



- Naomi Baron**
The American University, Washington, D.C.
- Fernand Baudin**
Bonlez par Grez-Doiceau, Belgium
- Peter Bradford**
New York, New York
- Gunnlaugur SE Briem**
Oakland, California
- Matthew Carter**
Carter & Cone Type, Cambridge
- Michael Golec**
Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
- James Hartley**
University of Keele, United Kingdom
- Aaron Marcus**
Emeryville, California
- Dominic Massaro**
University of California, Santa Cruz
- Estera Milman**
University of Iowa, Iowa City
- Kenneth M. Morris**
Siegel & Gale, New York
- Thomas Ockerse**
Rhode Island School of Design
- David R. Olson**
University of Toronto, Canada
- Charles L. Owen**
IIT Institute of Design, Chicago
- Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl**
IIT Institute of Design, Chicago
- Katie Salen**
University of Texas, Austin
- Denise Schmandt-Besserat**
University of Texas, Austin
- Christopher Seeley**
University of Canterbury, New Zealand
- Michael Twyman**
University of Reading, United Kingdom
- Gerard Unger**
Bussum, The Netherlands
- Jan van Toorn**
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Richard Venezky**
University of Delaware, Newark
- Dietmar Winkler**
University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana
- Patricia Wright**
University of Cardiff, United Kingdom

page

locale

core

C O N T E N T S

Cultural Dimensions of Visual
Communication: An Introduction
Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl 116-121

Function and Expression: Student typographic work in
English and Indian languages
Martha Scotford 124-145

India

type language

The Metastructural Dynamics of Interactive
Electronic Design
Patricia Search 146-165

cyberspace

cultural blindspots

Mapping a Graphic Genome: A cross-cultural
comparison between Korean and Japanese designers
Min-Soo Kim 168-205

Korea/Japan

identity

Toilet Signage as Effective Communication
Lynne Ciochetto 208-221

world travel

symbolic reference

Graphic Assimilation: New immigrants and
social identity
Barbara Martinson, Sauman Chu 222-233

United States

identity

Book Review: Language Culture Type – International Type
Design in the Age of Unicode

234-237

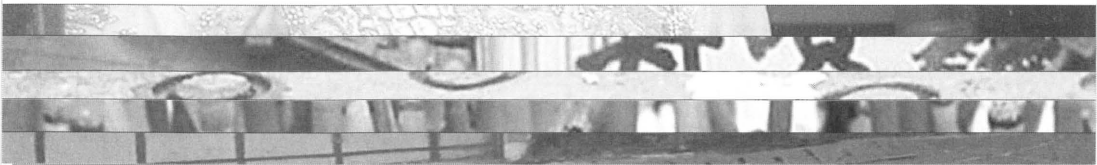
CULTURAL
DIMENSIONS *of Visual Communication*

AN INTRODUCTION

**the impetus to question
the conventions of others
and thus our own**

cultural flow

Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl



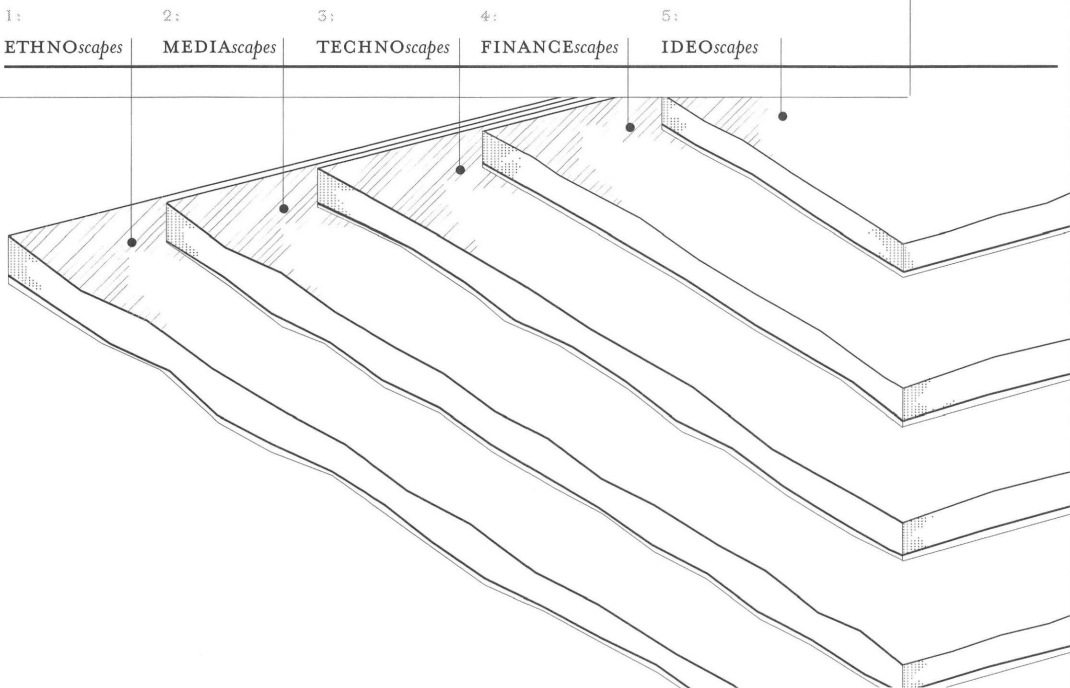
This special issue addresses a multifaceted communication perspective that deserves our increasing attention. We live and communicate in both global and local contexts, consequently the world in which we live is both large and small. It is peopled with those similar to us and quite different from us in language, culture and communication habit. The need to communicate beyond our own arena of comfort provides the impetus to question the conventions of others and thus our own.

Much has been written in recent years about globalization. For example, David Harvey (1990) has given us a theory of space-time compression. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) have speculated about the social and political ramifications of these ongoing global adjustments.

Using a framework from global theorist Arjun Appadurai (1996), it is useful to explore this issue in broader terms. He writes of media and migration as the creators of a global cultural flow. The media present us with news and vicarious experience of other's lives elsewhere — under different circumstances of climate, culture, social structure and expectation. Media can be turned off or ignored, but migration is a local fact as a new neighbor cooks things whose smell is unique and unforgettable. And this neighbor may share citizenship and language, yet is keeping alive the culinary heritage of a now remote homeland. Cultures mix and intermingle beyond the borders — integrated into a complex daily life. New cultural hybrids and syntheses evade stereotype; they are created as adaptive responses to complex and changing life circumstances.

Taking the vision of a global cultural flow further, Appadurai creates a framework of five dimensions:

- 1:
ETHNOscapes
the shifting diasporas of tourists, guest workers, immigrants, etc.
- 2:
MEDIAscapes
electronic production and distribution of information
- 3:
TECHNOscapes
irregular distribution and linkage between technologies
- 4:
FINANCEscapes
global flows of capital
- 5:
IDEOscapes
political conceptions like democracy, rights, representation, welfare, etc.



These 'scapes' have irregular shapes and shifting edges, their specific form depends on the perspective from which they are viewed. Inflected by history, language and politics, they are the building blocks for imagined worlds. The global flows revealed by this framework suggest we might now live in a new condition of neighborliness (Poggenpohl & Heskett, 2001).

Communities are increasingly not only in contact, but are interdependent for communal well being — from sharing resources and trade to sharing ideas and human values — from sharing aid during disaster to sharing common visions of a future. Whether the contact is technically mediated or a product of migration, this is a complex interwoven web of humanity with each of us being at times indigenous and at other times the 'other.'

What constitutes indigenous design and what is design for the 'other' is now ambiguous. For example, in Chicago election ballots are now printed in three languages: English, Spanish and Chinese. The 2000 census revealed that the Chinese community in that city had grown to such an extent to merit acceptance of their language in order to guarantee their political franchise. Language is an obvious cultural cue of belonging. And it is a site of conflict dealt with politically and culturally in many ways.

Culture in this issue has at least a double meaning if not more. Culture has referred to specific location, but now with the shifting ethnoscaapes mentioned earlier, geography or country of origin is a less certain cultural marker. Culture also refers to complex human associations organized through professional activity, socio-economic affiliation or other identifiable and variously permeable indicators.

Cultural Dimensions of Visual Communication is a reflection of current themes relating to communication within a global community. The articles can be examined from several overlapping viewpoints: they deal with either processes of developing or making design or of design as it exists in the service of its users, using design; from a geographical perspective, the articles are grounded in Korea/Japan, India, the United States, international travel or cyberspace; and many of the authors reflect on the materiality of communication design or the use of rhetoric. Despite these similarities among the articles, each has a specific and unique core concern. Returning for a moment to Appadurai's framework, the articles reflect his notions of ethnoscape, mediascape and ideoscape.

The first three articles are about making communication in a professional context. The first is about learning to control typographic design, the second is about experimenting to provide alternative structure for the still emerging digital culture and the third is about understanding cultural heritage and influence among designers in a region.

Martha Scotford's article examines language as a cultural divide. In a previous essay in this journal (Scotford, 1988), the author discussed the problem of translation, not just linguistically but also from a glyphic and visual structural standpoint, from Russian to English for Mayakovsky's poem, *For Reading Out Loud*, as presented typographically by Lissitzky. In the current article her concern is teaching principles of typographic structure and manipulation that transcend a specific language or writing system. Teaching design students in India, the challenge was to explore both Latin and non Latin typographic systems as carriers for English, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, and Malayalam and Tamil to a lesser extent. The book review (and the book reviewed) at the end of this journal, *Language Type Culture* (Berry, 2002) provide a complementary perspective to this article.

Located in cyberspace, Patricia Search questions Western hierarchical conceptions of communication and finds them deficient for use in the fluid more relational context of interactive digital communication. To escape the blindspot of Western cultural conventions, she develops a new syntax derived from aboriginal oral culture. This exploration of a connection between an earlier form of communicative order and the digital moment in which we live is an interesting strategy with which to attempt to remove pre-existing and hard to elude preconceptions. The author intimates that connections can be made between aboriginal ideas and more recent (19th and 20th century) conceptions of time and space.

A strong and recurrent cultural theme is the problem of identity in a world of immigration, migration and changing political action. Min-Soo Kim closely examines the identifying characteristics of design action from a generational perspective based on Korean-Japanese history and politics. His concern is exploration of the materiality of design and the 'genetic' traces that connect various designers' work in Asia. What emerges is an idea of internal cultural transformation in South Korea that continues today. Kim provides a hermeneutic reading of communication design that probes more deeply than aesthetics or style to confront the social and political situation it reflects.

The last two articles are about using communication design in daily life. The first of these has vernacular overtones as many of the signs with which it is concerned are handmade and even naïve. The last article is not a demonstration of design, but one of defining good social intentions with design in a context that often lacks a base of reasonable communication culture. Both of

these articles challenge design as an elite activity. International travel and the problem of dealing with human necessities, i.e., finding toilet facilities, is at the core of Lynne Ciochetto's article. Framed by an historic perspective on travel and commerce, she documents variation relating to this common need. Symbols and icons and their references are key to reading cultural similarities and differences and even the etiquette they acknowledge. Her analysis examines the materiality of signs and the contexts in which these messages occur.

Immigration with its inherent issues of adaptation, cultural assimilation or resistance, figure significantly in Barbara Martinson and Sauman Chu's article. Somali and Hmong residents of Minnesota need access to social service information in their own language and English. Such information is not benign as its presentation raises subtle issues of language and imagery from an identity standpoint. Further, it reveals status and dignity accorded to the immigrant by the host country. The materiality of messages is an important discriminatory element in these situations.

The book review for *Language Culture Type* rounds out this issue and returns attention to language, writing systems and the global interest in effective communication.

RESOURCES

- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large, Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Berry, John D., editor. *Language Culture Type*. New York: Association Typographique Internationale, 2002.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Poggenpohl, Sharon and John Heskett. 2001. Design at the Frontier in a Humane Global Ecology. Unpublished paper presented at Icoграда's World Design Convergence, Johannesburg, South Africa, September, 2001.
- Scotford, Martha. 1988. A Verbal and Visual Translation of Mayakovsky's and Lissitzky's For Reading Out Loud. *Visible Language* 22.2/3, 195-222.





Martha Scotford



Teaching typography in a cross-cultural setting poses particular conceptual and visual problems. Using a recipe as the content for a typographic assignment while teaching in India, the author explores typographic approaches that include functional, expressive and integrated perspectives in English, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi and to a lesser extent Malayalam and Tamil and various combinations of languages. This experience is documented through illustrations and commentary on the student solutions.

The students were amused: the American teacher was asking them to play with their favorite lunch food. This brought back all sorts of domestic and school memories, and discussions of family and regional variations. When translated from English, the recipe text was debated; how to render the word for 'leftover' that did not also imply 'stale'? The sensory experience of the dish was described for the teacher who had never eaten it: white, cool, smooth, mildly spicy, soothing in the heat of the day. The Indian lunch box, the multi-tiered and compartmented tiffin box, was remembered with fondness. The special shape of the vessel for making curd (or yogurt) at home was described. And by an amazing coincidence, on the day the project ended at the first school, we had Dahi Bhaat for lunch in the mess hall. Later, at another school, a student brought enough for the whole class to share on the last day. This was exactly what I had hoped for: a way for me into a new culture through language and food, a way for Indian students into experimental typography starting from some familiar ground.

Graduate and undergraduate students at four Indian universities and design schools worked on a typographic exercise using English and the Roman alphabet, Hindi and the Devanagari alphabet, and several other Indian languages and alphabets. The exercise was intended to explore some qualities of basic typographic composition, some aspects of expressive typography, the design assumptions and necessities of English/Roman compared to Hindi/Devanagari and others, and to prompt discussion of cultural and linguistic traditions in relation to typography.

The students were a mixed lot, coming from all regions of India: second year graphic design students at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad (the premier public design school in India) with some typography experience; first and second year graphic design students at the Shristi School of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore (a new private design school) with some type experience; graduate students in visual communication at the Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (the only graduate design program in India) with moderate type experience; and first

tiffin treat
dahi bhaat

2 cups boiled rice (leftover)
1 cup curd
1 tbs. oil
1/8 tsp. mustard seeds
1 green chili (optional)
1/4 tsp. chopped ginger
1 sprig curry leaves
salt to taste

the night before:
cook and cool rice, if there is none leftover

whip the curd
chop the chili
chop the ginger very fine
wash the curry leaves
heat the oil and splutter the mustard seeds in it
add the chili, ginger and curry leaves and fry for a minute
pour over the whipped curd
add the seasoning and rice
stir well
cover and chill
in the morning:
pack in the lunch box

note: a very cooling dish for summer

[added later: serves 4-6, preparation time 30 minutes]

year graphic design students at the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (the newest IIT campus, in the far east state of Assam) with little type experience. The core project was the same for each group, however adaptations were made based on student experience and time available (from two to three-and-a-half weeks). Technology was somewhat limited by United States standards; the students began with sketching, some with cut-and-paste compositions of photocopied text, and then moved onto computers using programs they knew (Corel Draw, Illustrator, and PageMaker) with limited fonts in Hindi and other languages.

The exercise used the short text of a simple and common Indian recipe for a rice and yogurt dish, called *Dahi Bhaat*, often served for lunch or snack. The text comprised a title, subtitle, list and quantities of ingredients, the procedural steps, and a serving comment (later two groups added serving size and preparation time). The structure of the exercise was to employ the admittedly artificial extremes of 'functional' and 'expressive' as beginning points for experimentation; then to arrive at an 'integrated' midpoint, with the possibility it would be better than either extreme.

WORD LIST :

To begin work a shared understanding of the terms was needed. The students brainstormed lists of words they associated with each of the extremes pertaining to typography. The lists remained on the blackboards for the duration of the project, to inspire and keep them on track. We discussed the nature and purpose of a recipe, who would be using it, how it would be used (shopping list and cooking directions), when certain elements would be important (for example, the rice must already be cooked before starting). We analyzed the text: what were the parts (titles, ingredients list, steps, note) and how did each operate in the whole? What kinds of words and symbols were used? Part of the discussion was also the memories and associations elicited by the text; mothers preparing food, how certain spices react, other tiffin treats, and eating customs in different areas of India.

	<i>expressive</i>
	Simple
	Radical
	Erratic
	Funny
	Personal
<i>functional</i>	Emotional
Mechanical	Playful
Business-like	Aesthetic
Unemotional	Subjective
Basic	Unconventional
Readable	Daring
Practical	Exciting
Clear	Rule-breaker
Comprehensive	Attractive
Ordered	Effective
Useable	Quick
Purposeful	Poetic
Structured	Eye-catching
Efficient	Contemporary
Effective	Special
Objective	Different
Concise	Extraordinary
Serious	Disturbing
Linear	Chaotic
Methodical	Spontaneous
Hierarchy	Beautiful
Balanced	Controversial
Comfortable	Useable
Direct	Indirect
Instructive	Misleading
Logical	Practical
Calculated	Persuasive
Symmetrical	Individualistic
Neutral	Free
Transparent	Informal
User-friendly	Non-functional
Communicative	Incomprehensible
Approachable	Biased
Universal	Deflected
Simple	Revolutionary
Precise	Artistic
Formal	Unusual
Static	Customized
Literal	Abstract
Framed	Extreme
Monotonous	Meaningful
Contextual	Experimental
Straightforward	Provocative
Sequential	Evocative
Unbiased	Connotation
Directional	Appropriate
Obvious	Metaphorical
Procedural	Short-lived
Persuasive	Human
Boring	Opaque
Denotation	Random
Conventional	Impractical
Traditional	Complex
Safe	Trendy
Attractive	Uncomfortable
Expected	Dynamic
Workable	Moving
Appropriate	Sensation

Working first in English, the students tackled the 'easy' Functional (closest to what they had already studied in typography), then moved to the Expressive, ending with Integrated compositions. Briefly, Functional was defined as easily readable, organized for understanding and following process. For Expressive the emphasis was on interpretation (of process, words, actions, associations, emotions, context) with readability not important. Integrated combined the best features of both, a useable text with increased visual, cultural, emotional interest and impact. Once they had cycled through the whole process, they could move through it again using Hindi or another Indian language with which they were familiar. For practical and pedagogical reasons, typeface choices were limited to a few sans serif faces. The students were given 'neutral' text in all lowercase, no punctuation; they were not allowed to add or subtract words, but could punctuate however they wished.

