Beyond Surface

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Graphic Design narratives

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Foreword
Kristen Coogan

In the most iconic scene of The Devil Wears Prada, Andy (Anne Hathaway) nonchalantly dismisses two nearly identical blue belts in a room full of fashion forward elites. Andy's icy, terrifying boss Miranda (Meryl Streep) retorts with a diatribe so full of vitriol that it effectively knocks Andy down a peg. It also illuminates Andy's own naive contributions to the very stylistic machinery she so blithely critiques: Miranda traces the origins of Andy's "lumpy blue sweater" all the way back to the explosion of the color cerulean in Oscar de la Renta and Yves Saint Laurent's early 2000s runway shows, before filtering down to department stores and eventually discount retailers where Andy "no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin."

Miranda's acerbic history lesson sets into motion Andy's transition from frumpy intern to uber-glam fixer, but it also does a favor for anyone interested in visual culture. The past offers a well-spring of formal, conceptual, and philosophical inspiration, making a deep knowledge of design history necessary for stylistic innovation. Knowing design history gives context to our contemporary visual culture—we can use the past to decode the present and forecast a stylistic future.

One of the best blueprints of this idea is Lorraine Wild's "Great Wheel of Style," which charts how style repeatedly drifts in and out of high and low culture like an undertow. In an interview for Eye Magazine in 2000, Wild suggests that style and a universally agreed upon notion of "good design" are intertwined: Good design creates intrigue and gets consumed by the mass market, which hijacks and superficially proliferates form devoid of its context. This results in cliché, embarrassment, then death, followed by fetishism, revival, and curiosity.

But what is good design other than a subjective and inherently flawed concept? When design and context are inextricably linked, it is good. When design detaches from its context, we are left with cliches, embarrassments...deaths. Wild's Great Wheel of Style plays out as design oscillates from the intriguing to the unimaginative. It's a helpful reminder for designers and design students today: if you borrow from a certain style, it's important to know where that style came from, as well as the social and cultural contexts that gave that style its rise.

For a classic example of this style cycle, one needs to look no further than the Memphis Group. In the 1970s, when Ettore Sottsass retreated from "Corporate Italy"— abandoning his position designing modular office space at Olivetti—he found himself in the eye of a perfect storm of modernist disruption. He resisted high paying commercial jobs in favor of collaborations with pioneering artists, architects,

and critics, including SuperStudio and Archizoom. While reading a 1977 edition of the New Wave magazine WET, Sottsass encountered the outrageously garish designs of ceramicist Peter Shire, with whom he later fathered the Memphis Group, an artist collective where tastelessness prevailed. The group's animated furniture and objects represented a clean break from Modernism, hurling them into the New Wave with brilliant, jewel tone color palettes adorning idiosyncratic geometries, new age kitsch, and functional impracticality.

Around the same time, graphic designers like April Greiman and Dan Friedman contributed their own stylistic improvisation, using technology and dark room experiments resulting in early Macintosh 8-bit aesthetics. Greiman's designs from this period reflect her formal Swiss training coupled with Memphis-inspired, California New Age, flaunting explosive colors and garish oddities that played on anti-taste styles of the New Wave. Friedman, too, developed a self-bred mix of peculiarity and logic through a radically modern formalism.

Within a decade, the style had ballooned out of its sub-cultural roots and into the mass market, setting the 1980s aglow. Both David Bowie and Karl Lagerfield bought entire Memphis collections to furnish their respective New York and Paris apartments. The iconic forms became a sort of kit of parts, and soon every surface, interior, and textile was veneered in Memphis inspired aesthetics—think 1980s sitcom Saved by the Bell, or 1990s hit Pee Wee's Playhouse. By the late '80s, the style had gone from fad to cliché to generic, soon entering the lowest vernacular markets like airport gift shops where, in any hub across the country, you could find a white mug, with a 2" x 2" grid overlapping a pastel triangle, with Your City written in Mistral script.

Per Wild's wheel, the style had surpassed mass market to embody cliche and embarrassment. Fast forward twenty years, and a Memphis rebirth thrust it back into the public consciousness. Christian Dior fetishized the look in his 2011 runway show. Supreme released Memphis-inspired skateboard decks. Retail outlets like American Apparel regurgitated the iconic and kitschy geometry. Today, London-based graphic artist, Camille Walala, represents the logical endpoint to Memphis's style evolution, elevating the work back into high culture with her refreshed Memphis-inspired interior design at high-end boutique Opening Ceremony in Tokyo.

Tracing the work of Walala—or Christian Dior, or even Supreme's uninventive rip-offs for that matter—to its origin sheds light on the market's influence on style and form. We all know that style goes from high to low and high again, but identifying a style's context breeds visual literacy and shepherds innovation. And it's not just necessary for aesthetic innovation, it's also necessary for good design. We can only avoid Andy's faux pas in The Devil Wears Prada when we consider context.

For another example, let's turn to the 2009 Want It campaign for Saks designed by Shepard Fairey's Studio Number One, whose uncanny impersonation of Constructivism recycles more than just a visual language.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Constructivism grew out of a Soviet State sponsored movement designed to disseminate political doctrine. Collectivism, universality, practicality, industry, and purity evoked the new Soviet utopia, yielding a simplified red,

black, and white Communist palette. Designs like El Lisstizky's iconic Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge and layouts for Vladimir Mayakovsky's For the Voice, featured intoxicating thick red and black stripes, primary shapes, and images that comprised a universal language engaging an illiterate peasant population. Type was meant to be seen and heard. The dynamically composed forms conjure a vision of the new world, "constructed" through a new visual architecture.

Unlike the Memphis Group, the Constructivist style cycle suffocated under Stalin's 1930s Socialist Realist mandate, and thus never made it to the mainstream. It tip-toed around subsequent cliche, embarrassment, death, etc. on the Great Wheel of Style, yet over the decades, the style was still fetishized and revived. In one prominent example, Neville Brody's 1980s design for The Face looks like a page out of Mayakosvky's book, with heavily ruled type, directional marks and idiosyncratic typographic maneuvers that operate linguistically and graphically.

Yet whereas Brody's design was less a wholesale rip-off of Constructivism, and more an homage to its anti-corporate and anti-establishment approach, Studio Number One's advertising campaign for the luxury department store copied it verbatim. English language messages were written in geometric, Cyrillic-inspired letterforms to connote Russian typography. The campaign's black and white photography mimics that of Alexander Rodchenko's photos of spirited Communist youths gazing toward an idealized future.

At first glance, seeing a high-end retailer like Saks appropriate the Constructivist methodology to sell high fashion to their beau monde clientele was a complete assault on the original Soviet mission—it felt completely out of context. And indeed, fetishism and revival can be dangerous when it decontextualizes a style from its social or political origin. Yet upon closer examination, Want It theoretically stoked the 2008 recession-era economy. Studio Number One hijacked the Constructivist ethos to fire up a patriotic faith through unmitigated stylistic quotation. In many ways, Studio Number One outsmarted the market with a posture that lower forms of imitation failed to assume. Despite the nearly hundred years separating the Constructivist and Studio Number One campaigns, a repeat performance of art and politics converge, the context presented itself once again. Studio Number One consciously hopscotched the Great Wheel of Style, landing squarely back at the cradle of good design.

For designers who may feel like everything under the sun has already been done, the cycling of style contains a strange type of reassurance: it has been done, and it will be done again. Understanding this underscores the importance of design history. Knowing your history nourishes originality and edifies creative disruption—a prerequisite for our contemporary postmodern, hyper-exposed and hyper-accessed context. The burden remains on us to translate the past to be good innovators.

African-American Designers:
The Chicago Experience Then and Now
Anne Meis Knupfer

Not all scholars agree with literary critic Richard Bone that the Chicago Black Renaissance began in 1928 and ended in 1960.[1] Some scholars have argued that there was no "flowering" of the arts, but rather a grafting of creative endeavors from the early twentieth century. However, there is little disagreement that Chicago was a major, if not the major, urban locus for African-American art, theater, poetry and fiction, blues and jazz, and intellectual energy during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Indeed, by 1930, Chicago had the largest African-American urban population in the country. Confined to the city's southside by restrictive covenants and realtors' red-lining tactics, most African Americans, regardless of their social class and occupation, lived together. Despite deteriorating mansions, and crowded tenements and kitchenettes on the southside, African-American Chicagoans took great pride in their communities, especially their social and educational institutions.

Among these institutions were the South Side Community Art Center, the first African-American-owned art center to showcase African and African-American artwork. There also was Parkway Community House, a prominent social settlement established by University of Chicago-trained sociologist, Horace Cayton. The George Cleveland Hall Library, the first public library in Chicago's African-American community, was one of the intellectual centers in Bronzeville, the most prosperous African-American business district in the city. Under the capable directorship of Vivian Harsh, the library showcased African-American art, poetry, stories, and music. Along with librarian Charlemae Rollins, Harsh organized reading circles, writing clubs, debates, children's story hours, performances, essay writing contests, and art exhibits. In short, there was vibrant intellectuality and artistry, informed by a pan-African consciousness, as well as the syncretization of southern migrant and northern urban traditions.

Although scholars only recently have begun to analyze the music and literature of Chicago's Black Renaissance, there has been little examination of its fine or design arts.[2] For this reason, the symposium "African-American Designers: The Chicago Experience Then and Now Symposium," held at the DuSable Museum on February 5, 2000, was especially noteworthy in showcasing scholars' work in design art from this period, as well as the accomplishments of first and second generations of African-American design artists in Chicago. This symposium, organized by Victor Margolin, professor of Design History and Fellow of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, was sponsored

1. Robert Bone, "Richard Wright and the Chicago Renaissance," Callaloo 9 (Summer 1986): 446–468.

2.See, for example, William Howland Kenney, Chicago Jazz. A Cultural History 1904–1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., The Power of Black Music. Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Bill Mullen, Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935–1946 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999). One book which does feature the arts, literature, and music, as well as the political and social activism of Chicago's Black Renaissance is Darlene Clark Hine and John McCluskey, eds., The Chicago Black Renaissance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

by the University of Illinois at Chicago, along with DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago, the Illinois Humanities Council, and various corporations and foundations.

Keynote speaker Floyd Coleman of Howard University's Art Department, began the program by speaking on "The Broader Context for African-American Design." Although aesthetics often is the focus of design art—be it graphic, industrial, or interior—Coleman emphasized its political and social intentions. Accordingly, he focused on African-American craft design in the historical contexts of the Middle Passage, slavery, and migration, with particular reference to issues of power and patronage. Using kente cloth as a one example, Coleman elaborated on the aesthetic and spiritual significance of its various designs, as well as African Americans' renewed interest in celebrating a pan-African identity.

Indeed, the primacy of African retentions was one of the hallmarks of African-American craft design, evident in house structures, basketry, furniture, pottery, and metalsmithing. For example, the architecture of slave houses in South Carolina in the late 1600s replicated that of houses in Western Africa. Likewise, the slaves' shotgun houses in Virginia drew from ancestral Yoruban traditions. In their silversmithing and pottery, slaves utilized African motifs and designs. Despite the unearthing of many such African-American artifacts, Coleman stressed that more historical work needs to be done. Then, as today, the analysis of the production of such art design needs to be informed by race, gender, and social class, as well as issues of power and patronage.

Charles Branham, Director of Education with the DuSable Museum, covered 150 years of African-American history in Chicago in his brief presentation. Beginning with the African-American founder of Chicago, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, Branham underscored the institutional basis for the promotion of cultural and community expansion. Especially during the 1890s, the African-American elite established political organizations, women's clubs, and businesses, many of which survived the Depression. This infrastructure supported the arts, music, and other cultural events, laying the groundwork for the Chicago Black Renaissance.

Victor Margolin, in "African-American Designers in Chicago: Themes and Issues," continued Branham's discussion of the rich tradition of African-American design and its support by African-American businesses and institutions in Chicago. However, because of politics, economics, and race, many doors of opportunity remained closed to African-American artists in commercial art, display design, cartooning, letter and sign painting, interior design, architecture, the design of industrial products, and advertising. To answer the critical questions of where African-American design artists worked and how they developed their own voices, Margolin elaborated on three types of discursive spaces: autonomous spaces, where African-American design artists could fully develop their artistic ideas; negotiated spaces, where they had to fight for a voice; and predominantly white discursive spaces, where they were allowed little or no voice.

African-American newspapers including the Chicago Defender, The Chicago Whip, The Chicago Bee, and The Chicago Enterprise provided autonomous spaces where artists could display their talents and polemics through advertisements, graphics, and cartoons. African-American magazines, especially those published by the African-American-owned Johnson Publishing Company were other outlets. In some cases, individual artists established their own business enterprises. Charles Dawson, a graduate of the School of the Art Institute in Chicago, started his own commercial art studio in the 1920s. Two other African-American commercial artists, C.E.J. Fouche and George Davenport, also established their own companies for illustration and sign painting during the same decade.

Perhaps the most salient examples of negotiated spaces in Chicago were the WPA and Illinois Art Projects, where African-American design artists were commissioned to create murals, sculptures, paintings, and other design art. Similarly, art exhibits, particularly the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition and the Diamond Jubilee Exposition of 1940, required African-American artists to negotiate the artistic and political expressions of their work because of white co-sponsorship and audiences. The original South Side Community Art Center was another cultural site of negotiated space. Originally funded as a federal arts project, the center eventually became an indigenous community center through its own fundraising efforts. Under the directorship of Rex Gorleigh, an African-American artist in his own right, the center became especially known for its African and African-American art exhibits.

The predominantly white discursive spaces which Margolin discussed were the prominent art schools in Chicago, including the New Bauhaus, the American Academy of Art, and the School of the Art Institute. Despite their training at these institutions, African-American artists often had difficulty finding employment in design art. Some did, however, break through the color line, such as cartoonist E. Simms Campbell. Designer Eugene Winslow, too, found work in the white community, but later established his own firm. Charles Harrison, who did his undergraduate and graduate study at the Art Institute, freelanced at Sears Roebuck. In 1961, he finally was offered a full-time job there. Clearly, Margolin noted, these African-American artists' career paths were not continuous, but rather moved back and forth between various discursive spaces.

Adam Green, an historian at Northwestern University, continued Margolin's theme of discursive spaces, focusing upon African-American Chicago cartoonists during the 1940s. Green argued that cartoons were, perhaps, more expressive of African-American art than other genres. Of special note, he argued, was the work of Chicago Defender cartoonist Jay Jackson, known for his editorial cartoons with themes of social justice at home after WWII and the "Double V" campaign. (The latter theme highlighted issues of transnationalism and colonialism.) By capitalizing on the new action comic strip, Jackson was able to effectively combine his political viewpoints and aesthetics with cinematic techniques. Green concluded by emphasizing the need for scholars to more closely examine cartoons and other graphics in African-American newspapers because of their large readerships.

Pamela Franco, a lecturer in Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago, next spoke about popular depictions of African Americans in Harlem during the 1920s. In particular, she examined the illustrations of Aaron Douglas, who "sold" a particular

ideology about Harlem then. Douglas was encouraged by his teachers to explore "that inner thing of blackness." As such, Douglas utilized themes of spirituality to portray the difficult, yet rich, lives of migrants in Harlem. For example, in his painting Prodigal Son, the motifs of gin, loose women, cards, and trombones signified that Harlem was a kind of Babylon. However, in Play the Blues, Douglas looked at jazz clubs from another perspective. By focusing on the music, not the dancers' "immoral" behavior, he presented a kind of "sanitized" portrait. These visions may have been created in part to counteract stereotypical negative images of Harlem. As Franco rightly noted, most Harlemites did not participate in black and tans, but rather organized rent parties to offset exorbitant rents.

The afternoon sessions shifted to presentations by the designers. Two panels featured the new and first generations of design artists in Chicago. Given emerging technologies today, there certainly are significant differences in the medium and design of the work of both generations. Likewise, there are more professional opportunities for African-American design artists today in both community and mainstream institutions. Two of the younger generation, Vernon Lockhart and Angela Williams, who worked for the Museum of Science and Industry and other institutions in Chicago, discussed how they created promotional materials, as well as exhibit designs, with an Afrocentric focus. Another panel member, Vincent Bowman, whose father was an offset printer, worked with a variety of materials in his designs of telephones, a film processor, x-ray machine, packaging, and bottles. The final speaker, Deborah Bennett, employed at a community development bank, administered programs for children and youth in computer graphic design, business management, and entrepreneurial skills. Similar to the discussions of historians from the morning sessions, she emphasized how art and culture could contribute to social progress.

Perhaps the highlight of the symposium was the panel of first-generation African-American designers in Chicago. Victor Margolin moderated the panel with the following design artists: Vince Cullers, a graduate of the Art Institute, who established one of the first Black-owned advertising agencies in the United States; Charles Harrison, another graduate of the School of the Art Institute and the Institute of Design, who had been a senior industrial designer at Sears Roebuck for more than 30 years; Andre Richardson King, also a graduate of the School of the Art Institute, as well as the University of Chicago, who specialized in environmental design; Gene Winslow, a graduate of the Institute of Design, who had his own firm and also worked for various Chicago firms; Tom Miller, a graduate of Virginia State University and Ray Vogue School of Art, who worked at Morton Goldsholl and Associates for more than thirty years; Herbert Temple, a graduate of the School of the Art Institute who has been the senior art director at the Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago for almost fifty years; and LeRoy Winbush, who apprenticed with a sign painter after high school, and is known even today for the window displays in Chicago created by his firm, Winbush and Associates.

Several themes emerged in the first-generation artists' conversations. Despite their professional training and expertise, most experienced discrimination and difficulty in finding gainful employ-

ment. Cullers had begun as a fine artist when he was younger, then decided to be a commercial artist and pursued advertising. But at that time, there were no African Americans in advertising, and so there were no opportunities. Miller was one of the few African-American students at the Ray Vogue School of Art; he was also one of the few students who graduated without a job. Nonetheless, he pointed out, that didn't stop him, and eventually he found employment. Temple had noticed that his School of the Art Institute instructors only gave job leads to their white students. An administrator at the school, however, assisted him and gave him a listing of agencies on Michigan Avenue to which to apply. But all told him that he was "just a little too qualified." The administrator then sent him to a place where several former students of the School of the Art Institute worked and they enthusiastically supported the management's hiring of Temple.

Because of these discriminatory experiences, the first generation talked about providing opportunities for the next generations. Cullers spoke about how he not only fought for employment for himself, but to help open the door for other African Americans. Winbush agreed, pointing out that they, as professionals, had an obligation to the next generation to get them involved in design art. "We are just still in the beginning, even with what we have here," he emphasized. His hopes, however, were otherwise: "[I] want to see us get a real force together."

Most of the first generation talked about how they had gotten their own start from standing on the shoulders of other African-American artists in their communities. Temple became interested in the South Side Community Art Center, where he met many artists, including William McBride and LeRoy Winbush. When Temple saw McBride's cartoons, it was the first time he had seen work by an African-American cartoonist. He tried to adapt his style to these cartoons, as well as to the magazine illustrations of African-American artists. King, too, met artist and cofounder of the South Side Community Center, Margaret Burroughs, and was greatly influenced by her. When Winslow discovered that "Black artists had nowhere to go," he started a series of portraits of well-known African Americans, which he sold to the southside schools. He also designed cards for barbershops and other community businesses that supported him. Eventually, he became vice-president of a new publishing company, AfroAm, which sold educational materials to the schools. These featured drawings and biographies of famous African Americans. Given the discrimination in mainstream society, Winslow and members of the African-American communities of Chicago created opportunities for the design artists to develop their autonomous discursive spaces.

Even as the first-generation design artists spoke of their experiences of racism and segregation, they emphasized the rich cultural experiences of their childhood and youth. As a young man, Winbush had worked at the famous Regal Theater's shop under the stage. He remembered it as "an exhilarating kind of experience." There, he met many famous African-American musicians including the Nat King Cole trio, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and Cab Calloway. One of the highlights of his career, he told the audience, was when Ella Fitzgerald sat on his lap. Temple spoke of "coming up" in a segregated society, where most African Americans had no con-

tact with white society. Everything, he noted, was segregated: buses, streetcars, cabs, and businesses. As he explained, "You didn't go downtown. You had everything on the southside."

For some of the first generation, their first full exposure to racism was during WWII. As Temple explained, "[You] didn't understand the difference until you went into the army. Officers were white." King, too, spoke of how the painful memories of war gave him the motivation to do something for society. His war experience, he remembered, "affected his psyche." His father advised him to go back to Europe until he figured out "what to do with his life." For King, Temple, Harrison, and others, veterans' assistance provided them with an opportunity to seriously study design art. Such study provided a whole new way of thinking for these first-generation artists. Temple described his classes at the School of the Art Institute, in contrast to his previous degrading job at the stockyard: "It was a new environment, talking about Will Durant, Machiavelli. I was introduced to new ideas." King, too, discussed his love of the study of architecture: "Architecture became something you could put you arms around. And fall in love with it." He eventually was involved in starting the new signing department at Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, one of Chicago's leading architectural firms. Certainly, these artists were poised between the pain of discrimination and the determination and passion to create design art. Their conversations poignantly revealed the ways in which they navigated the discursive and public spaces in their professional lives.

