a place to keep sports and hobby equipment.
- . . . a desk or table large enough for homework and hobbies.
- . . . a place to display snapshots or other personal things.
- . . . a place for study with good lighting.
- . . . a place to sleep with proper temperature, humidity, and ventilation.

RELATED FILMSTRIPS*

- Accessories in the Girl's Room*
- Fabrics in the Girl's Room*
- Selecting Furniture for the Girl's Room*
- Arranging Furniture in the Girl's Room*
- Introduction to Color*
- Color in the Girl's Room*

* For detailed filmstrip information and source, see List of Visual Aids, pages 502 to 504.

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Figure 11.3 Teen decorator. Image ‘Courtesy Dow Chemical Company’, in *Teen Guide to Homemaking*, edited by Marion Stearns Barclay and Frances Champion, New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1961, p. 205. Courtesy Dow CC-BY-NC.

dress we are inclined quickly to discard the old and eagerly grasp the new’ (Allen and Briggs 1950 [1942]: 34). In *Behave Yourself! Etiquette for American Youth* they imply a distinctly US aesthetic when they assert that ‘Good grooming is as much a part of modern life as is streamlining’ (Allen and Briggs, 1950 [1945] [1937]: 16).

Informal manners have been presented as an US national trait, not only in British domestic advice literature with its implied fear of Americanization/US-ization, but also through analysis of claims in US-produced titles of the forging of US manners. The pre-eminent US advice writer, Emily Post, continually adapted her advice to keep pace with the informalization of US society (Lees-Maffei 2012), from the first revision of her book *Etiquette* which responded to the influence of competing advice writer Lillian Eichler (Eichler

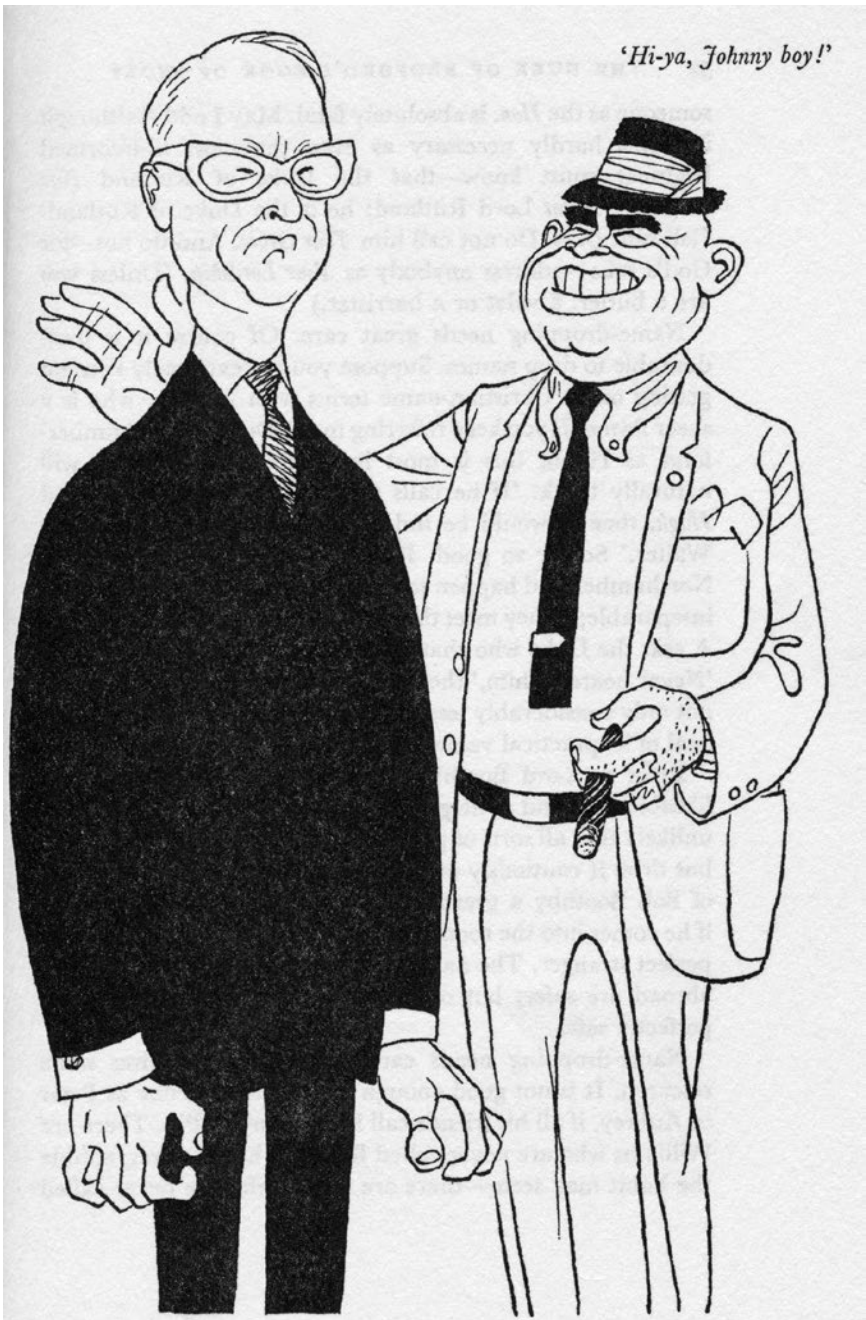


Figure 11.4 ‘Hi-ya, Johnny boy!’ illustration by Nicolas Bentley, in *The Duke of Bedford’s Book of Snobs*, John, Duke of Bedford in collaboration with George Miles, London: Peter Owen, 1965, p. 51.

1922 [1921]; Post 1922; 1927; Schlesinger 1968 [1946]; Arditì 1998; Lees-Maffei 2012) and in every subsequent edition. Yet she was later ridiculed by authors of ‘the new hospitality’, Mary and Russel Wright (Wright and Wright 1954 [1950]), who saw her not as the arbiter of US etiquette, but rather as a proselytizer for English manners at odds with the ‘easier’, more informal needs of mid-century US citizens (Lees-Maffei 2011; Havenhand 2014). The Wrights’ own *Guide to Easier Living* (1954 [1950]) was a landmark text in the development of informal ‘American’ home entertaining in the post-World War II period. See, for example, their advice on serving meals to guests at a ‘Kitchen Buffet’ (Fig. 11.5) and their recommendations that cleaning up after a meal can be part of the evening’s entertainment (Lees-Maffei 2011: 189).

However, notwithstanding Victoria de Grazia’s (2006) claims for the resounding victory of Americanization/US-ization, it was not a one-way street. Rather, two-way traffic might be a better metaphor for understanding the mutual influence of the USA and those countries in which Americanization/US-ization was bemoaned, if not a crossroads, or pile-up of multiple influences. Recognition of greater complexity in twentieth-century Americanization in design is provided by Leavitt, for example, who allows for the influence of Swiss Architect Le Corbusier on US domestic advice writers (2002: 104, 121); by Kjetil Fallan, who has shown how design discourse bore evidence of a shift from enthusiasm to questioning of US influences (Fallan 2015); and by Maiken Umbach (2002) who traces the global relevance of the



Figure 11.5 ‘The Kitchen Buffet’, illustration by James Kingsland, in Mary and Russel Wright, *Guide to Easier Living*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954 (1950). Permission Russel Wright Studios CC-BY.

German notion of *Heimat*, and some useful transatlantic design history of the period before the twentieth century (Jones 2013; Hinchcliffe 2013; Styles and Vickery 2007).

Broadening Horizons: America in the World of Advice

Studies of specific nations which have negotiated their identities in relation to external state(s) have been fruitful for the understanding of domestic advice and what it can tell us about ideals of the consumption of design in the home. This work extends beyond the understanding of a US-UK transatlantic domestic dialogue to encompass wider concern for America and Britain in the (rest of the) world. Young's analysis of *Middle Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* derives from her curatorial practice in Australia. Rather than accepting the preponderance in her Australian collections of objects which had been imported from colonial power Britain and commercial power the USA⁶ as being based on 'the Imperial agenda of supplying goods to the colonies' and 'American production strengths' in mechanized and domestic products respectively, Young regards the similarity of goods in Australia, Britain and the USA as evidence of a 'demand for certain kinds of items which both enabled and expressed a common pattern of values, behaviours and beliefs: middle-class gentility' (Young 2003: 6, 7, 8). Young points out that 'In the larger focus of transnationalism, the culture of the international middle class was neither "British", "American" nor "Australian" but characteristic of "Greater" Britain' (7). She is aware of the political implications of de-emphasizing difference, and that 'admitting to continuity seems to let down the spirit of the American Revolution, or to endorse the Old World values that despatched the poor and the criminal from the motherland to the antipodes' (2003: 7). Yet Young makes clear the potency of consumer goods, and particularly those associated with gentility, in colonial contexts: 'The absence of a fresh tablecloth on the frontier table would indicate despairing failure in the project to re-create the genteel habitus. Wherever the tablecloth was victorious, the success of genteel culture was proved across the globe' (2003: 188).

Writing in her *Domesticity in Colonial India*, published a year after Young's book, Judith E. Walsh concurs that 'During the nineteenth century, a collection of middle-class European ideals and practices on home and family life became a globally hegemonic discourse on domesticity [...] found in advice literature and other writings on home and family life published in England and the United States, as well as in colonial settings as diverse as India and Africa' (Walsh 2004: 11). As a postcolonial study of colonial discourse, Walsh's book is necessarily transnational and transcultural. The colonial Indian domestic advice books which Walsh examines:

were shaped by a transnational domestic discourse. But they were also (and just as profoundly) influenced by local worlds and their conditions: by the structures of British power and presence in urban centers like Calcutta; by the changing nature and demands of life under British rule; and by the indigenous contexts of home and family life, the worlds of women, children and family elders. (Walsh 2004: 31)

By merging transnational and local concerns, Walsh's focal texts exemplify Bhabha's hybridity, but she is careful to point out that while hybridity is 'not a concept usually applied to works within a Western cultural domain', US advice books such as Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) instantiate an accommodation of the transnational and the local in the same fashion as her Bengali examples (Walsh 2004: 26). Her point is that Bengali advice writers were deemed imitative and derivative, while Beecher was not. We can take from this the qualification that hybridity is not a practice of collaboration that transcends political specificities; rather hybrid texts embed politics specific to the circumstances and geography of their production. For example, Walsh's primary interest is gender and she returns repeatedly to the politics of literacy, noting that 'Fluency in English, of course, gave the English-educated access to all the discourses of British colonial modernity. And it gave them access to each other' (2004: 33), and that 'this story of what women learned in nineteenth-century Bengal and India need not conclude with nationalism and the end of social reform in India [...] It can also conclude – and reasonably so – with a large number of "literate and learning" women reading the texts of their pasts, beginning to consider their options for the future' (Walsh 2004: 159–160).

Literacy is critical, but it is not the whole story: Rosemary Marangoly George's interdisciplinary anthology explores 'the rhetoric and practices of domestication in contemporary cultures' and demonstrates how 'analyses of domesticity itself can be used to critique the racialized and gendered logic of nationalist and imperialist modernity from the late nineteenth century onward' (George 1998a: 16). Chapters examine architecture, film, literature and food packaging. George's own chapter uses novels and homemaking guidebooks as evidence of the perceived importance in the India Empire of Englishwomen's homemaking practices as imperial labour (George 1998b: 52). She observes 'the language of statecraft' in Indian imperial domestic advice books, which seek to persuade their English reader that 'her triumph is to replicate the empire on a domestic scale' (George 1998b: 58, 57). George's transnational perspective enables her to observe that English novelists and advice writers working in India enjoyed an 'autonomy afforded by their dislocation' which was not experienced by English women in England (George 1998b: 67). Similarly, Nancy R. Reagan's *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870–1945* (2007) avoids the pitfalls of a single nation study by considering domesticity not only as a practice of national identity but also one of colonialism in regions such as south-west Africa and the attempts to 'Germanize' eastern European neighbours.

Conclusion: A Special Relationship

Domestic advice forms a rich resource for understanding the macro ‘home’ of nation state via the microcosm of the physical family home, but this chapter has outlined some drawbacks to the convenient category of the national, and of national studies using US domestic advice as a case study. Domestic advice books have largely ignored the complexity of national compositions and identities and studies of this material have all too often followed suit. An insistence on national borders as borders for understanding domestic advice literature has obscured its role in mediating between nations and the development of a UK–US transatlantic ‘domestic dialogue’ of several centuries standing. It is not helpful to read domestic advice discourses on each side of the Atlantic separately, and contemporary audiences did not read them as such. To appreciate the importance of domestic advice literature in mediating national identities, we must also consider its transnational significance.

This chapter contributes to Wiegman’s fifth project, of rethinking ‘area studies models with more fluid and flexible ideas about nations as imaginary formations with deeply material effects’ (Wiegman 2009: 582). US domestic practices were forged in relation to European, and principally colonial British and French exemplars and yet the old world colonizer’s influence, which extended long after the formal ending of the colonial situation, has been superseded by the postcolonial USA exerting a reciprocal influence on the UK and other nations around the world through political, economic and military power and via the processes of Americanization/US-ization, cultural imperialism and soft power in the ‘American’ twentieth century. If the power relations between the UK and the USA have undergone a revolution, both literally in the historical event of revolution and subsequently as a result of the USA’s growing economic and cultural dominance, the direction of influence has not simply reversed.

Although Britain is now less powerful in its postcolonial relationship with the USA, a mutual influence prevails, perhaps particularly in the areas of etiquette, homemaking and home decoration due to the roots of this discourse. This domestic dialogue has seen the UK and the USA collaborating in the articulation of domestic ideals in a manner indicative of Bhabha’s hybridity as occurring in the cultural interactions of the colonizer and colonized. Transatlantic negotiation is perceptible in, for example, advice which directly addresses the inadequacy of British models of homemaking and etiquette for the US settlers on the western frontier (Child 1829; Chase 1873), and advice about managing the increasing influences of Americanization/US-ization in post-World War II Britain (Lyons 1967). Notwithstanding successive revisions in response to the influence of other texts, the Anglo-centrism of one landmark US advice book (Post 1922; 1927) has been critiqued in another (Wright and Wright 1954 [1950]). Furthermore, UK and US ideals and the relationship between them resonated throughout the world so that the analysis of domestic

advice, whether undertaken as a national study or as a transnational one, must encompass a transnational perspective and a postcolonial recognition of domesticity as a colonial practice, and domestic advice likewise, wherever it is read.

Following extensive debates in fields other than design history, principally American Studies, this chapter has argued for transnational design history as a more challenging but ultimately more rewarding approach than default national studies. Work in American Studies which has responded to the critique of US exceptionalism has cautioned scholars of the USA about the need to recognize the vantage points from which they research, write and make judgments and the contexts within which they do those things, as a way of avoiding a shift from the frying pan of nationalist myopia to the fire of universalizing and totalizing world views. Transnational design history allows for multiple viewpoints which, rather than leading to universalizing statements about a nation's (in this case the US) influence in the world, instead allow for a specific analysis of transnational influence in historical context, and an understanding of cultural collaboration all too rarely acknowledged in national studies of design to date.

Notes

1. This may be partly attributable to the marginal status of domestic advice literature (Lees-Maffei 2003).

2. In her Presidential Address to the American Studies Association in 1998 (published the following year), Radway (1999) proposed alternative names for American Studies and its US subject association such as 'United States Studies', 'Inter-American Studies Association', the 'Society for Intercultural Studies', before proposing to stick with the current name and pursue methodological rather than nominative change.

3. Harris' approach is consistent with other studies of whiteness and design such as Mark Wigley's now classic *White Walls* (1995), Kathleen Connellan's examination of the significance of white fitted kitchens in South Africa (2010) and Sara Ahmed's 'phenomenology of whiteness as a way of exploring how whiteness is "real", material and lived' (Ahmed 2007: 150).

4. Similar claims have been made for design, in initiatives such as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID), founded in 1957 and now with fifty member nations, for example.

5. Rachel Rich (2003; 2011) has also used advice literature to compare social practices in France and Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

6. Of course the USA has engaged in its own colonialist practices elsewhere.

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Surveying the Borders

‘Authenticity’ in Mexican–American Food Packaging, Imagery and Architecture

NICOLAS P. MAFFEI

Studies of food as a global phenomenon have usually focused on two processes: the blanding of local food cultures, and resistance through reassertion of the local (Bell and Valentine 1997). Exploring the former, this chapter draws on a number of fields from across the humanities and social sciences, including Architectural History, Food History, Latin American Studies, Cultural Studies, and Sociology, to demonstrate that a blended methodology is necessary to understand transculturation in design and the ways in which it is socially embedded (Ortiz 1995 [1947]). The analyses reviewed include writing on tamale advertisements, tortilla chip packaging, the architecture and signage of global fast food chain Taco Bell, and the interiors of local ethnic restaurants, spanning the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries. All the studies explore the ideological implications of representation and most evidence a cultural imperialism where symbols of Mexican identity were appropriated and transformed for a North American Anglo consumer. While these studies predominantly employ a narrative of top-down, cultural dominance, this chapter concludes by considering a number of investigations of ethnic restaurants from the social sciences where the social construction of ‘authenticity’ has resulted from collaboration between consumers and entrepreneurs. Thus, ‘authenticity’ can be understood as a co-produced experience where the exotic is mitigated by the familiar (Fine and Lu 1995; Gaytán 2008). This definition of the ‘authentic’ diverges from a humanities perspective that considers the inner self as ‘real’ and the performed self as ‘fake’, as well as the view that commercial values compromise the supposedly true self (Banet-Weiser 2012: 10–11).