The educational levels, experiences and mindsets of each group made their responses different; different groups found certain parts easier than others. The students studying at the two IITs, India's technical universities known for their engineering and computer science programs, found working in the Expressive mode difficult, whereas the students in the art and design schools did not. Accompanying lectures on the history of western avant-garde typography of the early twentieth century suggested possibilities and helped some students understand better the freedom available for their work.

From among the many strong examples, these are chosen emphasizing design quality and variety of concepts with priority given to those concepts most directly connected with the specific content and context; some formal ideas might well pertain to other texts (and here represent part of the student's learning process).

ENGLISH FUNCTIONAL:

tiffin treat

curd **rice**

Dahi Bhaat

Note: a very cooling dish for summer

1 cup curd
1 tsp oil
1 green chili
2 cups boiled rice
1 sprig curry leaves
1/4 tsp chopped ginger
1/8 tsp mustard seeds
salt to taste

The night before, cook and cool rice. If there is rice left over, whip the curd, chop the ginger very fine, wash the ginger very fine, heat the oil and splutter the mustard seeds in it, add the chili, ginger and fry for a minute, pour over the whisked curd, add the seasoning and stir, stir well, cover and chill.

1: | Seema Seth, Shruti

tiffin treat

dahi bhaat

note: a very cooling dish for summer
serves 4-6 preparation time: 20 minutes.

2 cups **boiled rice** (leftover)
1 cup **curd**
1/8 tsp **mustard seeds**
1 green **chili** (optional)
1/4 tsp **oil**
3/4 tsp **chopped ginger**
1 sprig **curry leaves**
to taste **salt**

THE NIGHT BEFORE: Cook and cool the rice. If there is some left over.

Whip the curd.
Chop the chili.
Wash the ginger very fine.
Wash the oil very clean.
Heat the oil and **splutter** the mustard seeds in it.
Add the chili, ginger and fry for a minute.
Pour over the whisked curd.
Add the seasoning and stir.
Stir well, cover and chill.

2: | Ashish Sharma, IIT-G

tiffin treat

Dahi Bhaat

Note: a very cooling dish for summer

1 cup curd
1 tsp oil
1 green chili
2 cups boiled rice
1 sprig curry leaves
1/4 tsp chopped ginger
1/8 tsp mustard seeds
salt to taste

The night before, cook and cool rice. If there is rice left over, whip the curd, chop the ginger very fine, wash the ginger very fine, heat the oil and splutter the mustard seeds in it, add the chili, ginger and fry for a minute, pour over the whisked curd, add the seasoning and stir, stir well, cover and chill.

3: | Surbhi Guleria, NID

tiffin treat

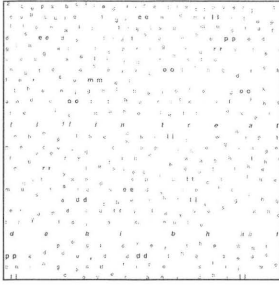
dahi bhaat

1 cup curd
1 tsp oil
1 green chili
2 cups boiled rice
1 sprig curry leaves
1/4 tsp chopped ginger
1/8 tsp mustard seeds
salt to taste

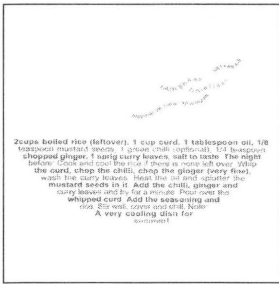
The night before, cook and cool rice. If there is rice left over, whip the curd, chop the ginger very fine, wash the ginger very fine, heat the oil and splutter the mustard seeds in it, add the chili, ginger and fry for a minute, pour over the whisked curd, add the seasoning and stir, stir well, cover and chill.

4: | Prachi Kamdar, NID

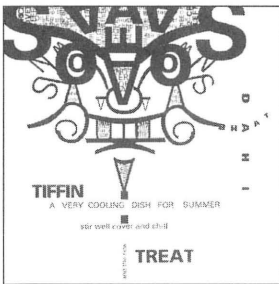
The essential parts of the message are clearly separated by space and alignments; other elements are treated for emphasis. The first emphasizes the main ingredients which become the English title (FIGURE 1). The second uses bold for ingredient names and the action verbs; the detail about cooking the rice first is separated (FIGURE 2). The third uses bold for quantities and actions (FIGURE 3). The fourth uses bold for ingredients and some actions; ingredients are distinguished by angled baselines; added space between the actions defines the steps (FIGURE 4).



5: | Kruti Saraiya, Shristi



9: | Shruti Shrivastava, IIT-G

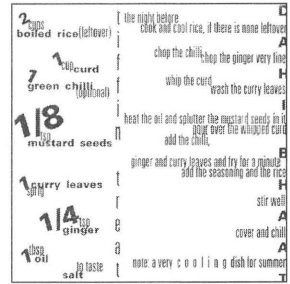


11: | Aviral Saxena, NID

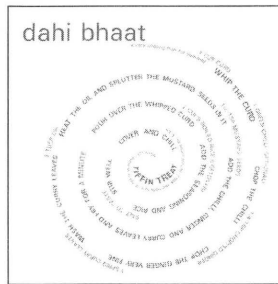
ENGLISH INTEGRATED:



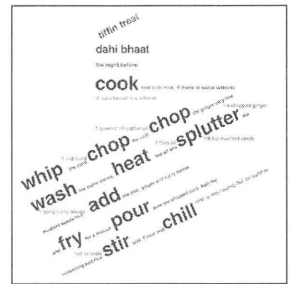
12: | Arvind Prabhakar, Shristi



13: | Geetanjali Srivastava, NID



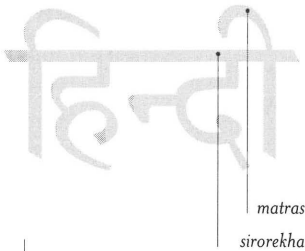
14: | Charmaine D'Souza, Shristi



15: | Mona Gonsai, NID

Integrated examples combine the best ideas for communication and expression. In the twelfth the sections of the tiffin box organize the steps, the ingredients at top allowing the evocative name and odor to escape (FIGURE 12). The size of the numbers in thirteen show quantity in reverse and suggest the spluttering mustard seeds (FIGURE 13). The fourteenth attaches the ingredient quantities to the action when needed for the whole swirling mixture (FIGURE 14). In fifteen the actions are emphasized and the quantities tucked in (FIGURE 15).

Following the English compositions, the students chose another Indian language. In most cases this was Hindi (the other official Indian national language with English), but some knew and chose Marathi (spoken in Bombay and the surrounding Maharashtra state), Kannada (spoken in Bangalore and the state of Karnataka), Tamil (spoken in Tamil Nadu) and Malayalam (spoken in Kerala). Marathi uses the same (Devanagari) alphabet as Hindi; the others employ their own alphabets derived from many writing traditions. This part of the project fulfilled one of my goals to learn more about the myriad Indian languages and alphabets in a typographic context that allowed discussion and exploration. It transpired that the students had done little typographic work outside of English, thus this part of the exercise was a beginning for them too.



A few basic characteristics of Hindi: the letters are consonants connected to make words by the top horizontal bar (*sirekha*) above which the *matras* indicate the vowel sounds, as well as some *matras* attached to character bases. There is only one case. A sentence ends with a vertical bar, and Hindi has its own numbers. The letterforms, compared with English, tend to be slightly more complex, more curved and closer to their humanistic pen-form roots. The close viewer/reader will notice a repetition of short words at the end of sentences — these are the Hindi verbs. The words 'tiffin treat' have become a single five-letter word 'nashta.'

HINDI FUNCTIONAL

In sixteen the comments and notes provide spatial divisions for the sections; the title is large at the bottom (FIGURE 16). The seventeenth contrasts the ingredients to actions by size, *nashta* and the note are vertical (FIGURE 17). In eighteen the title words define spatial areas for the two text sections; the *sirekha* provides a platform for *nashta* and the note (FIGURE 18). Words (title, subtitle and note) on diagonal in nineteen divide the space and suggest alignment for the text groupings; the numbers for ingredient quantities are enlarged (FIGURE 19). The pinwheel-like movement has a cultural significance; the swastika is an old and positive symbol in India.

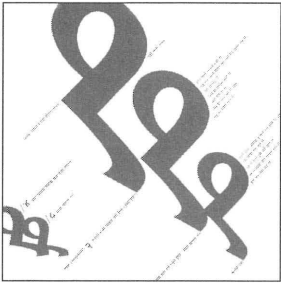
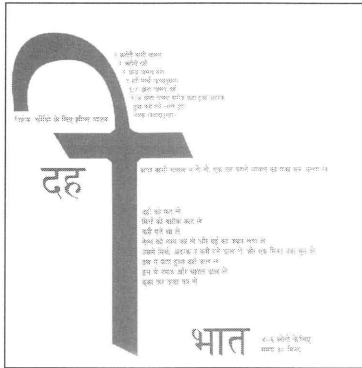
HINDI INTEGRATED :

अगर बासी चावल, बड़े बड़े कचरे। न हों तो, एक रात पहले
 चावल को पका कर अलग रख लें। दही, कड़वा लो को फेंट
 लें। मिर्च को निकालकर, को बारीक काट लें। करी पतले धो
 लें। तेल में कड़ाक सब को गरम कर लें और राई
 का बच्चा लगा लें। उसमें मिर्च, अदरक
 ब करी पतले को डाल लें और एक मिनट तक
 भुन लें। इस में फेंटा हुआ दही डाल लें। इस में नमक
 और चावल डाल लें। ढक कर ठंडा कर लें।
 विशेष: गर्मियों के लिए शीतल व्यंजन। दही भात



21: | Seema Seth, Shristi

24: | Gauri Bajaj, NID



23: | Rajorshi Ghosh, NID

25: | Gaurav Mathur, IIT-B

At Shristi in Bangalore, with students working in Hindi and Kannada, there was the opportunity to compare both languages with English/Roman in terms of alphabet forms, fonts, grammar, punctuation and general usage — all affecting typographic design. Both Hindi and Kannada have only one case and no italic. Both use phonetic alphabets, reading left to right with sentence structure beginning with nouns and ending with verbs. Kannada uses punctuation similar to English while Hindi uses the vertical bar (*purnaviram*) for a full stop. Hindi, with straight and curved, simple and complex forms, aligns along the horizontal *sirorekha* with *matras* above the line and below the letters like subscripts. Kannada, with mostly curved forms and a 'soft' slightly weighted baseline for alignment, has *matras* above and below letters. In Hindi certain sounds are formed with half characters joined horizontally; in Kannada subscript letters for combinations can be joined vertically. Because of so much information along the *sirorekha* and letter bases, Hindi is unreadable if cropped top or bottom. In contrast, Kannada readability can survive some top and bottom cropping. Hindi characters have a strong axis on the right, often a vertical stroke, but can create a strong left aligned edge; Kannada's soft forms create no strong edges and alignments are optical and easiest seen in mass.

For expressive purposes, English affords much greater distortion and flexibility while maintaining readability. In Hindi the necessary connection by *sirorekha* can be broken only slightly before words fall apart becoming meaningless; letterspacing is very limited as sound combinations are fragile. Nor can letterspacing be reduced by much before characters and *matras* pile up on one another. For the same reason, vertical stacking of Hindi characters is close to impossible. For Kannada, wide letterspacing is possible; *matras* can be distorted as long as they remain under the correct part of the character. Due to size differences among the characters most words cannot be stacked vertically. Given these conditions the students discovered what was possible, useful and expressive. Because of one case, larger characters or bolder characters could emphasize or define for both languages. The strong horizontal of Hindi allows close linespacing; Kannada needs greater separation between lines for definition.

ENGLISH;

HINDI;

KANNADA;

UPPERCASE,
lowercase

one case

one case

italic

no italic

no italic

--- read left to right ---

.! ? (punctuation)

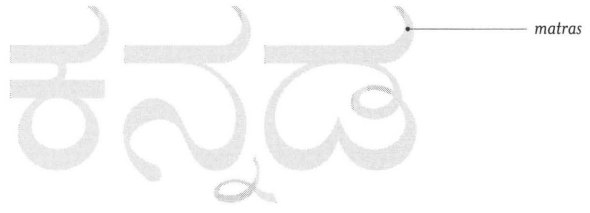
| (purnaviram)

.! ? (punctuation)

English

हिन्दी

ಕನ್ನಡ



KANNADA FUNCTIONAL

In Kannada '*dahi bhaat*' becomes '*mosaranna*' in five-letters and '*tiffin*' becomes three-letter '*thindi*'. In twenty-six, the ingredients are listed under the title and note while the steps are in larger type with the sentence-ending verbs much larger and looking bolder (FIGURE 26). Here you can see the variable visual density of the characters and the relative size of the bottom *matras*. '*Thindi*' (*tiffin*) is stacked in twenty-seven enclosing the title; ingredients are listed at top and process below, the note at the base (FIGURE 27). '*Thindi*' is again used as the focal point in twenty-eight; title, note, ingredients and steps rotate outward (FIGURE 28).

KANNADA EXPRESSIVE

By a student not familiar with the language, the essence of mixture, all the words and foods, is shown in twenty-nine, the title enclosed in '*thindi*' (FIGURE 29). The title in thirty is set in a more informal font; along the top the ingredients flow; mixing around the letters are the recipe steps; '*thindi*' can be seen in the medium-sized letters (FIGURE 30). Thirty-one emphasizes the forms of the Kannada numbers, even in fractions, the ingredients follow their forms; the steps are listed ending with the title (FIGURE 31).

MARATHI FUNCTIONAL

Marathi uses the same Devanagari alphabet as Hindi. The title in thirty-two with slightly overlapping words creates the column for the grouped texts; the curved note draws in the reader (FIGURE 32).

MARATHI EXPRESSIVE

Some of the title characters create a vessel for the food, shown with its clumps and spices in thirty-three (FIGURE 33). Another vessel created by one letterform pours the prepared food in thirty-four (FIGURE 34).

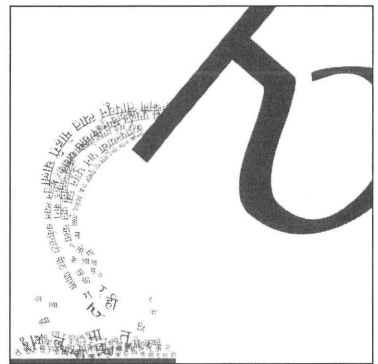
MARATHI INTEGRATED

The enlarged characters of 'bhaat' in thirty-five provide the spaces and alignments for the texts; ingredients separated from rice note, separated from procedures, from cooling note and from servings and time (FIGURE 35).



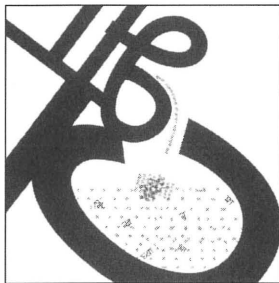
32: | Radhika Tipnis, IIT-B

MARATHI FUNCTIONAL;



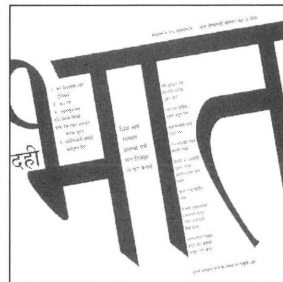
34: | Shweta Telang, IIT-B

MARATHI EXPRESSIVE;



33: | Radhika Tipnis, IIT-B

MARATHI INTEGRATED;

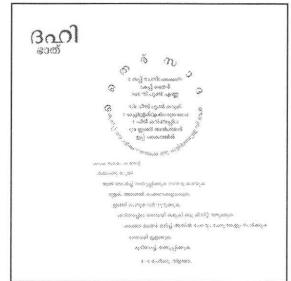


35: | Shweta Telang, IIT-B

In contrast to Devanagari from pen forms, Malayalam and Tamil alphabets are derived from writings on palm leaves with a pointed tool; the curling motions are combined with few straight lines in Malayalam, more complex curves in Tamil with more straight strokes. These too have single cases and must rely on size and weight for visual emphasis. More spacing flexibility is possible as the characters are separated. Malayalam has some accents, while Tamil has elaborate ascenders and descenders.

MALAYALAM FUNCTIONAL:

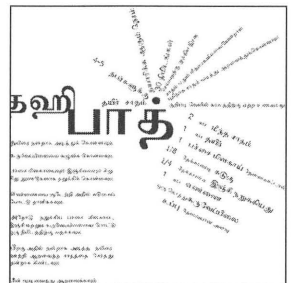
In thirty-six, the title in the corner in thirty-six the notes encircle the ingredients and the process steps down (FIGURE 36).



36: | Rajith Kumar, IIT-B

TAMIL INTEGRATED:

In thirty-seven, the large title provides the center point for all notes and the ingredient list; process steps are listed to left (FIGURE 37).



37: | Savavara Raja, IIT-B

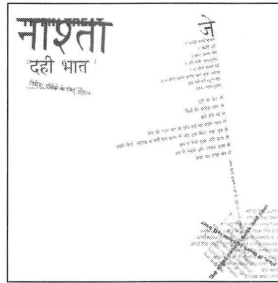
Some students explored the challenge of a bilingual composition. When attempting to balance weight and color between languages they discovered limitations in available fonts; type sizes are best matched optically between English and Indian faces as point sizes must include the *matras* making the x-heights different.

ENGLISH/KANNADA FUNCTIONAL

Both titles in thirty-eight are rotated and the two recipes lean toward each other in visual balance (FIGURE 38).



38: | Krupa Thimmaiah, Shristi



39: | Arvind Prabhakar, Shristi

ENGLISH/HINDI EXPRESSIVE

Politics (and humor) enter in thirty-nine where the student uses Hindi and its *sirorekha* to obliterate the colonial English and includes a banner of Hindi topped by 'jai' — short for the rallying cry of 'Jai Hind' or 'Glory to India' (FIGURE 39).

ENGLISH/HINDI INTEGRATED

Emphasizing the visual contrast of the letterforms by using a condensed English, forty alternates Hindi ingredients with English process along the left and the reverse along the right, with title to the edge (FIGURE 40). Hindi changes sizes and weight, the English changes only size.



