Nineteenth-Century Design

Volume III: Production and Practices of Design

Edited by
Clive Edwards

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Production and Practices of Design

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VOLUME III – PRODUCTION AND PRACTICES OF DESIGN

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A four-volume edition of primary source materials that document the histories of design across the long nineteenth century (c.1789–1914) gathered together in a comprehensive and accessible format. The four-volume format has offered an opportunity to multiply the number of texts and their length, as opposed to short or edited excerpts, so much of this selection includes complete articles or book chapters. The texts are arranged thematically, then within the sub-themes, chronologically. The mix of well-known and lesser-known texts is intended to demonstrate a range of, sometimes competing, approaches to the themes.

It might be argued that the availability of online sources of published works has made anthologies redundant. However, the prodigious amount of information now available electronically actually increases the need for some form of direction and navigational assistance through an edited selection of texts. Therefore, anthologies remain essential as guides to a field that would otherwise be overwhelming. Anthologies also act as compact accounts of a larger story that stand as both a gateway and a guide. Inevitably, anthologies are about exclusions as inclusions, but the choices made in this selection are considered as one part of a set of helpful tools towards an understanding of the beliefs and practices, theories, actions, politics, and practices related to design in the nineteenth century.

The introductions to each volume prepare the reader for a greater understanding of the particular subject matter than would otherwise be possible if considering the sources without some context. The introductions then provide pointers on how to read the materials in relation to major issues, and offer an overview of the shifting patterns of many aspects of design. At a more drilled down level, the headnotes to each text offer details about the author, where known; details of the publication and its after-history if relevant; and any thematic and textual relationship to other works by the author, as well as to other contemporary works. The contemporary critical reception of the texts is also of interest because this offers further insights into the attitudes and debates of the time. In this regard, extensive reference and quotation from primary sources are made.

The volumes are intended to stand alone, but each one will inform the other in an overall picture of nineteenth-century design. Taken together, these annotated

sources with their contextual introductions and headnotes present a valuable overview of a broadly defined field of design during the long nineteenth century.

This general introduction first considers the definitions of design as used in the period. It then considers some of the general themes and strands covered by the entire edition. It then briefly considers the publishing history of nineteenth-century design. Next, it moves to consider the major design issues of the century, which is followed by an overview of the individual volume content that delves into these matters. Finally, there is a brief note on the rationale and on the editorial processes used.

Definitions of Design[1]

During the nineteenth century, the term 'design' had several meanings, both as a verb and a noun. They are often related to each other and are usually dependent upon context for the precise sense of use. For example, Thomas Sopwith, a Newcastle cabinet-maker and architect explored the definitions in his work 'On the Principles of Design' (1836): 'Design in its most comprehensive sense, includes whatever is undertaken by man, as a reasoning creature; but, in its more restricted sense, it is applied to works of contrivance in mechanism, and in the fine and useful arts'.[2] This is fine as far as it goes, but there were more specific definitions used to understand the term during the period, which ranged from broad concepts to particular applications.

Jamieson's 1829 *Dictionary of Mechanical Science, Arts, Manufactures, and Miscellaneous Knowledge* explains the term in a little more detail:

> Design, in Painting, the first idea of a large work drawn roughly, and on a small scale, with the intention of being executed and finished in large. In Manufactures, design expresses the figures with which the workman enriches his stuff or silk, and which he copies after his own drawing or the sketches of some artist. In Building, the term ichnography may be used, when by design is only meant the plan of a building, or a flat figure drawn on paper; when some side or face of the building is raised from the ground, we may use the term orthography: and when both front and sides are seen in perspective, it may be scenography.[3]

The following subdivisions build on this definition.

Design as a Conceptual Process

For some, design referred to the first stage, a mental aim, scheme, or plan conceived in the mind, as a visualising process towards a goal. The American drawing teacher Charles Barry seems to sum up this idea: 'As it would be necessary in English composition to first have an idea to express, and then to clothe it in words; so, in design-composition, similar reflection and care are necessary'.[4]

This leads to the idea of invention as contriving and devising something. The American engineer and author C. L. Redfield linked design, invention, and skill: 'Design is the product of a knowledge of the laws and materials of nature joined to a sense of the fitness of things. Skill is an acquirement attained by practice upon one thing or class of things. Of these four elements relating to the progress of mechanics, invention, and design are most intimately associated with each other. Discovery is more closely connected with invention than with design; skill more closely with design than with invention'.[5]

Design as an Art or Skill

The 'art of design' was also a language or a set of practices, attitudes, and methods. Initially, it referred to preliminary drawings or sketches that played a major part in works such as painting, sculpture, or architecture. In an article discussing art and design education, *The Fine Arts Journal* (1847) developed the conceptual process by suggesting that design was an ability to translate the conceptual to the visual: 'The art of design is therefore not a distinct quality of art; but the result of a combined talent of acquiring power in the hand to put down correctly what the mind is capable of dictating clearly'.[6] The term was also widely used in relation to schools that systematically taught the 'art of design', as applied to decoration, and intended for manufacture, rather than fine art.

Design as Fine Art

In this usage, design often indicated a composition or a piece of finished artwork. Discussing the work of the artist Benjamin West, the *Library of Fine Arts* (1832) in an article titled 'The British School of Design' used the term specifically in relation to fine art.

> Looking to the design of his [West's] pictures, there are few which do not afford examples of the most perfect composition. His drawings and cartoons, preparatory to his finished pictures, are among the finest specimens of design, and are in many instances preferable to his larger and more finished works; but this must happen in all cases, where the mind pours itself out in the rapidity of its first impressions of the subject.[7]

In the same sense, the *Art Journal* defined design in this instance as 'sometimes used synonymously with Sketch or Study, to indicate the first composition for a picture'.[8]

At the other end of the century, in 1884, William Morris, in his evidence to the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, noted the link between art and design: 'The really good artistic designer must, in order to be successful, be equally talented and just as highly trained as the artist painter, and it is a mistaken notion to believe that designers are as a rule failures in art'.[9]

Design as Referring to the General Form or Composition of an Object

The term in this case refers to the completed product or result of the design process. It may also refer to a shape, style, or model of objects. For example, J. C. Loudon mentioned in his 1835 work *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* how 'The principal Styles of Design in Furniture, as at present executed in Britain may be reduced to four':[10] More explicitly a judge's report on prizes offered by the Royal Dublin Society, noted 'Among these, the designs for Porcelain, Muslins, and Wall Decoration, evince a degree of correct taste in form, composition, and colour, highly creditable to the Students'.[11]

Design as Decorative Patterns

The term design could also be understood as a template for production. Lewis Foreman Day suggested how this developed: 'we begin to see that, had there been no such thing as pattern design before, and no traditional forms of design for us to follow, those very forms must have been evolved as certainly out of the more complex conditions of modern manufacture as they were out of the simple contrivances of primitive handicraft'.[12] Walter Crane also discussed 'the structure of decorative pattern' in his explanation of design as pattern:

> The ornamental designer is not so absolutely bound by structural laws as the architect; but the fact that the structural laws which govern his art are more mental than physical does not make them less binding or less real. Designing is not mathematics or geometry, but there appears to be a certain logic of line and colour in design which, given certain fundamental forms and characters, demands certain necessary sequences.[13]

Design as an Architectural Drawing or Plan

Here, the word denotes an architectural drawing that suggests that a design is a plan to be carried out or followed. Many architectural pattern books of the period were titled 'A series of designs' or suchlike. A design in this sense may also be a preliminary drawing or sketch; a plan, outline, or model produced to show the look or function of a building, machine, or other object before it is made or built. In 1879, *The Hub*, a journal for carriage manufacturers, discussed the development of a design drawing:

> In considering how a [automobile] body should be proportioned as regards outline or style, the school in which the designer's taste has been cultivated forms a subject for consideration . . . the criticising process continues for days; and the drawing remains unfinished on the board, in many cases, from two to three weeks, until at last the design has reached the degree of perfection and beauty desired, when a working draft is made.[14]

Most of these various senses of the word will be found in this collection, where the usage is usually evident from the context. The definition of design is clearly multifaceted. Therefore, readers will find entries relating design to historical and practical topics, as well as entries concerning design and aesthetics, gender, politics, ideology, and so on.