Of course there are a variety of Mexican–American cuisines. Perhaps the most well-known of these is Tex–Mex, a food which by its very existence is a hybrid, a borderland creation of Texan and Mexican cultures. ‘Tex–Mex’ is a term often used dismissively to ‘denote any form of inauthentic Mexican food’ but it ‘more properly describes a regional variant of Mexican culture from Texas, with Anglo Saxon and Central European influences’ (Pilcher 2012: 440). What is now Texas has been *mestizo* since the arrival of the Spaniards in 1519. This Tex–Mex mix has been further hybridized by waves of immigrants from as far away as Germany and the former Czechoslovakia. Hybridity can be perceived as a threat to an imagined state of authentic cultural purity. The use of the term can be seen as an ideological tool, where the ‘other’ is romanticized, essentialized and incorporated by the dominant cultures (Kraidy 2002; Banu 2009; Hebdige 1979: 100). This chapter contributes to *Designing World’s* mission to reassess the role of national frameworks in design historical narratives by viewing ‘authenticity’ as constructed not within a single nation, but in both physical and imagined borderlands, where imposed and personal national identities are produced through a process of confrontation and amalgamation.

What is Ethnic Design?

To understand the design that accompanies ethnic food (its packaging, advertising and architecture), one must first understand what ethnic food is. From a sociological perspective, Ian Cook, Philip Crang, and Mark Thorpe (1990) observe that for some market researchers ethnic food originates from outside one’s own nation. For others, it is simply food that is considered ethnic. In the USA and UK ‘ethnic food’ is an established food industry category and can encompass Chinese, Italian, and Mexican or Hispanic dishes. Yet, such terms obscure a range of rich cultures and flatten out vast differences. Kimberly J. Decker tackles the near impossibility of marketing to an imagined, monolithic US Hispanic consumer segment, a group which is made up of many nationalities and ethnicities, including Cubans, Puerto Ricans, South Americans and those who identify with African, European and indigenous cultural traditions (Decker 2004: unpaginated).

Perhaps one way to approach ethnic food or ethnic design as a subject of analysis is to consider not what is consumed, but what is produced by consumers when they interact with other food cultures, including accompanying imagery and artefacts. Consumers of ethnic food go beyond simply tasting and imbibing. For example, Cook, Crang and Thorpe show ‘how everyday practices of commodified food provision and consumption involve the production and consumption not only of foods but of social imaginaries, which position individual dietary practices within wider discursive framings’ (Cook et al. 1990: 223).

The social imaginary of Mexican-American food culture is ripe with symbols. Perhaps the most resonant are those of the borderlands of the South Western United States, many of which are strongly linked to the people and landscape. From sleepy *caballeros* to sensual *indigenas* (native women in regional dress), and from colonial missions to nopal cacti, a variety of stereotypical imagery has been employed to conjure up Mexicanness in Mexican food imagery and food outlet architecture. These visual and material expressions carry their own class and gendered meanings. Jeffery Pilcher, the prolific historian of Mexican cuisine, argues that certain ethnic images such as Aztec and Mayan goddesses, pyramids and hieroglyphics can denote 'authenticity' for a national cuisine, even when such a cuisine excludes the actual foods of native communities which might be perceived by elite Mexicans as tainted by extreme rural poverty (Pilcher 2012: 416). Additionally, Pilcher observes, pictures of exotic Mexican women might conjure up a strange and alluring sexuality for Anglos in the USA (Pilcher 2012: 416). These images are understood differently across different borders, carrying one set of meaning in Mexico and another in the USA.

Finding the Border

Globalization has deep roots, for example the colonizing activities of the Spanish who brought European food culture to the Aztecs (Pilcher 2012: 282). The border and its symbols are a constant trope in the design surrounding Mexican American food. These linguistic and visual references belie the harsh political realities associated with the US-Mexican border. The spread of Mexican American food symbolism, whether in advertising slogans such as Taco Bell's 'Make a Run for the Border' campaign (1988–1990) or the representations of cacti, deserts and eagles in food packaging, arguably exemplify the postmodern disregard of national borders and the homogenization of ethnic cultures. Yet, the scholar of Latin American popular culture, Ana M. López, questions the assertion that globalization equals free movement and points to the realities of citizens denied access to certain nations: 'national borders are real and crossing them a painful and risky enterprise' (López 1998: 97). A Professor of Ethnic Studies, José David Saldívar, writes of the role borders play in the perpetuation of 'cultures of U.S. empire' (Saldívar 1997: xiv). He notes the variety of ways borders can be understood as a 'paradigm of crossings, intercultural exchanges, circulations, resistances, and negotiations, as well as militarized "low-intensity" conflict' (Saldívar 1997: ix). Borders and the geography they define can reinforce poverty, perpetuate misery, and instil fear. López argues that 'we cannot afford to refigure hybridity and heterogeneity as simple international phenomena. The notion that borders are disappearing is reassuring only to the privileged few' (López 1998: 99). Of course, certain information and visual culture may move more freely across borders, such as the images of the mission bell on

the Taco Bell restaurant exterior or the cacti on a tortilla packet. But what happens to their meanings as they make their own border crossings? Design and culture associated with Mexican-American border imagery, including a seemingly frivolous phrase in a Taco Bell advertisement, must be understood in the context of such realities.

Packaging Stereotypes

A number of scholars of Mexican food culture have focused on its Anglicization as part of a wider colonizing process. These authors trace this process to the late nineteenth century and into the 1930s when the industrialization of Mexican-American food, including canning and factory production, combined with advertising to disseminate both imperialist messages and nationalist expressions. Sahar Monrreal, an anthropologist focusing on the construction of imaginative geographies and literary representations of Mexican identity, provides a study of the ‘symbolic transformation’ and ‘shifting meanings of the tamale’ in advertising in popular US magazines at the end of the nineteenth century. The author investigates this process in the context of the Spanish-American War, and US imperialism, while examining changing notions of race (Monrreal 2008: 449). Monrreal considers these ‘images of not only Mexicans and *mestizos* but also ethnic food’ as ‘important “firsts” in the *Ladies’ Home Journal*’ (Monrreal 2008: 467).

Investigating the US marketing of Hispanic food in the first decades of the twentieth century, Vanessa Fonseca applies critical theory, cultural anthropology and semiotics to reveal what she terms the ‘Latinization of the US market’, the ‘appropriation and resemantization of Latin American cultural practices and artifacts by the mainstream culture’. She analyses this phenomenon as a neo-colonial, market-driven and hegemonic process resulting in cultural hybridization where ‘food artifacts’, including design elements used to promote cuisines, and practices of non-hegemonic groups, entered the mainstream and were stripped of their prior cultural meanings (Fonseca 2003: 3).

Discussing early twentieth-century Texas-based food manufactures, Gebhardt Chili Powder Co. and Walker’s Austex Chile Co., Fonseca shows how the promotional material for tamales, mass produced canned ‘Mexican’ beans and chili con carne aimed at Anglos, emphasized ‘authenticity’ and were associated with an imagined Hispanic and Mexican culture. This was achieved through the use of visual tropes including Sevillanas (women sporting mantillas and decorative combs from Seville) and phrases such as ‘genuine Mexican’. Such advertising resulted in a hybrid image that was simultaneously Mexican and Spanish. Fonseca’s analysis of a Gebhardt Mexican cookbook of 1932, which included photos of spotless food production facilities, shows how industrialized ethnic food was offered as ‘authentic’ and ‘exotic’, but also ‘sanitized’ (Fonseca 2003: 38),

perhaps appealing to a desire for something unique and romantic, while avoiding supposed Mexican dirtiness. Within the book images of 'presumed Mexican culture', 'peasants with oxcarts or animals, cacti, bullfighters, Indians carrying pottery', present an uncertain Mexican culture, confusingly mixing colonial, rural, Spanish and Native American characteristics while offering a hybrid image of ethnicity for the Anglo consumer (Fonseca 2003: 38).

The earliest tortilla chip packages provide a useful site for understanding the processes of representation in Mexican American food artefacts. Arguably the first mass-produced, packaged tortilla chips were manufactured by Azteca Mills of San Antonio and South Texas (later known as B. Martinez Sons Co.). Their initial logo employed symbols strongly associated with Mexican history and national identity, including a pyramid and green and red lettering. This was later changed to an eagle in flight holding an ear of corn (Fonseca 2003: 43). The coloured lettering and the imagery referenced Mexico's coat of arms, which depicts a Mexican Golden eagle on a prickly pear cactus with a snake in its beak. The combination of the name Azteca Mills and the imagery of the pyramid and eagle suggest a symbolic reference to the ancient Aztec story of the origin of Tenochtitlán (present day Mexico city) and the return to Aztlán (the mythic home of the Aztec people). Thus the corn chip was strongly identified with indigenous Mexican traditions, symbols and national mythology, whereas in the early 1930s the Frito Company of San Antonio would appropriate the corn chip concept, present it as their invention, and market it primarily to non-Hispanics (Fonseca 2003: 45). While not a Mexican tradition per se, in North America the tortilla chip and salsa starter became a mainstay of the Mexican restaurant experience, which established it as an essential component of Mexican-American cuisine.

The Mexican Restaurant

While manufacturers repackaged Mexican food as unthreatening and alluring, roadside restaurateurs in the United States conjured another type of exotic experience. Arriving in the USA with an influx of Mexican immigrants in the 1950s, Mexican cuisine followed Italian as the next ethnic American roadside food. Early roadside Mexican restaurants were simple in design and aimed primarily at recent Mexican immigrants. Later, however, they were designed to appeal to an Anglo clientele. In the 1960s such restaurants sported stereotypical Spanish colonial architectural details, including red-tiled roofs, wrought iron furnishings, arched entryways, and stuccoed walls. Taco Bell became the most prominent of these roadside venues.

Food historian Warren Belasco pinpoints the global rise of fast food in the 1970s, with Europe and developing countries 'discovering' McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. By the late 1970s fast food entrepreneurs in the USA



Figure 12.1 Taco Bell, Evergreen Park, Illinois, Fourth of July Parade, 1977. Photo courtesy of Bruce Cassi.

were positioned to take advantage of an ‘ethnic boom’. Food trade journals wrote of an increased appeal for foods ranging from pita bread sandwiches to tortellini, as well as burritos, fajitas and taco salads. Belasco asks whether this was a step towards achieving the democratic ideal of pluralism and equality or ‘depressing evidence of corporate conglomeration and cultural homogenization’ (Belasco 1987: 1). Ethnic fast food multinationals were in fact simply cashing in on a wider cultural phenomenon, a ‘grassroots ethnic revival’, while, according to Belasco, engaging in a hegemonic process where ‘dominant forces . . . incorporate insurgent strivings’ (Belasco 1987: 3). Because the members of the grassroots ethnic revival in the USA were mostly affluent and educated, this provided a great opportunity for food marketers. Rejecting past strategies that targeted an undifferentiated consumer mass, the food industry divided the ‘ethnic revivalists’ of the 1970s and 1980s into segments from first-generation consumers who desired simple, fundamental ingredients for use in traditional recipes to those who wanted an ‘Old World aura’ through the use of ‘processed convenience foods’, some spices and a ‘picturesque package’ (Belasco 1987: 8). Laying the foundations for the ethnic revivalists were fast food restaurants like Taco Bell.

Founded in 1962, Taco Bell, the largest of the Mexican fast food restaurant chains, offered its own fantasy of Mexico. In their study of roadside restaurants and the automobile in the USA, John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle claimed that ‘Taco Bell was more responsible for the transformation of Mexican food into popular roadside fare than any other chain’ (Jakle and Sculle 1999: 257). Taco Bell took advantage of increased automobility and the convenience food restaurant boom of the early 1960s. The business was aimed at mobile

food consumers including college students, military personnel and travelling salesmen. The authors note that '[t]acos spoke of an American region – the Southwest – but in ways inherently safe while seeming exotic' (Jakle and Sculle 1999: 258). Taco Bell's founder, Glenn Bell, needed a distinctive architectural type to materialize this ethnic fantasy. Employing the design language of Spanish Colonial missions and Mexican architecture, he developed a building with a low profile, red tile roof and brick walls. Within the front façade hung a bell, 'a symbol of the company's name yet a reinforcement to the [Spanish] mission image' (Jakle and Sculle 1999: 258). Bell's fast food restaurant expanded hugely through franchising and by 1975 Taco Bell had 673 units.

By 1982, when Taco Bell had 1,400 outlets in the USA and only five in the rest of the world, a redesign initiated by its new owner PepsiCo aimed at expanding the franchise into parts of the USA as yet unfamiliar with Mexican food. PepsiCo engaged S&O Consultants of San Francisco to investigate consumer perceptions of Taco Bell's image and design. Over five hundred fast-food consumers were asked how they felt about Mexican food and Taco Bell. Participants were shown images of Taco Bell restaurants and signage and asked to consider whether they were 'clean or dirty, family-oriented or adult, [or] expensive' (Langdon 1986: 176). Participants were also invited to judge the exterior architectural elements of the restaurant: the signage, bell tower, arched windows, red tiled roof and the logo. In a logo comparison test with McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken Taco Bell fared poorly. The study concluded that the company was in danger of being dismissed as too Mexican for Anglo consumers, particularly where Mexican food was not established. A similar threat had led to the redesign of Pizza Hut when in the mid-1970s the New York design consultancy Lippincott & Margulies recommended that Pizza Hut employ a design strategy to avoid seeming too Italian (Langdon 1986: 178). Likewise, S&O's study evidenced consumer anxiety regarding the cleanliness of Mexican restaurants. Anxiety around supposed Mexican dirtiness is consistent with the hygienic imagery used in Gebhardt's cookbook earlier in the twentieth century and has been a significant trope in Anglo worries regarding immigration (Hoy 1995: 92).

S&O's research suggested a preference for the red tiled roof and the arched window, but not the sign: a sleeping Mexican slouched beneath a giant sombrero sitting on top of a tilted mission bell. Rather than being recognized as a demeaning stereotype, it was criticized by respondents as unrecognizable and confusing. Keen to position the restaurant in the North American mainstream, Taco Bell kept its name and menu, but deemphasized its borderland imagery. Thus, in the restaurant retrofitting the focal point of the façade – the brick bell tower and bell – was replaced by a plastic bell logo. Also removed were the large protruding wooden beams typical of Spanish colonial architecture that projected from the exterior walls. The outside walls, which in S&O's report were called 'dirty brown,' were lightened, thus removing any taint associated

with supposedly unclean Mexican culture. Arched windows were replaced with rectangular ones. A tiled roof was used prominently in the redesign but designed to not appear too Mexican. The red tiles were employed on a basic mansard roof, or ‘Mainstream Mansard’ as S&O referred to it, echoing existing fast food architecture. Langdon concludes, ‘Taco Bell, like untold numbers of second generation ethnic Americans, saw foreignness as a troublesome label and grasped at established symbols of American retailing – plastic and mansards’ (Langdon 1986: 179). Taco Bell became ‘ethnic in name only’. By 1996, it was the leading Mexican fast restaurant food in the USA, boasting 6,867 units worldwide and sales of \$4,416,000,000 (Jakle and Sculle 1999: 260).

In an effort to further popularize the brand, in 1997 Taco Bell launched an attention-grabbing advertising campaign featuring a talking Chihuahua, which whined, ‘yo quiero Taco Bell!’ (‘I want Taco Bell!’). Seen as reinforcing a demeaning ethnic stereotype – the other as desirous animal – the campaign attracted a vociferous and negative response from the Hispanic community. The author of ‘Taco Hell’, an article in the *Hispanic Times* magazine, wrote ‘move over Frito Bandito, there is a new top dog in the world of offensive advertising’, referring to the image of Hispanics as criminals employed in a Frito Company’s tortilla chip ad campaign. The spokesperson for Taco Bell expressed surprise at the response and defended the ads as a ‘cool and hip’ portrayal of ‘a sort of quasi-Mexican heritage’. Observing that Hispanic leaders had called for a boycott, the author pointedly noted that such action would make no impact ‘since Hispanics don’t eat there anyway’ (Anon. 1998). According to the magazine the campaign was pulled in late 2000 due to falling sales, at least according to Taco Bell (Anon. 2000). Pilcher notes that corporate advertising tends to promote ethnic food to mainstream audiences through the employment of ‘exotic and demeaning images’ including the Frito Bandito and the Taco Bell dog, ‘conveying images of Mexicans as outlaws and animals’, adding that even when corporate imagery is more respectful it can still detrimentally ‘crowd out ethnic entrepreneurs’ (Pilcher 2012: 412).