40: | Geetanjali Srivastava, NID

In conclusion, with so many parts of the exercise new to the students, some progress was inevitable. Initially, some students found the exercise tedious, then got into the spirit. One of their usual teachers compared the whole exercise to cooking: not enjoyable unless your hands are smeared with ingredients. Here their hands were full of type, rules and text, and they began to enjoy. Some specific aspects they valued involved the structure of the exercise: using the extremes to create understandable boundaries that were subsequently blurred, the sanctioned rule breaking, and finally, knowing experimentation was acceptable and encouraged. The simplicity of the text led some to think the exercise limited but later were surprised at the level of creativity it generated. Working in two and three languages produced several rewards for students, in addition to pure novelty. Translating between the languages showed differences in sentence structure and hierarchy. They were confronted with aspects they took for granted in their primary language and now perceived differently in all languages. In the less familiar languages they began to look more closely at letterforms and at abstract qualities such as typographic color and texture. They found new visual ideas along with the new forms and structures and returned to the familiar with new eyes.

These students are preparing to take on the complexity of typographic design in a country with two official languages and more than twenty others, many dominant in their own regions. Through this short set of exercises they have discovered issues that will define their professional lives and problems that some may seek to address directly in their design. For example, currently the choice of typefaces for Indian languages is limited and within those available the variations in weight, structure and slant are not developed. Technology must address the fact that many Indian alphabets can have as many as fifty traditional characters. Hindi lost about ten characters when the British adapted it to the standard English keyboard. Those developing typefaces and typesetting programs have no standardized keyboards; manufacturers use their own variation on either key mapping or phonetic mapping onto English letters. There are important cultural and political ramifications to the creative and technical ability of designers to produce inventive and successful communication materials for the formidable range of voices among a billion people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks for their collaboration to:

At NID:

Colleagues: MC Patel and SM Shah

Students: Gauri Bajaj, Anish Biswas, Chiranjeet Borah, Dipannita Dutt, Mona Gonsai, Rajorshi Ghosh, Surbhi Guleria, Geetika Jaspal, Prachi Kamdar, Dev Kabir Malik, Kadambari Misra, Mohor Ray, Nidhi Sah, Aviral Saxena, Geetanjali Srivastava, Deepa V.

At Shristi:

Colleagues: Bela Rajagopalan

Students: Yolande Berlie, Vaibhav Bhawsar, Charmaine D'Souza, Shwetha Gopal, Chaitanya Krishnan, Ekta Manchanda, Gaurabh Mathure, Smriti Mehra, Shahana Mehta, Arvind Prabhakar, Arun Rajendran, Nitya Rao, Anindita Saha, Kruti Saraiya, Seema Seth, Krupa Thimmaiah.

At IIT-B:

Colleagues: Kirti Trivedi and Ravi Hazra

Students: Bhavna Bhargava, Harish Jaiswal, Rajith Kumar, Gaurav Mathur, Supreo Mukhopadhyay, Santhya Pujari, Anurag Rahul, Saravana Raja, Simone Schmidt, Shweta Telang, Radhika Tipnis, Shirish Totade.

At IIT-G:

Colleagues: S Nadkarni and A Das

Students: Kapil Arora, Ankur Jhavar, Ashish Krishna, Saveen Kumar, Sunil Parihar, Ankur Richhariya, Sidharth Saxena, Ashish Sharma, Shruti Shrivastava, Anand Yadav.

And thanks to all the friendly and helpful staff at the Fulbright offices in New Delhi and Mumbai.

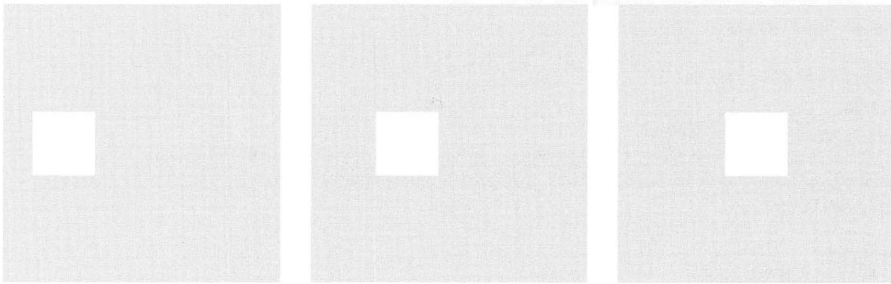
AUTHOR NOTE

*Martha Scotford teaches graphic design and design history at North Carolina State University. She is author of *Cipe Pineles: a life of design* (Norton, 1999). Her visual translations instigated Lissitzky's and Mayakovsky's 'For the Voice,' comprising a volume of essays, a facsimile of the original Russian book, an English translation (The British Library, 2000). She was a Fulbright Lecturer in India for four months in 2001 during which these workshops took place.*

The METASTRUCTURAL
DYNAMICS of

INTERACTIVE ELECTRONIC DESIGN

Patricia Search

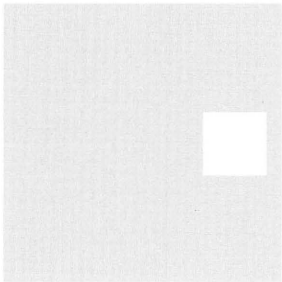


Interactive electronic computing enables users to manipulate text, graphics and sound into new multiliteracy models that emphasize patterns of relationships rather than discrete entities. However, most multimedia programs fall short of this objective because they reflect Western hierarchical concepts that have dominated communication since the development of writing. We need interface designs that help the user define dynamic patterns and synthesize information. The paper explores new forms of temporal, spatial and rhythmic links in interactive design that enable the viewer to explore information outside the framework of narrative and causality. The paper discusses the 'spatial grammar' of interaction and introduces the concept of kinesthetically articulated design in which the user builds cognitive maps by combining rhythmic patterns of interaction with audiovisual navigation cues. This new design syntax is derived from oral communication techniques used in aboriginal cultures.

INTRODUCTION

Finding meaning either in oneself or in the world depends not on a single perceptual standpoint and a bedrock of certain meaning, but on deciphering an unstable, ever-changing network of relations surrounding it.

– Polly Ullrich



In interactive multimedia computing, the interface designs do not reflect the dynamic nature of interactive multimedia environments where relationships continually change. Instead the interface designs support hierarchical structures that separate information into specific categories or groups. Current design techniques emphasize the position of text and graphics on the screen and the sequence of links, rather than using space and time to define semantic relations. Links to information in an interactive environment provide flexible access to information, but that flexibility is stifled by the fact that we still read for "fixed links between screens rather than focusing on a network of dynamic relationships between ideas" (Search, 2001).

The dominance of the printed page in communication has limited our ability to visualize alternative formats for structuring information. In written text, printing conventions such as paragraphs, indices and punctuation affect the way we read by organizing information into predefined hierarchical structures. However, in interactive computer programs the process of navigation reveals new patterns of relationships between the groups. As Monge and Kalman point out, ". . . as processes unfold they constitute (i.e., reproduce and/or transform) structures" (Monge and Kalman, 1996, 87). Jay Bolter acknowledges that this interactive process should result in new forms of communication: "the dialogic structure of hypertext might also enable us, as Derrida put it, to 'reread past writing according to a different organization of space'" (Bolter, 2001, 110).

The interface designs for interactive programs need to emphasize dynamic patterns of information as well as underlying structures. How do we visualize patterns that change over time? We need to combine logic and perception into a dynamic syntax that encourages a flexible, open interpretation of the matrix of patterns and relationships that evolve as the user navigates through a network of links. A new form of audiovisual logic is needed using Gestalt principles of perception to create a holistic synthesis of patterns that change in space and time. In these discursive environments, text takes on characteristics of visual imagery because words derive meaning from their relationships in space and time. In turn images and sound define a new audiovisual aesthetic in which graphics and sound have interchangeable or complementary meanings, creating multiple levels of semantic encoding. The new design syntax should enable the user to recognize the changing layers of associations, multiple dimensions of space and time and potential new connections that evolve as the interactive process transforms relationships. Within the context of this changing environment, the interface design should establish a flexible, underlying structure that helps the user recognize the continuity between ideas.

There are many parallels between oral communication and electronic communication that can provide insights into ways to visualize the transformative process that occurs in interactive multimedia computing. These parallels include the pluralistic meaning of symbols, emphasis on actual events as well as potential events, the collapse of boundaries between space and time and the integration of individual elements into the whole (Search, 1999). Oral cultures used audiovisual design techniques such as geometric symbols, transparency, repetition and rhythm and space to communicate these dynamic dimensions (Search, 1999, 2001). Some of these design techniques can be adapted for electronic communication to create a dynamic syntax that encourages open interpretations and new perspectives. I have incorporated many of these techniques into audiovisual design concepts called HyperGlyphs. In previous papers I have focused on specific HyperGlyphs designs that communicate the integration of ideas within the context

of flexible, changing relationships (Search, 2001). This paper takes these ideas a step further and explores ways to use media techniques and the navigation process itself to define patterns of relationships.

M E T A F R A M E S

*. . . with an electronic infrastructure,
the dream of perfect forms becomes the dream of information . . .
Filtered through the computer matrix, all reality becomes patterns
of information.*

— Loretta Todd

Interactive multimedia environments consist of complex information matrices that evolve in space and time. The perception of events and relationships between events is relative to the user's perspective and interaction. Modern science paved the way for this perspective in electronic communication. In the nineteenth century, the linear determinism of Euclidean geometry and Aristotelian logic gave way to dynamic mathematical models that used terms like betweenness, translation, reflection, projective, inversive and hyperplanes to describe flexible, multidimensional relationships (Search, 1993). These same terms describe today's hypermedia environments where webs of information are subject to continual change.¹ As Bolter points out, the unity or coherence of an electronic text "derives from the perpetually shifting relationship among its verbal elements" (Bolter, 2001, 12). We can expand this statement to include audiovisual elements where patterns and rhythms create coherence.

Metaframes are a new media aesthetic for computer interface designs that enable the viewer to move beyond the static frame of the computer screen and use multidimensional patterns to underscore the perceptual and cognitive links in the information space. In the Hyper-

1

The HyperGlyphs designs derive from geometric forms used in early forms of oral communication to emphasize the fluid dynamics of interrelationships within an integrated whole. The geometry emphasizes individual elements as well as unity and continuity (Search, 2001).

THE SPACE - TIME CONTINUUM

*Space [is] an active structuring
medium, not a void.*

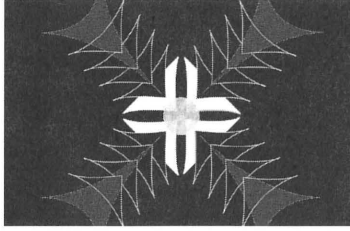
– Tarthang Tulku

The very nature of electronic communication underscores the significance of space since cyberspace is a medium for the transmission of information. In electronic environments space is not a void, but an active area defined by the events that take place in it, including possible events that are yet to happen. "Space and time serve as the contexts in which all these communication entities exist and unfold" (Monge and Kalman, 1996, 74). Space and time in electronic communication do not define objects or events per se. Space and time are flexible entities that describe relationships between events.

Metaframes help the user visualize this ubiquitous, all-inclusive dimension of space where multiple layers of objects, sounds, actions and perspectives are possible. Audio and visual designs create different levels and depths in space that represent the integrated whole and the temporal transformation of ideas. These designs break with traditional perspectives to create the impression of an all-inclusive space that is continually changing. The granularity of spatial representation ranges from contrast on the specific or localized representation, which is achieved with graphics, to contrast on the infinite or non-localized space, which is achieved with sound.

In this project metaframes encourage multiple perspectives by helping the user visualize flexible information structures that reflect the actual and the potential. Curved lines replace straight lines in geometric forms and expand the spatial dimensions of two-dimensional line and form into three-dimensional space, thus eliminating the boundaries between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space and suggesting the integration

1: | 2:



of the actual and the potential (FIGURE 1). Transparent colors and textures, dashed lines instead of solid lines and forms without fixed borders expand space and convey a transient quality of space and time that underscores the flexible nature of this changing environment.

Animation can visualize the role the interactive process plays in defining these dynamic information structures. In the beginning of this project a matrix of squares appears on the screen. When the user moves the cursor over a square, an enlarged version of the square 'pops up' and overlaps the edges of the surrounding squares. This temporal transformation of space emphasizes changing relationships, the fluidity of these relationships, the integration of individual ideas into a whole and the potential for new links and networks of associations.

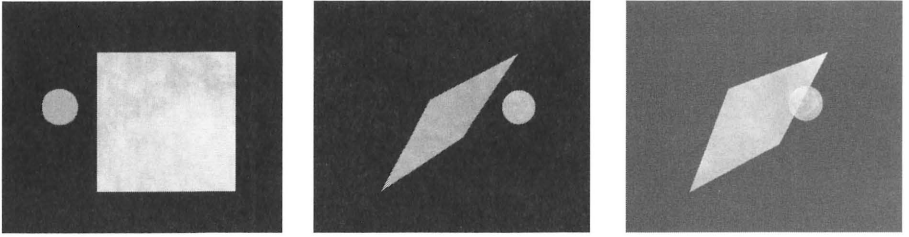
In this project, there is an emphasis on rhythmic transformations between positive and negative space. In some places positive shapes transform into 'ghosted' images or shadows that suggest the integration of the actual with the possible (see FIGURE 2). Textures derived from the physical world create spatial links between the real world and cyberspace. The same textures are used in different ways throughout the program. Sometimes a texture is static; sometimes it changes with the interaction. Sometimes a texture is physically linked to an object; in other places the texture appears or disappears with the interaction. These different uses of texture create tensions that unite diverse elements and emphasize betweenness and the space between ideas. For example, in one section of this program, a cloud-like texture changes from an intangible, floating reflection in the environment to a fixed texture on the cursor (FIGURE 3). Textures and designs become spaces within space. Space folds

FIGURE 1: |

Subtle curves in the forms suggest the inclusion of the surrounding space. Transparent forms symbolize the integration of diverse elements.

FIGURE 2: |

Solid images transform into different levels of transparency and become shadows or 'ghosted' versions of the original forms. These visual transformations symbolize the dynamic flexibility of the information networks and the integration of the actual and the possible.



| FIGURE 3: |

A cloud-like texture drawn from the 'real' world floats across a reflective plane as the user rotates the plane. When the sequence begins, the cursor is a solid color. As the plane rotates, the cloud texture 'transfers' to the cursor.

into itself uniting objects with surrounding space. The tension created by using the same texture in different forms or functions emphasizes the space between ideas. These new interpretations of space defy the 'either/or' perspective that traditionally prevails in Western diachronic logic.

The audio in the program combines drumbeats and chimes, both of which mark specific moments in time, with sustained tones that penetrate space and suggest infinity. This combination of audio and visuals creates a counterpoint of shapes and sounds that emphasize the space between events and the dynamic interplay between changing relationships. The low-pitch of the drums and the high-pitch of the chimes, represent both ends of the audio spectrum, symbolizing the integration of diverse dynamics into a continuous whole. Sound collapses space and time.

Metaframes also challenge the user's traditional perspective of time. The process of interaction creates a sequential path with a Western perception of history (with a past, present and future). However this perspective is challenged by an all-inclusive interpretation of space, represented by overlapping patterns and sounds, that suggests simultaneity and a multidimensional definition of time that is non-linear. In this project diachronic references to place and time such as here and there, now and then, collapse space and time into the present. There is a focus on the present and the 'time within.' Timelessness is manifested by an awareness of time in the present. However, time is not fixed. Interactivity emphasizes the unpredictable and transient quality of the present.

4: |

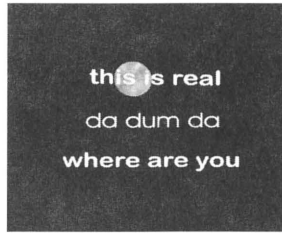


FIGURE 4: |

The 'erasing' of text on the screen does not represent a void. It represents the link between ideas that have already appeared and ideas that are yet to come.

Blank screens also play an important role in metaframes. They suggest the possible or that which is still to occur. In most interactive programs, there is very little blank space. There is an emphasis on 'filling the space' with objects because empty space is viewed as a void that contains no information. Traditional design uses 'white space' in layouts to separate objects into groups that create visual hierarchies. In this project empty space represents the connection between ideas. It is a place for the viewer to 'fill in' with new ideas and relationships. This space may appear as static black screens where text or other elements fade in and out, or the blank space may evolve as part of the interactive process. For example, in one section of this project, there are three lines of white text on a black background. The cursor is a circle, and the movement of the cursor creates a path of black circles that 'erases' the text on the screen (FIGURE 4). The action changes when all the text is gone and the screen is filled with black. The black screen, however, is not an empty void. The space represents an active area in which events, the actual and the possible, come and go. It represents a place where the user can integrate ideas and relationships represented by the text — a place where something comes out of nothing. The blank space encourages user participation and makes the virtual space more tangible, just as silence in oral storytelling encourages audience involvement. As Tedlock (1999) points out in storytelling, "A well-placed silence is as audible as anything else in a performance, so real the listeners can almost touch it" (xi).

Throughout this project the interactive process also highlights the role that space and time play in the formation of networks of associations and interrelationships. There will be more discussion of the importance of action as a design element later in this paper.

*. . . [rhythm] is a very high degree
of formal art which displays itself here, in expressing the same idea,
the same event, in the most varied manners, like a precious gem
turned in all directions . . .*

– William Trask

The dominance of European art in contemporary culture led to the dismissal of symmetry and repetition as significant design elements. Western cultures fail to recognize and appreciate the layers of multiple rhythms that occur when there are repetitions in forms, space or time (Search, 1999). In multimedia programs there is the potential to use the rhythmic patterns of graphics, sound and action to create integrated layers of spatial and temporal tensions that symbolize the dynamics of these flexible information networks.

Rhythmic patterns that repeat throughout the program suggest new relationships and the integration of diverse elements into the whole. The repetition of similar rhythmic patterns in text, sound and animations suggests continuity and flexibility. For example, in this project the text “da dum da” represents the sound of beating drums (Beier, 1975).² The three parts of the text are displayed one at a time in a three-part, rhythmic animation that reflects the tempo of several quick drumbeats. The motion also echoes the rotating rhythm of an animated graphic that precedes the appearance of the text. This section integrates overlapping rhythmic patterns from words, motion and sound. The unfamiliar text and the repetitive patterns prompt the user to ‘sound out’ the rhythm of the text. This participation helps the user recognize the interrelationships between the patterns.