General Themes and Strands Covered by the Entire Edition

The nineteenth century, often imprecisely described as the Victorian Age,[15] was particularly distinguished by immense and volatile changes and progress in most arenas of activity. Although there were numerous wars and conflicts, political upheavals, dynastic changes, and economic disruptions, great progress was made in the fields of science and technology, arts, literature and culture, and some progress on social changes. Alongside these issues were the continuing development of capitalism and business, the politics of colonialism and abolition, and an increasing interest in philosophy and religion. Britain's attitude to these changes was initially one of certainty and conviction built partly on economic success, but this was ultimately usurped by feelings of doubt about its role and position in the world.

The Industrial Revolution – Workshop of World

The Industrial Revolution is a blanket term that embraces the technological, scientific, and industrial innovations that were further developed during the century thus fuelling a massive increase in production and subsequent consumption. The French economist Adolphe Blanqui invoked the inventions of James Watt and Richard Arkwright in his *Histoire De L'Économie Politique en Europe* of 1837 as being the crucial moment of change:

> Just as the French revolution witnessed great social experiences of earth-shaking proportions, England began to undergo the same process on the terrain of industry. The end of the eighteenth century was signalled by admirable discoveries which were destined to change the face of the world and increase in an unforeseen manner the power of their inventors. The conditions of labour underwent the most profound alteration since the origin of societies. Two machines, henceforth immortal, the steam engine and the spinning machine, overthrew the old commercial system and gave birth, almost at the same moment, to material goods and social questions unknown to our fathers.[16]

Blanqui later mentions the works of Charles Babbage and Andrew Ure. He talks about Babbage's work on the division of labour and the use of machines; and Ure's work on the manufacturing system, but like later critics, bemoans the fact that the imperfections of these systems were not taken into account in terms of the operatives. Indeed, Ure's *Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835) defended the

factory system whereby the factory itself was seen as a 'co-operative body' that linked workers, machines, and products together in harmony. This model was hotly debated throughout the century and had repercussions for design.

Babbage's *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* (1832) takes a different view that suggested that machinery was the expression of abstract efficiency. In terms of design, this efficiency resulted in the production of objects that were more than commodities; they were signs of progress. In his Introduction, Baggage mentions the intellectual pleasure resulting from this contemplation:

> There exists, perhaps, no single circumstance which distinguishes our country more remarkably from all others, than the vast extent and perfection to which we have carried the contrivance of tools and machines for forming those conveniences of which so large a quantity is consumed by almost every class of the community. The amount of patient thought, of repeated experiment, of happy exertion of genius, by which our manufactures have been created and carried to their present excellence, is scarcely to be imagined.[17]

As the extracts will show, the topics of division of labour, novel products, new techniques, and materials feature in much of the nineteenth-century discourse on design and production.

In response to these enormous changes and the upheaval they brought with them, there were many who found the revolution highly disturbing and morally unsatisfactory. They challenged the conditions within the workplace, the use of child labour, and the development of cities with their associated pollution, poverty, and disease. These challenges were addressed directly by social reformers, but in terms of design, it was often the case that the opposition between industry and culture was expressed in nostalgic and romantic terms.

Social Reforms and the Growth of Democracy

Rapid and unregulated industrialisation not only brought about increases in wealth and economic success but also brought a host of social and economic problems. These were characterised in the population by poor health, unemployment, poverty, and rioting. This age saw the rise and growth of political movements, particularly socialism, liberalism and later, organised feminism. The Chartists organisation of workers helped create an atmosphere open to further reform, whereby religious belief in the infallibility of the Bible, and the nature of the human species in the universe, were increasingly called into question.

Although society was ostensibly ordered by rankings, there were some opportunities for social and geographical mobility. Entrepreneurs used their growing prosperity to buy into society, professionals developed their practices and a growing middle class developed. The impulse to emigrate, for hopes of self-improvement, was also a key feature of the century. However, by 1901, forty per cent of

adult men were still ineligible to vote, and no women were enfranchised, so for many, democracy was an illusion.

Nevertheless, the social changes that included the growth of the concept of domesticity, a clear work ethic, the model of improvement, the developing roles for women, the increasing educational and employment opportunities, and the growth of leisure were particularly linked to the rise of the middle classes. In terms of design, these classes required differentiation in their consuming patterns but conversely were somewhat limited by the demands of social conformity.

Idealisation of the Family and Homely Domesticity

The ideal of a respectable family and the associated cult of the home developed through the century. The home was one of the opposites in a series of culturally separate spheres, which included 'the inside' and 'the outside', respectability and deviance, and industry and home. The introduction to the Census of Great Britain for 1851 confirms this ideal of home: 'The possession of an entire house is, it is true, strongly desired by every Englishman; for it throws a sharp, well-defined circle round his family and hearth — the shrine of his sorrows, joys, and meditations'.[18]

As the subtle graduations of goods developed ever more, the meanings they held, which were designed in part to deal with the nonverbal communications, became more complex. Knowledge and understanding of the narrative nature of selected objects intended to reinforce respectability were increasingly important. Furnishings became more domesticated and homely, although they initially related morals to comfort, and not directly to presentation. These considerations were achieved in great measure by the common use of a language of display that was both shared and individual, which was both purchased from a retailer and constructed at home.

Expansion of Empire and a World Power

The rise of competitive colonialism was linked to Britain's trading dominance, naval, and military strength, and the growth of other major nation states. In the latter part of the century i.e. from 1870, there were increasing threats to Britain's military and economic supremacy. Nevertheless, the jingoistic idea of Empire was a very powerful concept that was supported by British notions of free trade and Christian civilisation, which were buoyed by attitudes of racial superiority that made expansion seem almost inevitable. In terms of design, there was two-way traffic in both goods and cultural imagery that was seen as commercially successful in England, but at the same time was potentially debasing to indigenous cultures.

Design as an Issue in the Nineteenth Century

British taste and design were both favourable and influential in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. The spread of Anglomania in Europe during the

eighteenth century was initially part of the Enlightenment, partly as an intellectual experience, but also as a stylistic matter. For example, the first edition of the German style magazine *Journal de Luxus und Der Moden,* published in 1786, enthusiastically discussed English fashions, furniture, musical instruments, carriages, Wedgwood ceramics, and even Coade stone.[19] England was seen as a rival to France in its approach to design. English design appeared to encompass simplicity, usefulness, and ease, compared with the French taste that was seen as lavish, often impractical and rigid. This was rather ironic, as for much of the nineteenth-century French design was held to be the model of taste and quality to which British designers and manufacturers should aspire. Indeed, there was already a taste in Britain for French designed products in the early years of the century.

However, already by the 1790s, a plurality of design styles was developing that included versions of the classical, the exotic, and the gothic. These were all linked to aesthetic judgements that were often based around the picturesque, which stressed both the importance of the visual and the unity of the arts. This plurality was to grow into a major concern for nineteenth-century design reformers, not least in relation to the issue of a national taste or style.

The idea of the development of a national taste that would raise the aesthetic threshold and act as a guide to morality and propriety was therefore of great concern. The perceived problem of novelty and fashion which appeared subversive had to be countered by the development of 'good taste' and appropriate education. This was to be easier said than done. In fact, a major issue that was to confront the British design world was the rapid development of a design infrastructure in Europe, especially in France and Germany. By the beginning of the nineteenth-century, these countries had already developed design education, with specialist schools and technical institutes established. Both countries had also begun to develop exhibitions of manufactured goods, in France from 1798 and in Germany from 1812.

Apart for these two crucial endeavours, France and Germany produced fashion journals that included actual samples of the textiles being discussed. The *Journal de Luxus und Der Moden*, (1787–1812) and the *Journal Für Fabrik Manufaktur, Handlung und Mode* (c. 1791–1806) were two such examples, which must have influenced Rudolf Ackermann in his later British publication *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics* (1809–1828). The French offered fashion journals, such as *Journal des Dames et des Modes* (1797 to 1829), the *Petit Courrier des Dames* (1821–1868), and *Le Follet* (1829–1892), as well as publications offering interior design schemes. Indeed, Henry Cole's famous *Journal of Design and Manufactures* was based on German formats. Other influences on British design came from European individuals, including Prince Albert and his collaborators, Ludwig Gruner and Gottfried Semper. In a different sphere, French designers were quite frequently employed in prestigious British factories.[20]

A more optimistic assessment of British prowess, by the painter and illustrator William Marshall Craig, in 1821 considered that

> Our great wealth is evidently the result of our flourishing commerce, the unexampled extent of that commerce is chiefly owing to the very great superiority of taste and design manifested in all our manufactures, and these qualities are ramifications of those notions in imitative art, diffused throughout the kingdom by our national school of painting and sculpture [Royal Academy].[21]

Despite this positive analysis, the nature of design was still a major topic of concern. The argument around the aesthetic hierarchy that put 'fine art' at its head was questioned. It was argued that the decorative arts (design) also had aesthetic significance, as well as functional and other meanings. This concern also reflected the tension between the commercial bourgeoisie and those who espoused high aesthetic doctrines.