From a Feminist and Cultural Studies perspective, Suzanne Bost considers the colonial meanings that permeate Taco Bell’s visual and material metaphors, focusing on the meanings of its Alamo-style architecture, the sexual symbolism of the taco, and the company’s broadcasts of the desirous Chihuahua. Bost argues that while many other Spanish missions exist across the Southwestern United States, the Alamo is the most recognizable as a national symbol. Thus, the Alamo is ‘evoked in the minds of many Americans viewing Taco Bell advertisements’ (Bost 2003: n1, 516). Following a narrative of cultural dominance, Bost writes, ‘This setting – like other Taco Bell ad campaigns highlighting border crossing, patriotism, and revolution – associates U.S. consumption of Mexican food with the historical framework of colonialism, but coding (inter)national relations in terms of fast food, flirtation and adorable Chihuahuas trivializes the political reality’ (Bost 2003: 493).



Figure 12.2 Postcard, Alamo, San Antonio, Texas, front, 1901–1907. Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries, University of Houston Digital Library.

Through an investigation of numerous ‘Mexican’ tourist sites, including Epcot Center’s ‘Mexico’ in Florida and the Spanish Colonial missions of San Antonio, Texas, Bost considers the design and promotion of such environments as part of a wider set of images and experiences – related primarily to the consumption of spicy food and pleasure – which are intended to be consumed as depoliticized narratives, as an ‘American Mexicanism’, a mythology of what Mexico represents to Anglo Americans in the USA. Furthermore, she argues that US tourist consumption of chilies and margaritas is ‘supported by a history of war, Mexican poverty, and borderland violence’ (Bost 2003: 494). Bost suggests that everyone engages in a kind of ‘consumer colonialism’ when taking in exotic cultural products, including food and places, without a substantial personal change. The colonizer’s empire expands while the threatening strangeness of the other is neutralized (Bost 2003: 495). Bost observes that the hype around the Alamo as a tourist site and its fictionalized presentation as a place of Texan victory presents a compensation for the ‘initial failure to “consume” Mexico at the battle there’ (Bost 2003: 495), a battle lost by the mostly Anglo–Texan battalion. Thus it presents a touristic ‘continuation of U.S. war with Mexico’ (Bost 2003: 495). Following bell hooks’s ‘Eating the Other’ (1992), Bost recognizes this battle continuing in the context of Mexican–American fast food: when ‘Taco Bell pose[s] their products as other, it must only be a pose, a touristic construct that affirms gringo nationality’ (Bost 2003: 510). She further argues that by ‘transplanting the border symbolically inside the United States – Taco Bells in every town, Coca Cola saturating Mexican markets – corporate culture disavows Mexican challenges to U.S. profits and

national boundaries. The United States can then eat the other and keep its border, too' (Bost 2003: 512).

Perhaps this perception is shared more widely by Hispanic consumers. Taco Bell's attempt to attract Hispanic customers has failed, contributing just 0.5 percent to its sales gains in 2005. Carl Kravetz, Chairman of Hispanic marketing firm Cruz/Kravetz: Ideas, Los Angeles, does not consider negative stereotyping or cultural colonization but 'authenticity' as the key issue in attracting Hispanic consumers. 'The main problem for Hispanics is the perception of Taco Bell's food as too Anglo-American. Their issue is authenticity, and they have a lot of years of not being perceived as authentic to break through' (MacArthur and Wentz 2006).

According to an ethnographic study by Marie Sarita Gaytán, tempering exotic with familiar symbols in order to create broad appeal is seen as key to the 'corporate' approach of Mexican restaurant design, where supposedly authentic and inauthentic design elements are employed to create an imaginary space that is 'ethnic, but not *too* ethnic, authentic, but not *too* authentic' (Gaytán 2008: 332). The corporate literature of the ethnic food sector cautions against being too real or risk losing customers: familiarity is sought, not 'authenticity' (Gaytán 2008: 333). One food industry insider has stated that successful ethnic food products 'will respect that spectrum's boundaries, sticking close to traditional cuisines that reflect American tastes. Once a product goes past the line of comfort and accessibility . . . it will not be seen as a real choice. It will be seen as something that is not convenient and not comfortable. And then it becomes foreign again' (Decker 2003: 113–114). Gaytán notes that this corporate approach to the production and promotion of ethnic cuisine rejects diversity of identity and cultural vibrancy, replacing it instead with celebrations of similarity rather than difference (2008: 334).

Authenticity: Balancing the Familiar and the Unknown

One of the earliest prominent debates regarding authenticity in Mexican food began in 1972. In her book, *The Cuisines of Mexico*, Diana Kennedy differentiated between 'interior Mexican food' and the 'mixed plates' of US Mexican restaurants (Walsh 2004: 121). Kennedy referred to Americanized Mexican food as 'Tex-Mex' and made a plea for better understanding of 'authentic' Mexican cuisine. Kennedy is considered extremely influential in initiating and disseminating the distinction between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' hybrid Mexican dishes. Appreciated in Mexico for her global promotional efforts of the country's cuisine, she was awarded the Aztec Eagle, the government's greatest honour given to foreigners (Gaytán 2008: 316). This evidences the role of culinary 'authenticity' in national identity and suggests that Tex-Mex, the hybrid and inauthentic cuisine disregarded by Kennedy, had no place in the Mexican

government's representations of its national identity and culture. Pilcher, on the other hand, argues that there is no such thing as authentic Mexican food. It is diverse in its origins and is under constant change (Pilcher 2012: 400). He recognizes that many other immigrants, including Africans, Asians, Central Europeans and Italians, contributed to Mexico's cultural hybridity rather than just the romanticized myth of Spanish–Aztec / Mayan mix (Pilcher 2012: 484). The same argument could be applied to the designs associated with cuisines of Mexico.

In the social sciences, authenticity has been understood as a collaboration between consumers and marketers where the exotic is tempered by the familiar (Fine and Lu 1995; Gaytán 2008). In ethnic restaurant experiences 'authenticity' includes the use of traditional ethnic ingredients in combination with familiar North American forms. In the design of Mexican–American fast food architecture such mixing includes the combination of traditional symbolism with modern architectural elements, for example a mission bell incorporated into the exterior of a prefabricated building. 'Authenticity' for customers is not presented as a pure untainted experience or the consumption of non-hybrid cuisines, as in Diane Kennedy's notion of virgin interior Mexican food, but rather it is seen as highly individual and the result of a self-imposed illusion.

In their sociological study of Chinese restaurants, Fine and Lu note that 'ethnic entrepreneurs' in the US developed commercial enterprises for Americans who valued tolerance and longed for cross-cultural experiences through the production of ethnic culture that was 'unique, yet comfortable': "'authentic" and within the bounds of cultural expectations ("Americanized")' (Fine and Lu 1995: 535). Recognizing that this process includes the 'illusion of authenticity' and the 'illusion of continuity', the authors present authenticity as a social construction (Fine and Lu 1995: 541). Whereas many of the other studies referred to in this chapter dwell on homogenization, Fine and Lu focus on cultural harmonization occurring through cross-cultural interaction. This process is not presented as a hegemonic, top-down domination, but as cultural production between different social groups where a desire for familiarity and the reduction of discomfort are balanced with a longing for the unknown. The same formula can be applied to Mexican–American food culture and its accompanying designs. A sense of authenticity may be generated within the bounds of a consumer's cultural expectations of Mexican–American food imagery and design, resulting in the production of illusions of both authenticity and continuity in order to create a kind of theatre of expected Mexicanness, whether in restaurant design, packaging or advertising. In this way one visitor's encounter with the stuccoed walls of a Taco Bell can be as authentic as another's appreciation of Diane Kennedy's interior cuisine.

Fine and Lu conclude that the 'social construction of authentic ethnic food is bounded by social, cultural, and economic constraints' (Fine and Lu 1995: 547). It is these constraints and the negotiation of 'authenticity' that allows



Figure 12.3 Las Cazuela Mexican Restaurant, Austin, Texas, 2014. Photo courtesy of Ron Rodgers.

the cuisine to survive in the USA. If it were too authentic (for example, pig's trotters), it would be rejected. If it were too American, it would no longer be attractive, as it would not provide the 'self-validating "ethnic experience", a mark of ... tolerance and sophistication ... as dining out is identity work' (Fine and Lu 1995: 547). The authors see the negotiation of authenticity on an individual level as contributing to the shaping of ethnic culture on a societal scale. 'Through our purchases and presence, we validate the legitimacy of the group and of the American polity, all the while altering the ethnic culture to make it congruent with mainstream values and tastes' (Fine and Lu 1995: 549). Many successful designs associated with Mexican food also operate within these constraints, neither shocking nor challenging widely held beliefs, but appealing to a circumscribed Anglo adventurousness.

Employing participant observation, Gaytán's ethnographic study of Mexican restaurants recognizes an asymmetry of power in the social construction of authenticity, noting that 'making claims to authenticity is capable of signalling an array of implicit and explicit power' (Gaytán 1995: 318). The desire for authenticity can be seen as a type of colonizing attitude that essentializes ethnic groups (Abarca 2004: 18). Thus, 'assertions of authentic "ethnic" food espouse romantic ideas about the people who are typically associated with certain cuisines. Such processes stifle creative expression while at the same time reproduce the notion that some groups of people are more "exotic" and "ethnic" than others' (Gaytán 2008: 318). This viewpoint echoes those of

Fonseca and Monrreal, discussed above, where imagined but unthreatening images and designs of Mexicanness are constructed by food entrepreneurs for a mostly Anglo audience.

Gaytán's study reveals how design has been employed in restaurants to denote or deny 'authenticity'. When a restaurant presented a seemingly inauthentic interior (e.g. Formica tables and plastic chairs) respondents felt they could still judge its genuineness based on the cuisine (Gaytán 2008: 322). In another restaurant an ideological authenticity was presented through prominent window decals exclaiming, 'hecho en Mexico' (made in Mexico) and 'viva la raza!' (a famous Chicano Rights cry from the 1960s) (Gaytán 2008: 322). The owner of this particular venue explicitly refused to include stereotypical imagery of sombreros, sarapes, and piñatas, explaining that this presented a narrow notion of Mexican identity and culture. Advertisements for the venue exclaimed, 'Evite el estereotipo!' (avoid the stereotype). Thus, the owner offered an ethnic 'authenticity' that was culturally and politically engaged (Gaytán 2008: 323).

Gaytán observes that in the décor, advertising and menu, one of the restaurants she studied made no claim to Mexican authenticity, but emphasized instead 'freshness' and 'alternative' food preparation (Gaytán 2008: 330). Thus stereotypical symbols of Mexicanness were avoided in order to focus on the excellence and individuality of the food and its ingredients. 'Authenticity' was not derived from images of ethnicity and nation but from the food itself. While this could be seen as an erasure of Mexican national identity and the victory of the colonial impulse over an ethnic other, it can also be viewed as an escape from the narrative of cultural dominance, leaving only the look of the food as an authentic element of communication.

In a 2004 discussion of food design – the use of ingredients to produce appealing colours, textures and forms in packaged cuisines – Kimberly J. Decker focused on the growing Hispanic market. She noted that recent food design research was focused on the vibrant and fun aspects of Hispanic culture. The author explained how food designers employed a pseudo-ethnographic technique of 'cultural mining' or 'trend treks' where they immersed themselves in the sights, sounds and smells of an ethnic neighborhood in order to translate those sensory experiences into food design. Reflecting an industry focus on the growing Hispanic market, Sylvia Meléndez-Klinger, a Chicago-based consultant to the food industry, and an experienced trend trekker, explained how this approach could be used to appeal to Hispanics:

Think of the colors of a piñata, the simplicity of it – it's paper and cardboard. It doesn't need to be very fancy. But it's vibrant, it's in a shape the community recognizes, and it's got the candy inside that they know. This is something that brings back memories. So you've got the colors and you've got the fun. You've got to transfer that fun to the food. It's got to be colorful. It's got to be something that makes them [Hispanic consumers] think of home and the flavors of home. (Decker 2004, unpaginated)

Arguably this approach continues the Latinization that Fonseca describes, but for a Hispanic rather than an Anglo audience. It reduces complex cultural meanings, which may carry symbols of national identity or of resistance, and reduces them to a range of party colours. While the terms ‘cultural mining’ and ‘trend trekking’ are used, such cultural excavation and ethnic travel can be seen as surface engagement and pseudo-ethnography. It is not aimed at the deep understanding of a culture, but rather a partial attempt to sense the tonal palette of a place in order to inspire the design of a non-threatening and marketable food. The emphasis here is on fun colours and nostalgic imagery. It is telling that there are no images of pyramids and snakes (Azteca Mills) or sombreros and mission bells (Taco Bell). It suggests that Hispanic food marketers and food designers are turning their backs on stereotypical imagery and employing a more abstract and open-ended symbolism (bright colours) to create a sense of playfulness and nostalgia. While this is not an example of hybrid inauthenticity, it could be termed non-Mexican Mexican food, or inauthentically authentic, as it strips away any explicit symbolic association with Mexican cuisine, but seeks unoffending images and design that expresses nostalgia, freshness and sociability.

Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed academic writing, from food history and Latin American and cultural studies to sociology and ethnography, in order to aid our understanding of the meanings produced and consumed in packaging, advertising and architecture associated with Mexican–American food. Ranging from homogenization, harmonization to inauthentic ‘authenticity’, a tendency to view food and design as a cultural battleground where an asymmetrical power relationship advantages Anglo producers is apparent across most of these studies. The first approach focuses on power relations; the second emphasizes the production of culture and personal meaning; while the latter has de-emphasized overt cultural symbols and concentrated on sales. Each approach provides a lens for understanding representations in Mexican–American food packaging, imagery and architecture and ways to investigate the ultimate product – the social construction of authenticity – while exploring an imagined borderland of national and ethnic symbols.

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An Empire of One's Own

Individualism and Domestic Built Form in Twenty-First-Century Jamaica

DAVINIA GREGORY

The twenty-first century seems strangely attached to the past. [...] A long-standing legacy of violence, compounded by new disasters, has engendered a set of rites – both individual and collective – that have taken many forms: the reconstruction of past histories, the retrieval of lost communities, [...] and a quest for origins. (Hirsch and Miller 2011: xi)

On a recent research trip to Jamaica I travelled as a passenger through many of its rural areas. For many tourists these long drives would be magnificent experiences due to the dramatic, sweeping green landscapes intermittently interrupted by mountains and the sea. For a design historian however, they also produced exceptional fodder for musing in the form of a new feature within rural housing. Planning permission is not required for domestic building projects in most rural areas provided the land tax is paid. This freedom has enabled the production of dream-houses that appear truly original and these creations, interspersed with more modest dwellings, are dotted across the landscapes of rural Jamaica.

They leave an impression of vibrant colour. As in many tropical places where concrete has been adopted as the dominant building material, painted houses turn the hills into a rainbow of brightly coloured speckles on a wash of green. In their colours as well as in the sprawling size of many, these houses are comparable to those in some in parts of India, for example. However, what stood out for me as being unique to Jamaica was the ubiquitous presence of columns reminiscent of the ancient Greek orders, most commonly the elaborate Corinthian columns as described by architectural historians (Shaw 1852: 99; Chitham 1985: 24–83;

Notes for this section begin on page 239.



Figure 13.1 Hillside house with columns. In this example, the top floor has recently been added to an existing single-storey house, and the fashion for elaborate columns has been included in the later part of the design. Photograph by Davinia Gregory, July 2013.

Rykwert 1996: 317–349). At first I suspected that they were confined to a particular locale, but as I traversed the length and breadth of Jamaica I spotted them everywhere, attached to brightly coloured country houses.

I remembered that such columns had not been present in the countryside on my last visit, in the late 1990s. My uncle confirmed this as he drove: ‘No, it’s a 21st century style my dear. You know how Jamaica likes to make and follow fashion’ (Walker, interview 2013). This uncle, a furniture designer and house builder in Jamaica for over forty years, could not tell me any more than that. His only and repeated explanation was that the columns were ‘style’ and this vagueness was repeated by everybody else I questioned, whether or not they approved of the design feature. Nevertheless, the popularity of classical-style columns in Jamaica cannot have appeared from nowhere; what in the collective consciousness of the Jamaican people is drawn to these symbols of grandeur, and why now? This chapter aims to decode these columns; to delve into the meaning that they have as objects of pastiche from colonial buildings in the Caribbean and into the multiple meanings that they assume when read by people of various backgrounds. The title intentionally nods to Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*.