2

This text comes from a primitive “drum poem” created by the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands who used the human voice to imitate the rhythm of drums in ceremonial rituals. This form of direct participation made drum poems a powerful memory or teaching aid (Beier, 1975).

As these audiovisual patterns weave in and out of space, they create a sense of perpetual motion. Forms move in relation to one another and emphasize the 'design' or 'pattern' of interaction. The interweaving of the different design elements in the graphics, as well as animated transitions between the graphics, create layers of rhythms. Rhythms occur when audiovisual symbols that represent closure and continuity (e.g., circles, squares) contrast with shapes or sounds that suggest infinite time and space (e.g., straight lines, sustained sounds).

In this project, sound combines with visual information to create a multi-layered matrix of information and sensory stimuli. An overlay of patterns created by images, text, sound and action weaves a counterpoint of rhythms and tempos. Sound, syncopated with the display of graphics, creates an interactive dialog that suggests multiple layers of associations and the flexible interpretation of ideas. The integration of diverse elements is symbolized by the juxtaposition of curved, lyrical rhythms with angular, staccato sounds and movements on the screen. Vibratos underscore the changing dynamics in the space. Structure is juxtaposed with fluidity.

Sound, which surrounds the viewer in three-dimensional space, helps the viewer assimilate the three-dimensionality of the physical world with the two-dimensional patterns on the computer screen. Sound underscores the significance of space and is a constant reminder that space is not an empty void. Blank screens encourage the user to 'visualize' the audio as well as visual rhythms. Pauses in the audio rhythms create a 'rhythm of silence' that encourages the viewer to hear the rhythms and 'feel' the patterns and connections.

The rhythm of the physical interaction also adds to these layers of patterns. The rhythmic movement of the viewer's interaction creates a syncopated backdrop to the visual and audio patterns. This accumulating rhythm, with its changing dynamics, encourages a broader range of interpretations and perspectives. The rhythm of interaction will be discussed in more detail in the section titled Action.



LANGUAGE

... the structure of language determines ways its users sense reality.

— Jerome Rothenberg

Print communication emphasizes fixed positions of text in sentences and paragraphs, thus structuring and restricting the meaning of text. Interactive multimedia communication creates new opportunities to explore language within the context of visual and aural semiotics where interpretations are more abstract and open. In the HyperGlyphs designs, language is a dynamic structure that encourages flexible interpretations. Text is not locked into a specific meaning or association. This flexibility is achieved by juxtaposing text with abstract visual and audio patterns. When coupled with abstraction, text takes on the discursive characteristics of the visual imagery and sound, creating layers of meaning. This dynamic quality of text is enhanced when text is combined with three-dimensional graphics that move and change shape in space and time (Search, 2001). This indeterminacy in language underscores the actual and the possible by creating an open framework for interpretation.

Language can also create a sensory experience in which text defines a 'sense' of place or time rather than a specific location or event. For example, in this project, words like 'where are you' and 'the center of time' reflect the cyclical nature of the interactive experience where relationships are always in flux. The semantic structure of the words is underscored by the rhythm of the interactive process itself.

Language can also symbolize the dynamic relationships in an interactive program. In this program, language adds layers of cognitive associations and rhythmic patterns to the sound and graphics. In one section of the program, individual lines of text on the screen actually comprise multiple layers of text that create a graphical representation of complex relationships in space and time. As the cursor moves over a line of text, the line

is replaced with new text. The layers of text create new semantic structures that reveal a matrix of changing associations. Tonality shifts, derived from phonetics and the mental pronunciation of words, add rhythms to the audiovisual patterns. The lack of capitalization and punctuation in the text eliminates visual and conceptual boundaries and contributes to a sense of integration and unity. Language creates a rhythmic flow in and out of space and time that defines specific actions as well as the space between events. Once again, structure is juxtaposed with fluidity.

In another part of the program, the words 'the sky is what I was telling you about'³ move across a circle in the center of a black screen. The black text is visible as it moves into the circle, but disappears as it moves into the surrounding black space. The design incorporates several symbolic representations of continuity and the integration of events or relationships:

- a) present/past tenses of the verb to be;
- b) lack of punctuation and capital letters; and
- c) words that move in and out of blank space.

Throughout this program, blank space plays a role in defining the indeterminacy of language. When text 'disappears' into blank space, the temporal dynamics of the linguistic syntax changes. This transformation signifies the integration of past (what was), present (what is) and future (what will happen). Everything is possible.

3

The line is from an Ojibwa poem titled "An Imploration for Clear Weather" (Rothenberg, 1985, 205).

ACTION

Sense of place is not just something that people know and feel, it is something people do.

- Albert Camus

In electronic communication, knowledge is usually removed from action and becomes highly symbolic (Zuboff, 1988). Researchers have focused on increasing the physical involvement of the viewer in cyberspace by using input devices such as helmets and data gloves to put the viewer 'inside' three-dimensional, virtual reality worlds. However, there are other ways to use the process of interaction to increase viewer involvement in an electronic information space. The patterns and rhythms of the interactive process can become part of the metastructural syntax of the interactive design. Action defines events in space and time, and it defines changing relationships. The process of interaction creates patterns and rhythms that define a spatial grammar of action that encodes space and time into tangible representations of the transformation of ideas. Designers can use this spatial grammar of action to create kinesthetically articulated designs that integrate the rhythm of action into the overall interface design.

Action encodes multiple dimensions of space and time. Action represents 'now' by its immediacy with the physical world. However, each action is the culmination of past actions, and each action represents future possibilities. Action represents the integration of space over time.

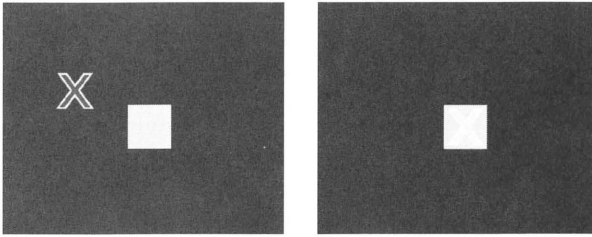
Action enables the viewer to move from one space to another and experience this integration. Action is the link between the viewer and the virtual world, a link that also bridges the actual and the possible. The rhythm of action emphasizes the 'space' between the links and the information that appears on the screen. Action defines the simultaneous existence of multiple spaces and times. Action is more related to a state of existence than a particular event or time.

This program uses layers of rhythmic patterns created by form, color, texture, sound and action. The patterns exist on multiple levels including the audiovisual designs, the movement of the input device and the cursor. Throughout the program there is interplay between the forms, colors and textures in the audiovisual screen designs and the interactive process itself. Action becomes part of the discursive syntax. Symbols, text and action have overlapping meanings that reinforce each other.

For example, in this program, a trackball is the input device. The circular pattern the user makes with the trackball echoes the circular patterns of designs and animations on the screen as well as cyclic patterns in the audio sequences. The circular movement of action suggests integration. This interplay of patterns and rhythms adds to the multidimensionality of the interactive program.

In the program there are three cursors. One cursor is an 'X,' the other two are circles. The cursor symbolizes the input action and becomes a visible link between the physical and virtual worlds — a link between the actual and the potential. The cursors are all transparent graphics. As the transparent cursors move over objects and colors on the screen, they visually merge with the underlying objects and create new visual images and integrated patterns that change over time. These perceptual transformations symbolize the synthesis of multiple relationships into a whole. Action reminds the viewer that relationships change and create flexible networks of associations in which all relationships are possible.

The 'X' cursor appears at the beginning of the program. It marks the beginning of the program and symbolizes the unity between the action (i.e., the user) and the screen. The program begins when the user moves the 'X' cursor into the center of a white square that is located in the center of the screen (FIGURE 5). At that moment the 'X' is no longer a separate visual. It merges visually with the white square. This transformation suggests interrelationships and the integration of individual



elements into the whole. It symbolizes the integration of the tangible world, represented by the action itself, with the elusive sensory and cognitive world in the virtual program. The 'X' also signifies a location in space ("X marks the spot."). The movement of the 'X' into the center of the screen to start the program signifies the center of space and time and the beginning of the cycle of continuity.

The circular cursor plays an important role in expanding the semantic structure of the program. When the circular cursor first appears, it has a transparent gray color with no texture. As previously described (FIGURE 3), in one section of the program a three-dimensional, rotating plane appears that reflects a 'cloud-like' texture. As the user rotates the plane, the gray cursor slowly takes on the cloud texture and assimilates the characteristics of the surrounding environment into the action. The syntax of the patterns and forms change with the interaction, adding to the metastructural syntax of the program. The cloud texture creates a reference to the tangible, physical world. When the cursor assumes the texture of the environment, the interaction integrates the tangible and virtual worlds. Within this flexible syntax, objects and actions exchange symbolic representations and enhance the feeling of an integrated network of associations where relationships change over time.

FIGURE 5: |

In the beginning of the program, the cursor is a large 'X.' When the user moves the cursor into the square, the program begins, and the 'X' merges visually with the square. This visual integration of the forms symbolizes the integration of action, space and time.

CONCLUSION

. . . human existence is irrevocably

situated in time and space.

– Keith Basso

Metaframes and kinesthetically articulated designs define new forms of navigation in and out of different types of spaces. These designs foster a perceptual awareness of relationships between audiovisual designs, space, time and action that can lead to new cognitive associations. As Peter Anders points out, "Spatial thought forms the foundation of our awareness . . . we have the innate abilities to navigate in space . . . and we have the ability to recognize symbols and think abstractly (iconic mentality and symbolic mentality)" (Anders, 1999, 12).

Research has shown that temporal orientation is linked to differentiated patterns of activity that are usually defined in relation to landmarks on the calendar (Friedman, 1990). This type of navigation or mapping of temporal space is similar to navigation in a geographic space. However, navigation in an interactive electronic environment, where audiovisual information continually changes, does not rely on static landmarks. Navigation in cyberspace requires the arrangement and rearrangement of dynamic patterns defined by events and relationships between events.

HyperGlyphs use audiovisual designs to define these types of cognitive maps. New interactive techniques such as metaframes suspend the viewer between information structures, thus enabling the viewer to transcend the limited perspective of a specific action and explore new associations. The repetition of spatial and temporal patterns in graphics, sound, text and action creates a matrix of rhythms and patterns that the user weaves into a coherent whole. Kinesthetically articulated designs use the tangible process of interaction to underscore the rhythm of the patterns and create links between the physical world and the metastructural syntax of the interactive program. The user employs Gestalt principles of perception and memory to construct relationships between patterns and define semantic associations. Hierarchical structures defined by traditional Western design, give way to fluid, dynamic pat-

terns of information where logic is tempered by the holistic integration of layers of information. In traditional forms of interactive design that emphasize categories and hierarchical organization, users seek resolution or closure derived from causality. In the HyperGlyphs designs, closure is a cyclic, ever-changing dynamic that is defined in terms of the space between events and the patterns that result from the integration of changing relationships.

These types of interactive designs have important implications for global networking. A shift away from Western analysis and logic as the primary means of organizing information creates opportunities to use audiovisual interfaces that transcend cultural boundaries. The rhythm of visual symbols, sound and action formed the basis for oral communication in many cultures throughout the world. The use of sensory stimuli in user interfaces can capture some of the intuitive immediacy of oral communication and create isomorphic bridges between cultures (Search, 1999). Incorporating the perceptual dimensions of patterns, rhythms and action into interactive design creates a flexible information structure that accommodates different cultural perspectives. The designs create an intercultural grammar that enables users to become part of another cultural space in which they can explore new perspectives within the context of their own cultural backgrounds (Search, 2001).

REFERENCES

- Anders, P. 1999. *Envisioning Cyberspace: Designing 3D Electronic Spaces*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Basso, K. H. 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 105.
- Beier, U. 1975. A note on the drum language of the Trobriand Islands. *Alcheringa* 1, no. 1: 108-109.
- Bolter, J. D. 2001. *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Camus, A. 1955. *Noces suivis de l'été*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 88.
- Friedman, W. 1990. *About Time: Inventing the Fourth Dimension*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Monge, P. and Kalman, M. 1996. Sequentiality, simultaneity, and synchronicity in human communication. In Watt, James and C. Arthur Van Lear, editors. *Dynamic Patterns in Communication Processes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rothenberg, J., editor. 1985. *Technicians of the Sacred*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 623.
- Tedlock, D. 1999. *Finding the Center*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Todd, L. 1996. Aboriginal narratives in cyberspace. In Mosher, Mary Anne and Douglas MacLeod, editors. *Immersed in Technology: Art and Virtual Environments*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 180.
- Trask, W. 1966. *The Unwritten Song: Poetry of the Primitive and Traditional Peoples of the World*. New York: The Macmillan Company, xviii.
- Tulku, T. 1977. *Time Space and Knowledge*. Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 121.
- Search, P. 1993. The rhythm and structure of multicultural communication. *Media Information Australia: Art & Cyberculture*, 69 (August), 62-69.
- Search, P. 1999. Ancient voices in cyberspace: Exploring the past to reshape the future. In Malkinson, Terrance, editor. *Proceedings of IEEE International Professional Communication Conference 1999*, 225-230. New Orleans, LA: IEEE Professional Communication Society.
- Search, P. 2001. HyperGlyphs: New multiliteracy models for interactive computing. In Cope, Bill and Mary Kalantzis, editors. *Proceedings of the Learning Conference 2001*. <<http://LearningConference.Publisher-Site.com>>. Also published in Griffin, Robert, Jung Lee, and Vicki Williams, editors. 2002. *Visual Literacy in Message Design*, 171-177. Loretto, PA: International Visual Literacy Association.
- Ullrich, P. 1998. The Workmanship of risk: The re-emergence of handcraft in postmodern art. *New Art Examiner* 25 :7, 24-29, 27.
- Zuboff, S. 1988. *In the Age of the Smart Machine*. New York: Basic Books.

AUTHOR NOTE

Patricia Search is a multimedia artist and associate professor in the Department of Language, Literature and Communication at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. In her artwork and multimedia research, she is exploring the use of audiovisual symbols from oral cultures as a foundation for new interface designs in electronic communication. She has exhibited her art in eighteen solo shows, including six in New York City, and participated in numerous group exhibitions throughout the world. She has published articles on electronic art and interactive multimedia computing in many international publications and received the "Best Paper Award" at the World Conference on Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia for her research in computer interface design for multimedia programs.

¥100

パークフリー2

delight

しぶや

しぶや



2F

天鳳
やまがた

貸和風スタジオ
舟唄
電話 (464) 8989

大衆ハブ
山形

雀荘
7時開店
年中無休
3F



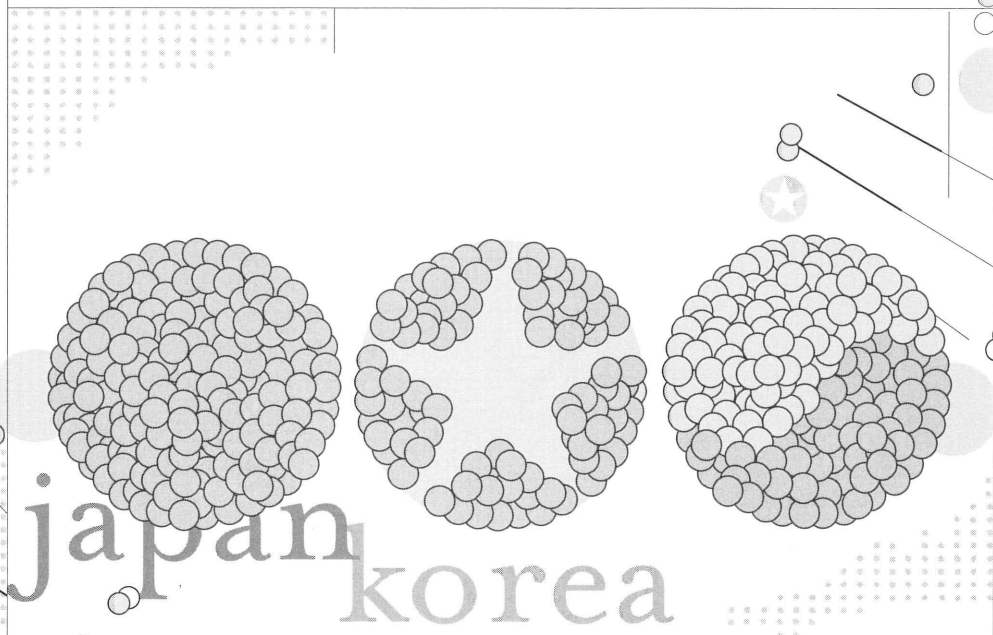
カラオケ
山形
若鶴

OSM
OSM

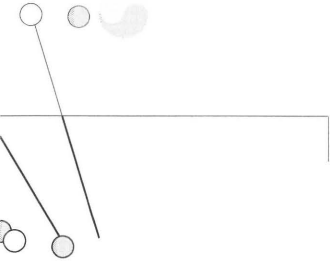
MAPPING A GRAPHIC
GENOME :

*A cross-cultural comparison
between Korean and Japanese designers*

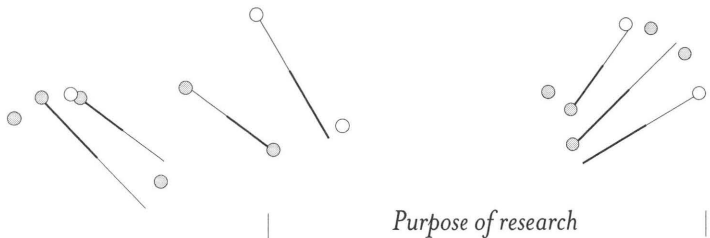
Min-Soo Kim



In this paper, the author proposes substitution of the biotechnical term genome for the aesthetic term style. The author does so in order to argue that a graphic designer's style is not purely an independent representation in visual form of factors interacting with free will, individual beliefs and personal talents. His or her style is also influenced by tacit knowing, to use Michael Polyani's words, by the phylogenetic factors imbued by a cultural context. The author posits that just as a map of genome — the collectivity of genes and chromosomes — explain the life structure and condition of an organism, it would be possible to trace a cultural genome by identifying designers' thoughts and actual works. What kinds of historical contexts, subject matters and inner logics are interwoven in the works of contemporary Korean and Japanese graphic designers? In what ways can such inter-related conditions and perceptions be compared and related to one another?