To hear the life experiences of the first generation was a rare opportunity for the audience. As historians, scholars, artists, and community members, we have much to learn from them: from their words, their artwork, and their memories. On a larger note, all of the participants and organizers of the symposium should be commended for illuminating the complexities of this neglected history. Hopefully, there will be other opportunities to learn about such noteworthy lives and accomplishments.

Walking the Tightrope:
Comments on Graphic Design
in South Africa

Marian Sauthoff

The necessity for post-apartheid South Africa to establish and develop local markets, compete in the global marketplace, and meet the requirements of social reconstruction and development afforded opportunities to review and reassess the role of design in the country. In the early-1990s, coinciding with the start of the postapartheid period, design commentators Kurlansky[1] and Oosthuizen[2] envisaged a significant economic and social role for design, as well as new demands for design skills. Both present design as a powerful national resource.

Oosthuizen called for "a new design order" based on a holistic and integrated vision of design purposes. This perception acknowledged the pivotal position of design in society, and its utilitarian and sign functions. It emphasized the need to foster the development of a South African design culture that combines global trends with the essential and differentiating qualities of Africa, and it elaborated on the idea of a design imperative in crafting a competitive edge for South Africa in both the national and international arenas.

Kurlansky drew parallels with countries including Germany, Japan and Spain which have faced similar challenges, and where design has underpinned an industrial and cultural renaissance. According to Kurlansky, who proposed a "new South Africa design initiative," the significant role of design can only be actualized through the institution of a unique South African design culture. This includes a distinctive creative expression; acceptable standards of visual literacy at all levels of society; the accommodation of inclusive and representational perspectives; equitable staffing practices that acknowledge previously marginal groups within design industry sectors; and the support and promotion of high creative standards.

The complexity and diversity of the challenges confronting design practice in South Africa, initially defined in comprehensive proposals such as those of Kurlansky and Oosthuizen, preceded the proffering of a multitude of opinions, observations, and recommendations by practitioners and educationalists. A number of themes, each with a set of sub-themes, continue to animate deliberations about the progress and maturation of design in South Africa. Two themes that have been featured prominently in the exchange of ideas are South African identity and graphic design's intersection with corporate organizations. While many points of concern and reflection in the areas of identity and corporate intersection demonstrate characteristics and content similar to those being debated internationally, these two themes recognize circumstances unique to this country.

This article comments on selected aspects of each of these themes in an exploratory review that seeks to establish the extent of

design engagement with the demands of the evolving economic and social order. The intention is not to provide an in-depth interrogation of impulses informing the selected aspects. Rather, it is to present a broadly based interpretation of the current situation, and to contribute to the debate about the future of graphic design in South Africa by offering some perspectives on the opportunities, directions, and options available to design in this country. I contend that there have been significant developments in graphic design over the last decade, and that progress has been made towards the realization of "a new South African design order." The real need, however, is for a better balance and integration between the economic and social dimensions of design, aided by the development of a more comprehensive, coherent, and penetrating indigenous design discourse and practice, marked by critical introspection and supported by rigorous research.

The Quest for a Local Idiom

The new South African constitution was enacted on May 8, 1996. This event formally marked the end of official, legislative institutionalization of divisive social and political policies in South Africa, and laid the foundations for a democratic future. The significance of this event must be interpreted within the broader context of South African history. Beginning with the settlement by the Dutch of the Cape in 1652, the history of this country has been shaped by both imperialism and colonialism coupled with the indigenous counter forces of defiance and obstruction. After 1948, the implementation of apartheid policies entrenched a system and brand of internal colonialism that gradually resulted in international isolation, and gave rise to resistance movements that particularized the South African situation. With the release from prison of Nelson Mandela in 1990, and his election as president in 1994, South Africans faced the emergence from international obscurity and intimations of another, more inclusive national and cultural identity.

The capacity of visual domains to clarify cultural identity, forge a national consciousness, and contribute to the expression of a national identity was thrust into prominence. The specific role that graphic design could play in these processes still is being analyzed and debated in different forums. Two tracks are briefly considered below. The first describes the focus that has been placed on the crafting of an indigenous design expression. The second suggests that the critical assessment of graphic design's contribution to establishing identity does not end with the aesthetic, but must take greater cognizance of how the new social, political, and cultural order is conceptually fixed and visually registered.

The need to explore and establish a distinctive and unique identity in graphic design has enjoyed considerable attention in published articles, conference papers, and in the work of South African designers during the last decade. The idea of an indigenous design identity essentially has been concerned with the search for, and honing, of a characteristic mode or form of expression and stylistic vocabulary peculiar to this country. Although the idea by no means is novel,[3] it was given additional impetus by the optimism

3. The attempt by a group of white artists commencing in the 1930s under the influence of Afrikaner nationalism is a case in point.

and anticipation accompanying the social and economic changes offered by the new political order. Designers were forced to reconsider a number of previously entrenched notions. The observation that South African designers slavishly copy or imitate international design solutions, while ignoring what was happening on their own doorstep, increasingly was raised. The desirability of South African design work being heavily imbued with Western sensibilities and design values was questioned, and a more detailed consideration was given to the nature and qualities of a design approach relevant to its African context.

Variously and indiscriminately labeled a South African design language, visual language, style, dialect, or aesthetic, a cursory overview of its articulation and manifestations reveals that the quest for a local idiom essentially has been informed by three challenges. These are first, the symbolic signaling of a new political order at the national and provincial levels, as well as the indication by private enterprises that they wish to be seen as part of the new dispensation. The second is the strategic positioning and competitive differentiation of South African design in the global arena. Finally, the drive to satisfy individual and creative curiosity concerning the nature of a design aesthetic meaningful within the South African experience continues to challenge designers.

The clearest indications and connotations of political change are conveyed by new or revised South African national symbols, regional identities, and redesigned corporate identities for state and private enterprises. Obvious examples that have emerged over the last decade are the official coat of arms, national symbols such as the Olympic logo visual identity systems for state departments including the Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology, and for large multinational organizations such as mining corporations Anglogold and Goldfields. These examples typify the approach adopted locally in forming identities that attempt to come to terms with self-unification, mergers and divestitures, and where design is instrumental both as means to achieve internal coherence and political solidarity, and as a competitive strategy. It is an approach that predominantly seeks to integrate indigenous impulses with a contemporary aesthetic. Such identities thus tend to be marked by an overt incorporation of the natural environment, wildlife, prominent cultural landmarks, and traditional ethnic symbols and craft motifs, as well as naïve techniques and marks considered to be characteristic of Africa.

It is important to note that these examples demonstrate little variance from international design tactics and impulses that have been employed in devising multinational and/or international identities where competitive visibility and cultural legibility are critical design parameters. In an interesting exercise, Lupton[4] demonstrates how easy it is for multinational and international symbols and logos to degenerate into "weary archetypes," thus weakening unique recognition and communicative values in a globally competitive environment. Consequently, designers have attempted to reinvest multinational identities with specificity by means of a range of essentially humanistic techniques (e.g., painterly execution, and naturalistic depictions), more informal approaches, and the incorporation of signifying forms from other cultures and localities that are not already in commercial use. To ensure multicultural

4. E. Lupton, Mixing Messages. Graphic Design in Contemporary Culture (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 86–88.

5. H. Steiner and K. Haas, Cross-cultural Design: Communicating in the Global Marketplace (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995), vii.

legibility, cross-cultural identities that simultaneously maintain and transcend cultural traditions increasingly have been developed. According to Steiner and Haas,[5] these identities "weave and transmute the strands of two contrasting traditions into a statement that is neither and both." In this process, culturally specific elements of iconography, typography, symbolism, and style are mixed, melded, and transformed by means of quotation, mimicry, and appropriation.

It is this strategy of cultural synthesis or hybridization that essentially underpins the articulation of an indigenous expression in South Africa. The aesthetics of "cultural mixing" perhaps are best exemplified by the local magazine i-jusi,[6] an open and experimental design platform first published in 1995. The magazine allows designers an opportunity to contribute to "an African stew"[7] by mixing and appropriating existing visual elements and expressions from different sources within the South African cultural matrix. The refinement of the experimental approaches adopted in i-jusi, and the crafting of a South African graphic idiom to meet specific communication and business objectives, mark the attitude and design strategies of a growing number of South African designers. The portfolios of design groups TinTemple and Orange Juice Design[8] from the mid- to late-1990s serve as two good examples of the above-mentioned attitude and design strategy. The portfolios show that even annual reports, usually regarded as one of the most conventional of corporate documents, demonstrate South African graphic design's direct engagement with, and visual reconciliation of, history, localities, indigenous cultures, and urban vernacular expressions. For instance, the 1993 Moolla annual report, designed by Orange Juice Design, incorporates (juxtaposes and melds) contemporary and historical images, ethnic patterning, ghosted background images of African artifacts, and an over-varnish that subtly presents African icons. A natural African environment is conveyed by muted colors, soft photographic treatment, and paper textures.[9] The 1997 Khula Enterprise annual report, from the TinTemple studio, contextualizes a standard approach to typography and layout by means of vernacular images and naive street communication. The cover of the 1998 Khula report seamlessly integrates bold colors, ethnic pattern, kudu horns, Africana[10] etchings, and contemporary images, all of which are formally and symbolically deployed as motifs throughout the report.[11]

The Delapse[12] studio, first established in 1996 and specializing in broadcast and interactive media, adopts a more radical approach to South African graphic identity and cultural hybridization. Their work shifts the focus from overt indigenous motifs and physical places to metaphysical spaces and ambient forces. The contemporary psychological landscape of Johannesburg with its "schizophrenic capacity to sustain both sympathy and an ordered urbane society and a predilection for anarchy and subversion"[13] forms the backdrop for much of their design. This polarity, according to creative director Johan van Wyk, generates a fertile space for a unique expression, and fosters an inclination for uninhibited transgression and appropriation of form and style without reverence for the specifics of origin. He suggests that urban tensions resulting from turmoil and instability, the idiosyncratic dualities of Johannesburg, and the hedonistic lifestyles indulged in particularly by the city's young inhabitants inspire a daring and provocative attitude in a new

generation of designers. Coupled to aggressive digital experimentation, this attitude acknowledges the complexity of the emerging social and political climate within a specific urban environment.

Three conspicuous attributes of a South African graphic idiom may be extracted from the design portfolios mentioned above. The first is the movement from the blatant appropriation of vernacular images characteristic of earlier South African work. This overt incorporation gradually has paved the way for a closer observation, underplayed references to indigenous color combinations, and Africa's heritage of shape and pattern; the use of regionalized visual metaphors; and oblique rather than direct allusions. The second attribute is a particular proclivity to remain connected to international design developments and trends. A seamless blending of indigenous elements and iconographies with Western aesthetics and formats has resulted in a Euro-African design amalgam. The third attribute intimates a conceptual commentary that goes beyond a visual aesthetic, and hints at the acknowledgement of a designer's dual position both within and outside of a culture. A direct engagement with an immediate environment and its vernacular manifestations, subcultures, tactile qualities, ambient forces, and lifestyles is encouraging local designers to draw on the intrinsic capacity of design to offer acute social and political observations. These above-mentioned three attributes contribute to the evolution of sophisticated and complex visual nuances in contemporary South African design that demand the forging of lateral connections and a high level of visual literacy from audiences. A sustained local rhetoric that evidences a range of possible modes of expression and recognizes a plurality and variety of design voices is emerging, rather than a singular and uniform identity, an idea that seemed initially to guide design thinking and production.

Commentary relating to an indigenous idiom generally is underpinned by celebratory attitudes and assumptions of progressive integration and unification. It largely is driven by two impulses, namely the subjective domain of the designer and the competitive global context. Conference papers and published reviews tend to focus on creative innovation, personal inspiration, and showcasing design outcomes. Indigenous sources are traced, charted, and categorized, often without the benefit of any analytical perspective or much additional information. The urgency of strategically positioning South African design in the global arena is consistently reiterated, thus underscoring design's economic dimension. The importance of a differentiating visual aesthetic and the value of design skills honed in a complex multicultural commercial setting continue to be espoused by prominent members of the design and communications industries.

On the whole, a great deal of discussion appears to be marked by an attraction to surface appearance and attention to formal qualities. Currently, very little explanatory and/or critical analysis has attempted to comprehensively place local developments within frameworks that adopt complex, multifaceted, or contrarian views of identity. For instance, few designers question whether the prevalent dialectic of the international and local might signify that South African design continues to be determined by imported design models and thinking. Topics such as the semiotic and semantic capacity of a forum like i-jusi, or recent developments in terms of the unfolding of content themes that touch on controversial political and

6. Published independently by designer Garth Walker of Orange Juice Design, the magazine is widely distributed throughout the design industry and the design education field. It has garnered international interest, and continues to play a significant role in the South African design arena. Roughly translated, the title is the Zulu word for "juice."

7. The origin of the term and design concept "African stew" is credited to Kenyan academic and designer Odoch Pido, and its popular use and promotion in South Africa to designer Garth Walker. See M. Sauthoff, "Portfolio of South African Designers: Garth Walker," Image & Text 5 (1995): 8–11.

8. TinTemple was established in 1996 by the young designers Carl Lamprecht, Daniel Matthews, and David Holland, who proclaimed a commitment to tap into the history, culture, and vernacular expressions of Johannesburg. Orange Juice Design was established in Durban by designer Garth Walker in 1995. One of its founding objectives was to take Afrocentric design into world markets.

9. M. Sauthoff, "Portfolio of South African designers: Garth Walker," Image & Text 5 (1995): 8–11.

10. Africana is the term used for books, pictures, objects d'art, and diverse rarities of South African provenance or interest.

11. M. Sauthoff, "Portfolio of South African Designers: TinTemple," Image & Text 8 (1998): 9–14.

12. Based in Johannesburg, Delapse has been the recipient of numerous national and international awards.

13. J. Van Wyk, "Place of Gold," Design Indaba Magazine 5 (2001): 60–63. See also Bladerunner Aesthetics: Order, Disorder, and the South African Graphic Image (Unpublished paper presented by Van Wyk at the 2001 Icograda Congress in Johannesburg).

14. Themes explored in recent editions have taken a more critical stance, and deal with aspects of crime, urban violence, religious beliefs, pornography, and immigration.

15. South Africa has eleven official languages.

16. Designer Zhukof (Steiner & Haas, Cross-Cultural Design: 204–211) provides some relevant insights in this regard in his discussion of designing for the United Nations. Here, the conceptual foundation of the organization as equality of peoples and nations is of paramount influence, and demands the fair and

social issues,[14] have yet to elicit serious consideration. Innovative practices in the magazine have tended to be interpreted as a pragmatic or experimental redirection of formal design production.

Aspects of South African graphic language and its relation to change, more specifically the extent to which fundamental social change actually is supported and/or reflected, have commanded even less attention. For instance, the democratization of the language policy,[15] and how this should be visually articulated, holds stylistic and symbolic implications with regard to the presentation of indigenous language design applications. These appear not to have garnered acknowledgement from the design community.[16] The graphic devices and styles of the liberation movements, their connotations of social transition, and their integration into current political and national symbology as signals indicative of fundamental change have yet to be granted serious recognition and comment. Observations and reviews of the evolution of a distinctive South African graphic idiom seldom note that it blatantly evidences many salient characteristics of postmodern design or critically comment on its links with post- and neo-colonial impulses. Discussions of identity in graphic design remain fairly unproblematized, one-sided, and unconnected to wider discourses.

Broader Visions of Identity

A growing number of prominent scholars and intellectuals agree that identity is one of the major socio-political issues of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This implies that professional and academic disciplines increasingly must possess and provide an adequate insight into, and an understanding of, individual, group, national, and global identities. If graphic design is to make a meaningful contribution to ideas of identity in this country, a more penetrating, extensive, and considered examination of the multidimensional nature of identity, and how ideas of identity are registered and interpreted in visual imagery, is demanded. Designers must, of necessity, develop a critical framework that allows them not only to address the designed object, but also the sites and circumstances of its production and use.

An inherent duality in the production and interpretation of contemporary graphic design is neatly encapsulated by Jobling and Crowley.[17] They contend that contemporary design is essentially marked by a visual language of appropriation, parody, pastiche, and the contextual revalorization of graphic forms coupled to greater subjectivity and individuality in the use of accepted design conventions. All of this clearly signals a change in societal values. Jobling and Crowley suggest, however, a divide in interpretations of the nature and identity of the society represented. For some commentators, contemporary design mirrors a new attitude that encourages a "knowing" and exploring spectatorship, a celebration of diversity, and a progressive recognition of pluralism. In essence, this is a recognition of different and individual racial, social, and gender identities and nonconformities, and an acceptance of the presence of proactive viewers who are willing and able to extract and construct their own

17. P. Jobling and D. Crowley, Graphic Design: Reproduction and Representation Since 1800 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) 271–288.

meanings for their own purposes. Alternatively, design is perceived to represent a wholehearted capitulation to the forces of consumerism that deaden differences by converting them into commodities. This propensity, the reliance on intertextuality and the recycling of ideas, images, and symbolism have led to definitions of "a kind of promiscuous and apolitical culture," one in which there is no position "from which to speak that is in advance, or even outside the general position."[18] Sadar[19] adopts a more radical stance that equates current consumer culture with the blatant exploitation of non-Western cultures and the continuation of Eurocentric colonial suppression.

The above formulations pinpoint some of the dilemmas contained in post- and neo-colonial situations such as South Africa that have to contend with mainstream cultural globalization and consumerism, the development of decolonized cultural sensibilities, and the recognition of internally colonized groups. Issues that have been stressed in many post-colonial contexts have, as yet, to receive serious consideration by South African graphic design. These include the ethics and politics of cultural appropriation, representations of previously marginalized groups, the recuperation of indigenous histories, tracking the work of unrecognized and/or exiled professionals, and acknowledging the inherent tensions in the conceptual positioning of South African design relative to African and firstworld contexts.

South African graphic design freely and generously uses and draws from its rich cultural and ethnic mix. The indiscriminate appropriation of imagery often results in cultural forms, indigenous creative expressions, and visual traditions being symbolically devalued, commodified, and invested with alien meanings. Many traditional items and visual elements are legally unprotected and available for incorporation into the work of professional designers. Cultural groups, particularly developing rural communities and those with little economic or political leverage, generally have no control over the trivialization of indigenous forms or the revalorization of historically charged symbols for mainstream consumption. The ethics and politics of cultural appropriation are given perfunctory mention in South African graphic design circles. Questions of who holds the right to cultural material, its appropriation and dissemination, and which evaluative frameworks legitimately apply seldom are broached.

The recuperation of African writing systems, and symbolic graphics of African origin and how they may contribute to design, have not received the type of consideration comparable, for instance, to studies such as those of Mafundikwa,[20] a Zimbabwean designer. Personal design experiences and interpretations of the problems of integration, domination, transformation, and indigenous expression posed by the Western/African dichotomies have yet to be granted the type of exposure in South Africa comparable to those documented and articulated by, for example, black Kenyan designer Pido.[21] Nor has South African graphic design attempted to understand its conceptual positioning relative to the West through in-depth explorations and considerations that invoke a center-periphery model in reviews of design, similar to those, for instance, of Asia[22] and the Latino community of the United States.[23]

Rather, it has been cultural theorists, and art historians in particular, who have considered South African material culture in terms of post- and neo-colonial studies, and identified the duality

18. Ibid., 298 and 297.

19. Z. Sadar, "Do Not Adjust Your Mind. Postmodernism, Reality, and the Other," Futures 25:8 (1993): 877–893.

20. S. Mafundikwa, Afrikan Alphabets (Unpublished paper presented at the 2001 Icograda Congress in Johannesburg). See also E. Gunn, "Ziva" Upper & Lower Case. The International Journal of Graphic Design and Digital Media 25:3 (1998): 7–11, 41.

21. J. P. O. Pido, "Made in Africa. A Designer's View of East Africa," Design Review 15:4 (1995): 30–35.

22. R. Ghose, "Design, Development, Culture, and Cultural Legacies in Asia" in The Idea of Design. A Design Issues Reader, V. Margolin and R. Buchanan, eds. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

23. R. A. Greeley, "Richard Duardo's Aztlan Poster: Interrogating Cultural Hegemony in Graphic Design," Design Issues 14:1 (1998): 21–34.

and dilemmas of continuity and change implicit within the broad domain of design. These interpretations sometimes have considered aspects of graphic design, but they have, to a larger degree, relied on semiotic readings of contemporary culture and mediated communications. Typical sites for analysis include advertising, cartoons and comic books, and shopping and entertainment environments. Although graphic design has remained an incidental consideration rather than a focus of attention, its implication in a number of themes periodically come under review. These reviews offer critiques of the visual representations of stereotypical gender, racial, and national identities, and provide revelations of the continuation of specific historical and colonial visions of Africa, the extension of cultural imperialism, and the entrenching of capitalist hegemony. Alternative interpretations of media images highlight the potential of design to contribute to nation building by upholding and promoting the ideals of democracy, to provide dissident voices within the new dispensation, and to integrate once-separated cultural identities through the creation of better multicultural communications.[24]

On the other hand, the growing significance of visual identity in the marketing mix has encouraged prominent South African designers and consultancies to initiate a dialogue in the professional domain that seeks to demonstrate how concepts of identity can contribute to both long-term strategic and immediate business and marketing objectives. Closer scrutiny of visual identity and image management by local designers has resulted from corporate restructuring and (re)positioning,[25] but also because of a greater recognition of the importance of branding (group, service, product and region/country/nation) in competitive differentiation. Not only have new design services and applications been devised by local consultancies, but designers also increasingly and actively explicate design/visual dimensions, processes, and conceptual approaches to visual branding. Aspects such as the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of brand value have been related to color, typographic configurations, visual impact, stylistic devices, and visual continuity.[26] In a similar vein, the expanding presence of digital technology has stimulated designers to indicate the specific importance of visual identity in interactive advertising and e-commerce and its contribution to facilitating accessibility, developing a cohesive voice for the brand, and supporting the strategic integration of media.