Almost every writer who has practiced his art successfully has been taught it [...] by about eleven years of education – at private schools, public schools and

universities. He sits upon a tower raised above the rest of us, a tower built first on his parents' station, then on his parents' gold. It is a tower of the utmost importance; it decides his angle of vision; it affects his power of communication. (Woolf 1957 [1917]: 169)

Feminism and postcolonial studies shared methodologies to great effect in the latter half of the last century. This chapter examines a phenomenon which, in many ways, makes a claim of ownership similar to Woolf's. 'An Empire of One's Own' is less a manifesto in itself than an analysis of a tacit call to action that has already happened and perhaps been missed in scholarship. The reclaiming of space and power that Woolf encouraged in the women of Newnham and Girton colleges in 1917, has been paralleled almost a century later in the postcolonial world through material gestures like the domestic adoption of these columns. This chapter asks how far this assertion of individual power can be considered a conscious one among Jamaica's rural residents; how far it can be considered universally relevant amongst them, and how deeply runs the collective aspiration to greater cultural and economic balance more than fifty years after the end of British rule. Through these questions the study of design becomes a vehicle for revisiting Stuart Hall's identification of the Caribbean as uniquely useful for understanding diasporic identity formation because so vast a proportion of its population has migrated from elsewhere (Hall 1995: 6).

By exploring the unique aspects of the Jamaican case this chapter also highlights the continued importance of national frameworks in writing design history. In an age of globalization in which the migration of people, objects, design features and ideas has become a worldwide phenomenon, and nostalgia for simpler pasts is common, a study set in twenty-first-century Jamaica can shed light on the nature and growth of increasingly creolized design as the inevitable product of increasingly culturally hybrid nations.¹

Neoclassicism and Jamaican Identity

The ancient orders of classical columns arrived in the British Caribbean as symbols of imperial power within Georgian and Regency neo-classical architecture. Here, as in Britain, they represented a power not shared by everyone. By harking back to ancient Greece, the modern empires of Europe used columns to declare a successful political structure, which supposedly represented and worked to the benefit of all citizens. Reflecting grand governmental and cultural edifices of Europe at this time, official buildings and some large country houses in Jamaica were designed to include columns as statements of imperial power, their grandeur creating and reinforcing the concept of British leadership and superiority in a colonial outpost. Vic Reid writes of 'an age of opulence and oppression, much and little, few in-betweens', acknowledging that 'while sugar built, for field hands, stacks of ugly shacks to disfigure the countryside,

the same commodity was causing castles for private and official use' (Reid 1970: 28). The tradition of sprawling architecture began during the age of sugar slavery and Reid uses houses to illustrate the resultant chasm that existed (and still exists in many respects) between rich and poor in Jamaica. The same can be said of many countries whether they have been colonies or not; however in non-European colonies like Jamaica class was also racialized (Gregory 2013). This visible and irreversible sign of difference made social mobility next to impossible for individuals until change could be effected on a national scale. This was the difference between the colony and the metropolis, and the imperial order responsible was visually represented by neoclassical columns.

So, in Jamaica columns came to represent British imperial supremacy. Part of that meaning has faded since independence in 1962 and the concomitant disintegration of imperial leadership, leaving the columns with an abstract semi-otic residue of former power; a banal stateliness that still represents the cultural capital and refinement that Europeanness has come to evoke in the Caribbean. While it is widely accepted in rural Jamaica that 'Foreign' is an imagined place standing for wealth in general, I have found it interesting that Jamaicans can identify me as Black British as opposed to African American before I speak. When I ask what it is that marks Britons out (which is in reality likely to be a range of subtly different ways of dressing and gesticulating), people invariably find it difficult to articulate. In interview, relatively well-travelled young professional Marie Hayden of Brown's Town, St Ann attributed it to an elusive attribute, 'refinement', claiming 'British people just look cultured' (Hayden 2013). Such is the strength of the stereotype that Britishness carries in the region. Similarly, among the white Jamaican interviewees from the *Tale of Two Houses Project* (2013) was formidable octogenarian, Montego Bay resident, and daughter of its former governor, Diana De Lisser.² As she led me around her home, she pointed out many displayed items. In a room formerly used as an amateur art studio she had displayed an array of paintings given to her in the 1960s by artist friends, noting Jamaica's former links to Europeans involved in what she deemed high culture, who holidayed in Montego Bay during its heyday. In pride of place on a coffee table was a thick guide to the Louvre, its cover bleached by the sun. Its spine was smooth and upon moving it slightly the surrounding dust confirmed its ornamental purpose. De Lisser extolled the virtues of the Louvre and its 'truly European works'. This reading of Europeanness, fostered by cultural imperialism, has always been latent in Jamaica's identity as has Europeanness itself. This was evident in mid-twentieth-century writings about its architecture, such as those of Arthur J. May, A.R.I.B.A (1933), who observed that 'most of the West Indian towns have their characteristic English squares with their large town houses, which might have been brought out intact from some English country town, so closely do they resemble Georgian town houses'. He acknowledged the workmanship of the stone entrances and pointed out: 'Somehow it does not seem out of place in this tropical island,

though many of its neighbours are of wood. It expresses a quiet dignity which is truly British' (May 1933: 125). This quiet dignity – now the aforementioned 'banal stateliness' – has become one of Jamaica's 'multiple roots' (Weil 1949: 43), the acknowledgement and expression of which are symptomatic of contemporary Jamaica's cultural sensibility.

The aesthetic Afrocentrism of 1970s Jamaica was a prominent element of the national identity forged after independence to represent a pronounced break from the Europeaness of British rule (Gregory 2013). However, to borrow a useful play on words from James Clifford's seminal work on diaspora (Clifford 1997), by the twenty-first century it has been nuanced in an acknowledgement of the country's multiple *roots*, as well as of many simultaneous and sometimes painful *routes*. These are the routes that have been and are still being taken to transform the country from a colonial outpost mechanized by a divisive, imperially imposed class system based on gradations in skin tone (Smith 1961) into a place whose people are able to visualize the future realization of its equalizing national motto: 'Out of Many, One People'. Temporal distance from British rule has enabled an acceptance of its symbols as part of the country's hybrid identity. In domestic architecture, this acceptance is not passive. The negotiation of conflicting identities has resulted in a visual language that balances all by changing each; for example, by taking the 'quiet dignity' of a symbol of perceived Britishness and painting it green and peach to suit its tropical surroundings. To project ownership of that dignity, homeowners make its stateliness part of individual selfhood. Hirsch and Miller acknowledge that an attempt to return to the origin is often, on some level, an attempt to map a loss, redress an injustice, or assert a right to personal acknowledgement (Hirsch and Miller 2011: 7; 18). The customization of classical columns in Jamaica can be read accordingly: in the process of self-fashioning they are not simply a statement of economic arrival. Customization bridges the gap between two identities considered opposites in long-established systems of thought, yet inhabiting the same cultural space in the British Caribbean and its peoples.

The columns are not an attempt to assume Britishness from Britain. Rather, they are an attempt to reify the abstract stateliness inherent within Jamaican culture, left behind by British rule. Therefore they can be read as symptoms of cultural return rather than mere adoption. They, and the process of customizing them, are a departure from the statement made by Edward Said (1993: xiii), that returns like these, which identify and 'include a refining and elevating element, each society's reserve of the best of what has been known or thought', are necessarily essentialist and very often xenophobic. Said sees them as being accompanied by 'rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behaviour that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity'. In the Jamaican context there is no native claim to land and no indigenous culture to hark back to, the native Arawaks having been wiped out during the period of Spanish rule. The culture

that is being returned to is piecemeal, consisting of bits of this and fragments of that; a creolized jigsaw which, semantically, does not speak of exclusivity and xenophobia but of the very hybridity and multiculturalism that an overt reclamation of a symbol of tradition or heritage in another country's twenty-first-century environment may oppose.

Personal Motivations: Aspiration, Social Mobility and the Columned House

So far this study has offered an analysis of subconscious, collective motivation for cultural return: columns as roots, looking backwards. It is necessary, in addition, to examine conscious personal motivations for building with columns, namely aspiration toward social mobility: columns as dreams of moving forward. In Clarendon, I was accompanied by a taxi-driving cousin, Mitchie Davis, who was uncannily reminiscent of the driver described in Daniel Miller's essay 'The Christian and the Taxi Driver: poverty and aspiration in rural Jamaica' (2009).³ His position within the Jamaican system of aspiration and acquisition is relevant here. Mitchie was proud of having bought himself a taxi, but he made it clear that his aspiration was to have a working fleet, with the goal of eventually acquiring a house like those with columns. Each time we passed a house with Corinthian columns Mitchie would point it out as 'another nice house' and stop driving, encouraging me to photograph it. When asked what he meant by 'nice', he would describe its size and grandeur; however, all houses highlighted as impressive had ornate columns, while those acknowledged as OK but modest, did not. It was evident that in Mitchie's eyes columns signified a status to which he aspired, the ultimate statement of arrival.

Because of the way in which individualism is constructed in Jamaica, the idea of living in a planned community with similar plots in the style of many new-build housing developments leaves many Jamaicans indifferent. Such developments often offer security, and a concierge to deal with maintenance, but they cannot satisfy the need for individualism, agency obtained through the ownership of land and customization of that land through the design of a house. Daniel Miller (Horst and Miller 2006) has identified these needs, pointing out that Jamaican individualism is unique in that it does not come from isolationism but rather originated as a coping mechanism during slavery as a means of maintaining personal identity, and therefore salvaging partial freedom. He recognizes that its expression is concomitant with the creation of a sense of self which is 'seen not so much as an "inner" deep persona, but rather emerges through others' response' (Miller 2006: 79). Individualism was firstly a form of resistance to dehumanization, then, following slavery's abolition, a process of healing effected through customization in many forms of self-expression including dress and the naming of children. This was only

heightened by a postmodern focus on hybridity as opposed to assimilation. Expressions of personal taste have long replaced expressions of ‘good’ taste as desirable, not only in Jamaica but globally. However on the island, individualism is also one of the routes to reclaiming roots that were lost to the majority of its citizens during the history of Empire.

The concept of affiliative self-fashioning, developed within the field of diaspora studies, comes from a reluctance to glorify the idea of roots and a desire to avoid the racial essentialism invited by an uncontested acceptance of root-seeking as a process (Gilroy 1993; Nelson 2011). The performative individualism mentioned by Miller can be seen as part of this and the cycle of aspiration and acquisition exemplified by Mitchie can also be accounted for as part of this system of ‘see and be seen’ selfhood formation. In this practice of representing the self, Corinthian columns are most sought after largely because they sell for the highest price. Some roadside vendors have told potential customers that they have been priced thus because they are more functional and will last longer, which is questionable. Homeowner Kemoy Downer is



Figure 13.2 Columns being advertised on the roadside. Photograph by Marie Hayden, November 2014.

a teacher in her early thirties with a young family. She and husband Hendin were not deceived by stories of increased efficiency, but she nevertheless purchased the style and had the columns which now adorn the veranda of their dream home moulded on site. Descendants of working-class rural Jamaican families, the Downers' custom design for their house does not recall the small-roomed, wooden houses of that class but, rather, harks back to a different Jamaican vernacular. Its layout is typical of houses historically inhabited by the upper-middle classes. Indeed, the sprawling mansions of twenty-first-century rural Jamaica almost uniformly seem to reflect an aspiration toward that type of house, between the Plantation Great-House and the regular middle-class house in grandeur. These houses were described by May as having been characterized by a large central living room of thirty or more feet in depth, with bedrooms opening directly from it and a surrounding veranda. May identified the design as a remnant from Jamaica's 161-year Spanish occupation (May 1933: 125). Of the contemporary houses with columns that I have visited, the vast majority, including the Downers', are built according to this specification or similar. The dream house, therefore, can be read as part of a system of affiliative and aspirational self-fashioning that has taken a physical form specific to Jamaica's architectural history.

Elaborate columns are an addition so important that many people start their building projects with them. A common sight in the Jamaican countryside



Figure 13.3 Metal column molds on a building site. Photograph by Marie Hayden, November 2014.



Figure 13.4 Abandoned columns near Maypen, Clarendon. Photograph by Davinia Gregory, July 2013.

is that of a simple wooden or zinc house filled with people, on a plot of land also containing a structure consisting of a concrete foundation and columns alone. Poignantly many of these are now overgrown with foliage like ruins in reverse, with structures having never been built around them. The unaccompanied columns represent the unrealized dreams of the people in the wooden houses. Since the beginning of the global financial crisis, paid farming work has all but disappeared in many parts of rural Jamaica. Many of those who would rotate seasonal farming between Jamaica and the USA have found entry to the latter country far more difficult to gain in recent times (McFarlane, interview 2013). The columns not only represent a quest for roots; they also encapsulate dreams, hopes and goals, and then become statements of wealth and achievement.

The Rejection of Columns and the Diasporic Returnee

Not every contemporary rural house features elaborate columns. This chapter has so far examined columns as vehicles for cultural return, but it is also necessary to consider the aesthetic choices of the physical returnee from the Jamaican diaspora abroad, who builds her or his dream house most frequently in retirement. Many Jamaicans emigrated in response to the British government's post-war call to colonial subjects to help rebuild that country's infrastructure following the blitz. Their dream houses represent a lifetime of working and

yearning in the hope of an improved standard of living upon their return to Jamaica, and the long-deferred justification of their decision to leave (Phillips and Phillips 1998). For many slightly younger returnees, the eldest children of those who chose to move, this return does not justify a choice but is an attempt to rectify a move that was thrust upon them.

For returnees, the myth of 'foreign' has been debunked. They have lived and worked in a very different system and been changed by it; Europe does not represent a distant refinement to them. Their reasons for building are not entirely different from those of the rural Jamaican; the house is still a long-awaited reparation for disenfranchisement. However the deracination is from place and family more immediately than from linear heritage and historical roots. Because it has occurred within the returnee's own lifetime the loss is more immediate and therefore the process of rectification is more conscious. To them the house represents reparation for sacrifices of culture, home, belonging and comfort. What is longed for in this case is Jamaica itself; intricacies of cultural history are often less important than the overarching idea of Jamaica as 'home'. To the returnee from Europe, columns are symbols which are out of place here, signifiers of what they have left behind rather than of what they miss about the island. In addition, where the returnee is retired there is less need for a statement of power or social mobility. Their work has been done overseas, inequality and injustice have been experienced there, not here. It is expected that they will be reconciled by relocation 'back home'. Location and house size (the latter particularly for returnees from UK cities where space is at a premium) are expected to make the years of economic and social and struggle abroad worthwhile.

Two such houses are being built next to one another atop Spur Tree Hill on the border of two parishes: Manchester and St Elizabeth. They are owned by brothers-in-law Launsby Hayden and Randolph Walker, the latter of whom is the uncle mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Uncle Randolph is not a typical returnee; he and his wife Rose (both Jamaicans) began married life in 1960s Jamaica and then moved back and forth between the island and the USA for much of their lives, holding citizenship of both countries. They live both in the Jamaican hilltop house and in their family home in Florida. Launsby Hayden is the archetypal returnee, having been 'sent for' by his postwar migrant parents as a child and having lived in the UK since. Over the past fifteen years he has spent more and more time in Jamaica and as retirement approaches he has been building his house remotely from Derby, England, with Uncle Randolph as his project manager. Neither house uses columns in its design. Each is designed to be outward-looking; the central focal point is not a living area inside the house, as with the Downers' home. Instead rooms are situated so as to usher inhabitants toward a rear balcony in one case, and large rear picture windows in the other. Both offer dramatic views over the precipice of Spur Tree Hill, and this focus is telling. The view is more important than the



Figure 13.5 Inside the building site: large rear windows overlooking hill precipices are focal points in houses like these. Photograph by Davinia Gregory, July 2013.

interiors and certainly more important than the fronts of the houses, which are quite simple. These houses are primarily about two things: being in Jamaica at last and working life being over, leaving the returnees time to enjoy the view. Uncle Randolph attests to spending most of every day on his balcony looking out. Launsby Hayden has often made clear that the flat roof of his house will eventually be a balcony for barbecues and gatherings. It is the feature that he is most proud of, and he is most careful in overseeing it remotely. It offers a bird's-eye, breezy view of picturesque Jamaica, away from the heat and mosquitoes found at sea level.

Uncle Randolph's house is more akin to a modernist box on pilotis than a Jamaican great-house with columns. Split-level but with only one floor visible from the road, it appears far more modest from outside than inside. He was keen to mention that there is no trouble on the hill for returnees because of the lofty location. Indeed safety is paramount for a 'foreigner' in Jamaica and displaying one's wealth acquired abroad is not a priority, especially if the owner is overseas for part of the year, leaving the house partially unattended. Ostentatious columns therefore go against the purpose of a house like this on a very practical level. Many returnees live on Spur Tree Hill, partly for this pragmatic reason and partly because the Jamaica imagined by the returnee is far more akin to the Jamaica of fifty years ago than to the country experienced by the contemporary citizen. In the 1960s people aspired to owning a hilltop

house for exclusivity as well as safety. Diana De Lisser pointed out: ‘Oh we didn’t live down here by the sea then. In those days if you lived next to the water you got malaria. So we lived up on the hill’ (Interview, 2013). Indeed the 1969 edition of *Jamaica and West Indian Review* featured an article simply entitled ‘Montego Bay’ which mentions one of her family’s homes: ‘Montego Bay was crowded in mid-February [...] However the crowds did not worry us as we hardly experienced them. We stayed as usual with Gary and Dick De Lisser in their lovely house on the Rose Hall estate, perched at exactly the right height above the Caribbean’ (Chapman 1969: 47).