In 1835, the Government commissioned an enquiry into the problem of art and design applied to manufactures.[22] The purpose of the committee was 'to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts, and of the Principles of Design among the People (especially the Manufacturing Population) of the Country; also to inquire into the Constitution, Management and Effects of Institutions connected with the Arts'. The resulting report published in 1836 was stinging in its criticism.

> In many despotic countries, far more development has been given to genius, and greater encouragement to industry, by a more liberal diffusion of the enlightening influence of the arts. Yet, to us, a peculiarly manufacturing nation, the connexion between art and manufactures is most important: and for this merely economical reason (were there no higher motive), it equally imports us to encourage art in its loftier attributes; since it is admitted that the cultivation of the more exalted branches of design tends to advance the humblest pursuits of industry, while the connexion of art with manufacture has often developed the genius of the greatest masters in design.

Nearly thirty years later, the designer Owen Jones could still comment about the apparent muddle and chaos in British art and design.

> We are amazed at the shortsightedness of the manufacturers, who do not see how much it would be in their interest to begin by having a real and proper design from the hands of an artist. The manufacturer answers, where are these artists? I admit they are few indeed, but it is for the manufacturer to help to make them. So long as they consider the design of such little importance, that they trust this important branch of their

> business to mere work-men without art-education of any kind, they cannot hope for any improvement or find artists to help them.[23]

Despite this, the French were becoming concerned about the progress in design Britain since the 1851 exhibition. In 1852, a Central Committee of Artists and Industrial Artists requested the French state to develop a museum for industrial arts, a principal school of arts applied to industry, as well as exhibitions of designers' works. In 1863, this movement was formalised the *Union Central des Beaux Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie*. These changes were clearly a response to the British initiatives at South Kensington.

Gradual changes in approaches to design in Britain signified (a) a move away from concerns around design as a moral issue to one more related to aesthetics; (b) the clash between utility and ornament; (c) the notion of style; and (d) a change from ideas of the application of universal design principles to a recognition of the role of personal taste.

The relationships between beauty, ornament, morality, and utility or function were multifaceted and were addressed in many differing ways. Ruskin, in his lecture *The Two Paths* delivered in Bradford in 1859 touched on this issue:

> Design is not the offspring of idle fancy: it is the studied result of accumulative observation and delightful habit. Without observation and experience, no design— without peace and pleasurableness in occupation, no design—and all the lecturings, and teachings, and prizes, and principles of art, in the world, are of no use, so long as you don't surround your men with happy influences and beautiful things.

For many reformers, their concerns particularly centred on the role of utility and ornament. The *Art Union* pointed out that 'The problem to be solved, in all cases of the invention of new forms, or the adaptation of old ones to useful purposes, is this—given the precise kind of utensil, it is required to find the shape best suited to fulfil its uses, and at the same time to develop the utmost degree of appropriate beauty'.[24]

The idea of function as design, based on utility was best seen in engineering design with many examples that point to the form being derived from the functional requirements without additional ornament. When ornament was added, there was often some incongruity in the overall effect that was criticised by reformers but was often commercially successful. The examples of domestic appliances, such as sewing machines with printed decorative graphics, or coal scuttles with painted rustic scenes, come to mind. These alleged 'horrors' were partly derived from the ability to mechanise decoration cheaply and thus offer novelty.

Underscoring many of the concerns was the search for a national British style that was suitable for the time. In 1840, H.W. Arrowsmith in his *House Decorator and Painter's Guide* wrote somewhat apologetically: 'The present age is distinguished from all others in having no style which can properly be called its own'.[25]

This anxiety was more than just deciding on the appropriate fashionable taste; it was also a response to the Hegelian idea of *Geist der Zeiten* that art reflected the spirit and culture of the time in which it is created, as it was created by people living in that time.

The irony was that the more the search continued for this elusive style, the more varied became the choices on offer. This eclecticism was promoted by the publication of a wide range of ornament and pattern books such as Owen Jones's *Grammar of Ornament.* The range of available styles also often reflected political, social, or religious positions. Hence, many styles looked to the past. The Renaissance revival for example, seemed to be highly appropriate, as it met most of the principles of design as set out by reformers.

By contrast, the versions of the Gothic Revival, including the Reformed Gothic and the Geometric Gothic, looked to the church and issues of morality initially, but later took a less pious and more art-based approach. These seemed to offer a bulwark of historically based stability in a confusing period. The influence of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement was the epitome of the moral crusade that had often underpinned design reform for much of the century. Although these were also sometimes linked to 'Romantic Interiors' which were related to an interest in Antiquarianism, the growth of the collector and a regard for the vernacular in design were to be rooted in political agitation and reform.

A return to a different approach was found in the demand for the importance of naturalism in design, again supported by numerous books on drawing and design from nature. This had derived from the French or rococo revival of the early part of the century, where natural imagery was important to the style. This approach was often used in a narrative way initially but gave way to designs that tried to relate natural decoration to the object's function.

Yet another example is the interest in the exotic, arising from world-wide interactions from trading and exploration that resulted in the rise of styles such as the Egyptian revival, Japonisme, and the adoption of selected imagery from a wide variety of other cultures.

The Queen Anne Revival and the Aesthetic Movement were attempted to introduce an eclectic mix into design, drawn from a range of disparate sources, while the Art Nouveau and the Glasgow School were influencing the Continent, as well as creating a commercial fashion in both the high-end stores such as Liberty, and, often in a debased form, the lower-class emporia.

At the end of the century, there was a return to British influence in Europe. Hermann Muthesius's *The English House* was hugely influential in his native Germany in promoting Arts and Crafts ideals but also encouraging modern technology in the home. *The Studio* magazine was also prominent in its publication of modern designs from across Europe, with an emphasis on British works. Other examples include Siegfried Bing's fashionable Parisian shop which sold English goods, and the Vienna Museum of Art and Industry that collected examples of British wares for the use of their design scholars.

All the concerns around design as an aesthetic or moral issue, the clash between utility and ornament, the notion of style; and a change from ideas of the application of universal principles to personal taste are evident in the documents in these volumes.

Previous Publishing History on Nineteenth-Century Design

Early academic interest in the topic was demonstrated by the 'Victorian Exhibition' held in 1931, which took over 23a Bruton Street, London where its rooms were furnished in a mid-Victorian style. One-time director of the V&A (1909–1924) Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith chaired the scheme. A contemporary review of the exhibition noted 'Leading from this landing was the Morris Room, excellent as showing the contrast between the truly Victorian taste and that of the first of the Moderns, though its vivid clashes of colour and insistence on pattern would make it a very trying room to live in to-day'.[26] In this vein, Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (1936 and later editions) developed an argument for the links between twentieth-century modernism and the nineteenth-century design theories and practice, especially works by William Morris, John Ruskin, Owen Jones and the industrial architects of the period. In 1952, a seminal exhibition, titled *Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts,* was held at the V & A and was responsible for raising the level of Victorian designs studies far more widely.

Publications began to flow in response to the revisions around Victorian design and practice. In 1957, the Norwegian art historian Alf Bøe published *From Gothic Revival to Functional Form: a study in Victorian theories of design*. In 1970, Herwin Schaefer's *Nineteenth-Century Modern: the functional tradition in Victorian design* (1970) confirmed the Modernist ideal of form over ornament, through a historical analysis of 'functional' objects. In 1972, a private collection of objects was lent to the exhibition at the Royal Academy titled *Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Art: The Handley-Read collection,* which produced an important catalogue.

Subsequently, a whole industry around 'Victorian design' has grown up, with an enormous range of publications from decorator magazines to coffee table books, from journals to academic publications on many aspects of the period and its design in the broadest sense. These include period surveys, books on individual designers and critics, books on various product groups, all ranging across a wide field, from the popular to the collector/connoisseur, to academics of many various persuasions. Finally, a word should be said about published readers or anthologies that have addressed the topic more recently. One of the first was Bernard Denvir's *Documentary History of Taste in Britain.* The relevant volumes were *Art Design and Society – The Early Nineteenth-Century 1789–1852* (1984) and *The Late Victorians 1853–1910 (1986)*. This was followed by Paul Greenhalgh's *Quotations and Sources on Design and the Decorative Arts* (1993), and then Isabelle Frank's more specialised *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology* (2000). Subsequent art and design history 'readers' have included small extracted samples on nineteenth-century design.