The manifested presence of visual identity in the South African public environment indicates an acceptance of its value. Less clearly articulated or promoted in the professional arena is how successful designers have been in facilitating the integration of visual identity programs and precepts into the systems and culture of client organizations in terms of both operational/functional and reception/acceptance dimensions, and as a means to promote internal cohesion and corporate values.[27] Nor is it apparent to what extent design has assumed responsibility for clarifying and fostering an understanding of the pervasive quality of visual identity and the extended articulation of the core values it should embody in all organizational applications. For instance, the importance of symbolic coherence and the need for credible and consistent visual argumentation/reasoning goes beyond the provision/application of visual standards, to visual interpretation, sustained visual rhetoric, and an

24. Interpretations that typically highlight these issues are B. Buntman, "Selling with the San: Representations of Bushmen People and Artefacts," Image & Text 4 (1994): 12–16; T. Du Plooy, "Madam and Eve: A Change Agent in the New South Africa," Image & Text 9 (1994): 19–26. M. Erasmus, "Lion, Camel, Man" Image & Text 6 (1996): 25–31; J. Van Eeden. "Mickey's African Adventure" Image & Text 5 (1995): 3–7; J. Van Eeden, "Malling, a Postmodern Landscape," Image & Text 8 (1998): 38–42; R. Van Niekerk, "Humour at the Horingboom Oasis," Image & Text 8 (1998): 4–8; and C. Wolfaart, "Of Mice and (Wo)men: Disneyland and the Cultural Aesthetics of Entertainment in the New South Africa," Image & Text 7 (1997): 10–14.

25. Kieser (AdFocus, Supplement to the Financial Mail, 1999:162) suggests that corporate image and identity design in South Africa has followed three movements over the last two decades: disinvestment, privatization, and globalization.

26. See K. Schilperoort, J. Sampson, and L. Selsnick on design and branding in the Encyclopaedia of Brands and Branding in South Africa (Johannesburg: Affinity Advertising and Publishing, 1998). See also the unpublished paper "The Use of Kinetic Design to Leverage a Brand Identity," presented by K. Schilperoort at the seminar Design and Technology: Britain and South Africa, Partners in Opportunity. Also the unpublished paper, "Design as a Strategic Asset: Exploring the Link Between Design and Economic Success" presented by J. Lange at the same seminar. See also J. Lange, "A Front Runner in Employer Branding" in The Encyclopaedia of Brands and Branding in South Africa (1999).

27. Restructuring, multicultural, and multiethnic employee compositions have accentuated the importance of corporate culture as a management asset: "... that stands on a par with labour, material, capital, and information." (A. Micklethwait and A. Wooldridge, The Witch Doctors: What the Management Gurus Are Saying, Why It Matters and How to Make Sense of It (London: Mandarin, 1997), 262.

ongoing manifested visual articulation of values. The question that arises is how well has design been considered as a means to support management imperatives in the internal environments of South African organizations, from both theoretical and practical perspectives?

Organizational Imperatives

In a consolidation and review of Western management theory, Micklethwait and Wooldridge[28] suggest that the three themes that have dominated contemporary management thinking are the changing structure of organizations, globalization, and the nature of work. These have generated four streams of debate. The first stream relates to assumptions of the size, strength and structure of organizations. The second and third are the use and management of knowledge and information; and corporate leadership, strategies, and accountability. The final stream deals with the impact of change on the world of work and workers, namely where do people work, whom do they work for, and what do they do. These observations are echoed in a more specific and South African context by the management view of strategic issues, polled consecutively from 1996 to 1999 (albeit with varying priorities). Identified issues are growth opportunities, global competitiveness, improving skills, human resource issues, vision, social stability, transformation, state legislation, information technology, affirmative action, and product development.[29]

Local scenario planners[30] concur, suggesting in a more compact manner that the values shaping the South African business environment are information and information technology; global cultures, but national identities; pluralism; ethics, accountability, and transparency; and social responsibility. They also suggest[31] that sustainable development in this country lies in the interrelationship of economic growth, environmental issues, and the quality of human life. The recent King Report on Corporate Governance[32] strongly reinforces this sentiment by stressing that the achievement of balanced economic, social, and environmental performance (the triple bottom line) is fundamental to contemporary enterprises. Corporate organizations thus are directly implicated in issues that traditionally were considered to be outside their accepted domains and boundaries. For instance, basic information, education, and promoting lifestyle changes related to identified areas and topics (health, literacy, energy, and water) to all sectors of the organization and society have been placed within the ambit of corporate concerns.

Designers are obliged to consider how graphic design might be assigned to support strategic and operational business objectives, to confront social issues in an organization's macro and micro environments, and to identify conceptual frameworks that could guide desirable roles for design. A concept that presents possible sites for appropriate graphic design contributions is a humanistic management paradigm.[33] This paradigm suggests that an organization is continually challenged to consider, in a holistic sense, how it represents itself and how it is required to make itself transparent in ways that assist both empirical and cognitive orientation and interaction within the organization. It must seek ways to support individual

28. Ibid.

29. Sunday Times/Business Times,"Strategic Issues for the Next Four Years" (April 18, 1999).

30. C. Sunter, The High Road: Where Are We Now? (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau Tafelberg, 1996).

31. B. Huntley, R. Siegfried and C. Sunter, South African Environments into the 21st Century (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau Tafelberg, 1989).

32. Released in 2002, this is the second report on corporate governance compiled under the chairmanship of advocate Mervyn King.

33. G. Puth, The Communicating Manager (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik, 1994) presents historical trajectories in the development of a humanistic management paradigm, describes its salient characteristics, and details implications and principles for management communications.

development, facilitate the operational tasks of employees, and acknowledge "other" value systems.

The diversity of operational tasks individuals are required to perform within South African organizations has been amplified by decentralization and the devolution of functions and responsibilities/accountability, owing essentially to two main factors: digital technology and business process reengineering. Both cut across all functions and departments, generating a multiplicity of communications options. These tendencies have contributed to the volume of information in internal circulation and served to democratize design functions. Everyone potentially is a designer, brand manager, strategist, and media communicator, and by implication should be able to understand and apply visual and design principles in the effective and efficient transmission of ideas and information.[34] This must include the ability to not only assist the flow and cognitive accessibility of information in the internal environment, but also to ensure the maintenance of visual continuity and a cohesive voice for the organization. Design-specific understanding such as, for instance, appropriate visual strategies and audience specific graphic techniques, as well as participative and collaborative design processes, thus are essential requirements for effective internal communication. Designers are called on to cultivate this insight through an informative interfacing with all levels of a client organization.

Although the value of an informative interface has been emphasized by South African designers, there is little documented evidence to indicate whether, or to what extent, appropriate initiatives have been adopted or implemented. Personal observation suggests that promotional material such as corporate profiles, newsletters distributed to clients, and interpersonal contact between design companies and clients sometimes fulfill an educational function. Individual designers have indicated a commitment to an educative role for themselves in a number of areas. Once again, there is little documentation describing the content, methods, or success of such efforts. Oosthuizen[35] intimates that it is not common practice in South Africa to inform and align all levels of the organization behind communication strategies. In considering the overall approach used by South African designers in the provision of design services and design recommendations, Temple[36] suggests that designers are unable to explain their conceptual methodologies or articulate their role as communicators. Other commentators propose that a perceived inability to present design rationales does not engender confidence in client organizations and that this often inhibits design acceptance and use. Furthermore, design credibility is questioned because of a poor research basis and a lack of relevant data. This deficit is regarded as being particularly problematic, since it has resulted in the superficial understanding of social and development issues pertinent to South Africa.[37]

According to the World Bank, more than fifty percent of South Africa's population (about twenty-two million) live in "third world" conditions, and about thirteen percent can be categorized as firstworld in terms of education and income.[38] Social inequality, multiethnic employee profiles, and diverse levels of employee literacy are key challenges facing organizations. An essential aspect of equity in a working environment must be creating access to an in-

formation culture for segments of an organization that are routinely excluded from it. Graphic design inherently offers the means to decipher intricate information, simplify processes, and construct frameworks that lead to understanding in a manner compatible with individual circumstances of use. Again, there is little documented information to indicate whether, or to what extent, South African graphic design attempts to make the working environment "visible" to all of an organization's employees.

Anceshi[39] suggests that the concept of "visibility" defines the essence of both what the designer does and the discipline of graphic design itself. He suggests that we "...live in an optical and visual world, but certainly not a visible one."[40] Thus, while the general tendency is to emphasize the importance of the visual in daily life and future scenarios, an oppositional view throws "a civilization of blindness" into relief. This situation may be characterized by an excess of visual stimulation; a lack of symbolic order; and concealed information. Concealed information within an organization may be by intent, for instance, a competitive culture of secrecy, or by inadvertently blocking access to information. Poor or inappropriate cognitive ordering of information; obtrusive and obstructive organizational frameworks; and the factual complexity produced by an organization's activities and structures frequently limit accessibility. Anceschi proposes that, in a world of declining visibility, the designer's role is not one of art and visual problem-solving only. Design competencies must include that of critical consultant able to reveal broader and complex problems, and to take up the position of users in negotiations with managements.

These matters relate not only to way-finding systems or how policies, procedures, and processes are rendered more transparent in the daily life of employees, but also to how specific issues are dealt with. For instance, transformation is a critical and multidimensional concept in South African organizations. Graphic design is intimately connected to ideas of transformation in its thinking, articulation, and final form. Lange[41] identifies some ways in which design may assist organizational transformation in South Africa. These deserve greater exploration and clarification. Another critical issue in South African organizations is the need for an increasing sensitivity to the incorporation of indigenous value systems into management thinking. An example is the current debate concerning the practical application and implications of Western management techniques drawing on the deep-rooted Ubuntu principles of African culture.[42] The Ubuntu tradition is based on ideas of participation, dialogue, cooperation, and the human spirit. Although not yet widely accepted as a viable option for dealing with complex dilemmas in the field of business, design commentary has made perfunctory mention of the argumentation surrounding this topic,[43] but has not pursued design implications in any great depth.

The conditions enunciated above advocate a more inclusive, knowledge-based form of design professionalism aimed at combating the interpretation of clients' needs in terms of one's own disciplinary strengths. Designers need to move away from the focus on very narrow portions of organizations, and to develop a comprehensive understanding of the workplace and how it is changing. This re-

34. Lam-Po-Tang illustrates how extensively the electronic media and electronic commerce channels intersect with internal departments and functions in an organization, compared to more traditional design media. (A. Lam-Po-Tang, "Managing a Design Association" (Unpublished paper from the conference Viewpoints in Time: Sydney Design 99).

35. T. Oosthuizen, "Communications: A Commodity Business?" Image & Text 6 (1996): 14–17.

36. M. A. Temple, Visual Aspects in Integrated Marketing Communications (Unpublished MBA dissertation. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1997).

37. These issues have received ongoing commentary. See R. Harber, "Making Ideas Affordable and Comprehensible," Design Education for Developing Countries (Pretoria: Design Institute, 1993); A. Kalsi, "Mass Production for Production by the Masses" in Design Education for Small Business Development (Pretoria: Design Institute, 1995); J. Lange, "Strategic Design in a Transforming Communications Ecology" Image & Text 8 (1996): 33–37. M. Southwell, "Magic by Design: Technology Transformed," Image & Text 7 (1997): 3–9; J. Van Eeden, unpublished summary of proceedings from the seminar Postgraduate Studies in Design held at the University of Pretoria, 1994; and K. Van Niekerk, "A Conspiracy of Mediocrity," Image & Text 2 (1993): 33–36.

38. G. Addison, The Hidden Edge: South Africa's Quest for Innovation (Johannesburg: Engineering Association, 2000).

39. G. Anceschi, "Visibility in Progress," Design Issues 12:3 (1996): 3–13.

40. Ibid., 5.

41. J. Lange, "Strategic Design in a Transforming Communications Ecology," Image & Text 6 (1996): 8–13.

42. E. D. Prinsloo " Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management" in Philosophy from Africa: A Text with Readings, P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux, eds. (Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishing, 1998).

43. R. Van Zyl and M. D. Sauthoff, "Buchanan's Matrix: A Framework for Strategic Alignment (unpublished paper presented at the 2001 Design Education Forum conference held in Johannesburg).

quires a practical consideration of discipline and role convergence, and the definition of strategies that acknowledge both strong design specialist expertise and design generalists who have the intellectual range to relate that expertise to a broad range of activity.

Realignment and New Connections

Ideas of a more inclusive form of practice suggest that design consultancies must see their interaction with corporate organizations in terms of understanding, co-operation, and negotiation regarding graphic design as a complex and diverse practice. Designers need to interact with client organizations across a broad spectrum. This may range from a championing interface that advocates, promotes, clarifies, and informs; through all the mediation and explanation demanded by design projects; to a counseling interface that cultivates a climate of acceptance and understanding of design, its use and application in both general and specific ways. The best alignment of design to the characteristics and requirements of the organization are of primary consideration. This could include, for instance, the transfer of inherent designing skills such as design analysis and interpretation, visual presentation, graphic facilitation, strategic visioning and the promotion of a better appreciation of the sociocultural dimensions of design and how these can be of value within organizations. A holistic vision of design is presupposed, echoing the growing emphasis in the literature of design on aspects including total design environments, strategically integrated systems, scenario planning, and fourth-order design.[44]

The traditional perception of graphic design in this country has tended to favor the compartmentalization of design into inwardly focused segments that offer defined design services based on core competencies. Most corporate organizations in South Africa commission graphic design projects on an ad hoc basis. This selective, project-based use, rather than a culture or understanding of design as an organizational resource, leads to a fragmented rather than an integrated, holistic or synergistic use of design. An impetus to broaden the scope of design services offered by South African practitioners may be inferred from the current debate and initiatives in the practicing arena regarding alternative modes of practice. For instance, multidisciplinary professional configurations, cooperatives and alliances, and strategic and integrated approaches that in- or outsource design expertise in accordance with dictates appropriate to devising an optimal solution to clients' projects, are variously being implemented.[45]

A more inclusive vision of design also is being presented on platforms that expose the multidisciplinary scope of design to business audiences. This has been the aim of a number of conferences during the last few years.[46] Various design associations and industry publications have launched both promotional and explanatory initiatives in attempts to broaden understanding of design.[47] The general thrust of these ventures is to entrench the professional status of design, clarify the nature and procedures of interactions with clients, promote ideas of accountability as integral aspects of design

practice, and orient clients towards changes in media, services and design techniques. Efforts primarily are targeted at the realization of business objectives rather than indications of social and cultural involvement or the systematic integration of design into client organizations.

Other tracks that attempt to define a more encompassing and inclusive vision of design are being activated, but outside the direct intersection with corporate organizations. A good example is the recent Interdesign 99 Water initiative[48] that demonstrates the viability of cooperative, multidisciplinary design exploration in the search for solutions to critical social problems. It typifies design experimentation in thinktank and scenario situations that foster a broad vision, innovation, connectivity, and inter- and cross-disciplinary participation centered around identified themes and alternative solutions to specified problems. This is an option that increasingly should be considered as a means to understand and deal with the complexity and scale inherent in the contemporary South African environment.

Another endeavor to cultivate a broader vision of design that deserves mention is the promotion of postgraduate studies, theory, and research in design education. Over the last decade, three trajectories may be discerned in bids to confront research and theory in local design education. The first examines the nature of design research in a broad sense: for instance, the scientific/academic acceptance and status of design, the difference between design methodology and research methodology, and the distinction and categorization of types of research in design.[49] The second considers the relevance of works of practice as legitimate equivalencies to research outputs. The mode of theoretical support that should accompany design outputs and dealing with entrenched academic conventions are ongoing questions.[50] The third trajectory deals with nurturing a culture of design research in terms of standards, content, and the dissemination of results.[51]

These developments have introduced a measure of critical reflection and debate into design, but they also have served to highlight a number of difficulties. There is an extreme lack of insight and expertise (in graphic design and other design disciplines) in relation to theoretical and methodological aspects that enable coherent and sustained research. Few verified empirical data on the nature and structure of the graphic design industry and local circumstances are available. As a mode of practice, graphic design has not been subjected to much objective description or critical attention. Even a popular graphic design critique, which would encourage general understanding and informed assessment of design, is almost nonexistent. While a degree of analytical scrutiny is routinely given to art or films in the popular media, graphic design is seldom submitted
to critical review. Very little concentration has been expended on exploring the indigenous dimensions of graphic design and establishing a local discourse. For instance, the literature on South African architecture that reflects, and reflects upon, the rich diversity of style, influences, and imperatives that have emerged in three centuries of interaction between indigenous factors and broader international impulses, cannot be remotely matched by considerations of graphic design in South Africa.

44. L. Keeley, "The Strategic Palette," Communication Arts 34:2 (1992):134–139; L. Keeley, "Transform: Reinventing Industries Through Strategic Design Planning" in The New Business of Design: Papers from the International Design Conference in Aspen (New York: Allworth Press, 1996); C.T. Mitchell, New Thinking in Design: Conversations on Theory and Practice (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1996). A. A. Moles, "The Legibility of the World: A Project for Graphic Design" in Design Discourse: History, Theory, Criticism, V. Margolin, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); R. Buchanan, "Branzi's Dilemma: Design in Contemporary Culture," Design Issues 14:1 (1998): 3–20. And T. Golsby-Smith, "Fourth Order Design: A Practical Perspective" Design Issues 12:1 (1996): 5–25.

45. AdFocus. Supplement to the Financial Mail (May 21, 1999).

46. Typical examples are Design: 2000 and Beyond held in Pretoria in 1997, and Design and Technology: Britian and South Africa Partners in Opportunity held in Johannesburg in 1998.

47. Design South Africa (DSA), a professional design association, has launched numerous initiatives targeted variously at government, education, professional practitioners, and the buyers of design services.

48. Fresh, Bulletin of Design South Africa Interdesign '99 Africa 2 (1999): 1, 4.

49. See J. Butler-Adam, "The Dilemma of the Educator of Creative Disciplines and Formal Research" in The Need for Research Development in Design (Pretoria: Design Institute, 1992). Also see M. Sauthoff and J. Lange, "Developing a Culture of Research" (Information Design Development in Design (Pretoria: Design Institute, 1992).

50. This is a longstanding debate. Critical points are encapsulated by J. Fourie in the unpublished paper "The Challenge Pertaining to an Accountable System for the Recognition of Visual and Performing Arts Research in South Africa." This paper was read at the Workshop on Arts Research Subsidy Funding for Artefacts and Other Research Outputs at Technikons and Universities held in Pretoria, 1999.

51. In this regard, Image & Text, the only academic design journal in South Africa, has consistently attempted to foster a critical attitude toward design and to develop local design writing and readership. The journal was first published by the University of Pretoria in 1992.

Conclusion and Final Remarks

Graphic design in the post-apartheid era has developed into a sophisticated practice and industry that projects itself as capable of delivering international standards of design and servicing large corporate clients. A unique graphic idiom that acknowledges local circumstances gradually is emerging. Professional design activities and status are being systematically promoted and entrenched, and there currently appears to be a growing recognition and exploration of graphic design as a resource and tool in certain well-defined marketing areas. While acknowledging these positive directions, this article suggests that graphic design neglects to stimulate an understanding of its wider socio-cultural role or to adequately address issues related to the totality of its national environment and culture. The current confluence, dichotomies and interaction of first/third world and Africa/West have been neither satisfactorily confronted nor properly conceptualized by South African graphic design.

Considerations of identity seem to indicate that design practice and commentary continue to align themselves with and aspire to the predominant Western and entrepreneurial design paradigm, with its emphasis on competitive differentiation and consumption. Concomitantly creative production and deliberations tend to focus on the values of visual impact, novelty, entertainment, assertiveness in image creation, fluidity, and the continuous revalorization of graphic forms. Very little thought has been expended on locating graphic design within the broader parameters and problematics of visual integration, domination, transformation, and indigenous expression. Insufficient attention has been directed to establishing a local discourse that allows for a deeper engagement with social context, or interrogates cultural meaning or monitors mainstream applications in relation to popular reception. Fundamental and penetrating considerations of the articulation of a South African graphic language as a search for values, understanding, and identity within the broader contexts of change in South Africa only now are beginning to emerge.