The author goes on to describe the house of a friend of the De Lissers’, president of the Casa Blanca Company, Stanley Vaughan. Vaughan’s new flat featured a swimming pool that had been hewn out of the cliff face. The guest was impressed by the excess of combining water, one of the joys of the seaside, with the exclusive perspective of the hill: ‘I have always thought a two-seater Rolls-Royce, with all that lovely wasted power, the height of luxury; Stanley’s abode runs it a close second’ (Chapman 1969: 47). It is true that hills in places near to the ocean were the territory of the wealthy few in mid-twentieth-century Jamaica, when many poorer citizens were migrating. Nowadays, descendants of these old, white creole families and international celebrities have properties by yacht clubs near the sea, leaving large houses in the hills as the preserve of retired returnees who had fixed in their minds through years of working abroad the image of a large, safe house on a hill with a view over the world and infinite leisure time in which to enjoy it. Corinthian columns as symbols of social movement are irrelevant to them – for them the return itself is the apex of social movement, as is the view. They are concerned with being inconspicuous but looking out on a world that brings them peace. The citizen is concerned with distinguishing themselves and looking in on a home that brings them pride. The returnee has no need for an empire of his or her own anymore; that need was quashed upon living in the metropolis. What they want is a Jamaica of their own. That is the difference between the two experiences of the island.

Conclusion

The image of the returnee on the hill is persistent, reminding me of the tower described by Virginia Woolf. Relocation abroad was, to the postwar migrant, the equivalent of starting a taxi business for Mitchie, or the pursuit of higher education and professional careers for the Downers. It was the commencement of a journey to chase the particular vantage point of privilege described by Woolf. Just as *A Room of One’s Own* demanded for women the freedom to write – essentially to learn and work – as equals, so the process of laying claim to a little empire of one’s own demands the freedom to live as equals in an unequal world.

Post-war migrants attempted to achieve this by moving to England, thus following everything deemed desirable that had been produced in Jamaica prior to independence, Jamaica having been colonized to be an export centre (Phillips and Phillips 1998: 17). Just over fifty years after independence, increased opportunities for education and work domestically have made it possible for many more Jamaicans to achieve at home what the migrants had travelled to chase, then having achieved it, to adopt symbols of power and wealth in the customization of property. But to what extent is this process successful? The adoption of columns might imply a vicious circle. Hirsch and Miller (2011) acknowledged attachment to the past as a characteristic of the contemporary world. I would complicate the suggestion of simple attachment by using another reference to Woolf. *A Room of One's Own* has been described by Elizabeth Eger as often having 'been read as a history of the woman writer's lack of agency, arguably contributing to the frustrating state of affairs in which women are forever in the process of rediscovering their foremothers' (2008: 144). Could a similarly frustrating state of affairs be the end result for diasporic peoples seeking completion, belonging and home? On the surface it might seem that the formation of a progressive identity and sense of national and individual pride may be hindered by constantly looking to the past. However this article has explored the elaborate and subconscious reasons for neoclassical pastiche by Jamaican individuals, and its findings have suggested that this is not the case. The motivations of the post-war migrant and the contemporary country house builder are similar, but the age difference between them is striking. In their mid-thirties, homeowners like Kemoy Downer have not experienced the double displacement of being firstly part of an African diaspora removed by slavery, then a Jamaican diaspora removed by migration. The modes of achievement available to them mean that the process of social mobility is quicker and less likely to cause rifts and transformations on the scale experienced by post-war migrants in their comparable endeavours. In this way, the columns represent progress in Jamaica's ability to facilitate affiliative self-fashioning.

While in Clarendon I attended a primary school graduation in which the headmistress, Marlene Ayton, made it clear to the children that having attended a tiny rural school in a village not on most maps would not stand them in good stead for making their mark on the world. Her emphasis was on proving the world wrong and returning to Elgin Primary at graduation time to inspire future generations to do the same. I thought of my father who had attended that school as a child. At ten years old he was sent to inner-city London to make his mark on a world very different to, and much larger than, his own, never to return. Looking at these children I was struck by how much more achievable belonging, stability and status in Jamaica are for them than for his generation. New methods of claiming an empire of one's own in which to live, such as the adoption of Corinthian style columns on middle-class homes, are more effective than migration was. They represent a simplification

in the performance of social mobility, which now involves adapting symbols and customs that have become Jamaican since independence, in an important transfer of cultural power. The educational, economic and social healing process that has enabled and is still enabling this shift has been subtle in places and not universally successful. Nevertheless, as a phenomenon that has left such a striking visual mark across the whole island, it should not be overlooked. Columns serve as evidence of its importance.

Notes

1. Here, Creolization refers to the complexity, hybridity and resultant restructuring of peoples, languages, cultures and cultural expressions like art and design as the result of colonialism and subsequent globalization. 'Creole cultures – like creole languages – are intrinsically of mixed origin, the confluence of two or more widely separated historical currents which interact in what is basically a centre/periphery relationship. [However,] the cultural processes of creolization are not simply a matter of constant pressure from the centre toward the periphery, but a much more creative interplay. [...] Creole cultures come out of multi-dimensional cultural encounters and can put things together in new ways' (Hannerz 1992: 164–165). Because the many ethnicities, languages and traditions that constituted plantation culture are still mixed there, the Caribbean was acknowledged by Stuart Hall (2003) to be an ideal crucible for the study of creolization. Jay Edwards (2001: 86) has examined the relations between architectural creolization and the other forms of creole culture, making the link between concepts of creolization and built form.

2. Because of creolization and the echoes of plantation culture, Jamaica's class system is subtle and intricate. Marie Hayden and Diana De Lisser's contrasts are representative of the way that subtle gradations of ethnicity and occupation can still be as important indicators of class as family economic history and personal wealth in Jamaica. Marie is a medium fair-skinned black woman who worked as a teacher and now holds a senior post in the Jamaican government's Ministry for Education. She is well respected both in her small community and for her occupation, across the country. She is a lone parent with modest personal wealth and is a first generation professional. Diana De Lisser is a white Jamaican woman from a former slave-owning family. The historical bedrock of white West Indian identity and its tensions not only with black West Indianness but also with white Europeaness have been explored by David Lambert in *White Creole Culture* (2005), and De Lisser is subsequently referred to as a white creole in this chapter. Her personal wealth has been depleted over the years, yet her ethnicity and inherited home in Montego Bay enable her to retain her status as one of the country's elite class.

3. Mitchie Davis represents members of the economically deprived rural class. Much of the extended Davis family, formerly farmers, have emigrated and those who are left struggle to find work in the remote areas they inhabit now that agriculture is not a sustainable career. As a taxi driver, Mitchie has established himself as a lynchpin of the community, see Miller (2009).

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CHAPTER 14

The Quest for Modernity

A Global/National Approach to a History of Design in Latin America

PATRICIA LARA-BETANCOURT

Design history studies in Latin America, strictly speaking, are just emerging, partly in response to the global reach that the discipline has experienced in recent years.¹ This chapter asks what kind of design history seems relevant for the region in an age of globalization, and argues for a complementary approach where both the national and the global, in their interaction, are equally relevant. In historical discourse, and for over a hundred years, the nation has been the favoured unit of analysis. This methodological nationalism has been criticized for its tendency to think of the nation as autonomous and self-determining, lessening the significance and role of global factors in shaping history (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). What I propose here is an example of altering the framework and discourse to consider how the global relates to the national, generating perhaps a richer way of analysing design's relationship with history and society in Latin America. A shift in focus from the 'only national' to the 'global and national' involves exploring the effect of assimilation and appropriation within the context of sophisticated networks of trade, world exploration and cultural sovereignty, which by necessity transform local cultures, arts and traditions. Drawing from published work and from my current and past research on the history of design and decorative arts in Latin America, I will refer initially to the debate about the role of the nation state in a globalized world and its methodological implications for a Latin American context. I will be proposing a dual global and national focus to the discussion of two examples – one from the nineteenth and the other from the second half of the twentieth century – exemplifying different approaches to design history,

Notes for this section begin on page 256.

interpreted as quests for modernity and identity. Such a focus, in attending to the interplay between global forces and national dynamics, highlights the way in which both shape, influence and respond to each other.

Forms of Exchange: The Dynamics of Globalization and the Nation State

As part of a globalized world, more than ever design is being affected by far-reaching changes in technology, communication and markets. As globalization accelerates, and in spite of its obvious benefits, there are increasing complaints about the spread of a homogenous material and visual culture throughout the world (Holton 2011: 189–202; Fiss 2009: 3). Shopping malls and international airports are often cited as examples of this tendency that turns cities, buildings and interiors into the same undifferentiated environments everywhere. However, given the enormous differences across the world in terms of geography, language, religion, cultural ways and traditions, it is still a matter of debate whether a global economy necessarily imposes a homogeneous culture (Holton 2011: 202–215). The same type of designed commodities, environments, information and advertising may be spreading everywhere, but there is also no denying the richly diverse ways in which different societies experience and consume them, not to mention the different meanings that people ascribe to them. The notion of hybridity is relevant here, with its focus on understanding how cultural exchanges take place and how cultures interact to produce something new. This approach suggests that globalization, in forging new hybrid paths, brings into question homogenizing and Westernizing trends (Pieterse 1995: 69–90), attending both to the global and national, and resulting in new articulations of the social and the cultural. With Latin America as a case study, and within a context of multi-cultural awareness, a number of Latin American scholars have analysed the way in which individuals interact with commercially driven media, highlighting their human agency and creative potential in receiving, manipulating, and sometimes subverting, the highly commodified products and messages in everyday life (García Canclini 2001: 10; Martín-Barbero 2000; García Canclini 1999).²

A common but different argument against the homogenizing tendency of a globalized economy is that even if global industries, goods, products and services keep extending their reach, this does not translate into equal access for all regions and all sectors of society. There are large inequalities in the redistribution of wealth in the world and within countries. With 100% meaning maximum inequality, the Gini index figures for Latin America fluctuate between 45% and 59% (Colombia has 58.5%, Chile 52.1%, Brazil 51.9%, Mexico 48.3% and Argentina 45.8%) (CIA The World Factbook [2009–2014]; Gini Index at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2172>).

html).³ What this argument illustrates is that social and economic differences still act as considerable counterbalances to homogenizing tendencies of multinational capitalism and that a significant part of consumption still remains determined by local political powers and policies of redistribution.

The Global/National Framework

As a historical process, globalization predates the emergence of nation states, with the connections between the birth of nation states and industrialization being evident since around 1750. Historians have pointed out that it was only within the context of an industrial society that nationalism could develop; showing how only the systems and infrastructures of industrialized societies could sustain the growth of nation states and nationalism (Hobsbawm 1990; Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991). It is interesting to note that the growth of nationalism in the nineteenth century was an international process, with nations emerging at the same time on both sides of the Atlantic, in Europe and in the Americas, and with the colonies seeking independence as European monarchies weakened, eventually coming to an end as ruling powers. With a history approaching two hundred years, the Latin American nation states have kept changing, responding and adapting to the dynamic interaction with global forces and in so doing have so far survived.

For some years now a global trend in design history has been unfolding, which has provided an opportunity to revise and revisit disciplinary questions. Even though this perspective implies bringing all regions in the world into the purview of the discipline, it is much more than a revision of geographic boundaries defining the field. The aspiration to globalize the discipline involves questioning the long-held assumption that the West (Europe and the USA) has had a leading role in history. The period between 1850 and 1950 could be seen as a co-production between Western and non-Western cultures rather than as a unilateral process driven by the West alone (Bayly 2004). Sociologist Robert Holton has pointed out that the 'historical contribution of non-European regions to the history of globalization has been marginalized', but more revealing perhaps is the 'presumption that the non-Western world can only participate in the global by assimilating 'Western' practices, many of which actually originated outside the West' (Holton 2011: 45). The notions of 'West' and 'Europe' have also come under scrutiny, with their status as monolithic, unchanging realities being questioned (Turner 2007). In moving away from a hierarchical and Western narrative, the non-Western element disappears as 'other' and the field of inquiry opens up to alternative, multiple and decentred perspectives. Going beyond colonial and postcolonial perspectives, a global/national approach allows for a dialogue between multiple locations with a focus on cultural mobility (of goods, artefacts, people and cultural practices)

and on the increased understanding of how transregional and transnational exchanges operate.

It becomes clear then that it would be limiting to discuss the historical development of Latin American design and material culture without a global/national interrelated approach. Made of twenty countries stretching from Mexico to Chile and a population nearing 600 million, the region represents a huge and growing market. In 2009 most Latin American countries had a higher per capita GDP than that of China, showing the growing economic importance of the area and particularly of nations such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico. Latin American modern history started with the geographical and commercial expansion of European powers in the sixteenth century when, in becoming part of colonial empires, the Americas were placed in contact with the rest of the world. The new European inhabitants brought along not only a different genetic pool, but also different modes of government, economic systems, social organization, language, religion and artistic legacies. Indigenous Americans experienced this foreign invasion as the end of their world. However, and in spite of continuous miscegenation, some aspects of indigenous cultures managed to survive, including ancient arts, crafts and design practices. From the seventeenth century European traders forced the migration of Africans to the Americas as slave labour, adding to the already complex human and cultural melding of the Hispanic, Portuguese and ethnic diversity of indigenous groups.

With the end of colonial rule in the early nineteenth century (excepting Cuba, Puerto Rico and Brazil), Latin America was born as a group of newly independent republican nations eager to start their gradual integration into the global industrial economy. This shift determined not only the type of national economies that were to emerge later in the century, gearing efforts towards the production of raw materials required by European nations, but also the material culture the region was to adapt, adopt and develop from then on, embracing industrial technology in the shape of European imports. Without this economic integration the new but fragile nations would not have been able to protect their sovereignty and remain as viable independent states.

The Quest to Modernize

The discipline of design history has mainly reflected the output of industrialized nations. Given that most countries in Latin America still do not have a fully industrialized economy, and that design historical studies are still emerging, the role played by the region in terms of design and manufacture has been under-researched and is largely unknown. The subject is only taught as a component of design training, and although there have been well-established university design education programmes since the 1960s, there are no self-contained courses in design history in higher education.

Considering the effects of economic globalization, the power of global corporations and global financial institutions is undeniable. Nevertheless, this power is not absolute in that, in order to operate, corporations and institutions need the collaboration and assistance of local governments. In Latin America it has been mainly during periods of protectionist policies – when governments have acted against the free-market rule – that industrialization efforts and industrial design have developed. One such period is discussed in a recent publication which is, so far, the only comprehensive account of design history for the region.⁴ *Historia del Diseño en América Latina y el Caribe* (2008), edited by Gui Bonsiepe and Silvia Fernandez, is a multi-authored volume focusing on the development of industrial and communication design in the past fifty years. It is written mostly by educators and practitioners working in Latin America, rather than by scholars trained as design historians. Considering socio-economic and socio-political processes, the chapters take into account shifts in political orientation, waves of immigration, surges of capital investment, and conditions dictated by the global financial institutions. As the authors reveal, it was not until the protectionist policy known as ISI, ‘Import-Substitution Industrialization’, became prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, that most Latin American countries were committed to state-driven industrial development. The authors discuss the effects of implementation of the ISI agenda, whose aim was to produce locally those products that had traditionally been imported, drawn partly in response to the demands from the macro-economy and international financial agencies. The result was accelerated industrialization at first, but in the midterm (especially in the 1980s), there were negative economic consequences for the region as a whole. Latin America went through a debt and financial crisis when the amount of foreign debt surpassed the countries’ earning power and most were forced to default on repayments. On social grounds the disappointment was even bigger as people had hoped that once industrialization was implemented change in the social order would follow, but that was not the case. The process showed, however, that the significant development of design in the 1960s and 1970s relied on the public sector as the driving force, with the Ministries of Economy, Industry and Commerce establishing institutions, setting up cultural and educational programmes, and, with the crucial input of design, striving to make the economic sector an autonomous one. So far, in most cases this type of initiatives has not lasted long enough to permit nascent industries to grow sufficiently strong to compete successfully in the world market.

The Quest for Identity

If we move away from a focus on industrialization and consider instead the nineteenth century, a different kind of design history emerges, one that refers to the wider process of modernity including the impact that British industrialization

had on global commerce and the emergence of Latin American export economies. This approach considers overall the unprecedented level of consumption of European imports and technology that took place in the second half of the century (Bauer 2001; Orlove and Bauer 1997; Lara-Betancourt 1997 and 1998). The picture grows more complex, adding layers of cultural issues such as what these goods represented, and in connection with them the emergence of national and class identities. Adopting simultaneously a national and global framework I examine the cultural narratives underpinning this history while focusing on how the region as a whole embraced, adopted and adapted the diverse manifestations of global modernity represented in its material culture. I move away from the traditional opposition between global supremacy and local appropriation to pay attention to the complex interplay between them.