Overview of the Contents of Each Volume

The first volume considers theories and discourses on design and thus looks at the ideas around aesthetics, beauty, and taste, that were to inform design over the century. To elaborate on these, the issues of ornament, design reform, exoticism, state interventions, economic imperatives, invention and copyright, and education are all considered as part of the wider context for design.

The matter of aesthetics and beauty, through the notion of associationism, was initially a major part of an understanding of the problems associated with design and its reform. However, it was the issue of utility and its relation to beauty that was a major practical concern. On the one hand, the French poet and critic Théophile Gautier proclaimed in 1835 that 'Nothing is truly beautiful except that which can serve for nothing; whatever is useful is ugly'.[27] On the other hand, William Morris, towards the end of the century, argued that 'nothing can be a work of art which is not useful'.[28] The issue of morality was closely connected with this, as well as the perceived distinctions between artists and artisans (designers).

Taste, its origins and tenets, the issue of bad taste, and the diffusion of good taste among all classes, were all linked to design principles. The concept of improvement of taste was not just an economic issue but a social one. For many, 'good taste' equated to a universal standard that enabled people to recognise beauty and if taught correctly would eliminate 'bad taste'.

The interest in ornament led to a growing awareness in the decorations of other cultures, as well as their histories. There had been a long-standing European interest in non-Western art, but the fascination for exotic styles was fuelled by significant displays of non-Western art at many of the international exhibitions from 1851 onward.

The well-known *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Art and Manufactures* of 1836 set an agenda for design reform in relation to its application of art to industry. Design reformers worked towards a set of specific beliefs. Initially, they argued for the supremacy of form over ornament; secondly, they considered that form is closely related to function and the natures of materials; and thirdly, that designs should be drawn from a pool of historic, exotic, and natural examples that were refined into modified and abstracted forms.

To foster these agendas and encourage both production and consumption, Governments moved to promote the protection of invention and copyright against pirating of design; they developed education and teaching to develop artisans and designers and supported libraries and museums for others to educate their tastes. In addition, art and design education represented a realistic conduit for movement between social classes, particularly for certain groups of women, seeking a widening of career options beyond that of governess.

The second volume considers objects, images and spaces, or areas of design activity as visual and material culture. In this regard, examples of texts that discuss material goods including domestic design, industrial art, metalwork, jewellery, ceramics glass, furniture, textiles, graphic and visual design, wallpaper, dress and fashion, engineering, and urban design (inc. architecture) are included.

Domestic design played an important part of the nineteenth-century development of the notion of homes. Numerous pattern and advice books were published to try and educate and cajole the public in certain directions. The goods associated with the domestic interior were either the products of industrial art manufactures or individual domestic work. In the field of metalwork, for example, works in silver, gold, bronze, iron, and brass were created for numerous applications in the home. Metalwork also encompassed the ecclesiastical and architectural ironwork and other artefacts. Jewellery was a specific branch of this business that attracted particular attention. In contrast, the encouragement of home crafts allowed people to individualise their spaces to a degree.

Ceramics and glass included a wide range of artefacts, such as architectural ceramics, tableware, art pottery, majolica studio pottery, and stained glass, all of which catered for varied markets and tastes. Furniture followed a similar path, being designed as either functional objects or display pieces, but following a stylistic trend dependent on the fashions. These types of products were also displayed in exhibitions, usually as examples of high-quality design and craftsmanship, thus reflecting national pride and status.

Graphic design, as the art of selecting and arranging visual elements to convey a message to an audience, had developed rapidly during the century. Like other advances, the evolution of graphic design as a practice and profession was closely bound to technological innovations, changes in society, and the influence of various art and design movements. Wallpaper was another product that benefited from the industrial revolution just as did textiles. Up until 1840, all wallpapers were produced by hand by means of the block-printing process. By adopting the methods used in the printing of calico, wallpaper printing machines were developed, and the market grew rapidly.

Various decorative and visual arts movements, as well as changing perceptions of the traditional gender roles, also influenced fashion. Technology also played its part in the development of the fashion industry, when sewing machines were introduced in the 1850s, along with the employment of new synthetic dyes for textiles. The expansion of the media encouraged participation in the fashions, which was linked to associated developments in retailing and promotion.

The matter of the role and status of the designer, architect, and engineer also caused many arguments. This volume allows some exploration of the issues arising from, for example, the role of ornament in engineering, and the concept of utility over decoration. In terms of nineteenth-century architecture, two principal features are evident; the use of a variety of historical styles and the development and application of new materials and construction systems.

The third volume investigates the nature of production and the practices of design and manufactures. The texts considered here are associated with topics such as the art industries, decorative and applied arts, drawing and design principles, the elements of design (e.g. colour, form, materials) and manufacturing methods. The conflicts around the craft, machine, and design are also represented.

The application of art to industry, in the form of design, was at the top of many of the mediators' agendas. For many, drawing was the key; whether this was technical drawing, sketching, or indeed, the argument about the role of life drawing, its role in education and any subsequent applications, was considered crucial.

The elements of design, whether conceptual, visual, relational, or practical, were discussed in great detail in terms of both theory and practice. In particular, disputes about form, the role of colour, the use of materials, and the imitation issue were fervently debated in these texts. The concomitant issues of the role and nature of craft and its connection to design, as well as the 'hand versus machine' debate, were also significant themes.

The fourth volume offers documents related to the actors, intermediaries, and mediators associated with the design domain; firstly as individuals including artists, architects, designers, artist-designers, pattern drawers, and engineers; secondly, as mediators as organisations and businesses, and thirdly, looking at other mediating systems, including critics and style debates, advice books and journals, exhibitions, and museums, all of which influenced aspects of design theory and practice. Often, the communication of information by mediators, actors, or agents affected the message of the meanings of things, via a variety of channels. These mediated communications also shaped the individual, the institutional, and the societal, and in the reverse order as well, when meanings are reworked and appropriated. The mediating channels themselves are designed artefacts, and are therefore of interest.

The topic of design and the discourses around it had been well established in the eighteenth century, but it was to develop into a major issue for nineteenth-century critics, philosophers, and design reformers, who mediated the discussion around the role and nature of the design. At the heart of the debates was the issue of a style that reflected the century and all its changes, not least the impact of technology. This search for a style that had unified a culture in the past was seen to be missing. The concepts of erudition, accumulation, and copies of the past were seen as poor substitutes.

The problem was that design movements are based on a style or prevailing inclination in art or design that upholds a specific philosophy or ideal and is followed and promoted by a group of individuals for a defined period. Therefore, their influence may be limited or widespread.

Texts and images are the overarching form of communication media. These included advice books directed to homemakers, fashion followers, collectors and art lovers, and journals (specialist art journals, trade and special interest journals, magazines specifically directed at men or women, and journals attached to societies and groups). Finally, museums and exhibitions are yet other channels of mediation that were embraced during the century, particularly for their apparent didactic qualities. Taken together, all these mediating categories form a network of involvements that closely engaged with the theory and practice of design during the nineteenth century.

A Note on the Selection and Presentation of the Texts, and the Editorial Principles

The aim is to offer an overview of aspects and attitudes to design during the long nineteenth century: It is not a history of design in the period, rather it is a collection of selected texts that explore and explain a range of aspects of design in the period from philosophical aesthetics to practical engineering. All the texts are ultimately about design. Some of the texts are well-known, and others less so. In many cases, we have tried to reproduce the full text of an article or chapter. In some cases, missing text is indicated by [. . .]. Original spellings and ellipses are kept in texts. Any footnotes that occur in the original are reproduced as footnotes.

It is also important to note that different editions, and even individual copies of the texts transcribed here, can have variations.

In some cases, extracts are used that make a particular point. It is worth noting that several of the selected texts cross over the topic divisions or themes in which they are located and could easily fit elsewhere. The texts are mainly by English authors, though there are occasional examples of other nationalities introduced, when relevant.

Each volume is arranged in appropriate sub-themes, then chronologically within each section. Each volume has an introduction that focuses on the themes therein. The thematic structure attempts to offer appropriate texts that are then sorted chronologically and can thus offer connections and contradictions within a theme. Each text has an introductory headnote, which includes brief details of the author, the publication history and its critical reception, and, where relevant, its connection to other authors and events. Wide and extensive use of contemporary reviews, analysis and criticism have given context to the editorial headnote texts. Editorial endnotes have also been included with many of the documents, to inform or explain where necessary.