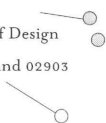


For specific analyses in this paper, the author uses selected works by designers who participated in the exhibition, "Contemporary East Asian Typographic Arts," held at the Seoul Art Center in late fall, 1999. The designers included in the exhibition are deemed well suited for this research, since the organizing committee of the exhibition carefully selected representative designers from Japan, China and Korea. Unfortunately no critical interpretation came out of this exhibit. The fact that it opened and closed without receiving criticism reflects the state of the field, which in Thomas Kuhn's words, remain in a pre-paradigmatic state. That is, it is a field of knowledge without a shared view of its concerns, common models of action and judgment and a baseline from which to evaluate particular exploration. From this missing inquiry, the issue of mapping a graphic genome emerges.



Purpose of research

The purpose of this paper is to consider the human graphic designer (a biological being) and his/her work as a genome, the collective grouping of genes and chromosomes as discussed in genetic engineering. By means of this conceptual ploy, this paper intends to provide some data for drawing a genome map of Korean and Japanese graphic designers.



KOREA:	JAPAN:	CHINA:	
Young-Jae Cho, 1935	Ikko Tanaka, 1930 Masayoshi Nakajo, 1933		193
Byung-Kyoo Chung, 1946	Katsumi Asaba, 1940	Taikeung Kan, 1942 Yungsung Hwang, 1943 Jingren Lu, 1947	194
Sang-Soo Ahn, 1952 Ki-Heun Shur, 1953	Kenya Hara, 1958	Alan Chan, 1950 Xu Wang, 1955	195
Joo-Sung Kim, 1960	Eiji Yamada, 1965	Jiaying Han, 1961	196

TABLE 1: |
The Distribution of Designers according to
Their Nationalities and Ages

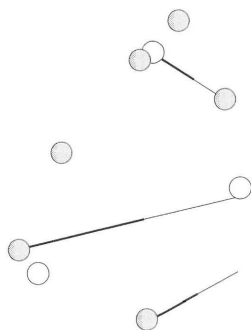
Background:
the sampling method and delimitations

On September 4, 1999, an exhibition titled "Contemporary East Asian Typographic Arts" opened at Seoul Arts Center, Calligraphy Hall. Included in this exhibition were seventy works of typographic design, fifty visual art works and fifty works of calligraphy; they collectively embodied the ecology of East Asian graphic design. While offering a good opportunity to appreciate from a comparative point of view the present progression of contemporary graphic design in the Northeast Asian region, the exhibition was regrettably under attended not only by the general public but also by insiders in the field of design. Under the theme of typography, the exhibition brought together rarely seen works by Korean, Japanese and Chinese designers. Some of the participating designers were: from Korea, Young-Jae Cho, Byung-Kyoo Chung, Sang-Soo Ahn, Ki-Heun Shur, Joo-Sung Kim; from China, Taikeung Kan, Jingren Lu, Alan Chan, Xu Wang, Jiaying Han, Yungsung Hwang; from Japan,

Ikko Tanaka, Masayoshi Nakajo, Katsumi Asaba, Kenya Hara, Eiji Yamada. Seen altogether, however, it was clear that grouping the displayed works together under one theme of typography was not appropriate. Rather, the list of works encompassed diverse genres such as posters, calendars and book design, besides typography. An unexpected result of this oversight on the part of the organizers was that the diverse works provided a good sample, with which one could broadly analyze the historical, cultural chromosomes and genes of individual designers within the larger genome of East Asian graphic design. Table I shows the distribution of these designers according to their nationalities and ages.

Although it partially misses certain generations of designers, table I does thoroughly embrace five generations born in the twentieth century, from Eiji Yamada in his thirties to Ikko Tanaka in his seventies. It shows that the exhibition brought to one place the thoughts and works of the five generations. If we were to divide the twentieth-century by its most dramatic moment — i.e., World War II — the designers can also be split into prewar and postwar groups. Korean Young-Jae Cho, Japanese Ikko Tanaka, Masayoshi Nakajo and Katsumi Asaba, and Chinese Taikeung Kan and Yung-sung Hwang belong to the prewar group. These are also figures, assisted by their subsequent generations, that led postwar graphic design in Northeast Asia. In the historical context of the Japan-Korea relationship, especially, the prewar-generation Japanese and Korean designers were in a colonizer-colonized relationship during the period of the occupation of the latter by the former. On the other hand, we need to remember that the prewar generations in China experienced, while in their youth, Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward, a socialist movement that sought fundamental change, i.e., the Cultural Revolution. The reason I am drawing this historical line is not in order to argue that a human designer and his/her work exist necessarily in a fatalist situation of limits. Rather, my intention here is to emphasize the mutual effects which a historical time-space and an individual or a group have on one another.

This paper deals with a relatively small group of samples, and thus is clearly too limited to make generalizations from it on the total genome of Northeast Asian graphic design. Since the exhibition, "Contemporary East Asian Typographic Arts," (if we can safely assume that the very premise of the exhibition was not fallacious) intentionally selected representative Korean and Japanese designers, whose stature merits public discussion, one can presume that they are sufficiently qualified as legitimate samples. Generally speaking, when the qualitative aspect, rather than the quantitative size of a sample, is emphasized, some truth can be deduced from it. In social scientific methodology, this sort of research is called a qualitative research or a case study. In the following, by focusing on individual cases, I provide evidence that helps us compare and examine the character of Korean and Japanese graphic designs as well as the working logics of individual designers that cannot be explained conceptually. The focal point of this essay is on Japan-Korea, and thus, an analysis of the genome of Chinese graphic designers is unfortunately left out of the discussion. Suffice it to say here, however, that recently having joined the WTO (World Trade Organization) and now preparing for the 2008 Summer Olympics, China is very likely to exercise much influence on the cultural ecology, not to mention on the politics and economy of Northeast Asia.



| *Definition of terms* |

Graphic Design

Until recently, the term primarily meant design that deals with two-dimensional flat images produced through printing media, e.g., posters. Of late, it has been officially replaced by another term, visual communication, at the October 2000 Seoul Conference of Icofrada, in order to include various connotations that include "image, text, space, movement, time, sound and interaction." "A Manifesto for the Education of the New Millennium" adopted at that time declares that graphic design has become a dead expression that does not adequately address today's design practices. The reason I am insisting on the term in spite of this recent shift is because this essay considers the specific historical contexts in which these designers worked and produced and it is accurately defined as graphic design.

Genome, Gene, DNA, Chromosome, Hereditary Character

In the following paragraphs, these terms are not used for their strict scientific definitions but rather as literary expressions — more specifically, as metaphors. That is, I consider the total characteristic of a (human) designer and his/her oeuvre as a genome, as the collective sum of genes and chromosomes. In genetic engineering, it is generally said that "there are 100 trillion cells, and within the nucleus of each cell are contained 23 pairs of chromosomes. Within each of the chromosomes, there are 100,000 genes. Each of these genes consists of 3.1 billion permuted pairs of four bases — Tyminine (T), Guanine (G), Cytosine (C), Adenine (A). A gene is composed of a double-helix pair of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), and depending on how the pairs of bases are combined, the hereditary characters that constitute the human being's physical traits are determined."¹ The terms borrowed from this scientific definition, chromosome or hereditary character connotes the comprehensive style of a designer's work. And, a gene or DNA stands for the specific working logic and constitutive characteristics of imagery in his/her work.

¹

Hwang, Chang-Ho. 2000. The Completion of a Draft for the Genome Project and Its Prospects. *Ohmynews*, June 27.

The double-helix structure of the genes
of Japanese graphic design

2

Some of the prizes he has received include: Mainichi Industrial Design Award (1954, 1966, 1973), Tokyo Art Directors Club Medal (consecutively from 1957 to 1961, 1963, 1965, 1967-70, 1973, 1985, 1986), Japan Advertising Artists Club (1959), International Council of Industrial Editors Award (1964-65, 1969), Warsaw Poster Biennale Award (1968, 1970, 1972), Art Directors Club of New York (1986) and many others.

The only septuagenarian in the exhibition was Ikko Tanaka (1930-2002). Appropriate to his advanced age of 71, his reputation has been widely recognized. Not only in his native country (Japan), but also internationally, he has been praised as the representative star of Japanese graphic design. It is probably extremely rare to find someone other than Tanaka, who has swept practically all the prizes given in the field.² He graduated from Kyoto City College of Fine Arts (1947-1950), and worked for Kanebo Fabrics as a textile designer (1950-52), then for *Osaka Sankei Newspaper* as graphic designer (1952-57). After co-founding Nippon Design Center and serving as art director (1960-63) there, he established his own design studio Tanaka Design Atelier (1963-76) and changed its name in 1976 to Ikko Tanaka Design Studio, Tokyo,³ this lasted until he died in 2002.

FIGURE 1: |

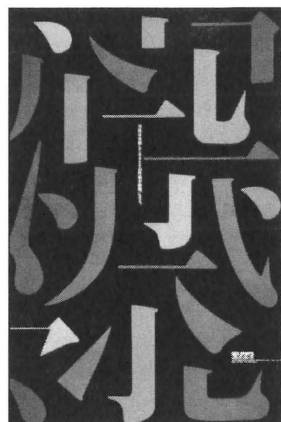
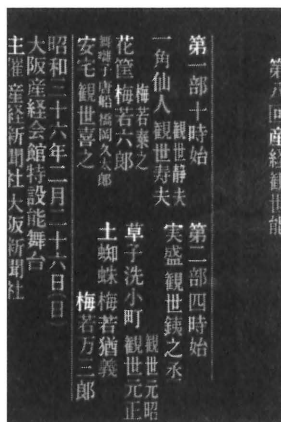
Ikko Tanaka. Poster for the 8th Performance of the Kanze School of Noh Theater in Osaka, 1961.

FIGURE 2: |

Ikko Tanaka. Poster, Imagination of Letters, 1993.

FIGURE 3: |

Ikko Tanaka. Poster for the 28th Performance of Noh Theater in Osaka, 1981.



One of his representative works "Poster Series for Sankei Kanze *Noh* Play (from 1954)" is an instructive example of his *oeuvre*. The chromosomes of his graphic design contained in the posters may be better analyzed once we understand the real identity of *Sankei Shimbun* (Newspaper), a supporter of Tanaka's work for forty years. Unlike other newspapers such as *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, which opposed the activities by the Coalition for a New History Textbook and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine (dedicated to the war heroes), *Sankei Shimbun* has submitted ultra-rightwing viewpoints, supporting and justifying these problematic political gestures and movements. It is because Tanaka's work possesses a particularly Japanese feel from the standpoint of ultra-rightwing politics, that *Sankei* has consistently supported the designer. Since 1953, with *Sankei Shimbun's* backing, Tanaka has produced a poster series promoting *Noh* Theater, the traditional Japanese stage drama originating in Osaka. The main characteristic of these posters is that the image, in most cases, feels like a 'stage of the traditional drama.' The background is often in a stark black like the stage backdrop of a *Noh* or *Kabuki* performance (FIGURE 1). This tendency is also found in the title covers and editorial design of the book *Japan Design*⁴ for which Tanaka was a co-editor and art director. In other words, all the Japanese traditional images manifested in Tanaka's designs are placed on the stage like actors, moving surreptitiously (FIGURE 2).

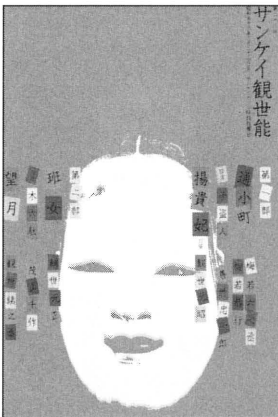
The typographic elements composed of diverse hues and Chinese characters resemble the brilliant and luxurious costumes in the traditional drama. Their 'brightness in the dark' enhances the visual tension — not unlike the histrionic contrast between a dark stage and the intensely-colored costumes in *Noh* (a widely popular dramatic performance since the medieval period). Evoking a decidedly Japanese ambiance, the image-effect of Tanaka's darkened backdrop controls visual elements, and by doing so, works as an apparatus that performs a dramaturge of 'theatricalized situation.' This is why he customarily uses black or single-toned, deeply saturated background colors (FIGURE 3).

3

Pendergast, Sara, editor. 1997. *Contemporary Designers*. New York: St Jones Press, 810.

4

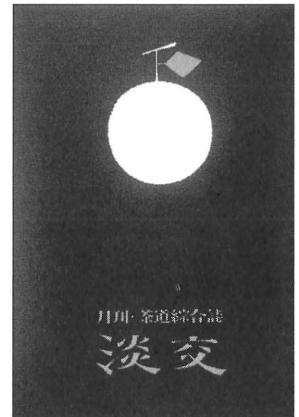
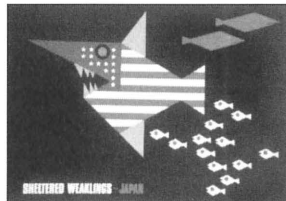
The book introduces Japanese crafts, art, forms, colors and imagery of design within the basic frame of Japan's four seasons. On the cover, Japanese traditional sweets of various colors and similar sizes are arranged with Seiko wristwatches. See Ikko, Tanaka and Koike Kazuko, editors. 1984. *Japan Design: The Four Seasons in Design*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.



We need to discuss more in depth the usage of black for background effect in Japanese graphic design. This aspect of Japanese design signifies that it has superseded the purely constructive pictorial surface achieved by Western abstract painting and graphic design. In terms of typography, the pictorial surface is what media theorist Walter J. Ong calls 'typographic space.'⁵ Japanese typographic space, however, not only is a stage coded with tradition — as seen in the work of Tanaka — but also becomes a space of meditation that embodies the aesthetic of Zen, an especially Japanese world-view. In short, it frames a consciousness of existence or the universe of self. Here, some other examples relate — the work of Takashi Kono (born 1906), who is a respected first-generation designer, along with Hiromu Hara (1903-1986). Having served in the army in China and Indonesia during the Asia-Pacific War, after the end of the war Kono created a poster titled "Sheltered Weaklings—Japan" (FIGURE 4). In it, the black background signifies the international politics surrounding Japan in the early 1950s and Japan is represented by a school of pathetic fish docilely trailing an enormous shark (the United States). The tiny fish have diminutive white bodies and red circles for eyes. In the top right corner, two red sharks (the U.S.S.R and P.R.C.) are swimming in the opposite direction.

FIGURE 4: |
Takashi Kono. Poster, Sheltered Weaklings—Japan, 1953.

FIGURE 5: |
Takashi Kono. Poster for Magazine Tanko, 1995.



It appears that Kono, as a Japanese, had especially acute feelings towards the Cold War that began in the 1950s. He seems to have felt a certain self-hatred and boiling rage; even in the poster the red eyes of the tiny fish fittingly hold its designer's emotions. Those red circles are no longer the *hinomaru*, the blazing sun with radiating rays, which gloriously emblazoned the flag of the Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere flying high during the war. Instead, the postwar-version *hinomaru* fell from its prewar glory to the fate of the bloodshot eyes of the thirteen pitiful fish breathlessly trundling along under American guardianship. Furthermore, by making the number of the fish thirteen, Kono seems to code even the death of Japan with the numerological meaning of that particular number. That he intended to signify death by using the number 13 (according to the Western superstition) is clandestinely corroborated by the title written in English, not Japanese, "Sheltered Weaklings—Japan." Such a Japanese-style worldview embodied in the typographic space of this poster is also employed in symbolizing a space of Zen meditation in the "Poster for Magazine *Tanko*" (FIGURE 5). The persimmon, with a leaf still attached to its stem, is a traditional image of enlightenment, and often appears in Zen paintings. As Tanaka evokes the theatrical tension of the traditional stage performance, the black backdrop Kono employs here provides a dramatic contrast against the white shape of the persimmon — into which a moment of awakening is crystallized — and emphasizes that this is a space of meditation. The image is paired with the Sino-Japanese phrase in the lower half — it reads "Monthly Magazine of the Art of Tea, *Danko*" — and the image and text together delivers the message of the magazine that it is a world of meditation and tea ceremony.

The marriage of a tradition based on strict conservatism with modern sensibilities in techniques and expressions, found in Ikko Tanaka's work, has earned him a widely recognized, world-celebrity status. That is, the defining characteristic of his work, as exemplified by the "Imagination of Letters" (FIGURE 2), can be found in his bold patterning of Chinese character brush strokes and also in his modern abstraction of traditional Japanese visual elements, such as the *Noh*

5

Typographic space means the visual space that determines type-ness under the control of printing and encompasses not only the issue of composition of words into a text on paper but also the problem of placement of words and relative location amongst words. See Ong, Walter J. 1982. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen.

or *Kabuki* stage, kimono clad women, masks and *ukiyo*e prints. The 1981 "Poster for UCLA Asian Performing Arts Institute" in which a woman in a kimono and a traditional hairdo is reduced to a drastic geometrical abstraction, is a particularly good example of his distinctive working method. This example, furthermore, bears out the argument that Tanaka is the Japanese designer, whose methodology most faithfully adheres to representing the Japanese identity which began to be formulated since the late nineteenth century in the early stage of modernization after the 1868 Meiji Restoration. In his work, one finds an unmistakable presence of 'Western technology, Japanese spirit' (和魂洋才, *Wakon, Yōsai* in Japanese; *Hwahon, Yangjae* in Korean), the watchword of modern Japanese art and culture industry. *Wakon, Yōsai* was a strategy of production that modern Japanese design adopted, in order to secure the identity of Japanese art and design in the brave new world by embracing the value systems and techniques of expression in Western art.⁶

6

Kim, Min-Soo. 1999. "The Roots and Shadows of *Hodori*: The Identity of Korean Graphic Design." *The Journal of Design Culture and Criticism*, 1, 59.