In looking at graphic design's intersection with corporate organizations, this article speculatively supports a perception that design appears to focus primarily on external constituencies, and does not devote suitable thoughtfulness to internal constituencies and the integration of design into the functional and cultural environments of client organizations. The broad thrust of interaction with client organizations seems to be on the expansionistic role of design and on clarifying its professional status. This article hints at a reconciliation (albeit simplistically) of design as a humanistic endeavor situated within the particular circumstances of an organization, and as a response to the impact of both information technology and contemporary management processes. This attitude recognizes the value of collaborative initiatives and the integration of many kinds of knowledge. It honors progressive transformation, the acknowledgement of traditional differences, explanation and mutual understanding, and the rational analysis of economic, social, cultural, and individual needs. The article supports a view of an extended and more encompassing role for graphic design that presupposes the adoption of a holistic understanding of design, and reinforces the importance of designers having a sound theoretical basis from which to practice. This includes the ability to elucidate conceptual methodologies, provide an informed appraisal of design, and place the optimal utilization of design within an increasingly complex environment.

If South African graphic design truly wishes to make a significant contribution to the achievement of sustainable economic and social development in this country, a number of points become evident. South African designers must move from a position that privileges creative intuition, the subjective domain, self-development, and tacit knowledge to the adoption of a multifaceted confrontation and wider engagement with historical and contemporary circumstances relating to design in this country. This movement must take design beyond "showing" and persuasion to fundamental explanations that comprehensively expose the semantics of design, and clarify its contributions to contexts of culture and use. A nascent design discourse is introducing a measure of objective description, critical assessment, and reflection, although this currently is fragmented, uneven, and eclectic. There is an urgent need to establish a systematic basis and accumulate a body of knowledge that will aid the integration of relevant aspects of the discourse into the practicing arena. Clearly, the above points indicate a model that suggests that it is essential for graphic design education and practice in South Africa to adopt multiple and defensible viewpoints, follow their implications in the broadest possible way, and permit these considerations to influence design development in this country.

Violent Compassions: Humanitarian Design and the Politics of Borders

Mahmoud Keshavarz

Through the past five years, and specifically since the spring and summer of 2015 referred to by the Western media as "the refugee crisis," a flood of new humanitarian design competitions, projects, think tanks, exhibitions, panels, and conferences have addressed "refugeehood" as a timely subject for design. From Silicon Valley start-ups and other entrepreneurial efforts to academic initiatives, designers and design researchers have mobilized their skills, knowledge, and creativity to address the urgent issue of displaced individuals and communities. Some of these projects, such as product and interaction design solutions, adopt a technocratic, universal approach; meanwhile, others involve social design initiatives that purport to take a more collaborative and long-term approach. Both of these types of projects, although different in method and outcomes tend to be understood as caring for the other under the banner of "making a difference" and "turning crisis into an opportunity." As a result, they are frequently acknowledged by professionals, entrepreneurs, citizens, and academics to be possible interventions when political projects fail or are simply ignored. Most of these initiatives come from a sense of emergency—a sense of crisis that "something must be done" to address the suffering of human beings on the move. They also are derived from a sense of compassion for "the other" in the name of universal humanity—a sense of caring for someone who is in a relatively (more) vulnerable condition.

Based on the two notions of "crisis" and "compassion," this article outlines and problematizes the humanitarian perspective in design. By contextualizing different historical and contemporary humanitarian design examples in an analysis of current European border politics, the article warns against the pitfalls of this increasing engagement of design practices with refugees and vulnerable communities on the move. I critique how designing, in the aftermath of the spring and summer of 2015, has been mobilized without due consideration of the types of politics it produces and the types of politics it eventually ignores. In doing so, this article does not call for a better humanitarian design practice; rather, it questions humanitarian design practice as a whole and challenges the foundations, logics, and politics upon which humanitarian design

appears and expands. Although I do not offer guidelines for a design practice in this article, I nonetheless call for greater sensitivity from designers and design researchers in the Global North. Those who want to address issues related to migrants and refugees need to

develop a better understanding of the politics of the current border regime that produces and regulates refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants worldwide. It further demands that instead of using their epistemic skill of "problemsolving," designers should align with the politics of justice demanded by refugees and rethink their practice in solidarity with such politics.

Unsettling Crisis

One reason that so many in the field of design have given attention to refugees could be the scale of migratory movements and their deadly consequences, communicated through the term "crisis." The urgency of a growing population of displaced and criminalized individuals—categorized varyingly as refugees in UNHCR camps, asylum seekers in migration office queues or other waiting zones, or undocumented migrants living with the constant fear of detention and deportation—is further heightened by the rise of neo-Nazi and fascist political parties, with either explicit or implicit xenophobic and racist policies. This current situation cannot be denied; however, differentiating between urgency and emergency is important.

In policies and media narratives concerning migration, refugees, and the asylum system, emergency is a desirable word; the term is used liberally to frame the ways we are told to think about the growing numbers of nationally and internationally displaced individuals and communities. The constant use of the term "crisis" in the context of migration represents an abstraction of particular events by a generic logic, making crisis a term that seems self-explanatory.[1] However, "crisis" is not simply explanatory or descriptive; the term itself constructs that particular condition.

Crisis makes the event described an exception to an otherwise peaceful order. For instance, the deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea in summer 2015 frequently has been called the "Mediterranean Crisis." According to statistics, however, the first deaths of a similar kind in the Mediterranean were reported in 1991 in Gibraltar—a few months after the Schengen agreement was completed with a convention toward a common visa policy.[2] The European Union (EU), as a strategic project, redesigned Europe into a continent without internal borders. This redesigning could not be accomplished without installing and developing a more extensive and technologically complex border apparatus around and outside of Europe.[3] Since the 1990s, Frontex, the European border management agency, has grown by a massive scale, both administratively and technologically; it has incorporated drones and high tech surveillance systems, and sound and smell detectors as part of a smart border initiative are imminently looming on the horizon.

In addition, on a larger scale—and as part of a long process of neo-colonization, which has formed the economic basis of the EU project[4]—many African countries have signed agreements with the EU to facilitate deportation, detention, and harsher border control. In exchange, they receive aid, which is often used to pay off debt to European banks and the International Monetary Fund.[5] Contextualizing the tragic deaths in the sea in the border politics of the past 30

years, these more recent events do not look so exceptional. Instead, they are part of a long process of constructing Europe into a fortress by externalizing its borders, redrawing its map, and re-graphing its geopolitics in a way that crossing borders for the global poor has become dangerous, deadly, and almost impossible. Calling the movement of those who seek asylum and refuge a crisis—because European borders have historically stopped, regulated, or slowed down these crossings—is not only an ahistoric perspective; it also has led to criminalization of those who claim the right to mobility and asylum, exercising their autonomy, if nothing else.

Furthermore, by calling these tragedies an emergency and rendering them exceptional, we deny the long-standing process of designing hostilities and violence against the global poor and position design as a bystander. Many scholars have shown that material practices, such as designing and technological configurations, have played vital roles in the production of immobility and have displaced populations historically. This involvement is both direct and indirect. These material practices directly shape mechanisms for the exclusion of certain populations by maintaining passport and visa regimes, technologizing and securitizing borders, and infrastructuring deportation and detention.[6] They indirectly shape global displacement by producing a world damaged by over-consumption, cheap labor, climate change, and war.[7]

When the historical and material violence of European border politics is masked and ignored through the discourse of crisis, the condition is then presented as a result of technical deficiencies in the system, which calls for more creative and innovative solutions or engagements of designers.[8] Vinnova, a Swedish funding agency that supports "innovative" and "technical" projects for a sustainable society released a call for grants in September 2015. Titled "Innovation for a more secure migration and integration of the new comers," the agency supported 16 different projects with grants, allocating 10 million Swedish Kronor. Similar funding opportunities have been announced in other European countries. In the same month, SAS Scandinavian Airlines announced a plan to increase its baggage allowance to help refugees. Travelers to the Mediterranean—the majority of whom were tourists at that time—could check in more baggage if they were taking "clothes, shoes and toiletries" for refugees.[9] As European passengers enjoyed their freedom of movement, they also were granted a sense of moral achievement by taking gifts to those whose passages were blocked by European countries, including Sweden. The airline exploited the vulnerability of refugees to attract more customers through its free baggage allowance. The hypocrisy in compassionate initiatives such as this one addressing emergency situations reveals itself in the practices of these companies outside the "emergency" context. For example, SAS has long been criticized by anti-deportation activists in Sweden for its collaboration with migration authorities in deportation of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers whose applications were rejected.

During the same period, a mobile phone app was produced that claimed it could help to pinpoint the location of boats in distress at sea. It won a humanitarian award but proved to be a fake and non-functioning app.[10] In 2013, in the aftermath of the tragic deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea—they drifted in the sea for

1. Janet Roitman, Anti-Crisis (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

2. From January 1, 1993, to May 5, 2018, the network United Against Racism has documented 34,361 deaths that occurred as a result of European border politics. These deaths have happened both inside and at the shores of Europe or as a consequence of deportation. For the full list of names, causes of death, and dates, see Death By Policy: http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ListofDeathsActual.pdf" (accessed August 30, 2018).

3. Nick Vaughan-Williams, "Borderwork Beyond Inside/Outside? Frontex, the Citizen–Detective, and the War on Terror," Space and Polity 12, no. 1 (2008): 63–79.

4. Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

5. Aino Korvensyrj, "The Valletta Process and the Westphalian Imaginary of Migration Research," Movement Journal 3, no 1 (2017): 191–204.

6. See, respectively, Mahmoud Keshavarz, The Design Politics of the Passport: Materiality, Immobility and Dissent (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Stéphane Rosière and Reece Jones, "Teichopolitics: Re-Considering Globalisation Through the Role of Walls and Fences," Geopolitics 17, no. 1 (2012): 217–34 and Ruben Andersson, "Hardwiring the Frontier? The Politics of Security Technology in Europe's 'Fight Against Illegal Migration,'" Security Dialogue 47, no.1 (2016): 22–39; Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz, The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010) and William Walters, "Aviation as Deportation Infrastructure: Airports, Planes, and Expulsion," Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (2017): 1–22.

7. Tony Fry, A New Design Philosophy: An Introduction to Defuturing (Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press, 1999); and Felicity D. Scot, Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

8. Tom Scott-Smith, "Humanitarian Neophilia: The 'Innovation Turn' and Its Implications," Third World Quarterly 37, no. 12 (2016): 2229–51.

9. Radio Sweden, "Airlines increase baggage allowance to help refugees," September 5, 2015); https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6248656 (accessed August 15, 2018).

10. Alex Hern, "Refugee Rescue App Pulled from App Store After It Is Outed as Fake" Guardian, June 21, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jun/21/refugee-rescue-i-sea-app-pulledapp-store-outed-as-fake (accessed August 15, 2018).

11. I have elsewhere discussed this project in length and the problems with the way design practice conceals the violence of European border politics in its speculation about saving refugees. See Mahmoud Keshavarz, "The Violence of Humanitarian Design" in Design Philosophy Reader, ed. Anne Marie Willis (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 120–26.

several days and their call for rescue was ignored by the Italian coast guards—an architectural firm designed a solution that proposed a line of saving buoys to be installed in the Mediterranean without paying attention to the histories of the migrant struggle at the sea.[11]

These initiatives ignore the fact that a serious engagement in the act of "saving" would require a great transnational mobilization of labor, forces, and time—not simply creating an app or a product. For example, AlarmPhone is a labor intensive initiative consisting of transnational activist networks across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. It mobilizes satellite information, open source data on sea traffics, and local solidarity networks to watch the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea 24 hours a day,assisting refugee boats in distress by sending their location to nearby ships for eventual saving. The activists not only engage in the practical act of saving but also work extensively on political campaigning efforts to promote freedom of movement and publish monthly reports on the abuse and violation of the rights of refugees and migrants by coastal guards of European and North African countries.[12]

Describing the im/mobility of certain populations using the term "crisis" conceals the discursive and material politics that actually produce these events and paves the way for "humanitarian design," which aims to "restore" the situation—often into the one preferred by those who produce the sense of crisis.

Humanitarian Design: Exception or the Norm?

As an established and well-promoted approach, humanitarian design had a precedent long before the spring and summer of 2015. It has been advocated as a way to craft technical solutions to problems primarily in the Global South, such as water access, emergency shelter, affordable housing, education, and health, by engaging a wide range of actors including professional design firms, development companies, philanthro-capitalists, universities, charities, NGOs, and residents of communities who are recipients of international aid.[13]

Humanitarian design often is moralized as a decision to save lives and "empower" individuals instead of giving services to the Global North[14] and often is uncritically assessed as "empathetic." Discussion of humanitarian design usually occurs within the context of development programs, empowerment, aid, and missionary projects.[15] However, critics have accused humanitarian design of being a practice of "new imperialism."[16] As such, Cedric Johnson argues that humanitarian designers seek to propose technical solutions to problems rooted in imperial and colonial histories, structural inequalities, labor exploitation, and the neoliberal restructuring of societies worldwide. In pursuing technical solutions, they neglect the politics and history of the conditions in which they intervene. Consequently, the global poor—as the main consumers of humanitarian goods—are constructed as design opportunities for the generosity of the elite, rather than as historical subjects with their own worldviews, skills, and political sensibilities.[17]

Humanitarian interventions have always been justified as a temporary way of addressing an "immediate" situation—as an emergency approach to saving lives and promoting the universal concept of humanity. However, anthropological studies of humanitarianism, particularly in relation to refugee camps, tell a different story: The majority of humanitarian practices become the norm and prolong the condition of precariousness and misery.[18] Although the turn from temporary to permanent is something that humanitarian and aid workers are reluctant to accept, in humanitarian design, the notion of permanence forms the basis of the practice.[19] Consequently, a situation characterized as emergency and temporary turns into a permanent site for the consumption of aid products specifically designed for the "humanitarian market."

Gender studies has shown that social norms are the effects of repetition: Through repetition, worlds materialize and "boundary, fixity and surface" are produced.[20] Similarly, the design and production of humanitarian solutions to emergency situations on a global scale repeatedly produce specific relations to be performed by refugees and others involved in the humanitarian market. In such normalized "emergency," refugees become dependent on humanitarian design to survive. Consequently, these design interventions reconfigure refugees as victims without agency whose identity is constructed as receivers of ingenious and benevolent design. The historical example of "emergency shelter" by Shigeru Ban, one of the most celebrated humanitarian architects, is illuminating in this sense. In 1998, UNHCR provided refugees arriving to Gihembe refugee camp in Rwanda with plastic sheets and aluminum pipes to use for shelter. Instead, the refugees would cut down the trees in the area to use as the support structure for the plastic sheets and sell the iron pipes in nearby markets. The UNHCR argued that this "problem" led to deforestation in the area, despite the fact that the establishment of the camp actually had begun the deforestation process. In response, Shigeru Ban created a modular shelter with recycled cardboard tubes, with no financial value. His solution was celebrated by the design community as an efficient, cheap mode of shelter, but in practice, it was a way to deprive refugees of the small degree of financial independence they had carved out—and to re-establish the UNHCR monopoly over the deforestation process.[21] The architect's humanitarian solution in fact replaced the refugees' design intervention. Ban's shelter imposed further vulnerability upon the refugees through a new design. Ban's prototype is now used worldwide as the model for UNHCR emergency shelters.

Because they are designed according to real or imagined failures of governments to provide the necessary infrastructure for living, humanitarian design products circumvent vital infrastructures, such as health care systems, transportation, education, and sanitation, for the sake of efficiency. They are designed to ensure that they do not need any specific infrastructure to function. Being independent from such systems, they tend to prolong dependency and to suppress demand from refugees for more just infrastructures.

Design and innovation's engagement with refugees is not confined to technical products but extends to entrepreneurship and social innovation initiatives. IKEA Foundation is the financial sponsor and distributor of Better Shelter, a newly designed modu-

12. For more information, see http://watchthemed.net and https://alarmphone.org (both accessed on August 15, 2018).

13. Cynthia E. Smith, Design for the Other 90% (New York: Cooper-Hewitt Museum 2007); Bryan Bell et al., Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism (New York: Metropolis Books, 2008); and Emily Pilloton, Design Revolution: 100 Products that Empower People (London: Thames and Hudson. 2009).

14, Pilloton, Design Revolution.

15. "Humanitarian Design vs. Design Imperialism: Debate Summary," Change Observer, July 16, 2010; http://designobserver.com/feature/humanitarian-design-vs-designimperialism-debate-summary/14498/ (accessed May 12, 2015).

16. Bruce Nussbaum, "Is Humanitarian Design the New Imperialism?" Fast Company, June 7, 2010; www.fastcodesign.com/1661859/ishumanitariandesign-the-newimperialism (accessed January 17, 2015).

17. Cedric G. Johnson "The Urban Precariat, Neoliberalization, and the Soft Power of Humanitarian Design," Journal of Developing Societies 27, no. 3–4 (2011): 445–75.

18. Liisa H. Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," Cultural Anthropology 11, no. 3, (1996): 377–404; Michel Agier, "Between War and City: Towards an Urban Anthropology of Refugee Camps," Ethnography 3, no. 3 (2002): 317–41; Michel Agier, On the Margins of the World: The Refugee Experience Today (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008); Miriam Ticktin, "Transnational Humanitarianism," Annual Review of Anthropology 43 (2014): 273–89.

19. One of the most recent celebrated humanitarian design products is Better Shelter, designed by five Swedish designers in Stockholm and supported and distributed by IKEA. The product is advertised as the most durable emergency shelter; lasting for three years, it can be used longer than any other model previously available on the humanitarian aid market. See www.bettershelter.org (accessed August 15, 2018).

20. Judith Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex (London: Routledge, 1993): 9.

21. Andrew Herscher, "Cardboard for Humanity," e-flux, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/68638/cardboard-for-humanity/(August 15, 2018).

22. Eleanor Gibson, "Humanitarian Experts Propose Turning Refugee Camps into Enterprise Zones Called 'Refugee Cities,'" Dezeen, December 9, 2016, https://www.dezeen.com/2016/12/09/ refugee-cities-turn-camps-into-enterprise-zones/ (accessed June 6, 2017).

lar container that functions as a housing shelter, as well as a school and a hospital unit in refugee camps. Foundation executives recently announced that they intend to launch a production line in refugee camps in Jordan, turning refugees into IKEA workers. This move has been celebrated as a successful strategy by which social entrepreneurship can thrive under challenging conditions.[22] It is part of a bigger plan that advocates harnessing "the remarkable opportunities of globalization" by establishing special economic zones (SEZ) in the less wealthy countries that host the majority of refugees worldwide. The main idea is that these countries can host companies from rich countries, offering them tax breaks and reduced regulation for hiring refugees as workers. Critics have already suggested that this idea, already deployed in Jordan and Lebanon, ignores refugees' rights and circumvents international obligations in order to keep refugees out of rich countries by any means possible.[23] The jobs that SEZs offer typically are low- or semi-skilled job with long hours and repetitive tasks, with no clear labor rights protections, to the degree that some have called SEZs "special exploitation zones."[24] The focus is on merely giving refugees a job of any kind, and it ignores the diversity of skills that refugees have, the work conditions, labor protections, and other support structures, such as security, health care, child care, and public transport.

The global consumption of humanitarian design reconfigures and consequently normalizes emergency situations, converting them into a permanent condition of displacement. In doing so, these designs avoid engaging with the historical and political issues that created the need (or "market") for humanitarian design. In contrast to the technocentric narrative at the heart of humanitarian and development programs, problems created by the modernization of the world and its forces, such as colonialism and capitalism, do not necessarily have "modern solutions."[25] Thus, the temporal politics of humanitarian design—in which the time and place of the emergency turn into permanency—not only ignore the histories of displacement, but also determine specific futures for refugees. Humanitarian design thus renders the bodies (of refugees) as subjects of biological help, but not political support.

The Violence of Compassion

The deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean or the harsh conditions of refugee camps evoke compassion above all else, once the history and politics of border control and regulation of displaced communities become actively concealed. The primary issue stays in the realm of feeling, rather than the realm of justice. When refugees become characterized as people who need "our" generous help and protection, questions of rights and justice disappear. Consequently, refugees are removed from a political space in which they can exercise their right to freedom of movement and are placed in a technical space concerned with improving conditions of survival. Postcolonial feminist Sara Ahmed notes that compassion plays a central role in othering by transforming others into objects of emotion.[26] As a specific performative endeavor, compassion often mobilizes emotions

through a strong binary relationship. By showing compassion to someone, the sympathizer enters into a relationship in which the recipient of the compassion has little or no control. Being sympathetic or compassionate about another's suffering sets emotions in operation. "In operation, compassion is a term denoting privilege: the sufferer is over there. You, the compassionate one, have a resource that would alleviate someone else's suffering."[27]

Once the "compassionate" think of themselves as having resources to offer the other, then the refugee becomes an abstract figure who can be emancipated using different design approaches, including humanitarian design. The effects of such approaches are not evaluated according to the political call for justice and equality, raised by refugees who move despite walls, fences, and borders. The "success" of these projects instead relies on their ability to first generate an academic or commercial narrative about the helpless and abstract figure of the refugee and then win acclaim by providing both assistance and empowering strategies. Furthermore, humanitarian design interventions help the public and the design community to imagine themselves and their practice as essentially good, positive, and sympathetic; thereby disguising the privileges and inherent historical violence embedded in designing—specifically in relation to conditions of displacement. It is the vulnerability of the "other" from the perspective of the designers that makes them "able to help." Thus, humanitarian design, despite its intentions, seems to be more about creating opportunities for the privileged to offer their skills, knowledge, and creativity—rather than to support the vulnerable. Anthropologist Liisa H. Malkki argues that the need to help someone somewhere else who is "out in the world" is more often about helping oneself to overcome issues or problems at "home."[28] Thus, in practice, acts of compassion might be concerned with the helper more than the helped. This view repositions the helper and the helped and allows us to reconsider who the true subject of compassion is.