Design and decorative arts in nineteenth-century Latin America were, as in the colonial past, a powerful medium through which to convey political and cultural ideas, values and attitudes. With independence from colonial rule, this role became crucial in defining the nascent nations and disseminating a rich republican symbolism. The material culture of the countries, cities and the homes of the elite and middle classes was radically transformed through the century, spurred by a strong desire in Latin Americans to become modern, to emulate industrializing nations (Britain, France, Germany and the USA) and to fashion themselves as Europeans. Integrating Latin America in the world economy and acquiring the signs of progress and modernity were believed to be essential for the economic and political survival of the new independent countries. Thus the adoption of a European material culture, patterns of consumption and social etiquette became not only the new parameters for social distinction but also an indisputable and indispensable signifier of class and national identity (Lara-Betancourt 1997 and 1998; Orlove and Bauer 1997: 1–29).⁵

With the exception of Brazil, Cuba and Puerto Rico, by 1830 all countries in Latin America had achieved independence and become republics. Brazil eventually abandoned its constitutional monarchy to embrace a republican system in 1889. The new states faced the enormous task of establishing stable political regimes and modernizing largely rural countries with hierarchical traditions, high rates of illiteracy, and economies hitherto geared to colonial interests and slave labour. Throughout the century internal conflicts, cross-border disputes and clashes between warring political groups, each vying with the other in trying to implement a democratic system, were some of the driving forces spurring social, political and cultural change. However, in the second half of the century, and underpinned by foreign investment and the consolidation of an export economy, Liberalism strengthened and warfare decreased, resulting in unprecedented economic prosperity (Bushnell and Macaulay 1994; Williamson 1992: 233–284).

From the 1820s the new republics started the long process of state and nation building, aiming to establish and expand a shared sense of identity linked

to nationhood (König 1994: 187–322). In order to awaken a feeling of national belonging, the use of visual symbols was fundamental in conveying the republican ideals. In a region where illiteracy was the norm (and continued to be widespread until the 1870s), the power of visual images was crucial. An emerging visual culture and public rituals and spectacles were necessary instruments to convey and disseminate clear ideological messages (Andermann and Schell 2000). Displayed at civic celebrations taking place throughout the century, the new symbols helped to create, even if slowly, a civic conscience. The new era also witnessed a revolution in forms of communication. Printed text and images (in paper money, newspapers, leaflets and books) gave authority to the new political ideas and helped in propagating them. The national visual discourse was important not only in publicizing modern political practices and instilling a sense of belonging to a territory; it was also a message directed at other nations in the world, particularly European states with the power to confirm the political legitimacy and sovereignty of the new republics. Although at first not all sectors of the population were represented in these national visions promoted by political elites (poor creoles and *mestizos*, indigenous groups and African descendants were excluded), the ideal of national identity and unity became more attainable in the last third of the century when the growth of export economies permitted the implementation of long-dreamt plans for urbanization and modernization.

In the aftermath of Independence governments had little money for new buildings so republican symbols were represented and disseminated mainly through the national flag and coat of arms, coins, paper money, stamps and portraits of Independence heroes depicting objects such as military uniforms, swords, medals, etc. (Bretos 2004: 147–206). The Mexican flag for example, created in 1821, depicted an Aztec legend, with an eagle sitting on a cactus while devouring a serpent. According to legend, the gods had instructed the Aztecs to build a city when they found this bird. The flag's green strip represented Independence victory, a white strip signified the purity of Catholicism, and a red strip made reference to the sacrificial blood of national heroes. The eagle in Mexico and the condor in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru became prominent symbols of the nation, and have been represented in national coats of arms, stamps, flags, medals and in a variety of decorative objects ever since.

After Independence, in the 1820s and 1830s, the structures supporting the production of crafts and decorative arts started to be dismantled, particularly those connected to the guild system and the Catholic Church. Throughout the colonial period the Church, with its mission to promote religious dogma and visual motifs, had been the fundamental inspiration and drive for artistic and craft practices (Rishel and Stratton–Pruitt 2006). Once the republicans came into power, the Church, with its historical ties to monarchic power, was seen as part of the old order and consequently considered an enemy of progress and Liberal ideas. Thus it gradually lost its influence and eventually ceased to be the main



Figure 14.1 Jar with Lid (14"), Caballo Blanco Alfar, ca. 1890, Aguascalientes, Mexico; Giffords Collection. Photograph courtesy of Gloria Giffords.

patron of the arts. The citizens of the new republics were now more interested in modern and novel political and cultural icons, subjects and themes that spoke to them of liberal values, such as liberty, equality and sovereignty. Portraits of the new leaders dressed in impressive military uniforms and visual representations of republican allegories all provided ideological support to the nascent powers (Ades 1989: 7–22; Martin 1985). A common allegorical image of Independence

was that of a crowned Latin American indigenous woman. Besides appearing in paintings and flags, she also featured on coins and on the new national coats of arms. The woman was typically shown wearing a crown of feathers, carrying a quiver of arrows on her back, and with her feet resting on a tamed caiman. The best known representation is Pedro José Figueroa's painting (1819) showing Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), the Independence hero, as the Father of the nation embracing an American Indian, representing the Republic, as his daughter. Figueroa painted the canvas to celebrate the final victory against the Spaniards after the battle of Boyacá (Colombia) on 7 August 1819 (Ades 1989).

Republican symbols also appeared on more domestic and personal items such as chairs, mirrors and tableware and also on cufflinks, buttons, guns and holsters. Bolívar's French tableware for his 'Quinta' (the country house which he used as his refuge in Santa Fé de Bogotá, between 1820 and 1830 – today a museum) was printed with the Republican coat of arms (Museo Quinta de Bolívar, Bogotá, Colombia; <http://www.quintadebolivar.gov.co/>). In Mexico, Agustín de Iturbide (1783–1824), another Latin American revolutionary, had his lithographed effigy and the Castle of Chapultepec (site of government) printed on a set of glassware comprising a decanter, *bombonniers*, tray and cups made in coloured crystal glass from Bohemia.



Figure 14.2 Set of *bombonniers*, decanter, tray and cups with lithographed effigy of Agustín de Iturbide and the Castle of Chapultepec; cut and coloured glass; Bohemia manufacture, Czech Republic; ca. 1820; Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico. Image authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, CONACULTA.-INAH.-MEX.

Fuelled by the rhetoric of the French Revolution and its enormous influence on Independence movements in the Americas, in terms of style (until the 1830s), the new republican powers favoured the (so called) French Empire, mostly in its American (Federal) and English (Regency) versions (Duarte 1982; Rivas 2007). This neoclassical aesthetic, called 'Republican' in some countries, influenced furniture, furnishings, fashion and attire (Duarte 2011). Most of the miniatures painted in these years show women dressed and *coiffured* according to this neoclassical trend. The furniture at Bolívar's 'Quinta' exemplifies the style (Museo Quinta de Bolívar).

In the second half of the century, government efforts to strengthen economic and commercial links with European and North American nations to integrate into the world economy focused on participating in international exhibitions and trade fairs, which were seen as the summit of progress and modernity and epitomized the spirit of free commerce (Di Liscia and Lluch 2009; González Stephan and Andermann 2006; Elkin 1999; Tenorio-Trillo 1996). Several Latin American countries such as the Argentine Confederation, the Empire of Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic contributed to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, and to the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855. These events and the pavilions designed and built for the spectacular display and presentation of goods and products encapsulated the nations' identity and the image that Latin American republics wanted to communicate and promote abroad. In spite of their differences, Latin American nations used similar modern designs to convey their identities as nation states. Participating at international exhibitions represented part of a larger group of official efforts to forge a sense of national pride and identity, which included museums, monuments, pageantry, illustrated magazines and, in general, progress-related representations and imagery, all contributing to creating the spectacle of modernity.

The Brazilian pavilion at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 was designed by US architect Frank Furness. Built in a style of architecture described as 'Mourisco' (meaning Moorish), the front façade used translucent glass bricks in flag colour combinations of green/yellow and red/blue to represent Brazil and the USA coming together (Gross and Snyder 2005). Almost ten years later, another famous Moorish pavilion was built by Mexico at the 'New Orleans Universal Cotton Exposition and World's Fair' (December 1884 to June 1885). Designed by Ramón Ibarrola and built in iron and steel by the Keystone Bridge Company of Pittsburgh, the 'Mexican Alhambra' as it was called, was widely admired mainly due to the colourful prefabricated concrete slabs and tiles inspired by Moorish designs. Part of its attraction was that its structure was made from cast iron pieces that could be assembled and dismantled without much difficulty (Mrotek 2009). As in the case of Brazil's pavilion above, the reference was not to an indigenous exoticism, or to a Moorish influence on Mexican architecture. The theme was a response to the huge interest

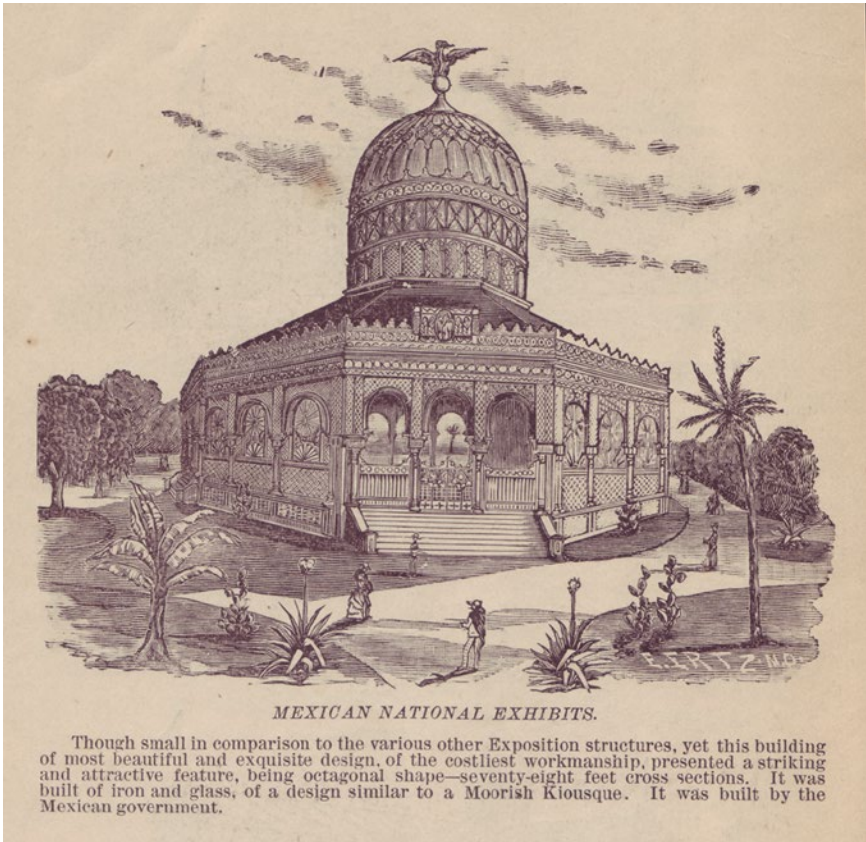


Figure 14.3a The Mexican pavilion at the New Orleans Exhibition 1884–1885; New Orleans Public Library Special Collections.

in exotic cultures that Europeans and the nations under their cultural influence (such as the new republics in Latin America) expressed at the time. The design was also a direct reference to the Moorish horticulture hall of Philadelphia in 1876. After the Exhibition the kiosk was reassembled on the 'Parque Alameda Central' in Mexico City until 1910 when it was moved to the 'Alameda de Santa María la Ribera' where it stands today. Most Latin American pavilions were designed by European and North American artists and designers, who probably knew little about these countries. Overall, pavilion designs reflected the compromises between the different parties involved: the state representatives, the event organizers and the general public, whose expectations were informed by current trends in taste and fashion.

Throughout the nineteenth century, and particularly during the second half, Latin Americans, in their ambition to spur progress on, showed a marked preference for new technology and imported goods. A new sense of identity emerged in allegiance with the modern world and a rising international



Figure 14.3b The Mexican pavilion today, known as *Kiosco Morisco*, and displayed at the Alameda Santa María La Ribera, Mexico City. Photograph courtesy of Marco Velázquez.

bourgeoisie. The growing industrialization of Europe and the expansion in international trade acted as a catalyst for Latin America to integrate finally into the global economy. There was, literally, a flood of imports after 1850 when the European demand for raw materials from overseas acted as a great stimulus to national and local economies. Mexican mining and agricultural produce, Colombian and Costa Rican coffee, Argentine beef and wheat, Brazilian coffee (Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo), cotton, sugar (Recife and Fortaleza) and rubber (in the Amazon: Manaus and Belem) and Chilean copper and nitrates, were among the raw materials sustaining the export economy (Bauer 2001; Orlove and Bauer 1997; Bushnell and Macaulay 1994). Particularly in the last quarter of the century, the influx of capital was destined for the building of railroads and transport infrastructure, in an attempt to reduce transport costs. As an example, among the impressive imported buildings made in iron and to be assembled on site, were prefabricated British railway stations, public markets, theatres, bandstands, and also houses. The use of iron in architecture immediately conveyed high social status due to its foreign origin, and any building could increase its value if iron structures were added, such as verandas, balconies, stairways or railings (Gomes 1995).

New wealth allowed the elite and also the emerging middle classes to acquire enticing European and foreign luxury commodities which represented not just a yearning for modernity but also an unequivocal social marker. The design of imported goods came to reference social class and buying these goods

became a clear and effective way of drawing and communicating social differences. Rather than being based on family lineage, as had been the case in the colonial past, social distinctions were increasingly linked to wealth and material possessions as the century progressed (Arana López 2011; Lara-Betancourt 1997 and 1998; Needell 1988).

The notion of what constituted foreign goods was a flexible one. Strictly speaking, it referred mainly to imported products, but also included objects made locally that resembled in design those that came from overseas (Orlove and Bauer 1997: 12–13). And the same criteria applied to products manufactured locally using imported materials, such as British woollen cloth employed to make suits or imported material to erect buildings. The drawing room of a typical middle-class home of the period would probably display a combination of imported and locally-produced furniture and furnishings: a piano and wallpaper would likely be of European origin, but the sofa and chairs would be supplied by the local cabinet maker. With the surge of imports, in every nation there was also significant stimulus to manufactures and factories producing machine-made goods such as textiles, ceramics, tiles and furniture. The *conversadeira* (loveseat) (Fig. 14.4) is a fine example of the type of furniture being produced in Bahia, Brazil during its imperial period (a collection of them are kept at the Museo Carlos Costa Pinto, Sao Paulo, Brazil; <http://www.museucostapinto.com.br/capa.asp>). Made in jacaranda, a fashionable

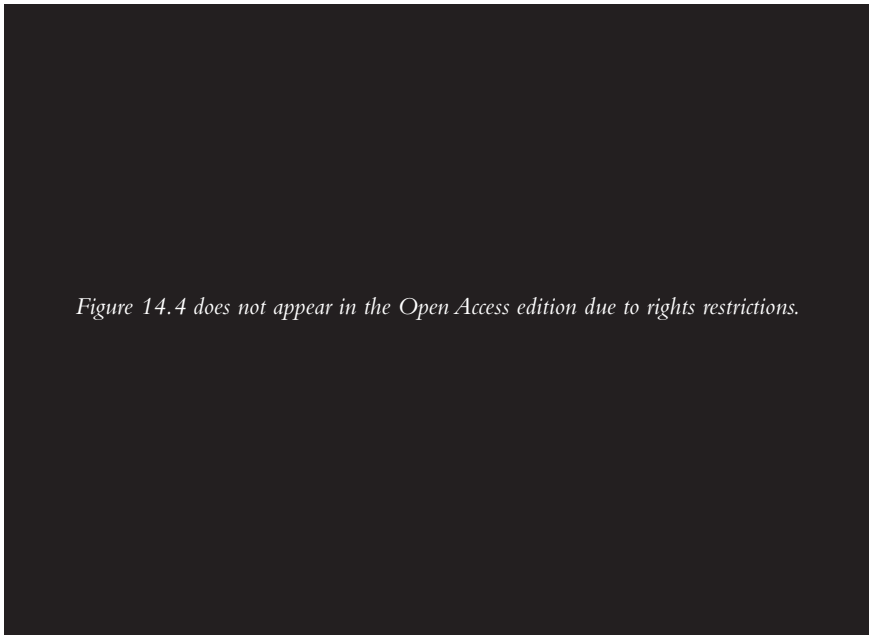


Figure 14.4 does not appear in the Open Access edition due to rights restrictions.

wood for domestic furniture, this type of chair was probably commissioned by one of the traditional Bahian families who made their fortunes in the business of sugar export. Produced in European styles fashionable at the time, the range of furniture made with this type of wood was varied and included different types of tables, chests, chest of drawers, wardrobes, desks, secrétaires, sofas, beds, mirrors, dressing tables and many others (Museo Carlos Costa Pinto).

Among the wealthy, domestic architecture reached European standards with families spending on them as much as their counterparts in industrialized nations. Latin America, particularly Mexico and the southern countries (Chile, Argentina and Brazil) had an impressive (and many complained excessive) Belle Époque which lasted until the 1920s (Bauer 2001: 129–164; Needell 1988). There was a construction boom in the last third of the century when the traditional colonial patio-centred houses were replaced with two- and three-storied houses and mansions. Many of the new domestic buildings followed the Second Empire French style, all with mansards, ample staircases and surrounding garden with gates to the street. Many others still followed neoclassical inspiration expressed mostly as Beaux Arts Classicism (Arana López 2011).