Finally, it is recommended that these readings are combined or connected with viewings of actual objects in relevant collections, in order to relate to them more closely and therefore understand something of the nature and dilemmas of nineteenth-century design and designers.

Notes

1 The Oxford English Dictionary was helpful in clarifying some aspects of the word and its uses.
2 T. Sopwith, ‘On the Principles of Design’, *Architectural Magazine*, 3, 31, September 1836, p. 393.
3 A. Jamieson, *A Dictionary of Mechanical Science, Arts, Manufactures, and Miscellaneous Knowledge* (London: Henry Fisher, 1829). Entry on Design.
4 C. A. Barry, *Primer of Design* (Boston: Lee and Shepherd, 1878), p. 29.
5 C. L. Redfield, ‘The Relation of Invention and Design to Mechanical Progress’, *Factory and Industrial Management*, Vol. 12 (New York: McGraw-Shaw Company, 1896–97), p. 286.
6 ‘The Art of Design’, *Fine Arts Journal*, 1, 18, 6 March 1847, pp. 278–279.

7 'The British School of Design', in *Library of Fine Art* (London: M. Arnold, 1832), 3, 13, February 1832, pp. 89–95.
8 'Terms in Art', *Art Journal*, 12, 1850, p. 288.
9 Evidence to *Second Report of the Royal Commissioners on Technical Instruction* (London: Printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1884), pp. 150–161.
10 J. C. Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London: Longman, 1835), p 1039.
11 *The Journal of the Royal Dublin Society*, 5, 1870, p. 529.
12 L. F. Day, *Ornamental Design: Embracing the Anatomy of Pattern, the Planning of Ornament, the Application of Ornament* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1890), p. 22.
13 W. Crane, *The Claims of Decorative Art* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1892), p. 40.
14 *The Hub*, 21, 9, December 1879, p. 390.
15 George III reigned up to 1820, George IV from 1820–1830, and William IV between 1830–37.
16 A. Blanqui, *Histoire de L'Économie Politique en Europe* 2 (Paris: Guillaumin, 1837), pp. 207–8.
17 C. Babbage, *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* (London: R. Clay, 1832) p. 3.
18 *The Census of Great Britain in 1851* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), p. 8.
19 Coade Stone: An imitation stone product devised by Eleanor Coade (1733–1821) made from a mix of clay, terracotta, silicates, and glass fired together for four days in extremely hot kilns.
20 Well-known names include Antoine Vechet, Léonard Morel-Ladeuil, Léon Arnoux, and Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse.
21 W. M. Craig, *A Course of Lectures on Drawing, Painting, and Engraving, Considered as Branches of Elegant Education. Delivered in the Saloon of the Royal Institution, in Successive Seasons, and Read Subsequently at the Russell Institution* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1821), p. 444.
22 [Interim] *Report from Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures. London: September 1835; and Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Their Connexion with Manufactures*, August 1836.
23 O. Jones, *On the True and the False in the Decorative Arts: Lectures Delivered at Marlborough House, June 1852* (London: Strangeways and Walden, 1863), p. 3.
24 'Art Applied to Manufacturers', *Art Union*, 1 February 1842, p. 24.
25 H. W. Arrowsmith, *The House Decorator and Painter's Guide, Containing a Series of Designs for Decorating Apartments, Suited to the Various Styles of Architecture* (London: Thomas Kelly, 1840), p. 111.
26 B. B., 'Ghosts at the Victorian Exhibition', *Connoisseur*, 88, July 1931, p. 58.
27 T. Gautier, preface to the 1835 edition of *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (Paris: Renduel, 1835), (*Il n'y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien; tout ce qui est utile est laid . . .*').
28 W. Morris, *The Decorative Arts: Their Relation to Modern Life and Progress; an Address Delivered Before the Trades' Guild of Learning* (London: Ellis and White, 1878), p. 27.

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME III

Production and Practices of Design

The texts in this volume investigate the nature of production and the practices of design and manufactures. They deal with both general issues and specific aspects relating to art industries, decorative and applied arts, drawing and design principles. The elements of design (colour, form, materials), as well as manufacturing methods and the conflicts around craft, machine, and design, are also included.

The application of art to industry in the form of design was at the top of many of the mediators' agendas. The major concerns were (a) to encourage economic activity especially in competition with France; (b) to establish a set of principles that applied across the designed world including not only the formal principles but also the relation between construction and ornament; (c) the distinction between artist and designer; and (d) between hand and machine work. For many, drawing was the key to solving many of these issues. Whether this was technical drawing, sketching, or indeed the argument about the role of life drawing, its role in education was considered crucial.

The elements of design, whether conceptual, visual, relational, or practical, were addressed in great detail in terms of both theory and practice. In particular, disputes about form, the role of colour, the use of materials, and the issues around imitation were fervently debated in these texts. The concomitant concerns of the role and nature of craft and its connection to design were linked to this.

The texts are arranged by issue and concerns, starting with the perennial question which was how to successfully link art and manufactures. This is followed by discussion of the role and definition of decorative and applied art; the key role of drawing; the actual design principles engaged with, and the specific elements of design; and finally consideration of manufacturing methods, including the hand versus machine debate.

Art, Design, and Manufacturers

Although the issue of art applied to manufactures had already been examined by the Select Committee of 1836, the topic was still very much alive ten years later. In 1846, the address to Council of the Society of Arts explained the connexion and their potential role:

> The application of the Fine Arts to our Manufactures. The manufactures of this country have, [Prince Albert] observed, attained an eminence for solid execution, for perfect finish, for mechanical accuracy, and for cheap production, which distinguished them in these respects beyond those of any other country. But there are some countries that excel ours in the beauty of design, in the perfection of colouring, in symmetry of form, in elegance of pattern: it is the application of the arts of design to the mechanical manufactures of this country that is alone requisite to enable her to stand without a rival. Of high art in this country there is abundance of mechanical industry and invention—an unparalleled profusion; the thing still remaining to be done, is to effect the combination of the two, to wed high art with mechanical skill. The union of the artist with the workman, the improvement of the general taste of our artificers, and of the workmen in general—this is a task worthy of the Society of Arts, and directly in the path of its duty'.[1]

A similar approach was taken by the Scottish Art Manufacture Association, but included the general public. In the preface to the 1856 *Catalogue for the First Art Manufactures Exhibition held at National Gallery, Edinburgh*, it was stated:

> The object of the Art Manufacture Association is to offer opportunities for elevating the imperfectly cultivated taste of the public, by making them familiar with the best Ancient and Modern specimens of Art Manufacture, and at the same time to encourage Manufacturers and Designers to leave the beaten track, and produce Works worthy of the place which the nation occupies in every other department of intellectual exertion.[2]

The collection of documents begins with 'Further Remarks on the Report of the Committee on the Arts and Principles of Design', in the *Mechanics' Magazine* (1837), which provided a harsh critique of the Committee's report which, they argue, appears to damn every aspect of English work and design, in favour of foreign examples. The article considers that much British work was of better design than French, and the evidence of important persons in the art and design world supported that.

The second document, W. S. W.'s article on 'Art Applied to Manufactures'(1842), raised many familiar matters including the need to teach first principles based on beauty and utility, and the distinctions between training for an artist or designer.

George Wallis, in his 'Recent Progress in Design as applied to Manufactures'(1856), discussed the role of manufacturers and retailers in design and identified the conflict between artistic design and commercial ideas, although he saw an improvement since 1851 in art manufactures generally. Denis O'Donovan's 'The Uses of Art & Design in Manufacture', 1871, took this further and explored some of the fundamental issues of Art industry: the distinction between constructive

or ornamental; the importance of utility and fitness; and truth to purpose and the avoidance of imitation.

Jacob Falke's discussion of the 'Vienna Exhibition in Connexion with Art-Industry' (1874) noticed the diversity of national styles in art manufactures based on historic precedent especially the Renaissance, Rococo, and Gothic, along with the relative decline of French influence.

One solution to the linking of art and industry was promoted by Tom Taylor, in his 'The Study and Practice of Art' (1874), where he argued that the nature of design was all-encompassing, whether it was fine or industrial art. For him, the human body was the basis of all design, and his discussion centres on the practice of teaching the basics of art/design as art industry.