The contemporary militarized border regime is not only about producing violence toward the bodies that transgress them as stated in the beginning of this essay. It does more than that. While it generates the maximum violence required to stop or slow down refugees and migrants, it is designed to hide this violence and instead promote a sense of pity and compassion for "some" of those bodies.[29] Therefore it is imperative that borders are not only destructive but also productive. They destroy, demarcate, and limit political subjectivities of certain groups but enable other groups to observe a select few instances of the crisis, feel pity, and extend their compassion. This is why borders are one of the main sites where inequality can be witnessed most starkly. Humanitarian design projects engaged with migrants and refugees ignore the violence of border politics and focus only on the compassion produced by the same politics of borders. These designs derive from a "politics of pity" rather than a "politics of justice," to borrow Hannah Arendt's terminology.[30] Such politics, based on a binary distinction between those who suffer and those who do not, is determined by observation rather than action. It is a spectacle of vulnerability that causes humanitarian design to intervene.[31] However this spectacle is not neutral or inevitable; instead, it is the work of a collective imagination based on racialized and gendered ideas about who is a worthy subject of compassion.[32]

23. See Benjamin Thomas White, "Refuge and History: A Critical Reading of a Polemic," Migration and Society 2, no. 1 (2019): 107–18.

24. Heaven Crawley, "Migration: Refugee Economics," Nature 544 (2017): 26–27.

25 Arturo Escobar, "Development, Violence and the New Imperial Order," Development 47, no.1 (2004): 15–21.

26. Sara Ahmed, Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality (London: Routledge, 2000).

27. Lauren Berlant, Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion (London: Routledge, 2004).

28. Liisa H. Malkki, The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism (Durham: Duke University Press, 201529. Humanitarian discourse is itself a by-product of the securitization process, and the former ends up strengthening and reinforcing the latter. This "military and humanitarian government" can be understood by tracing how humanitarian technologies are being implemented in conjunction with military force and vice versa. See Didier Bigo "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 27, no.1 (2002): 79; Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, Contemporary States of Emergency: the Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions (New York: Zone Books, 2010); and Nils Gilman, "Preface: Militarism and Humanitarianism," Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development 3, no. 2 (2012): 173–78.

30. In her book, On Revolution, Arendt distinguishes between two types of politics: one that derives from compassion toward the suffering of the other and the one that acts in relation to inequality. Hannah Arendt, On Revolution (New York: Viking, 1963).

31. During 2015 and 2016, images of bodies being washed to the shores and of cramped, non-white bodies on the boats circulated extensively in the media. See Mahmoud Keshavarz and Eric Snodgrass "Orientations of Europe: Boats, the Mediterranean Sea and the Materialities of Contemporary Mobility Regime," Borderlands e-journal 17, no. 2 (2019); and Nicola Perugini and Francesco Zucconi, "Enjoy Poverty: Humanitarianism and the Testimonial Function of Images," Visual Studies 32, no. 1 (2017): 24–32.

32. Miriam Ticktin, "Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders," Social Research: An International Quarterly 83, no.2 (2016): 255–71.

33. Ida Danewid, "White Innocence in the Black Mediterranean: Hospitality and the Erasure of History," Third World Quarterly 38, no. 7 (2017): 1684.

34. "Watch the Med Alarm Phone Weekly Report: Solidarity at Sea is not a Crime!" May 1, 2017–June 11, 2017, https://alarmphone.org/en/2017/06/14/solidarity-at-sea-is-not-a-crime/(accessed August 15, 2018); and Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani, "Blaming the Rescuers: Criminalizing Solidarity, Re-Inforcing Deterrence" (June 14, 2017), https://blamingtherescuers.org/report/ (accessed August 15, 2018).

35. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance (New York: SUNY Press, 2007); Gloria Wekker, White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

36. Ticktin, "Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders," 265.

The spectacle of vulnerability ignores what has made the subjects vulnerable in the first place and ignores the demands voiced by migrants themselves. Rather than being recognized as subjects who are resisting and exposing a historically racist and colonial mobility regime—one that secures an exclusionary wealth for already wealthy Europeans—the refugees are understood as objects of Western compassion and humanism. This view "replaces questions of responsibility, restitution, repentance, and structural reform with matters of empathy, generosity, and hospitality—a move that transforms the responsible colonial agent into an innocent bystander, confirming its status as 'ethical,' 'good,' and 'humane.'"[33]

The European politics of compassion toward refugees, facilitated through design initiatives might seem contradictory while Europe establishes harsher border controls, criminalizes those who help migrants to cross borders,[34] and makes it almost impossible for migrants to seek asylum. However, this seemingly paradoxical politics has been an inevitable part of the colonial project based on a will to forget, to not know, or to not want to know about the structural border violence that makes the need for compassion possible in the first place.[35] As a result, ongoing acts of humanitarianism sustain inequality by forcing the complex social and political struggles mobilized by refugees into just two categories: "those who have the power to protect and those who need protection."[36]

The temporal politics and compassionate power of humanitarian design, when mobilized by technological innovations and a spectacle of vulnerability, generates a category of human beings who are understood to exist merely to be helped.

Which Human in Humanitarian Design?

Questioning humanitarian design is not an easy task. Who would argue with wanting vulnerable people to suffer a bit less, survive a bit longer, or be better taken care of? However, addressing these concerns does not mean that the politics that necessitate and generate humanitarian design should go unnoticed. Most importantly, we must ask: What politics do humanitarian design interventions produce? What type of person is imagined to be the recipient of compassion? Who is being saved or empowered by these design initiatives? Does the need for empowerment via design interventions exist, or is it simply imagined by design epistemologies? Is this need constructed by designers' social and historical positions and by the dominant Western scholarship on social and humanitarian design? Malkki has suggested that the figure of the refugee is often abstracted by those who are interested in producing knowledge about refugees. The refugee becomes "an epistemic object in construction"—a product conceived by different power practices, including design and humanitarian aid. This abstraction is most evident in the design interventions for refugee camps across the world, as discussed earlier. Encamped refugees are managed and domesticated according to a particular border politics that, despite the promise of globalization, has become harsher toward asylum seekers and refugees since 1990. In this prolonged encampment, humanitarian design continuously

redesigns the condition of vulnerability into a permanent site of control and modification and destroys refugees' possibilities for acting politically. The contemporary violence of borders not only deprives migrants on the move of their right to freedom of movement, but also—and more importantly—deprives them of the possibility of acting to claim that right. Under such conditions, humanitarian products, services, and innovations blur the line between the practices conceived to manage humanitarian needs and practices that manage life; a fine line emerges between care and control. It is important to ask: Through what "modes of power [are] vulnerable populations formed as such?"[37] Humanitarian design practices construct a need for protection and empowerment for vulnerable populations that is materialized through products, services, and architectural forms. This not only negates the capacity of those declared to be vulnerable to act politically, but also expands biopolitical forms of regulation and control through new scales, sites, and imaginations. Through moralized goods, such as Better Shelter or Life Buoys, humanitarian design practices imagines a human being that is produced at the intersection of technologies of population governance and the production of differentiated values of human lives. The production of this imaginary human being in return calls for another sort of political economy, concerned mainly with morality over political demands or legal obligations at the intersection of the neoliberal market and supra-state control.[38]

Michel Aiger argues that we need to break the link between urgent medical aid and the designerly reconfiguration of sites of emergency through various products and prototypes.[39] Building on his argument, Eyal Weizman writes:

> Aid without a camp is aid that does not seek to manage, house, develop, and perform migration control. Refugees, like all people escaping war and famine throughout history, make their way across borders into cities, or settle and construct new ones. Aid, if necessary, should follow them into these spaces rather than construct environments of total control to facilitate its delivery.[40]

Humanitarian design shows that humanitarianism is not simply about an efficient response to crisis but about designing certain conditions of life. It enters and legitimizes itself as a crisis response but nonetheless establishes certain conditions and thus a certain politics of life. Interestingly, humanitarian design reveals that the general claim humanitarianism makes—of saving only in the here-and-now—is incorrect. Humanitarianism always stems from certain politics and histories, and it establishes specific politics and futures. When it turns into a design practice with durable solutions, systems, and infrastructures of aid, it confines and regulates the space in which refugees can act politically.

37. Judith Butler et al., Vulnerability in Resistance (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 5.

38. Peter Redfield, "Bioexpectations: Life Technologies as Humanitarian Goods," Public Culture 24, no. 1 (2012): 157–84.

39. Michel Agier, "Humanity as an Identity and Its Political Effects (A Note on Camps and Humanitarian Government)," Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development 1, no.1 (2010): 29.

40. Eyal Weizman, Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza (London: Verso, 2011): 61.

Breaking the Cycle of Border Violence

My critique on contemporary design's engagement with issues related to "the other" is not new. After reading Design for the Real World, Gui Bonsiepe engaged in a series of harsh exchanges with the author, Victor Papanek, in 1974. Bonsiepe accused Papanek of being naïve, of lacking a complex political understanding of power relations, and of promoting a poisonous new brand of neo-colonialism. Referring to Papanek's famous tin-can radio, Bonsiepe criticized it as a "paternalistic design—covered by humanitarian coating... doused in the ideology of the noble savage," as well as an instrument of ideological penetration and control in line with the U.S. army's policy in the Cold War.[41] Papanek rejected these accusations.[42] Whether one accepts Papanek's or Bonsiepe's arguments, what is missing from the conversation entirely is how "the other"—his or her body, life, and future—becomes the object of Western designers' consciousness.

The circulation of mass imagery of illegalized migration and of refugees taking lethal routes to Europe simultaneously leads to a ubiquitous humanitarian discourse and a xenophobic, racist, and nationalist one that empowers the politics of fascist parties all around the world. The simultaneity is not a coincidence. Design's engagement with refugees—in camps outside of Europe, along its deadly borders, or in reception centers inside Europe—has been framed as a counter-response to a growing xenophobic right wing that sees migrants as threats, as bogus, and as parasites. However, it ultimately reproduces the same logic it aims to resist.[43] The logic of many of these humanitarian initiatives is based on a universal figure who is essentialized, imagined, and produced through narratives of help, projects of protection, and initiatives of empowerment. This abstract figure is imagined to be at worst a consumer of a welfare and at best a collaborator of humanitarian design, either somewhere else "out in the world" or at "home." In both cases, a specific politics of borders is adhered to, and a certain inclusion by exclusion happens. In both cases, "the other" is understood as either a non-productive or a productive economic force.

Against the background of a prevailing critical discourse—one that presents design as an agent of social, political, and environmental change, it is important to remember that it is not enough to design "for" or even "with" the other. Designers and design researchers in the Global North must also recognize how and why they carry their acts of designing from the positions they occupy. In promoting the conceptualization of design as a change agent for political and social problems without considering the politics of designing, we risk depoliticizing the context in which the design interventions take place. bell hooks eloquently critiques the engagement of leftist liberal scholars with "the other," the "subaltern" and poor:

> It is not just important what we speak about but how and why we speak. Often this speech about the "other" is also a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences [...] Often this speech about the "other" annihilates, erases.[44]

When addressing these issues, designers must question what and whose political agendas are being driven, as well as what other politics are being pushed to the margin or being erased, masked, and ultimately oppressed. As long as designers uphold western epistemological frameworks that understand complexities of the world to be "problems" in need of solving by their generosity, compassion, technical skills, and social capital, then their interventions run the risk of being oppressive. Ignoring the politics of borders that have created vulnerable populations, who are rendered in need of compassion and humanitarian design, runs the risk of supporting the side of the oppressor, despite humanitarian designers' good intentions. The call to acknowledge this complicity might not constitute a guideline for design practice, but considering it is nonetheless vital for those who wish to engage in a collective struggle for justice. The cynicism and defeatism toward which discourses of emergency and humanitarian design force us must be resisted. Instead, let us begin to imagine and develop practices that engage in a non-essential, non-crisis terms which prioritize the struggles of refugees in transgressing national borders; works that expand the prevailing exclusionary notion of citizenship by redistributing wealth and resources globally rather than nationally; and makings that generate a politics of justice through various networks of solidarity that guarantee political subjectivity. These shifts are already happening within different refugee movements, and the first step is to notice and recognize them. Taking this first step might help us to break the cycle of violence that contemporary border politics produces, which mobilizes selective compassion toward refugees while immobilizing them.

Acknowledgement

41. Gui Bonsiepe, "Design and Underdevelopment," Casabella 385, January (1974): 43

42. Alison J. Clarke, "Design for Development, ICSID and UNIDO: The Anthropological Turn in 1970s Design," Journal of Design History 29, no. 1 (2015): 43–57.

43. Danewid, "White Innocence in the Black Mediterranean."

44. bell hooks, "Marginality as a Site of Resistance," in Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures, ed. Russell Fergusen and Trinh T. Minh-ha (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 343.

Accounting for Design Activism: On the Positionality and Politics of Designerly Intervention

Sarah Fox, Catherine Lim,
Tad Hirsch, Daniela K. Rosner

An Anecdote

Early during a weekday morning, Felicia and I (Sarah Fox) fixed our attention on a menstrual product dispenser attached to the wall in front of us. We were standing under a set of florescent lights, installing a networked device in a public restroom on the University of Washington's Seattle campus. I had designed the device to record the number of tampons and pads inside the machine and to project those numbers on a map of the city. With this intervention, I hoped that Felicia, a building supervisor, and her colleagues could more easily track the product levels in the dispenser and thus keep the numerous dispensers across campus more effectively and sufficiently stocked. Stocking menstrual product dispensers had been a perennial problem on the university's campus since at least the 1970s.[1]

Felicia began filling the empty machine and asked how the system worked. Her face relaxed a bit as I walked through the design. She told me that she hoped this platform would help Facilities' supervisors recognize how difficult it was for the building managers like her to keep machines stocked and operational. The custodians working for her aren't allowed to fill the dispensers, Felicia explained. Instead, building managers or their superiors have to travel between the areas under their supervision, empty the coins, and fill the machines with more products. This work of checking the machines was onerous: It was outside her regular tasks of managing schedules, and it involved overseeing the facilities of many buildings at once. As a result, she continued, machine maintenance often went undone. Despite being closest to and arguably possessing the greatest knowledge about individual restrooms and their care, custodians were not entrusted with replenishing the machines because of the money handling involved. Felicia laughed at the thought of this and offered to count the money that had accumulated inside the machine. Pulling out a separate and even smaller key from the one she used to open the machine door, she released the latch on a small metal box in the interior of the dispenser and counted the coins: "$2.25." She counted again to be sure, "Yeah, $2.25."

1. Elsewhere, we chart how the university, its facilities organization, and activist groups have struggled for decades to define local menstrual accessibility. Facilities made the decisive move in the 1980s to remove all menstrual product dispensers, while contemporary student activists recently convinced the institution to offer free products in all restrooms. For more on this history, see Sarah E. Fox, Rafael de Silva, and Daniela K. Rosner, "Beyond the Prototype: Maintenance, Collective Responsibility, and Public IoT," in Proceedings of the 2018 Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (New York: ACM, 2018).

Introduction

In many ways, the above vignette follows existing projects of design activism. It describes how the Riot project, an intervention into menstrual hygiene resource distribution, was bound up with wider social and political issues. We outfitted restroom menstrual product dispensers with networked sensors to increase access to menstrual products by underrepresented groups. However, in doing so, we also subtly exposed the class hierarchies around routine restroom maintenance. With Felicia's coin counting during the installation of the Riot device, she revealed an assumption hidden within the conditions in which she worked: that the custodians could not be trusted with the key to the dispensers.

Without understanding the work behind the scenes, we find it difficult to see who benefits from the projects and how. By introducing a consumer Internet of Things (IoT) technology in public sites, such as restrooms, we examine the situated conditions in which it works. How might such a device complicate the jobs of people already on the scene (e.g., by requiring new forms of technical maintenance)? Or how might this installation of networked objects affect the ways that labor relations play out locally? Without considerable post-hoc analysis, design scholars are left with a limited understanding of design activist encounters and their lived (and ongoing) consequences—both for the people typically identified as primary "users" of the design products (in this case, people seeking menstrual pads) and for the private, institutional, state, and activist actors they undoubtedly affect. Through our engagement with Felicia, we gained a deeper understanding of the divisions of labor enacted (and made invisible) in public sites, such as university restrooms.

Given the complexities of design activism, this article unpacks the responsibility of designers in affecting design interventions across two ongoing projects. We first introduce Archivo, a toolkit for collecting paperwork proving undocumented immigrants' residence in the United States and for applying for federal deferred action programs. We then return to Riot, a series of networked sensors that keep track of hygiene product availability. Comparing these cases allows us to consider positionality in design activism projects that involve different timelines and objectives at different stages of development.[2] Drawing on feminist calls for situating action and knowledge, we use these cases to acknowledge and examine designers' forms of positionality: the relations that enter into the formation of design interventions and the ways that a designer's situation affects the matter of the designs.[3] Recognizing and contending with design positionality entails a reflexive analysis of personal history, cultural status (e.g., gender, nationality, and racial identity), and power differentials— aspects of our identities that mark relational positions rather than essential qualities.[4]

For us, the concept of positionality builds on recent calls for feminist reflexivity that question design's institutional origins (i.e., where design is enacted and by whom) in ways that sharpen existing understandings of designers' roles and accountabilities.[5] These calls prompt examinations of who funds design activities and for what reasons, as well as how the intervention and its response might play out in relation to activists' professional affiliations or citizenship status. In what follows, we draw from this work to examine two cases of our own design activism: Archivo and Riot. Each of these projects has been built on close, sustained relationships that we formed with members of marginalized groups. We show how our cases differ crucially according to the designers involved, with aspects of our positions (including institutional and citizenship status and gender identity) shaping our access to funding, publicity, and the interventions themselves.

In discussing these projects, we highlight three dimensions of positionality in design activism that became important across our cases. First, we consider collective responsibility—our work to account for the relationships we have built with not only our collaborators and research community, but also with a broader social movement or constituency. The latter might not be physically present during the project's development but has much at stake in its outcomes. Second, we explore temporal alignments—the ways our work requires constant coordination to operate across changing time scales. Finally, we investigate flexible positioning, the need for shifting the form and content of a given project in response to changes in public policy and institutional arrangements. Derived from our cases, this three-part framework—collective responsibility, temporal alignments, and flexible positioning—has helped sensitize us to the groups with which we work and take responsibility for our modes of intervention and authorship. We argue that if design activists seek not simply to meet a social need or market pressure, but also to direct campaigns that incite social or political change, they must consider the wider power structures their work builds upon and may further entrench. They must ask, for example, how access to elite networks and funding creates openings that might otherwise remain out of reach. Our inquiry begins this process, exposing how designers' status has consequences for charting and refiguring the status quo.

Crises of Representation, Reflexivity, and Positionality

Before considering our specific projects of design activism, we turn to the core ideas of positionality that animate our discussion. Our impulse to focus on positionality has a long history rooted in intellectual traditions both in and beyond the discipline of design. For example, the reflexive turn of the 1980s that spread across several fields, including anthropology and sociology, challenged a removed form of study that framed the researcher's own experiences and emotions as invalid forms of knowledge production. Instead, scholars called for recognizing investigators as always shaping the worlds in which they work, the data they produce, and the analyses they develop. This scholarship cast reality as living inside rather than outside the observing subject, continually reproduced through methods of examination and representation.[6] This reflexive perspective rejects a priori distinctions between the analytic tools of researchers

2. This project resonates with concerns related to adversarial, reflective, critical, and speculative design—modes of investigation that expose the stable and often problematic assumptions, power structures, and ideas that organize design developments.

3. Lucy Suchman, "Located Accountabilities in Technology Production," Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems 14, no. 2 (September 2002): 91–105.

4. Renato Rosaldo, Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis (Beacon Press, 2001): 19.

5. See feminist design and technology studies scholarship by Lucy Suchman, Susan Leigh Star, Donna Haraway, and Lisa Nakamura, as well as recent work on decolonizing design. See, e.g., Ahmed Ansari, Danah Abdullah, Ece Canli, Mahmoud Keshavarz, Matthew Kiem, Pedro Oliviera, Luiza Prado, and Tristan Schultz, "Editorial Statement," Decolonising Design (2016). http://www.decolonisingdesign.com/general/2016/editorial/ (Accessed April 30, 2018).

