

CHAPTER 9

The Myth of Danish Design and the Implicit Claims of Labels

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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

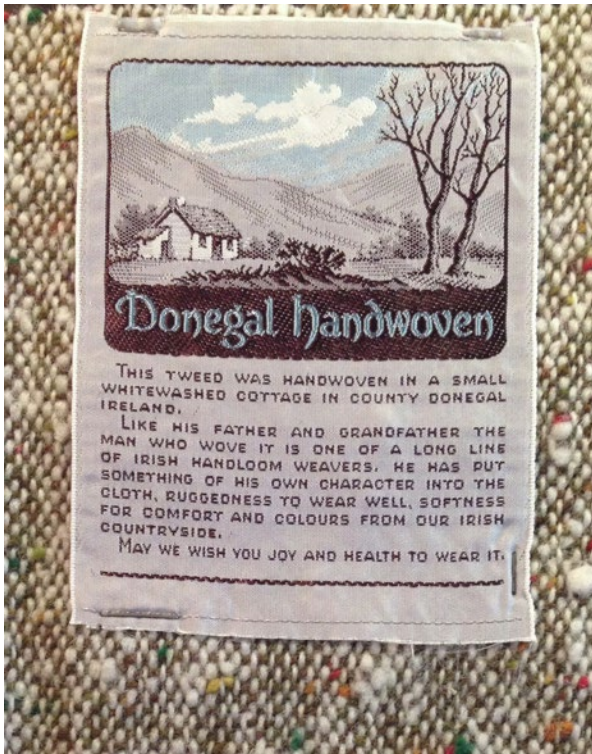


Figure 9.4 Label in Donegal tweed, 1959. Fabrics of a similar type but with a different provenance are often referred to as ‘donegals’ with lowercase ‘d’. Photo by the author.

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 elsewhere 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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