Decorative and/or Applied Art

The terms decorative or applied art are apt to cause confusion, but essentially they both refer to the application of art to industry in a practical manner. One commentator made a distinction suggesting that 'applied art' referred to when raw materials were worked up and combined, in contrast to 'refined arts', where elements of beauty are added. He gives the example of carpentry and weaving as termed 'applied art', while upholstery and tailoring are considered 'refined arts'.[3]

The first text in this section reflects upon one particular aspect of decorative or applied art, noticed early on, which was the potential for women to work within its sphere. John Stewart's, 'art decoration, a suitable employment for women'(1860), initially argued that a woman's place was naturally in the home and family, but if women had to work, they would be useful as designers, wood-engravers, porcelain-painters, or employed in other similar occupations, particularly wallpaper designing.

Less specific was Christopher Dresser's, 'Hindrances to the Progress of Applied Art' (1872), that considered a range of issues relating to art manufactures including the palpable commercial value of art. He particularly noticed the hindrances to the progress of applied arts. These included matters of education, the role of manufacturers, the adverse effect of middle-men with no taste, and indeed the public's lack of appreciation, along with museums that simply venerate the old. All this led to his conclusion that there was a need for an Academy of Design.

A less polemic discussion of decorative arts from a craft point of view is seen in Emma Lazarus's paper titled 'A Day in Surrey with William Morris'(1886). This is a poetic description of a visit to one of the important players in the decorative arts of the later nineteenth century from an American viewpoint. It shows the other side of rampant commercialism and also points to the arguments about hand and machine work. This is followed by an interview with the freelance designer Arthur Silver, (1894) which shows the studio system at work in conjunction with manufacturers, thus linking decorative art workers with producers. It is interesting to see that Silver suggests that sometimes abandoning principles in favour of artistic freedom are sensible, as long as the ensuing design is fit for purpose.

Drawing

The crucial importance of drawing in terms of design but also to improve competitiveness was already an issue in the eighteenth century. In 1741, the Bishop of St. Asaph published a sermon upon the then unpopular subject of general education, that emphasised the importance of drawing, incidentally, raising the spectre of French superiority that went on to haunt many nineteenth-century commentators. Charles Babbage in *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* (1832), linked drawing skills to machine design: 'It can never be too strongly impressed upon the minds of those who are devising new machines that to make the most perfect drawings of every part tends essentially both to the success of the trial, and to economy in arriving at the result'.[4]

This issue was addressed in the first document in the selection by Jacques-Eugène Armengaud, in *The Practical Draughtsman's Book of Industrial Design* (1853), where, in this context, industrial design refers to drawing. Armengaud's publication was highly influential in engineering and industrial design. A later and fascinating comment by the engineer James Nasmyth in his autobiography of 1883, explained the value of drawing: 'Without the alphabet of mechanical drawing, the workman is merely "a hand". With it, he indicates the possession of "a head"'.[5]

Within the debate around drawing one of the most controversial topics was the role of life drawing. Benjamin Haydon, writing in his journal for 1837, noted how important the figure was in designing:

> I made a clear statement to Poulett Thomson, proving that the figure was the basis; that the same principle regulated the milk-jug and the heroic limb; that the ellipsis was the basis of Greek Art, and the circle of the Roman; that if the figure was not the basis, the Government money would be thrown away, and the public disappointed.[6]

The alternative to life drawing was a so-called trade system of drawing based on a scientific and geometric approach that was supported and promoted by William Dyce and his Drawing Book of the Government School of Design of 1842–3. Dyce rejected studios, figure drawing, and the creation of artists in design schools. Haydon in a later lecture to mechanics made his point crystal clear:

> The Government is determined to prevent you from acquiring knowledge. You might become artists but you will be denied the power to advance yourselves . . . the method employed by Mr. Dyce, a flower of the dry, hard, Gothic German school is based on the German Gewerbeschule, whereas my proposals are based on the practice of the school at Lyons - and which do you think is best German design or French?'[7]

Whatever the case, Dyce's, *Introduction to the Drawing Book of the School of Design, Published in the Years 1842–3,* offered a complex theoretical discussion

planned with ornamentists at the centre, sitting between the artist and the mechanic. For Dyce, artists draw imitations of nature, ornamentists represent abstractions of nature for manufacturing purposes. Dyce described incremental and guided steps for drawing students, and his publication was widely used.

Some while later, the argument was still raising passions. William Burges in his *Art Applied to Industry* (1865), discussing the value of drawing the human figure as a proper acquirement for students wrote: 'As to the designer for manufactures, he will do well to remember what no less a man than Haydon said upon this point, namely— that a man who could draw a head could draw a leaf, but it by no means followed that a man who could draw a leaf could draw a head'.[8]

The final text on drawing by Lewis Foreman Day considers distinctions between working drawings and exhibition or presentation drawings (1889), which pulls some thoughts together about the distinctive role and nature of drawing for both working and for selling purposes. The architect J.D. Sedding argued that the role of drawing should not be proscriptive:

> adequate working designs can be expressed on paper. Possibly so, yet to me the incidental in old art is its chief charm. To fasten an able craftsman down to strict adhesion to some feeble effusion from an architect's office is to degrade the man. Fancy the Heckington Sepulchre, or the Antwerp Well, or the Hampton Court gates, being evolved out of paper designs and work[9]

Design Principles

Principles of design (those that could be taught) were key to the thinking about design improvements. Again, the eighteenth century provided precedent for these thoughts. In 1769, Sir Joshua Reynolds strongly suggested that ' Every opportunity should be taken to discountenance that false and vulgar opinion, that rules are the fetters of genius: they are fetters only to men of no genius'.[10] The design principles or rules that relate to the concepts of topics, such as balance, graduation, repetition, harmony, dominance, unity, proportion, rhythm, pattern, movement, emphasis, and variation, were similarly crucial to nineteenth-century design pedagogy.

The 1836 Select Committee on Arts and their Connexion with Manufactures confirmed that '[T]he principles of design should form a portion of any permanent system of national education'.[11] Indeed, the schools of art were rigorous in developing this approach to education, with two important texts published: one by the Department of Science and Art titled *Principles of Decorative Art* (1853) and the other by Richard Redgrave, *On the Necessity of Principles in Teaching Design,* (1853).

The first text in this section considers 'The Principles of Fine Art as Applied to Industrial Purposes' (1847), where Wallis argues for a distinction between the reproductive embellishment of industry and the idealised imitation of fine art.

He suggests some principles are common to both but their application differs. His comments are of value in distinguishing concepts: 'With some, to *draw* is to *design*. With others, to *desig*n is to *invent*. With a third party, to *draw* means merely to copy, and to *design* means *dovetailing* together in congruous or incongruous mixture certain things already done by somebody else'.[12]

The next text titled 'Universal Infidelity in Principles of Design', published in the *Journal of Design and Manufactures* (1851), examines the principles, in relation to utility, by drawing comparisons between tasteless ornament which ignores utility, and working machinery which is the opposite. This is followed by 'Examples of False Principles in Decoration', published in an exhibition catalogue describing examples of bad taste that were in contravention of design principles. The analysis of each entry is followed by a justifying statement by an authority. The anonymous paper on the 'Principles of design essential to the construction of artistic furniture'(1873), especially considers the key issue of fitness.

One of the other major issues relating to principles was the concept of utility. Lucas Baker's text 'Utility and Beauty' (1883), analysed beauty, arguing that nature was the supreme example of beauty and utility linked into one. Fundamental laws and attributes that provide harmonic arrangements are found in nature, hence it is the best source for designers. Selwyn Image also argues for a similar approach in his 'Of Design and the Study of Nature' (1892), where he sees nature as a store of ideas, not for imitation necessarily, but for analysis of how to use nature to create a design.

Of course, the reformers were fighting against an apparent tide of 'bad design' that was represented as the enemy of good taste. Vulgarity was the main adjective for this sort of design. F. W. Fairholt in an article for the *Art Journal* in 1862,[13] posited a fear of uncontrolled design that was lacking in principles that went beyond amusement into the realm of the excess, somewhere between man-made design and nature and hence the grotesque. Nevertheless, the grotesque held a fascination for the Victorians. Just in design terms, the taste for Minton majolica realism, Martin Brother's ceramics, insect jewellery, bird hats, and copies of Palissy ware are some simple examples.

Elements of Design

The three major elements of design are the visual elements (especially colour, and ornament (See volume one); the conceptual elements (especially form), and the practical elements (especially materials and function). These are discussed in the next set of texts.

Colour

Although Isaac Newton's *Optiks* had intimated a study of colour and light, it was not really until Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Theory of Colour* (1801) and Abraham Gottlob Werner's *Nomenclature of Colours,* (1814) that colour was seriously

considered in terms of design and manufactures. It was M.E. Chevreul's work in the law of colour contrasts that was also crucial.