6. Jean Lave, Apprenticeship in Critical Ethnographic Practice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

7. Within anthropology, this recognition marked a reflexive break from traditional modes of "Othering" toward questions of ethnographic positionality. The entanglement of anthropology and colonialism introduced an interrogation of the politics of representation and knowledge production. With this turn came critiques of the self-indulgent ethnographer and the provisional nature of this reporting. Accounts of the ethnographic frame (i.e., what is left inside and outside the analysis) could come with experiments in narrative form (sometimes denounced as creative fiction). Margery Wolf, A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

8. Victor Papanek, Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, 2nd edition (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005); Lucy A. Suchman, Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human–Machine Communication (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

9. See also Suchman's later call for located accountabilities—the responsibility that arises when one presents a view from somewhere specific. She suggests effective designs get built from the collection of partial and located knowledges. Lucy Suchman, "Located Accountabilities in Technology Production," Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems 14, no. 2 (September 2002): 91–105.

10. Lucy Suchman, "Making Work Visible," Communications of the ACM 38, no. 9 (1995): 56–64; and Susan Leigh Star and Anselm Strauss, "Layers of Silence, Arenas of Voice: The Ecology of Visible and Invisible Work," Computer Supported Cooperative Work 8, no. 1–2 (1999): 9–30. Geoffrey C. Bowker, Stefan Timmermans, and Susan Leigh Star, "Infrastructure and Organizational Transformation: Classifying Nurses' Work," Information Technology and Changes in Organizational Work (Boston: Springer, 1996): 344–70.

11. Randi Markussen, "Dilemmas in Cooperative Design," in Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conferences (Palo Alto, CA: 1994), 59–66.

12. Marc Steen, "Human-Centered Design as a Fragile Encounter," Design Issues 28, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 72–80.

13. Ramia Mazé and Johan Redström, "Difficult Forms: Critical Practices of Design and Research," Research 'Design Journal 1 (2009): 28–39. See also Ramia Mazé, "Ramia Mazé: Design Practices Are Not Neutral," Speculative (2016), http://speculative.hr/en/ramia-maze/ (Accessed April 30, 2018).

14. Dean Nieusma, "Alternative Design Scholarship: Working Toward Appropriate Design," Design Issues 20, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 13–24. More recently, Carl DiSalvo, Bruce Tharp, and Stephanie Tharp have sharpened this focus on activism by foregrounding contestational and tactical techniques that make room for meaningful debate and for re-envisioning design futures—a sort of reflexive turn toward what Tharp and Tharp call "discursive design." See also Garnet Hertz, "Art After New Media: Exploring Black Boxes, Tactics and Archaeologies," Leonardo Electronic Almanac 17, no. 2 (2012): 172–183; Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter, "Dawn of the Organised Networks," The Fibreculture Journal, no. 5 (2005): article 29; Carl DiSalvo, Adversarial Design (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012); Lilly C. Irani and M. Six Silberman, "Turkopticon: Interrupting Worker Invisibility in Amazon Mechanical Turk," in Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (New York: ACM, 2013): 611–20; and Bruce M. Tharp and Stephanie M. Tharp, "Discursive Design Basics: Mode and Audience," Nordes 1, no. 5 (2013): 406–09.

15. Alastair Fuad-Luke, Design Activism: Beautiful Strangeness for a Sustainable World (New York: Earthscan, 2009): 27.

16. Ann Thorpe, "Defining Design as Activism," https://designactivism.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Thorpedefiningdesignactivism.pdf (Accessed April 30, 2018).

and those of their sites of study. Instead, it recognizes their mutual constitution through field engagements.[7]

Within programs of design, scholars have encountered a complementary turn toward reflexivity since at least the 1970s, most visibly through the anti-corporate design activism of Victor Papanek and the rich ethnographic insights of Lucy Suchman and colleagues at the Palo Alto Research Center (PARC).[8] Our work draws particularly from Suchman's studies of expert systems, which expose the range of micro-practices upon which computing interactions depend—what Suchman calls situated actions. Rather than encoding "plans" or "goals" as control structures guiding use, Suchman argues for understanding interactions as ongoing and contingent configurations constituted through active sense-making and partnerships across the social and material world.[9] Moving beyond questions of measurement or support, Suchman—and later, Bowker, Star, and Strauss—draws from feminist perspectives to understand how work becomes visible or invisible in context. Bowker and Star, for example, note the challenges of trying to make nurses' work visible while retaining important aspects of its ambiguity and the use of discretion.[10]

Since these early calls for situating design activity, several scholars have proposed reflexive tactics for taking up feminist conceptions of reflexivity and positionality in design. In one such example, Randi Markussen encourages a "self-reflective approach" to design that might advance a mutual (and thus equitable) relationship between designer and user.[11] By speaking in their own voices, he claims, designers can move beyond the language of user needs to engage dilemmas across research communities and cooperative design partnerships. Marc Steen similarly argues for reflexivity—or what he describes as an examination of the designer's role in a human-centered design project—to help navigate the "fragile encounter" between self (designer) and the Other (e.g., collaborators or participants).[12] Expanding from these methodological concerns, Ramia Mazé and Johan Redström put forth the possibility of theoretical development that "happens through, and from within, design practice";[13] they recognize how the field sits within systems of power and capital that in many ways shape its culture and practices—or, what Dean Nieusma might call "governing mentalities."[14]

Design Activism: Artifacts, Infrastructures, and Frameworks

Alongside growing concerns for positionality, design scholars have challenged and expanded existing concepts of design activism. Alastair Fuad-Luke describes the practice as "a counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change."[15] Ann Thorpe extends this definition to argue that design activism must "work as activism, and something else, at the same time," contending with concerns like function, cost, and usability.[16] Following on Thorpe's discussion, Thomas Markussen identifies insufficiencies in efforts to un-

derstand design activism through theories borrowed from the social sciences, finding them ill-equipped to describe a "designerly way of intervening."[17] Instead, he argues, design activism must incorporate both political and material practice in the form of a "disruptive aesthetic," or material expression that evokes revelation, contest, and dissensus among its audience members. These scholars offer careful consideration for how the design community might interpret the merits of design activism, both as political and material objects.

A particular lineage of design activism has emerged over the past decade in support of collective action through design, rather than the development of discrete products.[18] This work builds on notions of infrastructuring—a design approach that moves its focus, in the words of Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren, "towards processes and strategies of aligning different contexts and their representatives."[19] According to these scholars, design work may help highlight constructive controversies on matters of concern, such as immigration, belonging, or climate change.[20] According to Björgvinsson and his colleagues, designers working in this liberal democratic tradition tend to view "agonist struggle" as both the core of a vibrant democracy and a source for innovation, which could result in a product, a set of services, a social movement, a piece of legislation, or some combination.[21]

A parallel body of feminist work highlights the challenges that particular forms of positionality in design activism may help address. For example, Irani and Silberman surface the often-hidden processes of micro-work on Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT), through the development of the Turkopticon system.[22] They later contend with the varied nature of interventionist projects by highlighting how this work provided a means for workers to make do within the current AMT system (rather than dismantling it) and enabled stories of themselves as "design saviors."[23] Informed by a feminist reflexivity, such accounts offer a means of interrogating design activism in its complexity, rather than painting an exclusively celebratory picture.

Drawing on this feminist reflexivity, we use two case studies to explore aspects of positionality within design activism along three dimensions: collective responsibility, temporal alignments, and flexible positioning. We highlight the formation of coalitions among differently situated actors; we examine the work to align diverse patterns of social and political change; and we document how activist projects must adapt their form and content. These facets of positionality became particularly important to us during our targeted projects of social change, emerging from our analysis of accountabilities in design.[24] In highlighting aspects of our positionality here, we illustrate the multiple influences on the objectives of design activism—influences that often get obscured or go unaccounted for in design (even as they remain integral to the work that results).

17. Thomas Markussen, "The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism: Enacting Design Between Art and Politics," Design Issues 29, no. 1(Winter 2013): 38–50.

18. See, e.g., Christopher A. Le Dantec, Designing Publics (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016): 5.

19. Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren, "Agonistic Participatory Design: Working with Marginalized Social Movements," CoDesign 8, no. 2–3 (2012): 127–8.

20. Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren, "Participatory Design and 'Democratizing Innovation,'" in Proceedings of the 11th Biennial Participatory Design Conference (New York: ACM, 2010): 41–50. See also Peter Weibel and Bruno Latour, eds., Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy (Karlsruhe: ZKM, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, 2005).

21. Christopher A. Le Dantec and Carl DiSalvo, "Infrastructuring and the Formation of Publics in Participatory Design," Social Studies of Science 43, no. 2 (2013): 241–64; Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren, "Design Things and Design Thinking: Contemporary Participatory Design Challenges," Design Issues 28, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 101–16.

22. Lilly C. Irani and M. Six Silberman, "Turkopticon: Interrupting Worker Invisibility in Amazon Mechanical Turk," in Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (New York, NY: ACM, 2013): 611–20. This work draws from Star and Strauss' and Suchman's work on invisible labor; see Star and Strauss, "Layers of Silence"; and Suchman, "Making Work Visible."

23. Lilly C. Irani and M. Silberman, "Stories we tell about labor: Turkopticon and the trouble with design," in Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (New York: ACM, 2016): 4577.

24. In preparing our cases, each author wrote a series of iterative, reflexive memos (Charmaz 2006), interrogating our projects and pushing at the relationship between activism and understanding, intervention and inquiry, research and reflexivity, and the tensions among them. We met weekly to review the memos and compare the insights raised. We revisited and refined our interpretations to iteratively build toward the emergent themes described by the three facets. Kathy Charmaz, Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Research (London: Sage, 2006).

Archivo: A Toolkit for Self-Documentation

In 2014, then-U.S. President Obama announced a set of executive actions expanding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and establishing Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), granting temporary work authorization and legal protections from deportation and detention to families of mixed immigration status.[25] To qualify for deferred action, applicants were to prove their continued presence in the United States for nine years by providing copies of, for example, education and medical records, pay stubs, receipts, tax returns, and bills—amounting in some cases to hundreds of documents. Responding to this policy development (and its administrative costs to applicants), the second author (Lim) worked with Seattle-based colleagues and organizers of activist and advocacy groups to develop Archivo, a toolkit for collecting and preparing paperwork for undocumented immigrants to access federal deferred action programs. The project was ongoing at the time of writing and comprises four items: a bilingual Spanish/ English booklet explaining deferred action and the required documentation; a worksheet to catalog collected items; file folders corresponding to each year of an applicant's presence in the United States; and a document case (see Figure 1.). Throughout the design process, the Archivo team worked closely with undocumented activist Maru Mora Villalpando on funding proposals and translation of the booklet content, as well as with grassroots groups in 11 states who distributed the Archivo kits.

Over the course the project, the design team responded to constantly changing policies and enforcement practices. After a June 2016 Supreme Court decision blocked the implementation of DAPA, the team redesigned the enclosed booklet to focus on DACA applications.[26] With more visible and frequent detention and deportation efforts since the 2016 presidential election, the team reworked the toolkit again to support families as they prepare for emergency situations, such as encounters with local law enforcement or unexpected Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids. The Trump administration's termination of DACA in 2017 has been challenged in the courts and—at time of writing—the future of the program is unclear.[27] In response to this uncertainty, the design team supplemented the toolkit with materials useful for the legal and emergency situations undocumented people could face in the immigration enforcement system.

Archivo exposed uneven risks for its users and designers, which manifested differently throughout the intervention. For instance, despite personal connections fueling their interest in working with immigrant communities—two on the team are of foreign-born parents, and the third designer is married to a partner currently applying for naturalization—the design team is comprised of U.S.-born citizens. Team members have the privilege of being secure in their legal status and incur significantly less risk than some of their collaborators (themselves undocumented) and those who use the kits. Although DACA applicants coming forward publicly has helped immigration activists argue for the value of expanded protections for undocumented people, applicants face possible detention or even deportation and separation from their families when they provide ICE with a decade or more of personal information. In providing Archivo as a documentation tool, the design team overlooked the need for express warning about these risks, assuming applicants would eventually seek legal advice from attorneys. The team also learned that community members fearful of encounters with ICE agents chose not to attend in-person community gatherings and immigrant rights workshops where kits were distributed (see Figure 2). Those who attended were encouraged to take multiple kits to share with family and friends.

These tensions around status and risk surfaced in other ways. In order to fund the project, for instance, the team entered a design competition, which pushed us toward particular material and aesthetic decisions. The refined visual design details and use of our funder's brand of high-quality paper added to the project's timeline and cost. This work led to a product that was more expensive than necessary (which might limit its distribution). We also felt a tension between the polish expected by the design community that the competition served and the practical issues of wide distribution that might benefit undocumented people.

Although our partners expressed appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of Archivo, it became increasingly difficult to justify these material decisions as we confronted concerns on the provisionality of the project. With heightened fears of detention and deportation in the undocumented community, we still question whether the funding we received could have been better spent on other efforts, such as payment for legal counsel to defend individuals wrongfully detained as a result of racial profiling.

These questions of funding and multiple and varied approaches to change continue as we turn to our next case on menstrual access and the Internet of Things (IoT).

25. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Immigration Action" (2015), https://www.dhs.gov/archive/immigration-action (Accessed April 30, 2018).

Figure 1
The Archivo kit. Image by Catherine Lim.

26. SCOTUSblog, "United States v. Texas" (2016), http://www.scotusblog.com/casefiles/cases/united-states-v-texas/ (Accessed April 30, 2018).

27. National Immigration Law Center, "DACA Litigation Timeline" (2019), https://www.nilc.org/issues/daca/daca-litigationtimeline/ (accessed September 29, 2019). National Immigration Law Center, "Litigation Related to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)" (2019), https://www.nilc.org/issues/daca/litigation-related-to-the-daca-program/ (accessed September 29, 2019).

Figure 2
People gathered for an immigrant rights workshop at which the Archivo kit was distributed. Image by Catherine Lim.

Riot: Public IoT for Menstruation

Although millions of people use pads and tampons, few public sites in the United States provide ready or free access to menstrual products, restricting availability for people with limited mobility or socioeconomic resources. To address this concern, the first author (Fox) and her colleagues conducted interviews and ethnographic observations at parks, community centers, and homeless shelters throughout Seattle, WA, between 2015 and 2018, while building relationships with local activist and advocacy organizations, including the Womxn's Action Commission. Together with these groups, they developed and installed Riot—a series of modifications to existing public menstrual product dispensers that outfit them with networked sensors so that the product levels might be more easily stocked (see Figure 3). In designing these modifications as IoT technologies, the team explored ways of providing more reliable and distributed access to hygiene products by people with limited resources, while interrogating the implications of the growing number of such devices entering into public sites under corporate-led initiatives (often in the name of efficiency, cleanliness, and managerial control).[28] The project was ongo-

Figure 3
The Riot dispenser, unboxed (left), and being installed in a public restroom (right). Images by Sarah Fox.

28. Sarah E. Fox, Kiley Sobel, and Daniela K. Rosner, "Managerial Visions: Interrogating 'Self-Governance,' IoT, and the Public Restroom," in Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (New York: ACM, 2019).

ing at the time of writing, with installations underway in branches of the Seattle Public Library.

Riot was initiated by two PhD students and an assistant professor within a department of human-centered design and engineering, each of whom identify as women. Although the team experienced consistent housing throughout their lives, one was involved in housing justice activism through a grassroots organization, and another supported an immediate family member who experienced homelessness. This background, along with observational research, inspired them to avoid associating menstruation with a narrowly constructed category of "women" and to challenge essentialist views of those who menstruate. One aspect of this position was a shift from unconsciously and uncritically using generic terms, such as "feminine hygiene," to the use of more descriptive terms, such as "menstrual hygiene." This change came out of incremental realizations about the gravity of such language during conversations with gynecologists and members of local grassroots organizations supporting transgender youth. These discussions led the team to examine the extent to which menstruation is gendered and obscured by terminology that does little to describe the bodily process, as well as their own positions as cisgender women. Not all people who menstruate are women, and not all women menstruate.

When the design team began collaborating with the Womxn's Action Commission (WAC), the organization was in the midst of a campaign within a larger, nationwide movement calling for "menstrual equity" through tax law revisions, collection drives, and education programs in schools and community centers. WAC's first initiative was the proposal of institutional guidelines mandating the introduction of sanitary napkin dispensers in the gender neutral restrooms of our home institution. After the passage of this mandate, the group began preparing state legislation that would require all public schools to stock menstrual hygiene products for their students and staff—replicating a program launched by the New York City Council to provide access in public schools, shelters, and correctional facilities.[29] In preparing materials for the proposal, they held discussions with building managers, who voiced concern for funding the proposed shift to free products: How much would it cost? With many comparable programs across the country still in their infancy, the WAC members could not point to an agreed upon average amount. Instead, they had to estimate the cost using current patterns of use; as a result, they viewed the dispenser inserts as a source of data that could be used to gauge the potential cost of the proposed legislation, as well as a means of tracking the program's uptake if the law were to pass. In doing so, they invited the design team to view Riot as a form of data advocacy, or as a data gathering object to be used in support of their cause.[30]

As researchers working within a college of engineering, the design team's proximity to technology making also gave access to streams of funding associated with IoT development, enabling the team to financially support the lead student on the project as a research assistant for three years (differing crucially from other student positions, such as an independent study). Proximity to "innovation" also occupied the imagination of the Facilities organization personnel, who viewed the installation of such devices as

a connective link to the student body and as a means of contributing to research on campus. However, the team's standing as a public institution required visibility of the results, which could come with unwanted attention, including harassment.[31] For example, as this project was forming, lead author Fox was subject to a series of brief but targeted social media attacks by members of various men's rights organizations, who objected to the feminist research featured in her portfolio.

By constructing infrastructure for tracking information about dispenser use and maintenance, Riot also opened up the possibility for members of the menstruating public to be tracked by proxy. Although the design team intended for the information collected to be shared with the users and the maintainers of the dispenser (whether the team or a partner), there remains potential for this data to be distributed through any number of channels. Broadcasting the product levels associated with particular public restrooms on an open online map would present challenges for maintaining a certain level of privacy for those using these facilities. Returning to discussion of the installation of the device, there are varied responsibilities expected of and entrusted to those who maintain the restrooms, and many ways the collected data could be used to further the managerial gaze and monitor custodial work.[32] To respond to these concerns as the project developed, the team explored other ways to display the information in more protected and situated environments, including community centers, libraries, and homeless shelters.[33] Even with this effort, the team must continually grapple with the reality that, by introducing a means for tracking menstrual hygiene products, we are also making movement through these spaces visible from long-range.

Attending to Positionality in Design Activism

The cases detailed above begin to clarify the stakes of recognizing the political conditions that shape design identities within activist encounters—stakes that shift as policy is made or undone and as designers gain access to funding or contribute to the social and political movements they aim to support. With Archivo, our previous experience working with immigrant communities helped us to consider issues of language access, yet the stability of our legal status limited our capacity to see the potential for the major policy turns and court decisions that ultimately unfolded. The project then became reliant on our collaborators' ability to provide continuity for communities directly affected by these changes through community meetings, social media, appearances on broadcast television and radio programs, and communication through a network of immigrant rights groups throughout the region and nation. With Riot, conversations with partners led us to recognize aspects of the work we left uninterrogated, such as gender categories around menstruation. But as our language shifted with these insights, so too did our intervention.

29. City of New York, "Mayor de Blasio Signs Legislation Increasing Access to Feminine Hygiene Products for Students, Shelter Residents and Inmates" (2016), http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-themayor/news/611-16/mayor-de-blasiosigns-legislation-increasing-access-feminine-hygiene-products-students-(Accessed April 30, 2018).

30. This effort became particularly potent as one of the earliest campus campaigns from Columbia University came to a quick halt after administrators suggested there was a lack of interest on the part of students. Even after being implemented, these initiatives were vulnerable to swift rollbacks.

31. Reactions to feminist author Jessica Valenti advocating for subsidized menstrual products were harsh and unrelenting. See Megan Gibson, "Free Tampons Are Actually a Great Idea. Just Don't Mention It Online," Time (August 11, 2014), http://time.com/3100857/free-tampons-areactually-a-great-idea-just-dont-mentionit-online/ (Accessed April 30, 2018).

32. Corporate-led initiatives fold in gig economy techniques of labor to reform traditionally undervalued work in the restroom. For example, firms use algorithmically assigned on-call scheduling, which reduces the number of hours low-wage workers can depend on each month. For more, see Fox, Sobel, and Rosner, "Managerial Visions."

33. In some ways, this work might limit the impact and visibility of the project on the broader community, but ensuring the privacy of those who use or care for the restrooms where the dispensers are installed takes precedence.

We moved to install the dispenser inserts in all gender restrooms and advocated for state level policy to be rewritten to foreground the needs of transgender residents. The reflexivity we drew on was ongoing, open, revised, and reinvented over the course of the project.

Examining the nature of positionality in design activism pushes investigators to understand the tradeoffs of anticipated structural shifts and the contexts of political power achieved and maintained. We explore these crucial but underexamined orientations as collective responsibility, temporal alignments, and flexible positioning.[34]

34. See also Christopher A. Le Dantec and Sarah Fox, "Strangers at the Gate: Gaining Access, Building Rapport, and Co-Constructing Community-Based Research" in Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (New York: ACM, 2015), 1348–58.