Public architecture did not lag behind and throughout the region foreign architects and engineers, and native ones trained in Europe, designed and built government sites, opera houses, theatres (Fig. 14.5), department stores, parks, boulevards and modern types of construction such as railway stations. A



Figure 14.5 Exterior of Teatro Juárez in Guanajuato, Mexico, ca. 1903. California Historical Society, Collection at the University of Southern California. Libraries Special Collections, Wikimedia Commons License.

remarkable example of an opera house was the one built in Manaus (Brazil), literally in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, made possible by the profits from the rubber boom. The whole region witnessed the transformation of national capitals from small towns into modern and elegant cities with gas lighting, trams, theatres and large mansions. Such was the case of Mexico City, Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and even much smaller cities such as San José in Costa Rica. As attempts were made to emulate European cities, new avenues and neighbourhoods sprung up, elite clubs emerged and cities benefited from the modernization of urban services (transport, aqueducts and sewage systems) (Almandoz 2010; Scobie 1974). For all their differences, Latin American nations made constant and deliberate use of modern design and technology (in urban, public and domestic spheres) to achieve modernization in a postcolonial context and to create and promote a sense of national identity closely related to it.

Conclusion

The dream of becoming as modern as Europeans did not materialize fully, as there were still sectors in society and huge areas in the region completely untouched by these modernizing efforts. But in following the dream Latin America moved away from a colonial past to engage with modernity in perhaps the only way that was available given the historical circumstances. The process is thus better interpreted as one of unquestioning belief in a particular notion of progress, reflecting a deep aspiration to become part of the modern world. Although later on it came to be seen as the continuation of a history of dependence, first colonial and then postcolonial, throughout the nineteenth century the quest for modernization was appreciated as a movement towards liberation from backwardness and isolation. If we compare this approach with the mixed response given to European goods by Asian and Middle Eastern countries (Western imports, for example, were rejected in China), Latin America embraced not just foreign goods and technology but what they represented in terms of enlightenment, modernity and progress (Orlove and Bauer 1997: 28). In keeping with the global/national approach proposed here, I might add that without the definitive embrace that Latin American nations gave European imports and technology, which situated them as a significant part of the global economy, perhaps the development of European modernity would have been compromised. We could also venture that it was the close economic, commercial and cultural exchanges engaged in by both parties that suggest that the shaping of the modern world was after all not a European achievement alone but a global and transnational one. It is by focusing on this dual perspective that it becomes possible to appreciate the significance of the transnational interplay within a global stage.

Notes

1. Nevertheless, the material culture and decorative arts in the Americas for the pre-Columbian and colonial periods have been studied by archaeologists, anthropologists and art historians since the 1920s.

2. Several Latin American theorists, including the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz contributing his notion of transculturation, have used concepts such as *mestizaje* and hybridization to explain and reflect Latin American cultural realities within a context of heterogeneity, diversity and pluralism.

3. Sweden has the lowest figure at 23% (2005) being the least unequal in its distribution of income, and some African countries have the highest index, with figures over 60%. The world average sits at an estimated 39% (2007).

4. Among surveys considering specific Latin American countries are: for Venezuela, Elina Pérez Urbaneja's website article, *La Promoción del Diseño Industrial en Venezuela: El Contexto del Diseño Industrial en los Países 'Subdesarrollados'* (2001), retrieved 7 May 2014 from <http://www.analitica.com/va/arte/portafolio/8969999.asp>; for Brazil, Cardoso (2000; 2005); for Mexico, Comisarenco Mirkin (2007); and for Argentina, Blanco (2005).

5. My research on the history of the drawing room in Santafé de Bogotá in the nineteenth century explained the transformation of this emblematic domestic space as a necessary political, social and cultural strategy to attract foreign investors through the display of what were considered modern standards of civilization in the shape of furniture, furnishings, interior décor and etiquette.

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Of Coffee, Nature and Exclusion

Designing Brazilian National Identity at International Exhibitions (1867 and 1904)

LIVIA REZENDE

Brazil has a long and rich history of exhibiting artefacts made in the country and of designing publications, displays and pavilions to represent and promote the nation abroad. From 1862, forty years after its independence from Portugal, the Empire of Brazil (1822–1889) participated frequently in International Exhibitions organized in Europe, North and Latin America. During that period, the Empire used exhibitions to project a civilized image of the nation abroad, to promote an advantageous commercial and political position for Brazil in an increasingly globalized and competitive market, and to prompt Brazil's identification as a political, cultural and social unit through differentiation from other national communities. International Exhibitions proved to be such a successful medium for state-driven processes of national identification and international projection that, just four years after its advent as Brazil's new political regime, the First Republic (1889–1930) seized the opportunity to redefine Brazil as a republican nation at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 (Rezende 2010).

The artefacts produced and amassed to represent Brazil abroad, and the material and visual evidence generated after these exhibitions form an unprecedented resource for the study and understanding of Brazilian culture, design and the formation of discourses of national identity. These sources, however, have received little attention from Brazilian design scholars and historians. This neglect stems, among other causes, from the way in which design has been understood and debated in Brazil until recently. The cultural and political discourses around design in Brazil have centred upon examining and exalting design as

a modern activity only, established through the industrialization and rationalization of material production. Design historiography, similarly, has focused on narrating the institutionalization of education and of professional practice since the mid-twentieth century (Leon 2014; Cara et al. 2010; Bonsiepe 2011; Braga 2011; Moraes 2006; Pereira de Souza 1996) and on writing the biographies of professional designers and their heroic precursors framed as ‘pioneers’ (Cunha Lima 1997, 2012; Souza Leite 2003). This narrowing of discourse resulted in relegating to academic and historical oblivion artefacts produced in Brazil before the ‘arrival’ of modern design like those displayed at International Exhibition.

This modernist conception of design practice and discourse is constrained by the ideologies of industrialization and unbridled modernization. It differs from the epistemological acceptance of design as a cultural phenomenon, professionalized or not, the historical investigation of which has included material and visual cultures produced by peoples from diverse geographical backgrounds and temporal experiences. Since the early 2000s, Brazilian design scholarship has diversified significantly to embrace the investigation of material and visual culture and to include archival research as the main source and method of enquiry. For example, evidence of visual communication and printing processes developed in Brazil before the establishment of the modern paradigm, but no less modern, for that matter, have been unearthed from archives and libraries. Research by Cardoso (2005, 2009), Fonseca (2012a, 2012b), Heynemann et al. (2009), Lima (2006) and Rezende (2005) has demonstrated, in examining graphic ephemera such as consumer goods labels and illustrated magazines, the development of a producer and consumer market in nineteenth-century Brazil. Changes in design curricula and historiographical revision of the discipline also show a preoccupation with establishing a design scholarship and design practices more attuned to wider social and cultural considerations (Souza Leite 2006; Braga and Moreira 2012). More recently, scholars have contributed to expanding the geographical and conceptual boundaries of the design debate in Brazil. Adélia Borges (2012) examined the potential of craft production to become a valuable and socially innovative form of sustainable entrepreneurship across Brazil, a proposal that counteracts Gui Bonsiepe’s persistent association of design and industrialization for the development of what he calls ‘the Periphery’ [sic] (2011: 17–27). The organization of the 8th Conference of the International Committee for Design History and Design Studies (ICDHS) in 2012 in São Paulo, and its subsequent publication (Farias et al. 2012), promoted the global character of design studies by ‘making connections between design historical work in different national, regional and linguistic communities, and recognizing the multiple sites at which this works is done’ (Adamson, Riello and Teasley 2011: 2).

Adding to the growth of this scholarship, this chapter contributes to a wider and more robust understanding of Brazilian culture and design history by addressing a question posed by citizens and intellectuals alike at least since independence in 1822: what makes Brazil different from other nations and

through what cultural, political and social processes are people and things identified as being Brazilian or having 'Brazilianness'? The phenomenon of International Exhibitions posed similarly pressing questions to participating countries by demanding a materialization of the nation into designed objects, or into the design of displays and pavilions. In retrospect, these designs and exhibitions offer an effective viewpoint from which to investigate the 'national' within the context of a globalized exchange of ideas and commodities.

National Objects, International Exhibitions

The term 'international exhibitions' encompasses a large variety of exhibitions, expositions universelles, world's fairs and shows that have proliferated around the globe since the Great Exhibition of the Industries of All Nations in London in 1851. Paul Greenhalgh (1988: 10–14) asserts that the birth of the international exhibition concept gave rise to the increasing commercial and cultural dispute between Britain and France from the first half of the nineteenth century. In the exhibitions arena, this dispute was sustained by comprehensive and competitive displays of fine arts, manufactures and machinery under a context of national production. Through their frequent exhibitions, Britain, France and subsequent host nations promoted a re-organization of the world's material wealth through the systematic classification and competitive evaluation of exhibits brought in by visiting nations against those of their own. International exhibitions commonly promoted a model of an industrialized and 'civilized' society to be aspired to and pursued by other nations. They advanced capitalist expansionism under the paradoxical discourse that wished to promote peaceful competition among nations in the context of an ever-increasing international market and access to natural resources (Rezende 2010: 113–194; Wesemael 2001).

'Nation' and 'national identity' are paramount concepts for exhibition studies. National provenance was the primary and chief category whereby exhibits from around the globe were organized and then classified, compared, ranked and awarded. Exhibitions promoted the identification between nation and artefact to the extent that national positioning in the ranking of civilization depended upon how national displays were interpreted and placed with a spectrum of value that ranged from technical advancement to exoticism. Conversely, as exhibits were to extol 'nationhood', 'nation-ness' or 'national identity', authorities responsible for organizing national participation in international exhibitions deployed the medium to further their top-down views of what their nations were and should become.

Eric Hobsbawm asserts that 'no single objective criteria – language, ethnicity, territory or common history – can explain *a priori* what a nation is'. He adds, 'categories that may explain one case may not be sufficient for another' (Hobsbawm 1990: 5–6). In some cases, however, the state has primacy over the

project of nation-building as ‘nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around’ (Hobsbawm 1990: 10). Official participation in international exhibitions played a central role in Latin American nation-building processes and their study shows ‘how states, nations and nationalisms, and notably the elites, have mobilized and united populations in novel ways to cope with modern conditions and modern political imperatives’ (Smith 1998: 223). The Brazilian case exemplifies this primacy. In a postcolonial context in the mid-nineteenth century, the Empire of Brazil furthered its wishful identification as a civilized and modern nation despite continuing the enslavement of African peoples and the decimation of its indigenous population.

To enquire into this state-driven conceptualization of a nation, this chapter provides a comparative analysis of two instances of participation in international exhibitions – one organized by the Brazilian Empire (1822–1889) and the other by the First Republic (1889–1930) – thereby exploring two markedly different views of what the nation was and should become. By examining the Brazilian participation in the 1867 Exposition Universelle et Internationale in Paris against the representation sent to the 1904 Louisiana Purchase International Exposition in St Louis, this chapter will reveal cleavages in the processes of national identification and will demonstrate their artificiality as opposed to the idea of a natural and organic manifestation of nationhood. These two cases, occurring nearly forty years apart and in different geopolitical contexts, demonstrate how historical changes elicited changes in the representation and the materialization of the national ideal in the design of displays and exhibition spaces.

‘A Place for Improvement’: An Empire in a Virgin Forest

On 1 April 1867, the gates of the Champs de Mars palace opened to the second international exhibition held in Paris, and the first under the Second French Empire (1852–1870). Conceived to out-do prior London exhibitions in the continuous rivalry between Britain and France, the Exposition Universelle et Internationale succeeded in promoting an ‘optimistic and progressive view of society’ (Greenhalgh 1988: 33) while transitioning the exhibition model from ‘traditional industrial exhibitions to modern culture expositions’ (Wesemael 2001: 221). Unprecedented emphasis was given to shows of different cultures, from the flaunting of colonial orientalist displays to the erection of specific pavilions and rooms to identify and differentiate nations in that massive international site of exchange.

The Empire of Brazil was initially uncertain about participating in the Paris exhibition. Since 1865, Brazil had been engaged with Argentina and Uruguay in a war against Paraguay, the longest in its history (1865–1870). The war opposed the continuation of an indigenous ruled society in South America understood as

barbaric. Hobsbawm, however, considered it as an attack against 'self-sufficiency' in the 'only area of Latin America in which the Indians resisted the settlement of the whites effectively' (Hobsbawm 1975: 78). While in Paris 'the phantasmagoria of capitalist culture attained its most radiant unfurling', as Benjamin (2002: 7–8) famously framed the 1867 exhibition, in South America resistance to capitalist expansion was being brutally repressed; the male population of Paraguay was reduced to 30,000 individuals by the end of the war (Hobsbawm 1975: 78).

After organizing provincial and national exhibitions to muster a considerable collection of exhibits, a group of Brazilian exhibition commissioners, sanctioned by the emperor Dom Pedro II, undertook the challenge of representing Brazil amidst the war. Close scrutiny of the Brazilian official publication-cum-catalogue issued for the exhibition reveals the rationale for going to Paris: 'In order that Brazil may become one of the greatest nations of the world, nothing is wanting but population, and to attract this, it is only necessary to render herself known' (*The Empire of Brazil at the Paris International Exhibition 1867*). By 'greatest' exhibition commissioners meant not only the nation's continental and vastly unpopulated territory; they also took it upon themselves to act as the 'civilization's forerunner in the South' (Villeneuve 1868 viii). Thus, it is no exaggeration to conclude that Brazil's aims in Europe and in South America, as well as its positioning in an increasingly globalized world, were not only that of being recognized as an Empire but also clearly imperialistic.

Perhaps unaware of the conflict in the Plata Basin, the French exhibition commission planned to group all South American countries in one single room at the Champs de Mars. The idea prompted furore among Brazilian commissioners. Led by the Brazilian minister in Britain, Francisco Ignacio de Carvalho Moreira (Barão de Penedo), they challenged the French plan, arguing that Brazilian goods were 'more numerous and more indispensable to the world commerce than those from the rest of the Central and South Americas' (Villeneuve 1868: xxxii-xxxiii).

Brazil eventually occupied an area of 785 square metres, larger than the aggregate area given to other Latin American countries, and it secured a separate room but one still located too near to other South American nations (Pesavento 1997: 137; Villeneuve 1868: xxiii-lix). 'The vicinity to the republics obliged us to give the ornamentation of the Brazilian rooms a *sui generis* character, in order to avoid confusion at all costs', reported Brazilian chief-commissioner Jules Villeneuve (1868: xxxii-xxxiii, original emphasis).

Territorial demarcation in the palace was achieved through the design of an interior space specifically coded to convey imperialism and tropical abundance, as the remainder of this section will discuss. The main entrance to the room (Fig. 15.1) consisted of two imposing portals and an adjoining wall covered in a pattern of squares alternating the Brazilian imperial coat of arms and the dragon of the Bragança dynasty, from which the Brazilian emperor descended. The pattern was painted in the Brazilian heraldic colours, yellow and green,

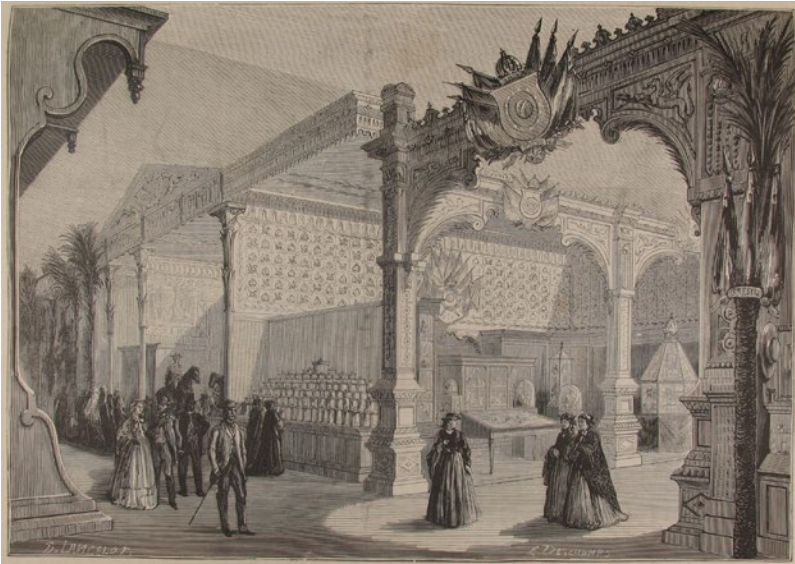


Figure 15.1 Main entrance to the Brazilian room installed at the Champs de Mars palace during the Exposition Universelle of 1867, Paris. The wall to the left of the portal was covered in a square pattern alternating the Brazilian imperial coat of arms and the dragon of the Bragança dynasty and painted in the Brazilian heraldic colours, yellow and green. Further left, the South American gaucho display can be seen. Photo from: Ducuing, F. *L'Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée*: Publication Internationale, Autorisée par la Commission Impériale. Paris: Administration 106, Rue Richelieu [1868]. NAL pressmark 504.G.41.

forming an early example of the famous colour scheme that later would be repeated persistently to signify 'Brazil' in patriotic celebrations (Villeneuve 1868: xlv). Before reaching Brazil's colourful room, visitors had to walk past an area that, Villeneuve noted contemptuously, 'the South American republics have populated with gauchos' (Villeneuve 1868: xlv).