In the field of Japanese design, while sharing the spirit of *Wakon, Yōsai*, many graphic designers display quite distinctive individual styles of design. The interesting fact is that those authorities that represent today's contemporary Japanese graphic design unmistakably trace their lineage back to the generation born in the early 1930s, such as Ikko Tanaka. The list also includes Kiyoshi Awazu (born 1929), Mitsuo Katsui (1931), Kohei Sugiura (1932), Shigeo Fukuda (1932) and Tadanori Yokoo, born slightly later in 1936 but nonetheless firmly and inimitably established in the field. Their modes of expression are quite diverse: Awazu's utilization of the traditional brush painting technique, Katsui's pioneering use of cutting-edge computer graphics, Fukuda's contemporary humor and parody and Yokoo's pop art-ish popularism. In stark contrast to this illustrious roster, Kohei Sugiura stands alone, like a Zen monk. Although he was not included in the exhibition under consideration, his reputation in various fields — including graphics, editorial work, book design, etc. — is legendary. I personally consider the omission of Sugiura in the exhibition a fatal mistake and error. For the hereditary characters of all the designers in the exhibition, with the exception

of Ikko Tanaka — Masayoshi Nakazo, Katsumi Asaba, Kenya Hara, Eiji Yamada — partake of the double helix-structured DNA of Tanaka and Sugiura.

Sugiura's design style is quite removed from that of Tanaka's. It is a style of 'secular and dramatized modernization.' His work perhaps quietly argues that the project of modern Japanese design that has been advancing under the banner of *Wakon, Yōsai*, is actually a theatrical fiction. Instead of *Wakon, Yōsai*, — i. e., conjoining the Japanese spirit to modern technical processing — Sugiura's work seems to be a personification a (non-dialectic) monistic philosophy — 和魂和才, *Wakon, Wasai* (*Hwahon, Hwajae*) fusing Japanese spirit and technology together. And going one step further to a religious level, it embodies a pan-Asian spirit. This is precisely the point of departure in Sugiura's philosophy that is distinctive from that of Tanaka's. Sugiura has largely avoided commercial projects and instead focused on cultural posters and publishing projects. This distinctive self-positioning seems to partially originate from possessing unique genes that differ greatly from other Japanese graphic designers of the same generation; in his genes, one would find those of an architect. In 1955, he graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts with a degree, not in graphic design but in architecture. This educational pedigree is unfolding in diverse fields ranging from exhibition space, poster, catalog, magazine editing, as well as book design.⁷

Coincidentally, the very first work of Sugiura's I witnessed personally was an architectural space. At the 1985 exhibition "Tokyo: Form and Spirit" at the IBM Gallery in New York, I was impressed by the exhibition space designed by Sugiura in collaboration with the architect Toyo Ito. Supported by many organizations in the United States and Japan, this exhibition first opened in New York to start its long itinerary. At the time of my visit, I encountered the sight of many spectators lost in the work "The Reflecting Space," which Sugiura and Ito installed. Entering through an entrance in the shape of the seated Buddha silhouette, the spectator was led into an interior illuminated from below by countless mandalas — symbolizing the Bud-

7

Although Sugiura's prize-winning record isn't as spectacular as Tanaka's, he has still received quite a few important awards in his fields of speciality: Mainichi Industrial Design Award (1961), Kodansha Publishing Award (1970), Gold Medal at Leibzig Book Fair (1978, 1982), Minister of Education Industry Award (1982) etc. He worked as art director for many magazines, and once also served as a visiting professor at Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, a school reconstructed by former members of German Bauhaus (1964-65, 1966-67). After having been a professor at Tokyo Zokei University, since 1993, he is currently a professor at Kobe University. See Pendergast, *Contemporary Designers*, 795.

Friedman, Mildred, editor.
1986. *Tokyo: Form and Spirit*. New
York: Harry N. Abrams, 197.

I have argued that the flattening of line forms originates in *Japanisme* that catered to the Western taste in modern Japanese art in the era of Art Nouveau in the late nineteenth century. The tradition has been continuing through the Japanese term *zuan* (図案, a technique of stylized patterning). In Korean, the term *doan*, a transliterated usage of *zuan* has been used since the liberation (1945) and signifies such stylized design. See pages 54-55 in "The Roots and Shadows of *Hodori*."

dhist universe. S/he treads on a bridge composed of the geometric shapes of a square, a circle, a triangle and a half-circle — the four shapes each signifying earth, water, wind and ether (air)⁸ Like this, Sugiura's work differs from the so-called Japanese tradition of stylized design⁹ and the function of two-dimensional space in visual communication. Rather, it calls to mind a certain 'taste of deep existence' produced by meditation and enlightenment in an encounter with a three-dimensional space.

The seated Buddha's silhouette used for the entrance in "The Reflecting Space" was originally an experimental image from a poster design from the previous year. In 1984, the image was created in the "Poster for *Les Ateliers*, Paris," where an exhibition titled "Tradition and New Techniques" (*Tradition et Nouvelles Techniques*) took place. The work crystallizes the working method through which the designer's philosophy and logic of space were transformed into a representation (FIGURE 6). Produced via the technique of gold-color gradations printed in gravure on aluminum foil paper, the poster represents the hierarchical structure of the Buddhist universe according to a mathematical ratio. Two rows of mandala designs, five on each side, are placed on the side margins, flanking the main image. And vertically interspersed with the mandalas are also two rows of Sino-Japanese characters that read Tradition And (right) Modern Techniques (left). Here, the effect of the word message is highly minimized. Inscribed in the centrally placed radiant Buddha, is a turtle propping up a lotus flower and a Buddhist pavilion, all in turn placed on top of a square pedestal, depicted in three-dimensional perspective view. The position of the turtle is precisely where the Buddha's hands are; the hands are placed where the two ankles meet in the cross-legged meditation posture. The hands form the *mudra*¹⁰ of meditation — two hands are interlocked by fingers and the ends of two thumbs meet. In other words, the visible shape of the turtle contains the invisible *mudra* of meditation — an absolute contrast between the visible and the invisible. Furthermore, the culminating pagoda on top of the pavilion sparkles like a jewel at the pivotal point of the Buddha's forehead. In this poster design, Sugiura

elevated a rather hackneyed subject of the exhibition to the enlightenment of the meditating Buddha, i.e., the order of the universe that embraces all the tangible and the intangible.

In this way, in a departure from the predominant two-dimensional approach to design employed by most Japanese graphic designers, Kohei Sugiura seeks to represent a higher level of the spiritual world structured in three dimensions. His design exercises even more remarkable enduring power in editorial and book designs, since he considers 'the book as architecture.' As demonstrated in *A Collection of Tibetan Mandalas* published in limited edition by publishing house Kodansha in 1983, Sugiura's book design does not look at the book as a mere accumulation of flat surfaces of individual pieces of paper. This approach is well corroborated by a statement recently made at a symposium in Korea by book designer Hitoshi Suzuki, who had been Sugiura's assistant. Suzuki recalled that Sugiura "regarded a book as a certain solid object, rather than an accretion of flatness. He went beyond the cover design and dealt with the structure of the main body of text, thus controlling the whole book as one unit. He intended to transcend the common practice of considering the binding as only a matter of cover so that the outside of the book can interact with the inner pages."¹¹ To rephrase, Sugiura deems a printed and completed book an organic totality, a solid structure

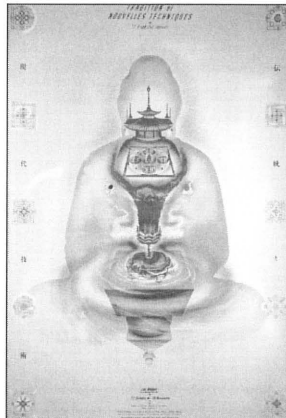
10

Mudra (手印, Su-in in Korean) refers to the hand gesture seen in the images of the Buddha. Especially, the gesture of two hands one on top of another in the seated Buddha is called *Sun-jung-in*; the left palm is placed at the center of the body and the right palm is placed on top of it, while two thumbs meet at the ends. The *Mudra* signifies the Buddha's meditation under the Bodhi tree.

11

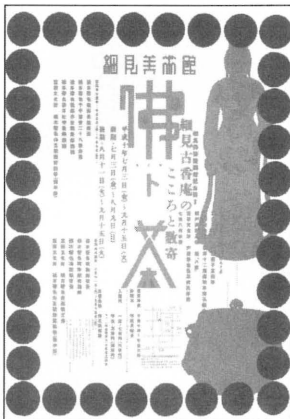
Suzuki, Hitoshi. 2002. "The Environment and Characteristics of Japanese Book Design," *Proceedings of the Symposium Japanese Book Design and the Identity of East Asian Design*. Seoul: Seoul Arts Center, Calligraphy Hall, September 2, 17.

FIGURE 6: Kohei Sugiura. *Poster for Les Ateliers Paris, 1984.*

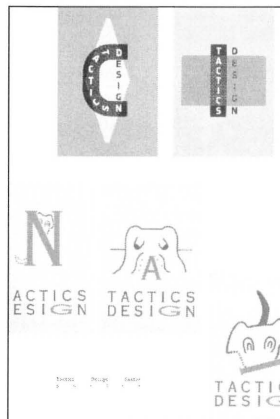


commensurable to an architectural construction. The completeness of a book should be assessed, thus, in a similar way to the way in which the success of a building is measured; according to its interaction with its users. If I were asked to describe Sugiura's book design, I would call it an architecture of cosmic meditation. It goes beyond design and reaches into the realm of philosophy.

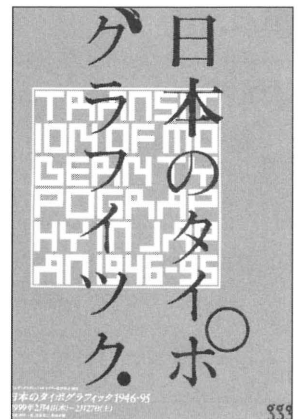
If we recognize Tanaka and Sugiura as the two axes of Japanese graphic design, the other designers from Japan included in the exhibition under consideration can be better analyzed. At first glance, the poster design by Masayoshi Nakajo, at age 68, belongs to the same generation as the other two and seems rather unlocatable. In it, one can hardly find Tanaka-style daring modernism, which severely condenses traditional elements down to an abstraction or the high-level spirituality one witnesses in Sugiura's work. Instead, Nakazo seems to gaze at traditional and modern contexts in separation from each other. What makes his work intriguing is that he employs different methodologies for treating the traditional and the modern. That is, one finds in his designs on traditional themes a trace of the Japanese design technique of 'stylized patterning,' and in those on modern themes, one finds the techniques used in contemporary Japanese character designs. For instance, take two posters, first for the exhibition "The Buddha and the



| 7: |



| 8: |



| 9: |

Tea" at Hosomi Museum (FIGURE 7) and, then, for the exhibition "Kyoto—the Ancient Capital and Art" (1998); in these examples, the traditional elements are simply arranged as patterns in the larger designs. On the other hand, in "Poster for Tactics Design" (FIGURE 8), which deals with a modern theme, a dog plays with letters in various ways; simplicity and playfulness are deployed here, in a more distinct context than in the two previous examples.

In contrast, Katsumi Asaba (age 61) approaches Tanaka's end of the spectrum. While sharing the Tanaka-style treatment of the traditional, Asaba's work displays certain differences. The former often adopts an artificially somber and darkened stage as the backdrop of many of his posters and treats typographic elements (FIGURE 9). The latter treats the whole pictorial space in natural, bright and evocative ways, by substituting the background with photography. In his famous work, "Delicious Life, A Poster for Seibu Department Store" (FIGURE 10) and "Poster for the 70-Year Anniversary of the Founding of *Shaken*" (FIGURE 11), each has, respectively, American actor-director Woody Allen and a nude female torso as the backdrop. Especially, the phrase Delicious Life (*oishii seikatsu*), which was the catchphrase used by the public relations campaign by Seibu, is traded on by the messy calligraphy by Allen himself. He is clad in a kimono, seated in a half-perfect Asian style, and holding up the calligraphic piece



FIGURE 7: |
Masayoshi Nakajo. Poster for Exhibition,
"The Buddha and the Tea", 1988.

FIGURE 8: |
Masayoshi Nakajo. Poster for Tactics Design.

FIGURE 9: |
Katsumi Asaba. Poster for 'Transition of
Modern Typography in Japan 1946-1995
Exhibition', 1999.

FIGURE 10: |
Katsumi Asaba. Poster for 'Delicious Life, A
Poster for Seibu Department Store', 1982.

FIGURE 11: |
Katsumi Asaba. Poster for the 70-Year Anni-
versary of the Founding of Shaken, 1995.

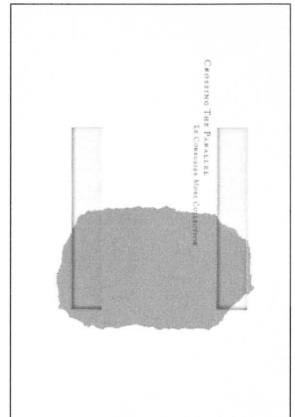
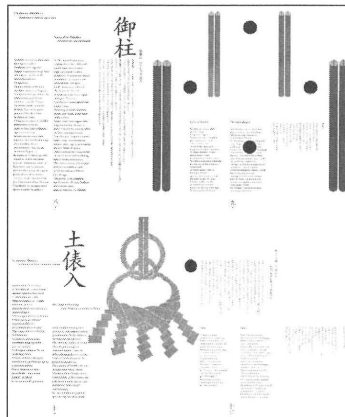
he drew, rather solemnly. Emerging here is a mysteriously paradoxical message somewhere in between seriousness and laughter. Besides these instances, in his “Poster for World Heritage Exhibition, 1997,” he took a photograph of an ancient epitaph rubbing as the backdrop and used the brushwork of the ancient calligraphy to its maximum expressive power.

The work of Kenya Hara (in his forties) provides a successful example in which the Tanaka and the Sugiyura genes effectively interfuse in the dimension of everyday communication. His editorial design spatially explores the relationships between textual contexts and compressed traditional image elements. The “Official Program of the Opening Ceremony for the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics” consists of various images symbolizing the opening ceremony and introductory texts in three languages: English, French and Japanese (FIGURE 12). The designer decided on the symbols and titles of a variety of ethnic celebratory rituals and placed them in a well-controlled interrelationship with the main texts explaining them. Particularly, the Raising of the *On-bashira* ceremony — a local festival that has been performed for several centuries in Nagano prefecture — on pages 8 and 9 introduce the portion of the ceremony — setting up eight 10-meter-long wooden pillars at four cardinal points in the main stadium. Matching with the lengths of the image of the red pillars, Hara accordingly adjusts the lengths

FIGURE 12: |
Kenya Hara. *Official Program of the Opening Ceremony for the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics*, 1998.

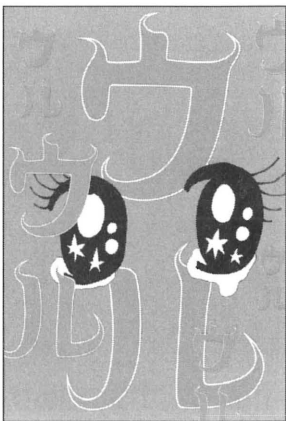
FIGURE 13: |
Kenya Hara. *Pamphlet for Crossing the Parallel: Le Corbusier Mori Collection*.

FIGURE 14:
Eiji Yamada. *Poster for Ultra Graphics*, 1988.



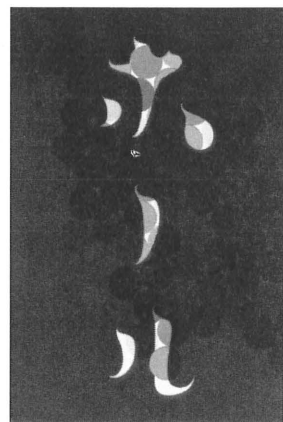
of the main texts. The interesting point here is that he manages to secure the visual integrity of each of the texts of three different languages, while maintaining the horizontal writings of English and French and the vertical writing of Japanese. More specifically, the Chinese character title read in Japanese as *onbashira* located at the visual focal point of the text, and the image of the pair of red pillars are perfectly matched with the vertically written Japanese text. And the French and English texts to the left also wonderfully correspond to the lengths of the Japanese and the pillars. In a similar fashion, the *Dohyoiri* Festival is introduced on pages 10 and 11, through a combination of an image of *kesho-mawashi* — the decorative waistband the sumo wrestler wears when entering the arena — and its explanation. The style of editorial design exemplified here originates from his exploration of three-dimensional typographic space in printed materials. Another good example of his working method is found in a pamphlet “Crossing the Parallel: Le Corbusier Mori Collection” (FIGURE 13). Hara cut two vertical rectangles out of the cover page, creating a light-and-shadow effect, and with a big blotch of red ink spreading between the rectangles and beyond, he invites the viewer to realize the meaning of the design as fitting for the given subject. In this case, design is not simply a delivery of communication of meaning, but a kind of discovery.

Eiji Yamada (in his thirties) won the grand prize at the recent “ACC Open Competition for Logo Mark” as well as “the best newcomer award given by JAGDA” (Japanese Graphic Designers’ Association) in 1998. He is a highly promising designer in Japan. It appears that the field of Japanese graphic design is valuing Yamada’s work highly because it perturbs the rules of orthodox Japanese design. He is indifferent to seriousness, strict orders and interiority privileged by the tradition of modern Japanese graphic design. The Japanese *katakana* typeface — *uru* — used in the poster for “UlTRA Graphics” means to sell (FIGURE 14). Repeated six times, in differing dimensions, the word becomes a screaming sound — a visualization of oral/aural impressions of an explosive emotion from the heart. In addition, the black eye shapes in the center are seemingly wet



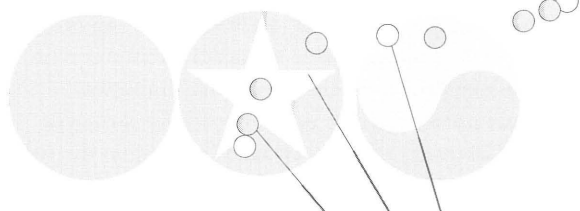
with tears, adding to the image of scream. Yamada's typefaces follow Western traditions such as the Italian Futurists' words-in-freedom or dadaists' sound poems that sought to visualize fractures and breaks in the human voice. They are as free as an expressive human voice, or sometimes are reminiscent of the shamanistic, primitive emotions and instincts one feels in the traces of stone carvings left by anonymous ancient artists.