Collective Responsibility: Forming Coalitions Across Difference
Our efforts toward collective responsibility rejected the separation between designer and subject but also embraced the unevenly situated experience of each coalition member. Both Archivo and Riot comprised targeted services, responding to a specific need identified by grassroots collaborators. Attending to positionality in these projects allowed us to form working partnerships while accounting for the differential relations of power that develop alongside them. For instance, both projects exposed how funding can become an important means of making material decisions and organizing labor, but also of forming and maintaining partnerships over time. With Archivo, we began to surface important questions around support for increasingly contentious political issues. In the case of Riot, our design project began to incorporate consumer IoT technologies, the privacy and security implications of which have yet to be fully recognized.[35] We further found that making a project public—and publicity efforts more broadly—may compromise partners' initial commitments and increase risk to already marginalized populations. Situating our work within collective efforts meant forming coalitions across difference.

35. See, e.g., Carl DiSalvo and Tom Jenkins, "Fruit Are Heavy: A Prototype Public IoT System to Support Urban Foraging," in Proceedings of the 2017 Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (New York: ACM, 2017): 541–53; and Sarah E. Fox, Rafael de Silva, and Daniela K. Rosner, "Beyond the Prototype: Maintenance, Collective Responsibility, and Public IoT," in Proceedings of the 2018 Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (New York: ACM, 2018): 21–32.

Temporal Alignments: Drawing Together Diverse Rhythms of Change
Approaching positionality in design encourages a contemplative sensibility that in our own cases came with slowing down calls to action and social change—a position itself marked by privilege. For Riot, the quick, iterative design process changed pace as we considered the surrounding public resource infrastructure and its care. We continually emphasized that the design of the insert must allow for easy repair—shifting to an inexpensive, low-power microcontroller and a long-lasting power bank, for example. While many designers of IoT prototypes claim to develop easily and cheaply deployable devices, we built an IoT project that accommodated existing infrastructure of electricity and maintenance from the start.[36] This adaptive work took significant investment at multiple registers—both technically (through continual battery tests) and socially (by sustaining relationships with municipal and grassroots organizations responsible for hygiene resources and their management).

36. Fox, de Silva, and Rosner, "Beyond the Prototype."

Flexible Positioning: Responding to Changes in Public Policy and Institutional Arrangements
Archivo had to change its form and content to accommodate funding constraints, as well as policy changes. Due to the priorities of the agency funding the project, we needed to ensure that the proj-

ect's material look and feel a certain way: use expensive paper and reflect a cohesive branding and visual style. After an announcement that the DACA program would be dissolved, the team had to radically transform the content of the materials, shifting the nature of the archive. Rather than focusing on government facing documentation targeted at building a case for legal protections and the right to lawful employment, the folder became a personal archive targeted at equipping undocumented immigrants to face changing government

Uneven Power Distribution
Across Design and Activism

Pulling back from our specific cases, this work highlights the fact that resources, identifications, and status often differ across design collaborators.[37] Recognizing this varied positionality involves accounting for the privilege of the designer to shape the interventions underway.[38] Our professional positions as students and professors, for example, distributed power unevenly across the research team. Many on the Archivo team found themselves on the job market within a year or two of the project's start, requiring members to balance weekend workshops on immigrant rights with professional pursuits that might call for corporate alignments—two political stances that might ordinarily sit in tension with one another. Collaborating with unknown organizations and examining topics stigmatized in popular accounts proved more imminent for some of us than others.

We also saw how questions of status and stigmatization do not stand on their own but instead entangle with additional hierarchies of difference, such as gender and nationality. It is simply more dangerous for someone who is gender non-binary, for instance, to track down or use tampons or pads in public restrooms due to the threat of harassment or violence (a phenomenon Cass Clemmer calls the "candy bar dilemma").[39] Likewise, the risks and fears of detention and deportation, seen with the Archivo case, illustrate how questions of nationality can be critical in contexts of design activism.

Beyond pointing out that such power dynamics exist, we encourage those who design to continually grapple with their role in the construction of design outcomes. Through our interventions, we saw how we may unwittingly stage differences that reinforce power differentials or exclusions for those marginalized, invisible, or oppressed. Much is at stake in these interventions and their unintended outcomes. By recognizing their stakes, and by mapping their contingencies, we call into question the promise of their reforms—opening opportunities for responsive revision.

37. This is what anthropologists call "differential subjectivities," or the ways in which standpoints, histories, identifications, and resources differ across our positions and sites. See, e.g., Marilyn Strathern, Partial Connections (Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman Altamira, 2005); and Lucy Suchman, "Located Accountabilities in Technology Production," Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems 14, no. 2 (2002): 91–105.

38. Lucy Suchman has described the role of artificial intelligence researchers. See Lucy Suchman, Human-Machine Reconfigurations: Plans and Situated Actions, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

39. Trans activist Cass Clemmer describes the "candy bar dilemma" as the phenomenon of using the restroom of the gender with which one identifies, only to be confronted with shouts from neighboring stalls or urinals on the crinkling sound of a tampon wrapper. To avoid harassment, Clemmer responds "Oh, it's just a Kit Kat!" See "Talking Periods in Public,"(Washington, DC: National Public Radio, 2018): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6Cl4KZIXjQ (Accessed April 30, 2018).

Ottoman Foundations of Turkish Typography: A Field Theory Approach

Özlem Özkal

This work focuses on typography in the Ottoman Empire from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth within the framework of strategic action field theory.[1] It explains the typographic environment of the late Ottoman period by using the measures of field formation and demonstrates that typography was an emerging field long before the Script Reform in Turkey in 1928.[2]

Since the foundation of the state printing press in 1727, movable metal type has been used to print books in Turkish with Arabic letters.[3] After the appearance of private presses, and with the impetus created by mass publication, typography thrived from the mid-nineteenth century onward. During these years, a body of knowledge accrued that contributed to the overall development of typography as a field (an organized social environment). Several publishers and printers who efficiently continued their businesses using Latin letters after the reform are indicative of this foundation.

In this context, this study aims to portray the typographic background of the late Ottoman period. To do so, it refers to the field concept, which looks beyond the creative output to perceive typography as a web of relations, in which different actors interact to set different potentials in motion. When we inquire whether such interactions and their outcomes align to manifest a strategic action field in the Ottoman context, we find that the prevailing conditions, such as insufficient institutionalization, do not yet permit us to consider typography as a full-fledged profession or a stable field. Meanwhile, despite its dispersed character, we can note the obvious processes that validate typography as a field in the process of formation. This paper elaborates on these processes and argues that the dynamic network of diverse but co-dependent activities, such as punchcutting, typefounding, printing, publishing, and journalism, adequately reveal typography to be an emerging field during the late Ottoman period.

1. Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam, A Theory of Fields (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

2. After the foundation of the republic in 1923, the Arabic script in which Turkish had been written was changed to Latin letters. The 1928 Script Reform started a new chapter in Turkey's history while abandoning an entire mode of communication in print.

3. The Ottoman Jewish, Greek, and Armenian communities had run printing presses since the late fifteenth century. İbrahim Müteferrika, an imperial servant, secured official permission to prepare and use Arabic metal type to print in Turkish for the first time.

Theoretical Framework:
The Field Concept

To analyze the defined historical period methodically, the theoretical framework of this study has a sociological grounding. The life of professions has been one of the central subjects of sociology. Especially popular in the 1980s, the attributes, formation, and organizational processes of professions were studied from different perspectives, leading to different debates as to whether the meaning or purpose of a profession is to provide expert service to society, or to create an economic advantage and secure a status position. An important drawback in constructing the notion of profession is the tendency to use the term to indicate a closed and homogenous social space, clear of any internal struggles or tensions with external agents.[4] In this context, replacing "profession" with the notion of the field provides the advantages of a more fluid and open perspective rather than a static and demarcated space. This approach better serves the analysis of typography because drawing fixed boundaries around typographic practice is difficult.

The field-based approach visualizes professions as a dynamic web of relations. Typography consists not only of designing typefaces, but also of using them; thus, from information to identity design, and from books to film titles—wherever language is represented—typography and typographers are at work. Historically, the lines that separate typographic activities and their actors from others are even more blurred and permissive. In a time when contemporary specializations had not yet taken shape, the same person could be the writer, publisher, printer, and typesetter of the same newspaper. The field concept permits us to consider typographic practice not as a fixed system but as a network of relations that follow a specific logic. This network is always under transformation because of the consistent struggle of potential and active forces.[5] Thus, the field concept enables a viewpoint that can register the dynamic interaction between various actors—both individual and collective ones.

Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam have developed the field concept further with the notion of strategic action field, which they use to examine the sources of change and stability in institutional life. They define a strategic action field as "a meso-level social order where actors […] interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purposes of the field, the relationships in the field, and the field's rules."[6] Thus, a strategic action field is an organized social space that dynamically evolves around common interests and identities operated by individual or collective actors. Each strategic action field interacts with other fields, and each can stimulate the emergence of another field. Its dynamic relation to a broader environment makes the concept of strategic action field especially meaningful in dealing with a subject like typography, given its continuous reciprocal relations with several other, proximate fields, such as printing, publishing, and calligraphy.

Because the present inquiry is interested in the formation stage of typography in pre-republic Turkey, the processes by which a field emerges are more crucial than the workings of an established field. Fligstein and McAdam define an emerging strategic action

4. Melahat Sahin-Dikmen, "A Bourdieusian Lens on to Professions. A Case Study of Architecture" (PhD diss., University of York, 2013).

5. Loïc J. D. Wacquant. "Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu," Sociological Theory 7, no. 1 (1989): 59, doi:10.2307/202061 (accessed January 12, 2017).

6. Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam, "Toward a General Theory of Strategic Action Fields," Sociological Theory 29, no. 1 (March 2011): 3, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9558.2010.01385.x.

field as a form of social space where the rules or the relations are not yet routinized.[7] As actors in the field gain information about other actors, they are motivated to act with regard to one another. When strategic interactions occur among actors who have intersecting interests and worldviews, the field gradually stabilizes.

The existing proximate fields are important for field formation. Just as printing brought forth typography, proximate fields have the potential to stimulate new fields. However, proximate fields are not the only catalysts for field emergence; other factors also are at work. Fligstein and McAdam categorize these factors as external and internal processes. They observe that the external factors influencing field emergence are population expansion, technological advances, the extent of social organization, and state action—all of which work in concert—while internal factors at work include shared understanding, fixed actors, consensus on the nature of rules, and existence of an interpretive frame.[8] In the following sections, these processes are discussed in further detail in relation to typographic production in the late Ottoman period, showing typography to be a vibrant emerging field in the decades before the 1928 Script Reform.

7. Fligstein and McAdam, A Theory of Fields, 86.

8. Ibid., 86–88.

External Factors for Field Emergence

This section compares the external forces that engender new strategic action fields with the conditions in the late Ottoman Empire. As Fligstein and McAdam observe, these factors have been influential throughout history in the organization of social space. They work together, and as the level of cooperation among them increases, they contribute more effectively to field emergence.

Population Expansion
One of the external factors effecting field emergence is population growth. In the Ottoman Empire, the first census was organized between 1828 and 1831. Statistics from this period onward show that the population trend moved upward, unless such movement was interrupted by adverse events, such as the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78.[9] Equally important for this inquiry is that the reading population also experienced a correlative positive growth trend. Following the 1839 Imperial Edict of Reorganization, the Education Act of 1869 effectively improved literacy throughout the empire by establishing new schools and regulating the curricula countrywide.[10] Hence, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the literacy rate had risen from 5% to about 15% to 18%.[11]

The majority of the literate population was located in the cities, suggesting a new reading public with modern tastes in literature. This taste served as the primary force that enabled young Ahmet İhsan, a renowned printer of the late Ottoman period, to jumpstart a prominent publishing career. His translation of Jules Verne's The Mysterious Island, published in 1889, quickly became a bestseller, paving the way for several other translations (see Figure 1). In less than two years, İhsan established his own printing press, Servet-i

9. Kemal H. Karpat, Ottoman Population 1830-1914, Demographic and Social Characteristics (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 107–90. I have arrived at this conclusion by comparing total population counts of successive censuses that are listed in the statistical appendices.

10. Emine Ö. Evered, "Education Act of 1869," appendix 1 in Empire and Education Under the Ottomans (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 205–30.

11. Kemal H. Karpat, Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 513.

Figure 1
Cover for Jules Verne's novel, Gizli ada [The Mysterious Island], translated into Turkish by Ahmed İhsan Effendi, 1889. Courtesy of Atatürk Library.

12. Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, Matbuat hatıralarım [My Memoirs on Publishing], 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012). Ahmet İhsan took the name Tokgöz after the Surname Law was passed in 1934.

Fünun [Wealth of Sciences], which survived even after his death in 1942.[12]

Technological Advances
The second factor that externally motivates field emergence is technological progress. Although the Ottoman Empire did not actively partake in the industrial revolution, new inventions were imported without much delay. The rotary printing press, pantographic engraving machine, and hot metal typesetting machine were some of the technologies that directly influenced the development of printing and publishing in İstanbul. For example, Hovhannes Mühendisyan—a punchcutter, typefounder, and printer—had three new-generation printing presses and two lithography machines imported from the United States in the 1850s. The accelerated capacity of his small print shop made him "obtain the control of almost the entire [printing] market" in the city.[13]

Mass-circulation media was another technological advance, spurred by the development of the telegram and national news agencies in the nineteenth century. In İstanbul, newspapers and journals rapidly multiplied in number after the 1860s. Their dependence on speed put significant pressure on publishers and printers, leading them to question the economic convenience of existing techniques in metal type printing. These dynamics eventually led to a remodeling of the typographic system in a way that permitted printing by fewer metal sorts.

13. Teotig (Teotoros Lapçinciyan), Baskı ve harf. Ermeni matbaacılık tarihi [Type and Letter: History of Armenian Printing], trans. Silvart Malhasyan and Arlet İncidüzen (İstanbul: Birzamanlar Yayıncılık, 2012), 102. Originally published as Dib U Dar (Constantinople: G. Bolis Nersesyan, 1912).

The Extent of Social Organization
The capacity for social organization, or the presence of proximate fields, is a third factor that contributes to field emergence. In this context, metal type printing can be referred as the main proximate field because of its direct relationship with typography. However, printing was part of a larger network. In her study on printing and its multidimensional role in history, Elizabeth Eisenstein refers to print shops as dynamic social spaces. They attracted intellectuals and "encouraged forms of combinatory activity which were social as well as intellectual."[14]

A similar situation can be observed in İstanbul. Authors, poets, editors-in-chief, political columnists, and even bureaucrats frequently visited, gathered in, and worked in the printing presses. Newspapers, journals, and pamphlets were a practical means for them to publicize new ideas and influence society. Most of these intellectuals were familiar with the printing process and introduced progressive ideas to it. For example, İbrahim Şinasi experimented with a system of metal type that reduced the number of sorts from roughly 500 to approximately 112. Although the actual letterforms he devised did not receive much appreciation, his idea of scaling down the typecase was instrumental in the growth of the field by inspiring other actors in the network.

Emerging typography also benefited from other fields, such as publishing and journalism, which can be observed in the alliance between the İkdam [Perseverence] newspaper and the punchcutter, Haçik Kevorkyan. As one of the highest circulating dailies, İkdam commissioned Kevorkyan to create a heavier type to meet its changing editorial needs. The result was the first bold variation in naskh

14. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 76.

style (see Figure 2). Kevorkyan was quick to understand publishers' appetite for novelty. He stepped outside the customary styles and sizes, cutting a highly decorative kufic fount and display sizes for the first time.

State Action
Referencing the rise of modern nation-states, Fligstein and McAdam describe state action as the fourth external factor affecting field emergence. The Great State of Ottomans, as it was officially titled, was clearly not a nation-state, but a multinational empire. Other than two brief periods of constitutional monarchy, the absolute power was in the hands of the sultan who represented the state. Accordingly, the Ottoman state was the sole owner and commissioner of printing activities until the legalization of private presses in the 1840s. The state's powerful influence in the growth of a vital proximate field affected typography positively. Near the turn of the nineteenth century, the state press went through a reorganization. Its increased capacity required that the metal type remaining from the first press founded by İbrahim Müteferrika be replaced. The task to cut new Arabic type was given to an experienced Armenian printer, Bogos Arabyan, in 1795 (see Figure 3), which eventually rekindled metal type production. When private publishers began entering the printing field, the state continued to exercise control over printers, as well as to be an affluent client by continuously ordering schoolbooks, valuable paper, yearly reports, and Qurans.

Figure 2
Detail from İkdam newspaper, October 27, 1904, showing Kevorkyan's 24 pt. bold naskh type in the centered title. Personal collection.

Figure 3
Detail from the book el-Okyanusü'l-basît fi tercümeti'l-Kamusi'l-muhît [Arabic-Ottoman Dictionary] by Firûzâbadî (Takvimhane-i Amire Press, 1855), showing 16 pt. naskh type cut by Bogos Arabyan. Courtesy of Emin Nedret İşli collection.

Internal Factors for Field Emergence

This section reviews various events, people, and their relations in their capacity to operate as internal processes that effect the emergence of the field of typography in the late Ottoman period. The criteria Fligstein and McAdam propose for field emergence are examined in the context of the Ottoman Empire to illustrate the typographic environment and to show how it was increasingly coordinated and visible.[15]

15. Fligstein and McAdam, A Theory of Fields, 88–89.

Shared Understanding
Did participating actors in the emerging field draw attention to certain immediate issues or events, and if so, did their perspectives coincide? Examining the historical evidence suggests that actors did indeed share an understanding about the significant events and developments taking place in their historical milieu.

Of note are two magazines and their publishers: Ebüzziya Tevfik's Mecmua-i Ebüzziya [Ebüzziya's Magazine] and Ahmet İhsan's Servet-i Fünun [Wealth of Sciences] magazine. The contents of both publications largely reflected the worldview of their owners, who also wrote regularly in the magazines and demonstrated an understanding of what can be considered a nascent form of typography in international conversation. We can see evidence of this cosmopolitan knowledge in İhsan's advertising catalog for his print shop. Uncommon for its time, this promotional album, prepared by the Ser-
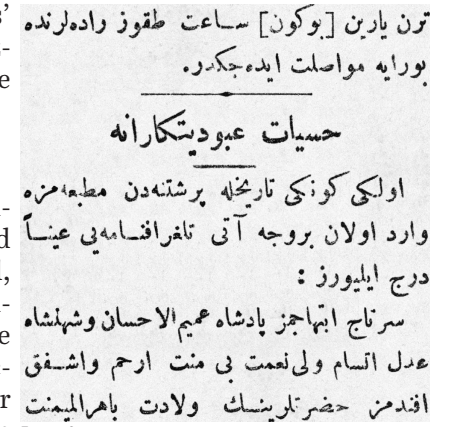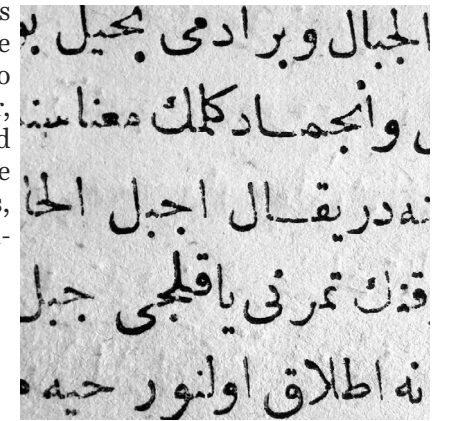
Figure 4
Page from the promotional album of the Servet-i Fünun Press, showing the typesetters' room, 1912. Personal collection.

16. Haçik Topozyan, "Linotip mürettip makinesi," [Linotype Typesetting Machine], Mecmua-i Ebüzziya, no.154, 26 Rajab 1330 [July 11, 1912], 60–64.

Figure 5
Spread from the Mecmua-i Ebuzziya magazine, July 1912. Courtesy of National Library of Turkey.

17. "Elektrikli matbaalar," [Electrical printing] Servet-i Fünun, no. 1146, 9 Mayıs 1329 [May 22, 1913], 46.

18. Johann Strauss, "Zum Istanbuler buchwesen in der zweiten halfte des 19. jahrhunderts" [İstanbul Book Trade in the Second Half of The Nineteenth Century], The Journal of Ottoman Studies 12 (1992): 327.

19. "Constantinople," The Times, October 11, 1888, quoted in Ebüzziya-Tevfik, Nevsâl-i marifet [Yearbook], vol. 11 (Constantinople: Matbaa-i Ebüzziya, 1310 [1894]).

20. "Servet-i Fünun'un Şikago madalyası ve şaha-dethamesi," [Servet-i Fünun's Chicago Medal and Certificate], Servet-i Fünun 290, 19 Eylül 1312 [October 2, 1896], 56–57.

Figure 6
Spread from the Servet-i Fünun magazine, October 1896. Courtesy of National Library of Turkey.

vet-i Fünun Press, showed a modern print shop with well-organized work spaces, powerful metal type presses, and trained typesetters (see Figure 4).