The term 'gaucho' refers to the inhabitants of the Plata basin in South America, and for the Brazilian commissioner, the display of mannequins in national costumes resorted to a 'popular spectacle' clearly designed 'to dissimulate the scarcity of their exhibits' (Villeneuve 1868: xlii). The Empire of Brazil was against 'vulgarity and exoticism', continued Villeneuve, 'It would have been easy to decorate our rooms with indigenous costumes, or typical outfits from the inhabitants of our provinces. However, the [Brazilian] commission has decided to exhibit products of first necessity for the European commerce and industries' (Villeneuve 1868: xlii). What ensued from the official resolve of identifying Brazil with its 'inexhaustible resources', 'precious products', 'fertile territory', 'healthy climate' and 'liberal institutions' was a display like the 'virgin forest', discussed below, an emblematic example of how Brazil was identified with its territory in 1867 (Villeneuve 1868: xlii).



Figure 15.2 The ‘virgin forest’ was a monumental display of timber from the Amazonian Forest designed to impress the world. It showed timber previously unknown in Europe cut in horizontal, vertical and diagonal sections to demonstrate its special material properties. Around the display, a set designer of the Paris Opéra painted an interpretation of a tropical forest. Photo from: Ducuing, F. *L’Exposition Universelle de 1867 Illustrée*: Publication Internationale, Autorisée par la Commission Impériale. Paris: Administration 106, Rue Richelieu [1868]. NAL pressmark 504.G.41.

In another room also dedicated to Brazilian exhibits, a monumental display of timber from the Amazonian Forest was designed to impress the world. Arranged in a high and broad pyramid, large blocks of timber were cut in horizontal, vertical and diagonal sections to specifically demonstrate their material properties (Fig. 15.2). Around the centrepiece ran a panorama painted by Auguste Rubé, a set designer from the Paris Opéra, intended to represent a tropical forest. The dramatic scenario was set underneath a ‘dome formed by the lofty branches of a tree, behind which one could see the blue and transparent sky’ of springtime Paris (Villeneuve 1868: xlii). The Brazilian timber display was an open space. Visitors walked around the imposing collection, measuring their bodies against the gigantic Amazon trees. The spectacular tropical setting gave visitors an immediate feel of the bounty of the Amazon Forest and, therefore, of Brazil. Nicknamed ‘virgin forest’ by the French press, the display was a success, boasted Villeneuve, soon one of ‘the most visited places of the exhibition, being reproduced in illustrated magazines, and mentioned in all newspapers and journals’ (Villeneuve 1868: xlii).

At the Exposition Universelle et Internationale of 1867, the Brazilian virgin forest turned out to be as spectacular and popular as the criticized

South American display of *gauchos*. The difference between the two forms of national identification comes from their intended outcomes. Whilst some South American republics exhibited regional culture in dress and custom through models of local dwellers, the Empire of Brazil identified the nation with its imperial status but also as a virgin territory, empty of people but replete with untapped natural resources. In Mary Louise Pratt's words (2008: 60–61), Brazil was then represented as a 'place for improvement' to the eyes of foreign industrial entrepreneurs, for the Empire equated national development with the international exploitation of Brazilian resources and the attraction of European immigrants for population.

'The Land of Opportunity': A Republic of Coffee

The Louisiana Purchase International Exposition held in St Louis in 1904 commemorated the centenary of the land purchased from France that augmented the USA's territory to continental proportions. Likewise, the St Louis exhibition mobilized large numbers. It consisted of fifteen mammoth exhibition palaces and more than 1,500 buildings to accommodate all the federated states, 34 foreign nations and 20 million visitors in seven months (Rydell et al. 2000: 56). Thousands of people lived in situ, mostly imported by exhibition commissioners as human displays of foreignness and primitiveness (Rydell 1984: 167–168). Privately organized by the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company and supported by President Theodore Roosevelt, the St Louis exhibition aimed to convince citizens that the USA thrived after a period of economic recession (Rydell 1984: 157). To the world, the fair confirmed the USA's growing military power and proposed a ranking of nations, peoples, and cultures according to the idea of racial segregation (Greenhalgh 1988; Rydell 1984; Rydell and Gwinn 1994; Rydell et al. 2000).

For the Republic of the United States of Brazil instated just fifteen years earlier, in 1889, the USA's territorial expansionism and display of power over the American continent compelled its global repositioning. While in Europe the attraction of immigrants partly motivated the Empire of Brazil to participate, in St Louis the Brazilian republic aimed at affirming its geopolitical weight as the 'second nation' in the Americas and the first in South America through specific commercial strategies. As propagandized by the main national publication designed for and circulated at the exhibition:

Very little is manufactured yet in Brazil for exportation and the manufactured supply of many articles is not even sufficient for the demands of the country. There is, therefore, a very good market for foreign goods and splendid opportunities for the establishment of factories both to supply the home market and for exportation. Especially when taken the fact [sic] that raw material of first-class quality is inexpensive and abundant, that almost all kinds of machinery enter the country

free of duty, and that labour is plentiful and cheap. (*Brazil at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* 1904: 105)

The logic was simple and seductive: Brazil's population was growing, bringing with it 'plentiful and cheap' labour and the promise of an expanded consumer market. In this way, more manufactured and industrialized goods were necessary, but Brazil's output was inadequate. If only foreign capital could continue 'pouring into the country' to exploit the 'inexhaustible' and 'abundant' natural resources, mutual profits for Brazil and its investors would ensue (*Brazil at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* 1904: 4). In contrast to the want of population seen in 1867 when Brazil was represented as a 'place for improvement', the official line in 1904 presented the country as the 'land of opportunity' (Andermann 2009: 346) where international capital would find no obstacles to exploit untapped resources. The main avenue for mutual profitability was Brazil's 'black gold': coffee.

By 1904, Brazil exported four-fifths of the world coffee production, and coffee alone accounted for more than half of Brazil's export revenue (Ministère du Commerce 1906: 119). Exhibition commissioners sent to St Louis were closely related to the coffee oligarchs who ruled Brazilian politics from 1894, either by family ties or by holding professional roles in the federal government. To establish its global position in the beginning of the twentieth century, Brazilian commissioners devised an exhibition that compounded the idea of the nation with its most profitable staple, as this section will discuss further.

The effect and response prompted by the virgin forest display in Europe was replicated in the USA with the extraordinary coffee exhibit housed in the neoclassical Brazilian pavilion erected in the exhibition park (Fig. 15.3). Well positioned in the foreign section of the park, the Brazilian pavilion was designed by Colonel Francisco Souza Aguiar and received awards for its exquisite 'French renaissance style of architecture' (*Brazil at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* 1904: 83). Its interior flaunted grandeur and elegance with 'flights of granitoid steps', marble statues and upholstered settees, large porticos, and a majestic double staircase that led to a gallery which offered splendid views of the fairgrounds (*Brazil at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* 1904: 83). Although integrated into the Beaux-Arts architectural style prevalent at the St Louis exhibition, an unusual exhibition dominated the palatial pavilion's ground floor – an exhibit that went beyond traditional strategies of display to embrace all the sensorial inputs felt during the making of coffee (Fig. 15.4).

Every day, on the ground floor of the Brazilian pavilion freshly ground and brewed coffee was served free of charge to the visiting public. With their imaginations whetted by the powerful and tempting smell that permeated the pavilion, visitors enjoyed their hot drinks and some Brazilian conviviality around charming little tables placed in the main hall and its open-air loggias. Skilled

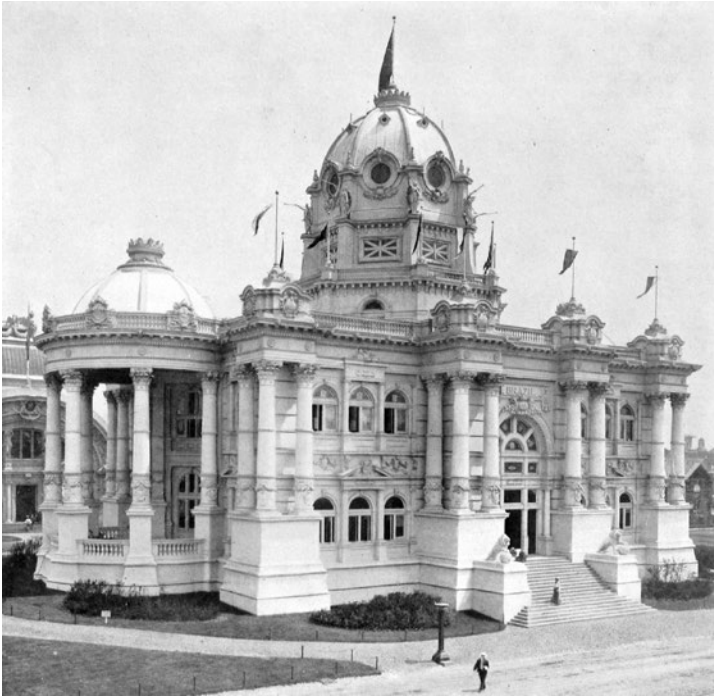


Figure 15.3 The award-winning Brazilian national pavilion designed by Colonel Francisco Souza Aguiar in the Beaux-Arts style for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, 1904. Dubbed the ‘Palace of Coffee’ for its vast exhibition of coffee on the ground floor, the pavilion helped to conflate the association between Brazil and coffee in the United States of America and beyond. Photo from: *Brazil at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, 1904*. Saint Louis: S.F. Myerson Ptg. Co., 1904. NAL pressmark A.32.19.

workers from São Paulo prepared and served the ‘flavoursome national beverage’ in small cups, as this is how coffee is appreciated in Brazil (Relatório da Comissão 1906: 137–138). In total, more than two hundred thousand pounds of coffee by weight were served. Brazilian commissioners exulted in the success of their coffeehouse and the commercial advantage ‘of greatly popularizing the use of the Brazilian coffee under its own name instead of under the fictitious name of Java or Mocha, by which it is commonly sold’ (‘Brazil at the World’s Fairs’ 1904: 20). Asserting the provenance of the best coffee beans was matched by another central rationale for turning the national pavilion into a Palace of Coffee. In the process of nationalizing the commercialization of coffee, it also became paramount to ‘Brazilianize’ coffee drinking, as shown by the emphasis on drinking rituals and the attempt to change preparation and consumption habits in the USA.

In associating nation and coffee, commissioners designed displays centred also on coffee production. Adjacent to where coffee was being served at the



Figure 15.4 The exhibition of coffee mounted in the interior of the Brazilian national pavilion unusually emphasized the sensorial experiences of coffee consumption and production together with its visual displays. Visitors could touch the beans displayed and smell coffee being roasted, ground and prepared in the premises. Hot coffee was served free of charge everyday in dainty little cups to change consumption habits in the United States of America. Photo from: *Brazil at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, 1904*. Saint Louis: S.F. Myerson Ptg. Co., 1904. NAL pressmark A.32.19.

Brazilian pavilion, operating machines instructed visitors on how coffee was transformed and packaged in sacks for exportation. Visitors could touch, smell or taste the beans displayed in open sacks, judge them by colour or shininess, and choose their preferred variety from among the many cultivated in Brazil. Roasting machines processed raw coffee from green beans into hard, brown ones; grinding machines turned shells into a powder which was then brewed into the fragrant beverage served in those peculiar, small Brazilian cups. Photographs of Brazilian *fazendas* (coffee farms) and plantations reinforced the exhibitionary progression from beans to beverage by exposing coffee cultivation and harvest in Brazil (Relatório da Comissão 1906: 138).

The republic mounted displays of various natural resources and products in at least thirteen other department buildings. Brazil was represented as a cohesive political unit, albeit culturally segregated into primitive and modern regions and peoples as per the worldview proposed by the St Louis exhibition. At the Forestry and Game department, for example, Brazil's Amazon and Northern

regions were framed as the loci of primitivism in Brazil via displays of timber and rubber that heightened their unskilled extraction. This was in contrast to the more complex and skilled work of coffee cultivation shown in the compelling exhibition at the national pavilion that inextricably associated Brazil and coffee in the North American and European consciousnesses.

Coffee, as discussed here, was represented as the agricultural, cultivated solution for Brazil's future. Domestically, coffee production and oligarchic politics occurred near the country's largest urban centres, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, thus framed as the loci of modernization and modernity in Brazil. The construction of a national identity conducive to that of a 'Republic of Coffee' in 1904 was therefore politically as well as economically motivated. The identification between nation and coffee – and the subsequent materialization of this concept in specific displays – served not only to strengthen commercial ties between oligarchs and international businesses but also to establish oligarchs' hegemony over the country.

Reconsidering the National Paradigm Built on Exclusion

On 1 May 2010, another international exhibition opened. Expo 2010 Shanghai China, to give it its official name, celebrated China's international power by promoting urban modernization as the locus of modernity. The exhibition proposed 'Better Cities, Better Life', a theme which participating countries interpreted in their own ways. In Shanghai, Brazil was represented again by a tropical forest, a trope this time employed in the surface design of its shed-structured pavilion (Expo 2010 Shanghai China; retrieved 30 April 2009 from http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en_gj_tpl_29.htm). Unlike the virgin forest display of 140 years earlier, the Brazilian pavilion in Shanghai was designed, paradoxically, to celebrate 'pulsating cities' (Expo 2010 Shanghai China). 'The tropical-forest-like Brazil Pavilion [sic] shows off the cultural diversity and dynamism of Brazilian cities', states the Expo's official website. The incongruity is striking. Few images could misrepresent urban dynamism and cultural diversity more than that of a tropical forest. Nevertheless, the conflicting representation of Brazil seen in Shanghai was no novelty.

As discussed in this chapter, tropical nature, urban modernization and Brazil's population have been seen as historical national 'problems' that frequently emerged through the cracks of seemingly positive representations. Brazil's exhibitionary efforts, across the Empire (1822–1889) and the First Republic (1889–1930), were based repeatedly on exclusion. 'Brazilians' themselves were largely absent from the national representations seen abroad, especially those from working and peasant classes, black descendants and indigenous peoples. At the Exposition Universelle of 1867, Brazilian exhibition commissioners criticized other South American nations for displaying the material culture and

costumes of gauchos. They named those displays of customs ‘artifices’ used to offset a supposedly ‘scarcity’ of exhibits. Brazil, instead, had nature that could provide products ‘of first necessity for European commerce and industries’. The enslavement of black people, internationally condemned by then, was described in this period as a sort of ‘humanitarian slavery’ by one of the several propaganda publications that sought to mitigate ‘preconceptions’ against the country (*The Empire of Brazil at the Paris International Exhibition 1867*: 30–31). Material cultures from Brazil’s numerous indigenous peoples were chiefly confined to the anthropological departments of exhibitions and displayed to exemplify allegedly past human stages. Indigenous people were as such excluded from the present. Rural Brazil, especially during the Republic, represented an antithesis to the optimistic view of national modernization and modernity with which the state wanted to be identified.

Brazilian population and society were, and are to date, distinguished by their multiracial and multicultural make-up. This, I argue, constituted a representational problem for exhibition commissioners. International exhibitions commenced by gathering, classifying and ranking the ‘works of industry of all nations’ but considerably extended this classification and ranking to exhibiting nations and to those exhibited as colonial possessions. The Louisiana Purchase International Exposition in 1904 epitomized this phenomenon by placing nations, cultures and peoples in a supposedly evolutionary, progressive scale that promoted the white race and Western cultures as the pinnacle of civilization. To succeed in this increasingly divided and radicalized world, Brazilian exhibition commissioners opted for excluding the plural and diverse characteristics of the Brazilian population and their cultures.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, Brazil has become big news. International commentators have hailed the country and its recent economic and political success as ‘Latin America’s big success story’ (*Brazil Takes Off: A 14-Page Special Report on Latin America’s Big Success Story* 2009: 13). Has that great future so often predicted by exhibition commissioners finally arrived for Brazil? Whatever predictions may be true, with economic and political growth come new challenges for national development within a context of material and representational global exchanges. Brazil’s ascension as a coming power was endorsed by its successful bids to host two major global tournaments, the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic games in 2016. As a result, international eyes have turned again towards Brazil and its status as a democratic, modern and progressing nation is closely scrutinized. How will cultural diversity and urban dynamism be represented on national soil during these games? What will be made visible and what will remain excluded? Most importantly, how will Brazil’s exploitation of natural resources and its national development project equate with the global debate on sustainability that demands a restructuring of traditional paradigms of production and consumption? These shifts also imply the reconsideration of traditional ways of approaching design and

the writing of design history. They require a move from the territorialization of the discipline towards a conceptualization of design as a cultural phenomenon that includes not only the canons established by the professionals but also the broader material and immaterial production of the Brazilian population while acknowledging them as global experiences.

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