Another poster design by Yamada titled "Hole" (FIGURE 15) pronounces an end for the serious performance of typefaces placed on a heavy, sober stage in Ikko Tanaka's poster series for the Sankei Kanze Noh Theater. Now the stage is the busy street in Tokyo's Shinjuku or Harajuku District, and the letters have transformed into out-of-control, disobedient teenagers enacting a *cospre* — a contraction of the Japanese transliteration of the English phrase, costume play. This refers to a recent cultural phenomenon of young teens making and dressing up in the costumes they see in popular animations/cartoons. It is still questionable, however, whether Yamada's work is the latest extension of the incomplete project of Japanese modernity and graphic design, or a deconstructive anti-modernity. Of course, I still believe that Yamada's design is related to the directions in which contemporary arts and culture are moving. Looking at his posters again, one realizes that all the elements are derived from the DNA of the Ikko Tanaka family. That is to say, what was expanded from Tanaka's work is a substitution of somber typography with, to borrow my own metaphors, a dancing primitive or a fashionable modern-day cityslicker. The only thing that has been deconstructed of Tanaka is his solemnity. I find the fact that the Japanese graphic design field is extremely sensitive to these sorts of small changes is itself very Japanese. And I make a careful presumption that such sensitivity may be one evidence with which we can understand the current politico-cultural impulses that have caused an empty and insecure socio-economic psychology of modern-day Japan. For the Japanese have rarely experienced a life in which the center of society and culture was radically off its pivot.



| FIGURE 15: |
Eiji Yamada. Poster for 'Hole,'
1988.

| FIGURE 16: |
Young-Jae Cho. Poster, Uh-
byun Sung-ryon, 1999.



| *Inbreeding of Korean and Japanese genes and its mutants* |

In contrast, the Koreans have experienced a turbulent history; they survived the loss of their country and a drastic de-centering and forcible shift/rearrangement of their culture. The tradition and spirit in Korean modern history have been deconstructed by Imperial Japan. Since the accounts of distorted colonial legacies have not been liquidated even after the liberation in 1945, a need to fundamentally weed out the remnants of Japanese Imperialism still persists. The grotesque history still marches on. Paradoxically speaking, post-colonial Korean life is itself a deconstruction. And one finds the genetic codes with an unflagging and enduring life force in the work of Korean designers who participated in the exhibition.

In the exhibition, Young-Jae Cho — a sexagenarian, whose station lies above and beyond all other Korean designers — was represented by his poster designs. Many call him “the person who opened the door for Korean modern design,” “the first-generation professional designer,” “Paul Rand of Korea.”¹² His recent works — posters of seemingly newly designed typography, for the 2002 World Cup Games and for a work by poet Yi Sang — urge us to reconsider this godfather of Korean modern design. When considered purely from his work, Cho’s genes are unfortunately composed of the chromosomes of the Japanese godfathers; he shares homogeneous genes with the following Japanese designers — previously mentioned Ikko Tanaka,

12

Cho, Young-Jae. 1995. *The World of Young-Jae Cho's Graphics: A Harmony of Ideal and Reality*. Seoul: Ahn Graphics, 8-25. The book was published five years before Cho's retirement from College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University. The introductory comments include personal recollections and assessments, formed through Cho's intimate relationships, by Yusaku Kamekura of Japan, alongside Professor Shi-Hwa Chung of Kookmin University in Seoul, and Professor Thomas Ockerse of the Rhode Island School of Design.

along with Shigeo Fukuda, Yusaku Kamekura and Hiromu Hara, all of whom are older, well established figures in the Japanese design world.

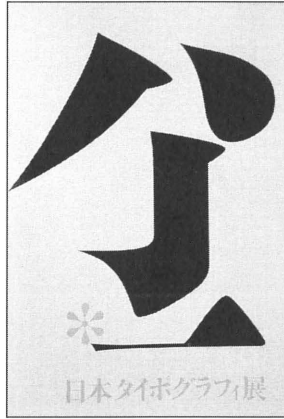
Consider first Cho's poster "魚變成龍, *Un-byun Sung-ryong*" (1999), which consists of a predominant black backdrop, a thickly dragged diagonal white brush stroke, stylized fish and geometric patterns and a final touch of his signature CHO '99 (FIGURE 16). In the bottom section of the poster is the title written vertically in a small font. There is a strange ambiguity — previously not seen in his works known for a concise and lucid message-effect — created in between the title (which means a fish metamorphoses and becomes a dragon) and the actual visual effect of his design. This ambiguity, on one level comes from the problem of communication, and on another level, from a collision among diverse codes produced by many individual styles of Japanese designers. There is a fissure between the title and the pattern-designed image of the poster. More specifically, the relationship between the intended Chinese character-phrase of *Un-byun, Sung-ryong* and the actual shape of the type, which seems like a geometric patterning of another character 忠, *Chung* (loyalty). As a host of complex patterns intervene in the original form of the character, the former dissolves the overall image and causes a visual confusion in the delivery of the message.

13

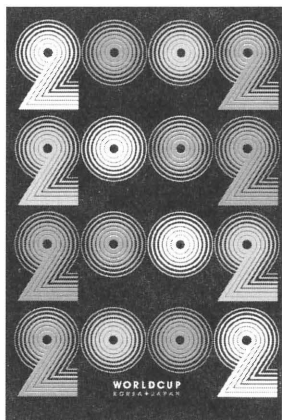
By the late 1920s, Hiromu Hara had already read and comprehended the practices as well as the theories of Jan Tschichold, who had been deeply influenced by Bauhaus typography and graphics. In 1927 at the age of 24, Hara translated and published out of his own pocket Tschichold's *Die Neue Typografie*.

One finds another kind of inbreeding with the Japanese genes. More than anything else Cho's typographic design is reminiscent of earlier examples of poster works by Ikko Tanaka (refer to figure 2) or by Hiromu Hara. In Japan, one finds the origin of the hereditary line in Tanaka's genes and the chromosomes of typography posters produced in the late 1950s by Hara, who was also an enormous influence to Tanaka. The 1959 poster Hara designed for Japan Advertising Artists Club (JAAC) had a considerable impact on Japanese graphic designers at the time (FIGURE 17). For in a way redolent of the logic of artistic production formulated and realized at the German Bauhaus in the 1920s and 1930s, he structurally tears apart then reassembles typographic elements like machine parts. More specifically, Hara breaks down the Chinese char-

FIGURE 17: |
 Hiromu Hara. Poster for Japan
 Advertising Artists Club, 1959.



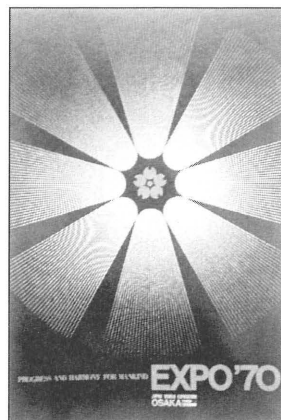
acter 少 meaning little; *so* in Korean pronunciation, and *shō* in Japanese to its individual brush strokes, and finally reconstructs them into an image of the human face.¹³ Also, he places a stylized Japanese-national flower next to the brush stroke that now signifies the mouth area in the reconstructed image of the face; in this way, he evokes something like an image-message of a Japanese smile. We now realize that Cho used the brush strokes that constitute a character like 心 (meaning heart, or mind; *shim* in Korea, *shin* in Japanese), and that he crossbred a structural interpretation of Chinese characters, *a la* Hara, with Korean traditional decorative patterns. These patterns, in turn, can be said to be a geometric transformation of 'leather-brush painting' (革筆書), one genre/technique in Korean traditional folk painting. Unfortunately, this element collides with the refined visual message which the designed brush strokes deliver in Hara's work. A certain pedestrianism of popular 'leather-brush painting' cannot be easily recreated through a geometric simplicity. When placed in Cho's artificially compressed Japanese garden, it loses its original vitality. The genre of painting is best realized in its original mode of production as a sort of 'word picture,' painted in a colorful palette, with a thick leather brush in uninhibited and refreshing calligraphic lines, depicting traditional imagery such as ten creatures of longevity or flowers and birds. We can then conclude that Cho imitated Hara Hiromu's regard for typography only on the level of technique, while extracting from



18:



19:



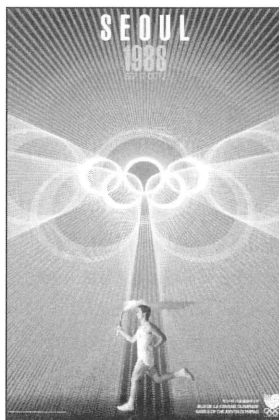
20:

FIGURE 18: |
Young-Jae Cho. Poster for the
2002 World Cup Games, 1999.

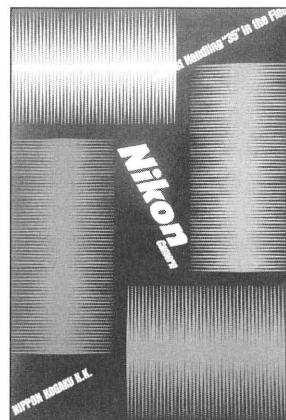
FIGURE 19: |
Young-Jae Cho. Poster for Poetry
of Yi Sang, Ogamdo, 1999.

FIGURE 20: |
Yusaku Kamekura. Poster for the
Osaka World Expo, 1967.

FIGURE 21: |
Young-Jae Cho. Official Poster
for the 1988 Seoul Olympics,
1988.



21:



22:

FIGURE 22: |
Yusaku Kamekura. Poster for
Nippon Kogaku, 1957.

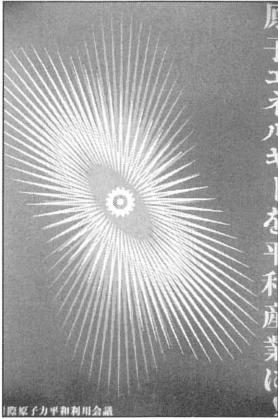
FIGURE 23: |
Kazumasa Nagai. Poster for
Nippon Kogaku, 1962.

FIGURE 24: |
Yusaku Kamekura. Poster for the
Conference of Peaceful Use of
Atomic Energy, 1956.

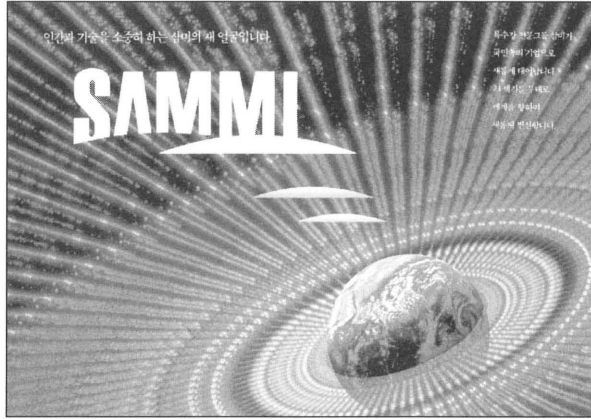
FIGURE 25: |
Young-Jae Cho. Poster for Sammi
Co., 1991.

the 'word picture' of traditional Korean folk painting not its flavor but only its mechanical patterns.

Such a technical borrowing, without apposite content, is also found in two other examples from the same period — posters for the "2002 World Cup Games" and for poet Yi Sang's serial poems "Ogamdo" (FIGURE 18 and 19). While addressing two completely different subject matters, their technical repertoire and methods are identical; both against a black backdrop, repeated geometric shapes create selfsame forms of light. It is indeed rather incredible that the same image of a festival used to commemorate the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup can be applied also to poetry



24:



25:



23:

14

I have closely dealt with this connection in my Korean paper, "The Roots and Shadows of *Hodori*," 68-69.

which intellectually represents human existence in the 1930s' modern city. Where do these genes for this imagery come from? I would argue that the source lies in a work by Yusaku Kamekura (FIGURE 20), that became the prototype for Cho's computer imaging-aided work, "Official Poster for the 1988 Seoul Olympics" (FIGURE 21).¹⁴ One may very well contest my claim, by pointing out that there is a subtle technical difference between Cho's computerized digital image and Kamekura's hand-drawn piece. Pay close attention, then, to Kamekura's analog poster (FIGURE 22) for the public relations of Nippon Kogaku (also known as Nikon). Through a combination of optical effect-inducing geometric patterns, brilliant colors and the company name, it symbolizes what the client stands for — light exposure and precise optics. In another poster for Nikon by Kazumasa Nagai (FIGURE 23), it is clear that Kamemura's graphic genes are preserved intact, with only the patterns changed into circles and rearranged. With these models revealed, the DNA codes contained in the chromosomes of Cho's "2002 World Cup Poster" can be better discerned. That is, in the 1957 "Nippon Kogaku" poster, the prototypical genes of forms of light in Kamekura's work — which would later become the designer's trademark — are being cultured (FIGURE 24), and via Nagai, the genes are inherited down to Cho. This sort of inbreeding has often manifested itself in Cho's other corporate public relations posters (FIGURE 25).

I have fully discussed Yi Sang's experimental poetry in my paper, "An Eccentric Reversible Reaction": Yi Sang's Experimental Poetry in the 1930s and Its Meaning to Contemporary Design, *Visible Language* 33.3, 196-235. In this paper, I argued that his strange and often incomprehensible poems from the early 1930s should be interpreted not in the context of textual or literary theory as often supposed, but in the context of visual texts found in such fields as architecture, graphic design and typography. His works transcended western dada's anti-tradition, and furthermore even transcended modern concrete poetry. In addition, his experimental poetry was the powerful text of visual arts that carried visual space and time toward deconstruction.

It is only reasonable that Cho should have distinguished the forms and color-arranging methods used for the "2002 World Cup" public relations poster from those for the literary work of Yi Sang (né Kim Hae-Kyung), an architect, graphic-typographic designer and the representative poet of early twentieth century Korean literature. Let us take a look at Yi Sang's submission in the open competition for the cover design of magazine *Choson gwa Gunchuk* (*Korea and Architecture*, 1929), for which he won the first prize (see my paper in *Visible Language* 33.3). Yi's graphic design easily transcends the Japanese design of the time, which was yet to break away from pre-modern design and build its own realm of modern typography.¹⁵ Cho returns Yi's progressive graphics back to a mere design. One may very well argue that regardless of the similarity with the "2002 World Cup Poster," Cho's poster for Yi's poem "Ogamdo" abstracts/extracts the basic elements from Yi's design for the book cover. Yi's design, however, was not created for the context of his own poem, but rather for architects who were the magazine's primary readers. "Ogamdo" was a highly intellectual poem, which he serialized in *Choson Joongang Ilbo* (Newspaper) in 1934; the series ended after fifteen installments. Cho's work serves as a good example of how graphic design, without a rigorous analysis of the content to be communicated, can readily fall into the trap of decorationism.

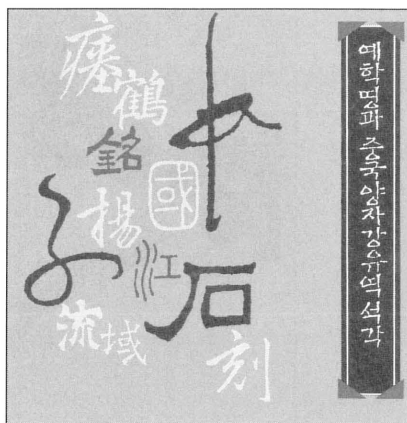
Although not included in the exhibition, Shigeo Fukuda's genes are also found mixed with those of Cho's ideation and methodology. Cho has been known for his works in which contemporary humor and wit are given form through techniques of bold condensation and omission. The examples I discuss here do not exhaust his large body of work, for Cho has taken on numerous projects that represent Korean graphic design. Especially, through a number of successful corporate image projects, he has raised design to the level of corporate management. But, what does he teach, as a first-generation Korean graphic designer, for the following generation with his works as presented in the exhibition?

FIGURE 26: |
 Byung-Kyoo Chung, *Poster for
 an exhibition of Byung-kyoo
 Chung's Book Designs:
 1977-1996, 1996.*



The life of graphic design begins at the point of printing. Unlike Cho's works, Byoung-Kyoo Chung (born 1946) presented printed posters, calendars and published books produced through actual printing processes. There is a rather uncommon history in Chung's genes. He was bred in the soil, not of design, but of humanities studies; he studied creative writing in Art and Literature at Suhrabeol College of Arts (1970) and graduated from Korea University, with a degree in French literature (1974). After graduation, he worked as chief editor for Minumsa publishing house in 1976, then as editorial director at Hong-sungsa in 1977. It was only after completing the 13th Tokyo UNESCO training course for editors in 1979, studying at Estienne Academy in Paris in 1982 and opening his own design studio in 1984, that he converted his hereditary characters into those of a serious editorial and book designer.

His "Poster for an exhibition of Byung-Kyoo Chung's Book Designs: 1977-1996" (1996, FIGURE 26) and the 1997 "Poster for VIDAK (Visual Information Design Association of Korea) Members' Exhibition" demonstrate his home-grown analytical ability vis-à-vis modern graphic design — rather hard to find in the field of Korean graphic design. That is, his 'exploration into basic principles' goes far beyond the first-generation Korean graphic designers' superficial



16

Russian architect, graphic and typographic designer and exhibition designer, Lissitzky, studied architecture in Darmstadt, Germany. In the 1920s, he started the Russian constructivist movement with Malevich.

17

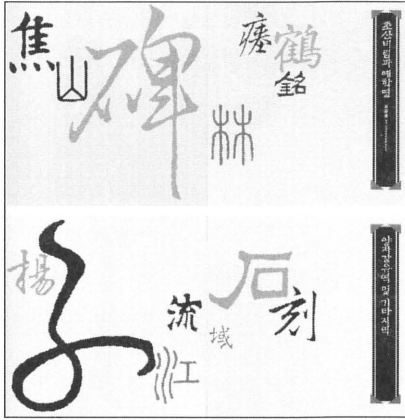
Born in Leipzig, Germany, Tschichold studied book and typography design following in the foot-step of his father, a typeface designer. Strongly impressed by the first exhibition at the Weimar National Bauhaus in 1923, he embarked on organizing theories and principles of typography from 1925. The consequence of this work is the famous *New Typography*, the pioneering study of twentieth century functionalist typographic design. Realizing later that his theory was not different from national socialism, he changed his direction to the research of traditional typefaces.