Ebüzziya Tevfik was a renowned literary figure and calligrapher, whereas Ahmet İhsan was known for his translations, in addition to his skills in journalism. Their magazines were keen to exhibit a modern, Western identity covering various popular subjects, from literature to science, and history to travel. As committed printers, Tevfik and İhsan occasionally published news articles on the history, technology, and practice of printing. One such article in Mecmua-i Ebüzziya, written by an author named Haçik Topozyan, introduced the Linotype typesetting machine as the product of the modern world.[16] The Linotype Company made mechanical typesetting of Arabic letters available in 1911. This June 1912 article offers insight into how engaged the pre-republic printers were in the advances in printing and type (see Figure 5).

A year later, in 1913, a brief news report titled "Elektrikli matbaalar," [Electrical Printing] was published in Servet-i Fünun, informing readers that the new electrical moveable type presses made in Germany allowed printers to print the same content in different places of the world simultaneously. According to this article, this invention could compete with Linotype; its setup was more costly, "but compared with the current methods [print shops were using], it provided 80% more benefit."[17]

The similarity of subjects in both magazines was not a coincidence. Tevfik and İhsan closely followed the new trends in the art of printing around the world. They wanted to be a part of it and, in some cases, did participate in the international printing scene. The yearbooks Tevfik printed were selected for public exhibition more than once by the Book Printers' Association in Leipzig.[18] Upon his success, Tevfik received a mention in The Times newspaper and later reproduced the newspaper clipping on the cover of the 1894 yearbook he published. The importance he attached to the article indicates that Tevfik was very pleased with the way The Times addressed him: "…having travelled abroad to study European languages and progress in arts and sciences, the printing office of Tewfik Bey Ebusiah, [at] Galata, near the Ottoman Bank, where ornamental typography has been brought to a perfection, [is] unequalled in any European printing offices of the same kind."[19]

Not to be outdone, the Servet-i Fünun magazine was exhibited and received awards during the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. Similar to Tevfik's response to The Times' praise, Servet-i Fünun's publisher, İhsan, revisited the story after three years and also included images of the actual trophies—a medallion and certificate (see Figure 6).[20]

These examples suggest that two of the most prominent printers of İstanbul in the late 1800s were carefully observing not only their local competitors but also the international sphere. The fact that they used Arabic letters, and thus different typographic standards, seemingly was not an issue. Despite their language medium, these printers adapted to new technologies and exhibited that they were in touch with the "modern" world.

Fixed Actors

The second internal condition necessary for field emergence is the presence of fixed actors—people who have certain knowhow and are capable of playing pivotal roles in the organization of the field. Fixed actors do not claim the status themselves but are afforded that position as a result of their actions, which elicit the trust of others.

Johannes Gutenberg and İbrahim Müteferrika occupied distinct places in the esteem of the Ottoman print workers as the founding fathers of letterpress printing. A painted sign found in a print shop displayed the following expression:

At every dawn, with Basmala, we open;
Gutenberg, our founder, is our chieftain.[21]

Similarly, Mühendisyan in his type specimen book acknowledged İbrahim Müteferrika as "a person of perseverance and skill who printed in Turkish two hundred and sixty-six years after Gutenberg."[22]

In addition to these historical figures, the names that repeatedly appear in independent sources in the context of punchcutting and typefounding are Bogos Arabyan, Hovhannes Mühendisyan, and Haçik Kevorkyan, in chronological order.[23] Each of these actors has received state awards and decorations. Bogos Arabyan was given an Order of Press by Sultan Mahmud II, as well as privileges, such as tax exemption.[24] Upon presenting his specimen book to the Palace in 1888, Hovhannes Mühendisyan was awarded with a fourth rank Order of the Medjidie and the Medal for Fine Arts by Sultan Abdülhamid II.[25] Finally, because of his success in restoring the long since abandoned ta'līq type at the state press, Haçik Kevorkyan was considered for a fourth rank Order of the Medjidie in 1844 and was then presented with this order, as well as an additional third rank in 1917.[26]

Poet Safvet's verses dedicated to Mühendisyan also demonstrate his role as a fixed actor in typography's emergence as a respected field in the late Ottoman period. The poem was printed as a type specimen using Mühendisyan's new 24-point naskh type (see Figure 7) and was presented to Sultan Abdülaziz in 1866. After describing the calligrapher's contribution, Safvet wrote that Mühendisyan had punched the letters on steel with such skill and had so closely adhered to the originals that the books printed with these letters would be as agreeable as the handwritten ones for the men of the craft.[27]

To the Ottoman eye, punchcutting would not be comparable to calligraphy, which was considered high art. As artists, calligraphers created the letters, while punchcutters transformed calligraphers' art into metal type. However, Mühendisyan's cuts, like those of his precursor Arabyan, were addressed by their name rather than by the calligrapher's name,[28] indicating the esteem that punchcutting was starting to receive. The 16-point naskh type and the ta'līq type, created for the state press by Bogos Arabyan, were both referred to as Araboğlu.[29] Mühendisyan's type held similar distinction, as can be seen in the court documents concerning his royalty rights, which explained the subject as "the metal type used under the name mühendisyan in printing."[30]

The designation of the typefaces with Arabyan and Mühendisyan's names are an overt indication of their confirmed po-

21. Gökhan Akçura, Cumhuriyet döneminde Türkiye matbaacılık tarihi [The Turkish Printing History in the Republic Period], (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2012), 37. "Basmala" is the name given to the phrase meaning "in the name of God."

22. Ohannes Mühendisyan, Type Specimen, Atatürk Library Digital Archive and E-Sources. http://ataturk-kitapligi.ibb.gov.tr/ataturkkitapligi/index.php?dil=en (database item accession number Bel_Osm_O.02645) (accessed June 5, 2017). This six-page specimen bears three different dates: The page with 24-point naskh is dated 1283 [1866]; the page with 16-point naskh is dated 1300 [1883]; and the page with 6-point naskh is dated 1305 [1888].

23. The Armenian names had gone through slight changes during transliteration. For example, Mühendisyan's first name was commonly written as Ohannes in Ottoman-Turkish sources. Also, in formal contexts, both Arabyan and Mühendisyan preferred the translation of the patronymic suffix into Turkish. As a result, they are also known as Araboğlu and Mühendisoğlu.

24. Teotig, Baskı ve harf, 90. The Order of Press was given in 1817 for the first and last time to Bogos Arabyan.

25. Kevork Pamukciyan, Biyografileriyle Ermeniler [Biographies of Armenians], ed. Osman Köker, vol. 4, Ermeni Kaynaklarından Tarihe Katkılar [Contributions from Armenian sources to history] (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2003), 313–15.

26. Ahmet Rasim, "Yeni yirmidört punto kufi yazı," [The New 24 point Kufic Script], İkdam [Perseverence], August 13, 1924: 3. This article presents a commentary by Haçik Kevorkyan that gives a detailed account of his experience with punchcutting.
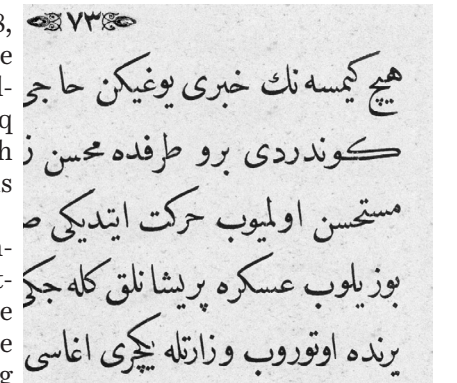
Figure 7
24 pt. naskh type 'cut by Hovhannes Mühendisyan. Detail from the book Hulâsatül-itibâr [A Summary of Admonitions] by Ahmet Resmî Effendi, 1870. Personal collection.

27. Uğur Derman, "Yazı san'atının eski matbaacılığımıza akisleri," [The Reflections 'of the Art of Writing on Our Past Printing], in Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği, basım ve yayınıcılığımızın 250. yılı [Turkish Librarians Association, 250th Anniversary of Our Printing and Publishing], (Ankara: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği, 1979), 97–118.

28. Arabyan uses the hand of calligrapher Deli Osman; Mühendisyan uses the hands of Yaserizade Mustafa İzzet Effendi, Racih Effendi, and Kadıasker Mustafa İzzet Effendi. They were famous master-calligraphers of their periods.

29. Pamukciyan, Biyografileriyle Ermeniler, 33.

30. Zarohi B. Mühendisyan, "Mühendisyan Ohannes Efendi tarafından imal olunan mühendisyan yazıları namı ile matbuatda kullanılan yazıları için telif hakkı," [Copyrights for the type produced by Mühendisyan Ohannes Effendi, used under the name mühendisyan in printing], petition, 1916, General Directorate of the State Archives of the Prime Ministry (accession number Ş.D. 3114, 22, H-22-03-1313); https://en.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/ (accessed May 22, 2017).

Figure 8
Portrait of Hovhannes Mühendisyan wearing the decorations with which he was awarded, Servet-i Fünun magazine, April 1891. Courtesy of National Library of Turkey.

31. Ahmet İhsan, "Mühendisoğlu," [Mühendisyan], Servet-i Fünun no.5, 11 April 1307 [April 23, 1891], 55. After completing the mentioned ruq'ah type, Mühendisyan passed away in November 1891.

32. Ahmed Rasim, "Yeni hakk edilmiş bir huruf," [A recently cut type], İkdam [Perseverence], August 11, 1899.

Figure 9
48 pt. kufic type cut by Haçik Kevorkyan. Detail from İkdam newspaper, August 18, 1922. Courtesy of National Library of Turkey.

33. Ahmed Rasim, "Duyub üstad Rasim'den dedim tarihin, düzüldü hatt-ı kufi kırksekiz punto," [I Heard from Rasim and Noted the Day of the Fourty-eight Point Kufic Script], İkdam [Perseverence], August 18, 1922.

34. Fligstein and McAdam, A Theory of Fields, 88.

35. Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Arap asıllı Türk harfleri," [Turkish Letters of Arabic Origin], in İstanbul Ansiklopedisi [İstanbul Encyclopedia], (İstanbul: Neşriyat Kolektif Şti., 1959), 930.

36. Zekeriya Sertel, Hatıralarım [Memoirs], (İstanbul: Yaylacık Matbaası, 1968), 128.
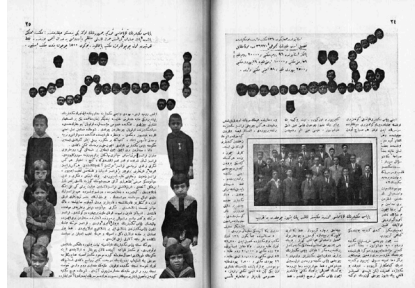

Figure 10
Spread from Resimli Ay [The Illustrated Moon] magazine, May 1924. The title created with cutout faces says "we want books." Courtesy of Atatürk Library.

37. Tahir and Diyarbakırlı Ahmed, Sanat-ı tıbaat yahut mürettiplik [The art of printing or typesetting], (İstanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1311 [1883]). I'm grateful to Ömer Durmaz and Nedret Emin İşli for sharing this book in their collection.

sitions as punchcutter/typefounders. However, a less implicit sign of Mühendisyan's status—yet one that confirms him as a fixed actor in his community—is that the Servet-i Fünun magazine addressed him as "our famous punchcutter" (see Figure 8). The magazine informed its readers that "the 82-year-old master" was "currently cutting an exceptionally exquisite ruq'ah style type which would be another contribution of his to the world of printing when completed."[31]

Our final example of a fixed actor, Haçik Kevorkyan, took over typefounding after Mühendisyan and also received recognition from major newspapers, including İkdam and Vakit [Time]. For example, in August 1899, Ahmed Rasim, a popular novelist and columnist of the era, wrote that "[t]he new, thick letters which our readers have been asking about were created by our skilled punchcutter Haçik Kevorkyan."[32] After describing the meticulous process of punchcutting and typefounding, Rasim added that it was readers' duty to give thanks to people who served the progress of the country. Two decades later, in 1922, Ahmed Rasim praised Kevorkyan again for completing a 48-point kufic style type
(see Figure 9). This time, he concluded that punchcutting should be considered an art.[33]

Shared Rules
The third internal condition necessary for the emergence of a strategic action field requires that the actors agree to some extent on what kinds of actions are desirable for the field. Their consensus eventually helps to regulate the overall interaction in the field.[34]

The Ottoman society largely valued and relied on traditions in the organization of social and institutional life. That the domain of printing quickly produced its own unwritten rules, from the organization of workspace to the hierarchy of workers, should not be surprising. For example, novice typesetters were expected to acquire two years of training to be considered competent typesetters.[35]

The calligraphic traditions observed in manuscripts dominated the formal decisions in the earlier stages of printing. However, in time, the printed page developed its own conventions. These conventions became so entrenched that when publishers Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel wanted to experiment with different layouts in their new 1924 publication, the master typesetter protested the arrangements as an insult to his art. He even disassembled the type that had been tied up for printing, complaining that the two publishers would make him the laughing stock of the entire community.[36] The eventual published pages of the magazine suggest that the master typesetter might have protested the unjustified blocks and the text-wrapped images, favoring instead a more formal look (see Figure 10).

The conventions that the Sertels' typesetter wanted to pursue seem to be more than just personal fabrications. Rather than casually communicated know-how, the preferred conventions could well be drafted principals, like the ones in the guidebook, Sanat-ı tıbaat yahut mürettiplik [The Art of Printing or Typesetting].[37] This 34-page book, written and published by two typesetters in 1893, communicates a body of knowledge regarding typography at the time. Thus, it is an attempt to systematize and transfer this knowledge to newcomers to sustain the practice of printing and typesetting.

Trade associations also have a critical role in establishing rules and regulating the interaction of participating actors in a field. Fligstein and McAdams refer to such organizations as "internal governance units," stressing that they are influential in shaping the process of field formation.[38] Crucial for our context are two organizations that were founded shortly after the print boom in 1908.[39] The first was Osmanlı Matbaa İşçileri Zanaat Birliği [The Ottoman Print Workers' Craft Union], founded under the leadership of Karekin Gozigyan.[40] This union succeeded in reducing the workers' shift to eight hours and in doubling their pay. The second was Mürettipler Tasarruf Sandığı [The Typesetters' Provident Fund], which aimed to maintain Ottoman typesetters' economic security.[41] Unfortunately, these organizations ceased their activities in less than a year because of the political turmoil. Thus, typical of emerging fields, stability was still fragile.

Interpretive Frame
The fourth internal component that motivates field emergence is the presence of an interpretive frame used by the participating actors to evaluate others' activities in the field. In an emerging field where the rules are not fully established, opposing views on what is principally valid can be expected. Such debates are crucial because they indicate that strategic actors are able to exercise a critical look toward the existing conditions.

In Ottoman printing, we can find a number of such debates regarding typography as an emerging field. A significant debate emerged from the high quantity of metal sorts required for printing. For the common naskh style, around 500 sorts were necessary, which was inconvenient for rapid production.[42] Especially after the 1860s, with the proliferation of private presses and mass circulation publications, the complaints became more vocal. For example, referring to Mühendisyan's new 24-point naskh, the Muhbir [Informer] newspaper wrote, "Mr. Ohannes's cuts are worthy of all the praise and respect. But their maintenance is costly, and not every man has the economic power to afford it." [43]

Trying to reduce the number of sorts, İbrahim Şinasi, the editor of the Tasvir-i Efkar [Illustration of Opinions] newspaper, introduced a new system in 1870 that used around 112 sorts. The system altered the conventional cascading arrangement in favor of a plain, linear setting (see Figure 11).

Ebüzziya Tevfik, Şinasi's junior associate, did not approve of his tampering with the traditional form. Although Tevfik acknowledged the new system's economic benefits, years later, he criticized Şinasi's system as inferior to his own set of 519 sorts. In the criticism, Tevfik renounced the printers who used downsized typecases derived from Şinasi's model because they failed to make any progress toward creating beauty and perfection in printing.[44]

Tevfik's passionate and meticulous attitude toward printing greatly contributed to the interpretive frame around the emerging field of typography and is evident in his other writings. In fact, his role as an observant critic was as equally remarkable as his creative contribution to printing. In January 1912, he published a comprehensive criticism on Haçik Kevorkyan's new 36-point naskh type (see Figure 12).

38. Fligstein and McAdam, A Theory of Fields, 94.

39. The Second Constitution lifted the heavy censorship on the press in 1908, causing an upsurge of new publications.
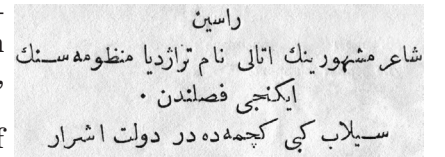
40. Teotig, Baskı ve harf, 162.

41. Ibid.

42. For example, the California typecase, standardized in 1871, consisted of 89 sorts.

43. Untitled, Muhbir [Informer], 18 Muharrem 1285 [May 22, 1867],

Figure 11
İbrahim Şinasi's typographic system used in his book Terceme-i manzume [Translation of poetry], 1870. Courtesy of Atatürk Library.

44. Ebüzziya Tevfik, "Islah-ı huruf meselesi," [The Case of Reformation of the Letters], Mecmua-i Ebüzziya [Ebüzziya's Magazine] 43, 1 Rebiülahir 1302 [January 18, 1885], 1368.

Figure 12
36 pt. naskh type by Haçik Kevorkyan. The type specimen from İkdam newspaper, December 27, 1911. Courtesy of Atatürk Library.
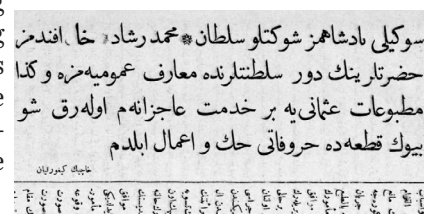
The article first pointed out the discrepancy in the way news-papers introduced the type. The İkdam newspaper noted that the type was cut by Kevorkyan, whereas Tanin [Resonance] wrote that Kevorkyan had had it cut. Tevfik found this inconsistency trouble-some because the former referred to punchcutting, whereas the lat-ter concerned typefounding. He asserted that every punchcutter can be a typefounder, but not every typefounder is a punchcutter. Finding the type to be in poor quality because of calligraphic mistakes, Tevfik argued that the problem could be originating from the calligrapher. He concluded that "if the type is enlarged from Mühendisyan's old cuts, then, it is even worse!" [45]

Such comments might sound harsh, especially for a seasoned punchcutter like Kevorkyan. However, we can see that Kevorkyan was not disheartened by this criticism at all. In later years, he created two kufic types, a 36-point ruq'ah, and a 14-point naskh type.[46] Tevfik's contribution to the interpretive frame enabled participating actors like Kevorkyan to make better self-assessments and to improve their

Conclusion

Historical grounding is essential for the development of a field be-cause it helps to visualize the practice in a broader scope and to set innovative future strategies in the light of the former efforts. While trying to arrive at a more comprehensive view of the development of the field of typography in Turkey, this study also aims to contrib-ute to world design history by presenting new knowledge, and thus a wider perspective, on an under-explored terrain. Although the 1928 Script Reform marks an abrupt change in the typographic his-tory of Turkey, it is not the starting point for Turkey's typograph-ic formation, which can be traced back to the Ottoman period. In this regard, the initial question of this study was whether typogra-phy-related activities in the late Ottoman period bore the charac-teristics that affirmed field emergence. For this purpose, this study pursued a field-based perspective that enabled a flexible approach to typography, rendering it as an organized space of relations where the actors shared common purposes, interests, or identities and where they interacted strategically to obtain stability.

The comparison between the conditions in the late Otto-man era with the processes required for the emergence of a strate-gic action field signifies that typography had substantial potential to evolve into an organized field. Participating actors displayed a shared understanding about the issues at stake, influential actors and common principles set the parameters, and the participating actors had the ability to interpret and criticize the general output.

Appropriately, we can say that before the modern republic introduced methodical education via printing schools and art acad-emies, the self-taught Ottoman artisans had already taken the first difficult steps toward a coherent field of typography. Hovhannes Mühendisyan poetically discloses the challenges of an emerging field as he describes his quest into the arts of punchcutting and typefounding. In the publisher's note to Benjamin Franklin's The Way to Wealth, he writes:

> …*by spending valuable time, walking a road no one has travelled before, and with God's help, I have answered the demands as much as I could afford, and finally, I have meandered from the befuddled unease of a groom in the bride's room into the visible world.*[47]

These steps, for all their meandering and befuddled unease, were the first in the field of typography in Turkey; its rich history began in the late Ottoman period, and it continues today.

45. Ebüziya Tevfik, "36 punto huruf ve Haçik Kevorkyan Efendi," [36 point type and Haçik Kevorkyan Effendi], Mecmua-i Ebüzziya [Ebüzziya's Magazine] 128, 14 Mu-harrem 1330 [January 4, 1913], 370.

46. Rasim, "Yeni yirmidört punto kufi," 3. Kevorkyan cut a 12-point kufic in 1912 and a 48-point kufic in 1922. He produced a 36-point ruq'ah in 1917, and a 14-pt naskh in 1918.

47. Ohannes Mühendisoğlu, Tarik-i servet: ez-hikmet-i Rikardos [The Way to Wealth: From the Philosophy of Richard], by Benjamin Franklin, trans. Bedros Hocasa-ryan (İstanbul: Mühendisoğlu Matbaası, 1286 [1870]). I would like to extend my gratitude to Onur Yazıcıgil for introducing me to this book and for his help in the translation of this difficult passage.