In the first text by John Gardner Wilkinson, *On Colour and on the Necessity for a General Diffusion of Taste Among all Classes* (1858), he argued that colour theory and rules do not take the place of the perceptive faculty of a designer. Lucy Crane's text, 'Decorative Art—Color, Dress, and Needlework' (1882), contrasts with Wilkinson by suggesting guides to colour harmony should be made through rules of analogy, contrast, variety, delicacy, and repetition. John D. Crace's 'The Decorative use of Colour' (1888), considered colour from a practical point of view, pointing out how movement was linked to fashion, and solidity linked to surfaces, so colour should be used in relation to structures. As an interior designer, for him, colour as an expression of structure was the main issue. This practical aspect of colour is also found in Roberts Beaumont's text, *Colour in Woven Design*, (1890). Here he points out that an understanding of colour must be based on a knowledge of (in his case) weaving practice and techniques, as they will greatly influence the final effect.

Concerns about appropriate colour usage continued into the new century. Alexander Millar, in a paper to the International Art Congress (1908) argued for more education in colour language. He contended that popular taste in matters of colour was ruled by fashion, suggesting that there were 'distinct signs of decadence, and in the shop windows, which at one time were an unfailing delight to the cultivated eye, we now see chintzes and wall-papers of Early Victorian crudity'. In an effort to teach correct methods of colour use, he proposed a museum of colour for use by both the public and trade designers, in which might be found 'a revival of what once existed at South Kensington,—a small chamber of horrors in which bad colour combinations might be exhibited and their faults pointed out'.[14]

Form

For many reformers and critics, the issue of form was closely related to concepts of function, fitness, and utility. M. Digby Wyatt in his *An Attempt to Define the Principles Which Should Determine Form in the Decorative Arts* (1852) argues that nature was the model through its use of four principles: 'Variety—Fitness—Simplicity—Contrast'.[15] These ideas had been expressed earlier in a different way. A. W. N. Pugin's *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, (1841) argued that: 'The two great rules for design are these: first, that there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety; second, that all ornaments should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building'.[16]

The first text from Horatio Greenough's 'American Architecture' (1843) expresses another way of considering form. The adaptation of forms to functions is discussed using the example of ship design, but he also refers to anatomy, skeletons, and organic approaches to form as developmental. The next text, David R. Hay's, *The Natural Principles and Analogy of the Harmony of Form* (1842) also

considers principles of form founded upon nature. He argues that science helps to understand form, using examples of music and colour as a harmonic set of relations.

Lucy Crane's text on *Art and The Formation of Taste* (1882) considers the role of materials, place, and use in relation to form and returns to the concept of a 'normal' form for particular objects. While in Henri Mayeux's, 'Decorative Art Composition' (1889), he argues that composition as form is the basis of use, citing ancient Greek examples. The fourth text by Hugh Stannus, 'Some Principles of Form-Design in Applied Art' (1898), is an essay on the relation between fitness, variety, proportion, material, and construction, as well as form in relation to human bodies.

Material

For some, the idea that materials have a particular nature that meant that the way they were worked and how they would look was peculiar to them. This seemed to suggest that the form and decoration would follow naturally. Of course, these dogmatic assertions ignore the skills of makers, as well as some delight that was found in using material imaginatively. Indeed, there was much pleasure in using one material in imitation of another, either as a curiosity or as economic imperative.

The application of 'meaning' to an object by the imitation of particular materials was part of the process of signalling refinement in homes. The ability of the machine to print wallpaper, produce marbled linoleum and plated metal, and myriad other copies or imitations was of huge significance to the nineteenth century. These ideas of imitation connect with the idea that it was not the actual process of manufacture that was important to the consumer, but the ability of the object to 'stand for' a particular form of production, even though it may be derived from another completely different one.

One of the main ideas about materials was that their use in relation to design should somehow reflect the concept of 'truth to materials'. For Pugin for example, 'All plaster, cast-iron, and composition ornaments, painted like stone or oak, are mere impositions, and, although very suitable to a tea-garden, are utterly unworthy of a sacred edifice'.[17]

In 1852, Matthew Wyatt took this further and argued that using inappropriate materials was in contravention of the principles of good taste.

> In acknowledging, the correctness of the undeniable proposition, that every material, insomuch as it differs in organic constitution, should vary correspondingly in the form and proportion into which it should be wrought, an admission was made, that the ordinary system of copying in metal forms proper for stone, and in stone forms proper for metal, wood, etc., was as contrary to the true canons of good taste, as it was subversive of any prospect of consistent originality.[18]

John Ruskin took the ideas still further and associated moral values with Gothic styles, in particular, the maxims of 'truth to materials' and 'honesty of

construction'. These ideals were highly influential on the later Arts and Crafts movement.

An interesting comparison can be made between these ideas and those of the German theorist Gottfried Semper. For Semper, it was not the properties inherent in the material and the technique but the human judgement and ingenuity that determine artistic forms. He introduces the idea of Stoffwechsel (material metamorphosis) to transgress material boundaries. He ignored the ordering of artefacts by their material but considers them in the light of his four proposed elements of architecture (design): (a) hearth = metallurgy, ceramics; (b) roof = carpentry; (c) enclosure = textile and weaving; and (d) the mound = earthworks.

The three selected texts refer directly to the issue of imitations in popular materials. The first is Emil Braun's 'Electrotyping Applied to Art Manufactures' (1850), that considers the practice of electrotyping and mechanical reproduction. The second, George Dodd's 'Papier mâché', in his *Curiosities of Industry* (1858), uses a very popular material as an example of new materials and their design pitfalls; while the third text, which is anonymous, considers 'Design in Relation to Material' (1869), through an analysis of stone, wood, metal and plaster, again making a plea for honesty in their use.

Manufacturing Methods

The great debate over the development of factories and the subsequent division of labour, the nature of handwork and the role of machines, ran through most of the century. For some, the changes reflected progress and development. Charles Babbage saw a progressive expansion in manufacturing technologies and methods. This evolutionary model links to other contemporary thoughts like Darwinism.

The first text in this section is from Adam Smith who proclaimed that the division of labour was an important development that helped to create wealth. The example given is of a simple workman's coat, that requires numerous contributors to complete the work. Alternatively, and in a differing vein, William Cooke-Taylor's 'The Mutual Interests of Artists and Manufacturers', (1848), analysed the important links between artist and manufacturer, which he saw as akin to the alliance between an author and publisher.

James Ward, in his *The World in Its Workshops* (1851), considers the Great Exhibition as a display of a metaphoric battle between nations and economies in which design plays an important part. The fourth text, Joseph Whitworth, and George Wallis's report on *The Industry of the United States in Machinery, Manufactures, and Useful and Ornamental Arts* (1854), offers a comparative analysis of the industries of the United States and Great Britain, with particular discussion around the division of labour, machinery usage, and the role of design patents.

In 1892, Walter Crane argued for different classes of art – industrial, decorative, applied and fine, but the hierarchy changed so that now useful objects were at the

peak, with the machine developing work under the artistic designer. He explained in *Claims of Decorative Art*:

> We have "industrial," "decorative," or "applied" art, as we now call it, and "fine" art — fine art and "the arts not fine," as my friend Mr. Lewis Day has it. . . . Nor is this altogether wonderful, considering how, under our system of wholesale machine production, the appliances of common life have lost their individuality, interest, and meaning, together with their beauty.'[19]

Of course, linking with Crane's idea above were those of William Morris. In his text 'The Revival of Handicraft' (1902), the conflict between machinery versus handicraft was discussed within the context of a wider argument for dramatic changes in society.

However, division of labour never went away and was re-visited by Frederick W. Taylor, in his *Scientific Management* (1911). In this last text, Taylor argues that these ideas had the same goals of efficiency that would benefit all but were to be achieved in different ways.

Craft Machine and Design

In a long article titled the 'Philosophy of Architecture', *The Artizan* concluded their discussion by mentioning operative arts and their role: 'It is with the artizans that art has ever originated: it was born in the workshops of Athens, and resuscitated in the workshops of Italy; and if it be destined to experience another renovation, it will be in the workshop, we are confident, where the revival will take place'.[20] The texts in this section look at the issues arising from the nature of the interactions between crafts, designs, and machines.

The first text from Charles R. Ashbee's, 'Decorative Art from a Workshop Point of View' (1889), considers the social influence on art and design. It amusingly compared the role of workshop versus studio, arguing that the workshop is most important as the basis for a community of co-operation. John Dando Sedding's short article 'Design' in *Arts and Crafts Essays* (1893), takes the example of the craft of needlework and makes a comparison with historical work and the use of nature in contemporary work. In Fred Miller's chapter 'Design and Craftsmanship' in his *The Training of a Craftsman,*(1898), he revives a recurring theme that argues that the artist, designer, and craftsperson are all in one, but the nature of the material will reflect particular choices.

Discussing fine book printing and binding, Thorstein Veblen's text suggests that, as in the parallel case of the apparent superiority of hand-wrought articles over machine products, intrinsic excellence is imputed to costlier and more awkward articles. Veblen's argument is that machine-made products are often better in matters of utility than are the hand-made goods. He discusses the code of marks reflecting status and taste that certain crafts provide in terms of honorific value.

In a more practical manner Esther Woods's, article on the 'Home Arts and Industries Exhibition' (1899), discusses the exhibits and introduces the many small school craft classes, with critiques that remind us of the interest in arts, crafts, and design at a local and regional level.

The arts and crafts theme is continued by Oscar Lovell Triggs's *History of the Arts and Crafts Movement,* (1902) which is a eulogy of the values of the Arts and Crafts movement and the role of co-operation. Finally craft, and especially the work of William Morris is discussed in J. Scarratt Rigby's 'Remarks on Morris Work and its Influence on British Decorative Arts Today', (1902) which is supportive though not wholly hagiographic analysis of Morris work and contribution to the crafts.

Notes

1 'Transactions of the Society of Arts 1846–7' discussed in *The Artizan: A Monthly Journal of the Operative Arts*, 3, 1848, p. 64.
2 *Catalogue of the First Exhibition of the Art-Manufacture Association: In the National Galleries, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas Constable, 1856), Preface.
3 J. Fergusson, *An Historical Inquiry into the True Principles of Beauty in Art, More Especially with Reference to Architecture* (London: Longmans, 1849), pp. 92–106.
4 C. Babbage, *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* (London: Chas Knight, 1832), p. 208.
5 J. Nasmyth, and S. Smiles, *An Autobiography* (London: James Murray, 1883), p. 125.
6 B. R. Haydon, and T. Taylor, *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter, from His Autobiography and Journals*, Vol. 3 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, 1853), p. 66. Poulett Thompson was the Committee chair.
7 Cited in S. Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (London: University of London Press, 1970), p. 84. See also F. W. Haydon. *Correspondence and Table-Talk* (Boston: Estes, 1877), p. 243.
8 Review of W. Burges, 'Art Applied to Industry', *Athenaeum*, July 1865, p. 88.
9 J. D. Sedding, "On the relation of Architecture and the Handicrafts" read at the General Conference of Architects 3 May 1887. Reprinted in *American Architect and Building News,* 21, 25 June 1887, p. 311.
10 Sir J. Reynolds, *First Discourse on Art*, Opening of the Royal Academy, January 1769.
11 *Report of the Select Committee on Arts*, 1836, p. 6.
12 *The People's Journal*, 3, 1847, p. 231.
13 F. W. Fairholt, 'Grotesque Design', *Art Journal*, March 1862, pp. 89–92.
14 'Colour-Training and Colour Museums', I. *Art Journal*, November 1908, pp. 328–331 and 357–360. The idea for a museum had the support of artists, including Edward Burne-Jones, G. F. Watts and Walter Crane.
15 M. D. Wyatt, *An Attempt to Define the Principles Which Should Determine Form in the Decorative Arts* (Lectures on the results of the Great Exhibition, second series, 19, London: D. Bogue, 1852), p. 417.
16 A. W. N. Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London: T. Weale, 1841), p. 1.
17 Pugin, p. 45.
18 M. D. Wyatt, *Metal-work and Its Artistic Design. Dedicated, by Express Permission, to the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere* (London: Day & Son, 1852), Preface.
19 W. Crane, *The Claims of Art* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1892), p. 109.
20 'Philosophy of Architecture', *The Artizan*, IV, 30 April 1844, p. 81.

Part 1

ART INDUSTRIES AND MANUFACTURES


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‘FURTHER REMARKS ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN’

A Select Committee was appointed in 1835 to ‘inquire into the best means of extending knowledge of the Arts and of the Principles of Design among the people (especially the Manufacturing Population) of the country; also to inquire into the Constitution, Management and Effects of Institutions connected with the Arts’. The Committee published their report in 1836, which had as a main conclusion ‘that, from the highest branches of poetical design down to the lowest connexion between design and manufactures, the Arts have received little encouragement in this country’.[1] The Committee reported on several aspects of design, including the lack of instruction (and Schools of Design); the contrast with French practices; the role of museums, galleries and academies; the issues of copyright; and the commissioning of works. Many of these considerations were to affect the artisans and mechanics of the time.

This article was an excoriating critique of the 1836 Select Committee’s report, particularly in relation to the apparent ignoring of British superiority and efficiency in many areas of art and design. The article sifts through the report and uses some of the evidence produced to try and counter many of the seemingly unfavourable comments about British workers and their efforts, especially when used in comparison to foreign work and workers.

There was probably an element of ‘playing to the audience’ of the journal. *The Mechanics Magazine* was a weekly periodical founded in 1823 and edited by Joseph Clinton Robertson, who also wrote under the pseudonym of Sholto Percy. Aimed at the working man, the object of the publication ‘was one of entire novelty, and no inconsiderable importance’. It was aimed at that “numerous and valuable portion of the community, including all who are manually employed in our different trades and manufactures,” who felt the want of ‘a periodical work, which, at a price suited to their humble means, would diffuse among them a better acquaintance with the history and principles of the arts they practise, convey to them earlier information than they had hitherto been able to procure of new discoveries, inventions, and improvements, and attend generally to their peculiar interests as affected by passing events’.[2]

'Further Remarks on the Report of the Committee on the Arts and Principles of Design', *Mechanics' Magazine*, 704, 4 February 1837, pp. 323–329

Sir,- In a former communication (No. 696, p. 187),[3] I ventured the remark, in reference to the Parliamentary Report on the Arts in Connexion with Manufacture, that "the Committee seemed to have entirely lost their memory as to any fact creditable to the talents of their countrymen"—following up the observation with a few pretty striking proofs of the fact. On looking over the evidence on which the Report *ought*, at least, to have been founded, proofs of the same nature are to be found at every step "as plenty as blackberries"—so plentifully, indeed, that it becomes in some sort an amusement to detect the shifts to which the writer of the Report has been continually put, in contriving to omit all mention of British proficiency, and more especially of British superiority, and forcing forward every iota of testimony in favour of foreign pre-eminence, in order to justify the monstrous conclusion that the fine arts in England are in the lowest conceivable state of degradation, and particularly that the arts of design in connexion with manufacture, present, to use Milton's phrase, "in the lowest deep a lower deep." The leading members of this illustrious Committee were evidently "all agog" to convict the artisans of England of every possible species of bad taste; and several at least of the witnesses seconded, with might and main, their patriotic endeavours. And with all this note of preparation, what does their bill of indictment amount to at last? Why, truly, its counts, after all, are so miserably few, and, few as they are, so many of them will not "hold water," as the lawyers have it, that the defendants may well think it hardly worth while to plead to them at the bar of public opinion. In fact, when the matter comes to be investigated, the *evidence* on which the prosecutors rely either flies so directly in their faces, or with a little sifting breaks down so completely, as to put them out of court at once and for ever, with "not a leg to stand upon!"

"The want of instruction experienced by our workmen in the arts," observe the Committee, "is strongly adverted to by many witnesses. This deficiency is said to be particularly manifest in that branch of our industry which is commonly called the fancy trade; more especially in the silk trade; and most of all, probably, in the ribbon manufacture. Mr. Martin (the celebrated painter)[4] complains of the want of correct design in the china trade; Mr. Papworth (an eminent architect),[5] of its absence in the interior decorative architecture of our houses, and in furniture. *Hence* the adoption of the designs of the era of Louis XV. (commonly dignified with the name of Louis XIV.), a style inferior in taste, and easy of execution. To a similar want of enlightened information in art, Mr. Cockerell[6] attributes the prevailing fashion for what is called Elizabethan architecture; a style which (whatever may be the occasional excellencies of its execution) is undoubtedly of spurious origin."

And this is the sum and substance of the Committee's charges, a true copy of the whole bill of indictment! Well may we exclaim, "Is this the mighty ocean, is