18

Ades, Dawn. 1984. *Posters: The 20th Century Poster*. New York: Abbeville Press, 62.

comprehension. In other words, the spatial relationship between the background screen and typefaces in Chung's posters exhibits an 'ideology of modern graphic space' espoused by visionaries ranging from Russian constructivist El Lissitzky (1890-1941)¹⁶ to designer-theorist Jan Tschichold (1902-1974).¹⁷ Lissitzky attempted an architectural construction of abstract image elements in the graphic space. Tschichold criticized Lissitzky, asserting that the latter's design, "while unique and powerful, only adopts conventional typefaces,"¹⁸ and he himself experimented with economy of expression and asymmetrical typography. It was this Western design tradition that strongly influenced Chung. If his own thinking and practice only remained at the level of a passive receiver of Western influence, however, he would have ended his career as a tardy late modernist at the end of the twentieth century.

As I briefly mentioned above, Chung's philosophy as a book designer was cultivated over a long period of time in the soil of humanities studies; he calls it an "ideology of one book, one type" (FIGURE 27 and 28). It is a belief that, like all living creatures, all books have their own individually distinct body and expression. That is, "since each book possesses different expressions, in order to give an adequate form to those expressions, one should invent the most appropriate typeface, rather than choose one." This belief arises



from his search for expanded visual language on the level of 'imagination of materiality,' a search he embarked on with an influence from the thought of French philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard. Chung thinks of a written language not simply as a conceptual medium of communication — *langue* (concept) as opposed to *parole* (speech) in Ferdinand de Saussure's semiological linguistics — but as itself an image that becomes *parole*.¹⁹ In other words, a book composed of type is a body plus spirit itself, or going one step further, a being that contains spirit. The book, therefore, must not only be read visually, but should also possess a spiritual sound, tactile feelings of its pages, and even a smell of flesh, i.e., paper and ink. The phrase he habitually sings, "the culture of the book" is an expression that distinguishes between books produced through such an experimentation and those that are not. In short, a publishing industry without its own culture of the book is meaningless.

It is such strands of philosophical thinking that helped bring about diverse typefaces with their own expressions in his posters (see figure 26). In the 1996 poster he designed for a one-person retrospective exhibition of his works from over twenty years, Chung expressed the idea of the culture of the book, which must communicate diversity while sharing the basic system of modern design, through the word book written in a unique typeface. Looking closely at this intense title

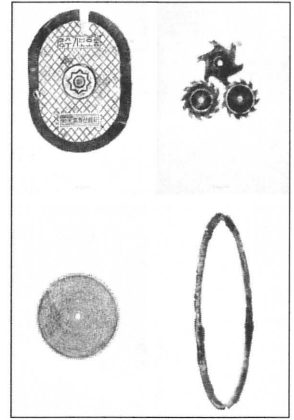
FIGURE 27: |
Byung-Kyoo Chung, *Poster for Seoul System's Royal Font*, 1997.

FIGURE 28: |
Byung-Kyoo Chung, *Editorial and Book Design*, 1996.

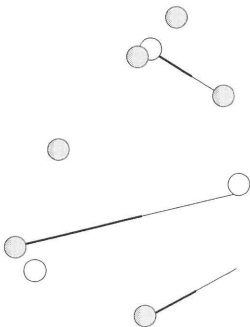
19

Interview with Chung,
March 22, 2000.

| FIGURE 29: |
Sang-Soo Ahn. Letter Work, 1999.



typography, we realize that it is not designed in the customary way ordinary graphic designers work on a flat surface. Rather, it is a 'spatial shape' that seeps out from the 'structure of a book' per se. On the book cover with a black piece of paper inserted underneath, Chung cut out the shape of the word *Book* with a knife and tore out the shape by hand. In the revealed black silhouette, he brusquely wrote the same word in white ink. The calligraphy shimmers like bunched wires or optical fibers in a skinned cable. Herein, we get to see contained in a book or a poster, numerous existential and processual philosophies. To put it differently, we witness various material beings and acts, such as an already present paper surface, an artificially constructed structure and things drawn and made on top of them. In this way, Chung's inimitable individual personal touch was completed. Let us look again at the subtle interstitial spaces between the knife-cut and hand-torn alphabet letters. Do we not feel the personal touch and trace of the presence of one sensitive and creative man who plunges into space? This is none other than Chung's aesthetic of graphics and world of book design that originate from the book. And knowing this, we realize commonalities and differences between Chung's work and the notion of book as an architecture of cosmic meditation of Koehi Sugiura. Both designers encompass the infinite space of the spiritual inner world. Chung's design, however, is not a sacred architecture in the style of Sugiura, but instead deals with book as a so-called Nietzschean



existential architecture. In this way, it is not through a master-slave relationship, but through a philosophical encounter that premises mutual differences, that a true cultural exchange amongst professional designers from both ends of Korea and Japan can be meaningful.

One in the extremely small group of Korean designers known internationally is Sang-Soo Ahn, born in 1952 and now entering his fifties. In the exhibition, Ahn exhibited his oeuvre of experimental typography under the title, "Letter Work" (FIGURE 29). Ahn's Letter Works are a collective attempt to visualize the typeness of Korean written characters in everyday objects found around us. For instance, the title of one letter work – [*Hangul* - <Seoul> - 1999 - Letter work - "ㅇ" x 3 - "ㄷ" x 1' – may seem like a complex table of random numbers, but as a matter of fact, it tells in what direction his experimentation is heading. Specifically, he is explaining here that he is manifesting the kinship he finds between the Korean alphabet letters, *Hangul*, such as the consonant ㅇ and the vowel ㅏ and objects found on the street in his 1999 letter work. This manifestation is specifically expressed through three images of the objects that morphologically constitute the consonant "ㅇ, ㅍ" (*Jung*, the name of the consonant), and one image of the object that relates to the vowel, ㅏ. In the letter work, "ㅇ x 3," which indicates the three selfsame constitutive consonants of the consonant's name itself – ㅍ – is manifested through three object-images (whose material characteristics are clear) – a lid for a water pump container, a three-cogwheel gear and a carpenter's circular saw blade. On the other hand, the material nature of the image corresponding to the vowel (indicated by ㅏ) is rather obscure – it is a vertically elongated elliptical object.

What he is attempting to do here is to image separate vowels and consonants, whose combination can form individual syllables – one characteristic of *hangul*. Morphologically, *Hangul* shapes can be expressed as syllabic units that own both consonants and a vowel and moreover, syllables can be broken up into disconnected vowels and consonants, which can function as individual visual signs. Especially, vowels provide sound and movement to consonants. The bottom right quo-

| FIGURE 30: |

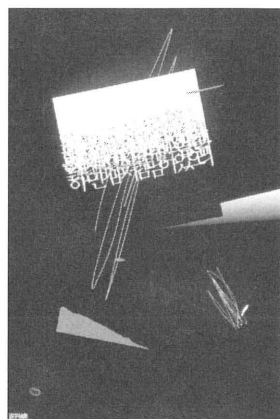
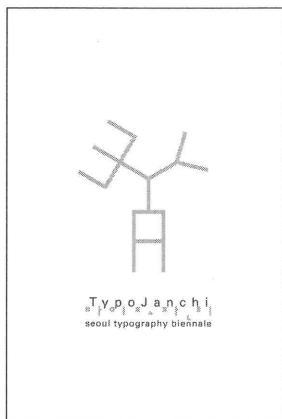
*Sang-Soo Ahn. Poster for the First
Front DMZ Cultural Arts Movement
Exhibition, 1991.*

| FIGURE 31: |

*Sang-Soo Ahn. Poster for Bogoseo-
Bogoseo, 1997.*

tient in the letter work, which corresponds to the part of the title — “ㅈ” x 1 — articulates this point. The shape of the object-image resembles that of a mouth uttering the sound for “ㅈ.” Ahn, then, has captured into an image the phonogrammic characteristic (that is wholly unlike ideogrammic written language such as Chinese) of *Hangul* letters. One can also say that this work, which is manifested through tangible material objects, is in one sense an attempt to traverse between the phonogrammic characteristics of *Hangul* and the ideogrammic characteristics of Chinese writing. A precedent in appropriation of *objets* in modern art can be found in the work of German artist Kurt Schwitters, a member of the dadaist movement in the 1920s. He invented what he termed *Merz* — a kind of relief-collage made out of junk and detritus; it was also a process of using all kinds of everyday matter and waste product, organizing them and building relations among them. Although not a multivalent appropriation like Schwitter’s, Ahn similarly encapsulates the typographic impression (typeness) through an appropriation of quotidian subject matter as *objets*. But it is necessary to study Ahn’s method of object appropriation a little more.

Although the object-images that signify the consonant, *lung* — a lid for a water pump container, a three-cogwheel gear and a carpenter’s circular saw blade — are themselves present-day everyday objects, the way in which he represents them somehow quite inexplicably



October 2001 displays a typographic image that exquisitely becomes an object. Reminiscent of the Choson Dynasty-period poured iron types, the three initials, ㄱ, ㅌ, ㅍ of *Suh-ul Taipogeurapi Bienalle* (Seoul Typography Biennale) are designed as if they have just come out of an iron mold (FIGURE 32).

Ahn's desire to expand typeness into graphics, joined by works by other typographic designers, is forming an axis in Korean graphic design. For example, such a tendency is observed also in the works of two other designers included in the exhibition, Ki-Heun Shur (born 1952) and Joo-Sung Kim (1960). Their works differ from Ahn's in that in a departure from the latter's focus on typography, the former tend to be quite painterly. Shur and Kim both similarly deal in relations with regards to typefaces and 'materiality.' But between the two designers, there is a difference that can be defined as analog versus digital. Whereas Shur has made works like "Typeface Look" (1999, FIGURE 33) through the materiality produced in creating shallow recessions and projections on a sheet of plastic gold leaf, Kim has made "Typeface Abstraction" (1999, FIGURE 34), through the digital immateriality of 0-and-1 binary digits. Interestingly, as the titles of their works indicate, they converge at the same point; they both identically sought to represent the aesthetic traits of abstract painting through typography. Although Shur's *Typeface Look* is reminiscent of ancient Buddhist sutras in its expression, just like

Kim's Typeface Abstraction, in its content, points towards abstract painting. Kim, especially, used a neologism Typographism, made from typography and graphism for another work in the exhibition, and in doing so, is expanding typefaces per se into the realm of graphics.

Additional discovery and suggestion

Above, I have tried to show that the works of the generation of Japanese graphic designers in their sixties and above, ranging from Ikko Tanaka and Masayoshi Nakazo to Katsumi Asaba, share a selfsame frame of consciousness, despite minor individual technical differences. Their designs contain a clear sense of self-identity and world view. On the other hand, the work of Young-Jae Cho, the Korean designer of the same generation, manifestly reveals an utterly contrary case. Without an apparent identity and worldview, his work resembles only the genetic makeup of his Japanese counterparts and only on the level of techniques. In spite of the recent blow-ups in Korea — such as the Japanese textbook-in-distortion controversy²¹ and the Japanese prime minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, when it comes to the relationship of Korean and Japanese graphic design, it remains one of master and slave from its very origin. It seems that Cho has never given a serious thought to what kind of influence such a relationship will have on the subsequent generation of designers. Take for an instance the following quote from the introductory commentary by Yusaku Kamemura in Cho's collection of works published in 1995. Presenting Cho as "the very first pioneer who launched Korean modern design," Kamemura reproduces expressions used by the Japanese colonial masters; he writes, "... because the crime the Japanese had inflicted upon the Koreans cannot be simply erased away. There were many cultured people at the time, however, who possessed deep affection and admiration

FIGURE 32: |
Sang-Soo Ahn. Logo and letterhead for the
1st Seoul Typography Biennale, 2001.

FIGURE 33: |
Ki-Heun Shur. Typeface Look, 1999.

FIGURE 34: |
Joo-Sung Kim. Typeface Abstraction, 1999.

21

The Japanese history textbook controversy broke out on April 3, 2001, when the Ministry of Education was examining and authorizing the so-called New History Textbook. This governmental action repeats the several decade-long tradition of erroneous history-distorting statements publicly made by Japanese high-level bureaucrats. *New History Textbook*, based on the anachronistic war-time imperialist ideology, denies the history of Japanese invasion and oppression, and going one step further and justifying Japan's motivations, in effect denies the Asia-Pacific War itself. In addition, it downplays and withholds information about controversial issues such as Rape of Nanking and Comfort Women (sexual slaves drafted, or in fact, mostly kidnapped and forced into inhumane condition of servitude to Japanese soldiers in the war fields; most of the women were Korean). The *Textbook* problem caused much shock and furor in the countries formerly colonized and/or invaded by Japan—South Korea, North Korea, China, and Taiwan—as well as with the larger international communities and organizations such as United Nations Human Rights Commission. This most recent Japanese gesture towards their history of atrocities is especially striking in comparison with the German case; since 1945, Germany has acted with a far more responsible attitude towards the criminal acts it committed during the Third Reich (1933–1945), and has assiduously carried out consultations and discussions with its neighboring countries such as France and Poland in order to prevent possible controversies with regard to distortion of the history.

for Korean traditional culture and arts. They were especially enchanted by the ceramics of the Yi Dynasty and folk paintings. I was one of them.”²² To recap, Cho chose to include this writing in the preface of his book, proudly displaying his intimate association with the godfather of Japanese graphic design, who held affection and admiration for Korea. In the mind of Kamekura, however, Korea is — I would not go so far as to expect him to think it the sovereign Kingdom of Choson — registered, not even as Choson, but instead as Yi Dynasty, the name given to the kingdom by the invaders. We need to inquire, again, about this bizarrely warm mutually affectionate linkage between the two countries. Is it really acceptable to overlook the offensive, historically charged oversight — calling the sovereign nation not by its own name, Kingdom of Choson but by Yi Dynasty that suggests a mere land ruled by the Yi family — just in order to receive from the Japanese godfather praise?

We must remember that Japan had already experienced a state of self-consciousness in the late 1920s. The Japanese realized modern design without sacrificing their traditional values and the qualities that they long held onto. Since the opening of its door through American Commodore Perry's gunboat diplomacy and the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Japan embarked on a massive plan of modernization, absorbing and imitating Western civilization. The Japanese modernization of the late nineteenth century — accomplished in the form of rapid industrialization and exportation of art work — advanced graphic design only to the extent of surface imitation of Western design through the technique of formulization of designs. Nevertheless, reexamination and reflection on this shortcoming began to take place after the 1923 Kanto Great Earthquake. This movement was driven by the principle of Japanese Spirit, Western Skills, i.e., thoroughly understanding and accepting the technical background and philosophical tenets of Western design and conferring Japanese spirit on top of them. As mentioned, it was a result of such a consciousness that Hiromu Hara published a translation of Jan Tschihold's *Die Neue Typographie* in 1927. In other words, the Japanese were

experimenting with new techniques while constructing new philosophical and knowledge structures.

In contrast, one can say, as I have tried to show above, that Korean design went through six decades in a vacuum and only reached a level of self-awareness only in the late 1980s. Since the liberation in 1945, many graphic designers in Korea sought to realize a distinctive Korean character — such as plain flat surface and lines, bright colors and a well-structured pictorial spatial composition — applied formally to traditional subject matter. In actuality, however, the contents consisted of a manipulated genome of Japanese graphic design. Some may maintain that such an identity does indeed arise from local specificities, though still falling within the Japanese sphere of influence. There is, of course, a justifiable need to take a look at the post-liberation situation from the perspective of cultural exchange. For design, or any cultural identity, for that matter, does not stand in isolation from the factors surrounding it, but rather undergoes constant changes in mutual interactions with them. Furthermore, it is not possible that cultural or environmental influences of a particular time are irrelevant to a graphic designer.

I am, thus, not interested in discerning the route of transmission of sensibilities — i.e., whether the influences have come from a detour through Japan or straight from the West. The issue here is the subjective eye and thinking. There is no doubt that we must examine design identities flexibly from multicultural perspectives, but this cannot mean that one relinquishes one's subjective consciousness per se. Design and culture without their own subjectivity, even if they consist of multiple cultural elements, can only be defined as a plagiaristic formation, not an identity formation. One may recall, as an analogy, the recent movie, *Being John Malkovich* (1999) by director Spike Jonze, in which we encounter a schizophrenic with no eye of his own but only with the eyes of many others.



Fortunately, since the 1980s, the genetic makeup of Korean designers has departed from inbreeding and been moving towards experimentation based on principles. For instance, take the case of Byung-Kyoo Chung. The genetic material of his design does not consist of mannerisms, but rather comes from different principles and philosophy. He aspires to an ideology of one book, one letter that is inspired by a variety of thoughts ranging from Russian constructivism to semiotics. The real face of his genome, therefore, is not form as a means of existence but an invisible principle. Another similar case is Sang-Soo Ahn, who introduced the thinking of Jan Tschichold by translating and publishing his *Asymmetrical Typography* in the early 1980s while working as artistic director for the magazine *Ggumim* (Decoration). Thoroughly comprehending theories of Western graphics and typography design, Ahn has been pursuing the development of *Hangul* typefaces and their graphicization.

The historical vacuum is creating a new problem to be solved, however. Although Korean graphic design has only recently begun to break out of the shadow of a Japanese stylistic connection, it now finds itself arrested by another anachronistic shackle of modern art, that is, 'a plasticity-centered tendency.' One can say that it is only natural that typographers or graphic designers are crossing back and forth between the boundaries of design and fine art. Today, however, the fine art which art for art's sake used to seek in the past has gone through the stages of 1960s pop art and 1970s and 1980s conceptual art, and in the process has begun to deal with everyday contexts just as design creates for everyday life and communication. It is my opinion that in such a context, there is no reason for design to orient itself towards plasticity-centered pure art. It is not that such attempts are meaningless, but that discoveries vis-à-vis quotidian communication tend to be missing in them. For instance, there exists a difference between everydayness and abstractness between Eiji Yamada's sensibility-filled posters and Joo-Sung Kim's letter abstractions. I remember one exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art on the Stenberg Brothers, designers of movie posters in 1920s Russia. Today's museums are letting

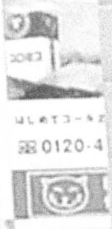
in as art those posters originally designed in the past for the street and treated as of no value. That sort of art is not art that is like art but instead art that is like life.

In the same light, it is still difficult to find a designer like Yokoo Tadanori, who in the past six decades has tirelessly explored the psychological dimension of popular culture. One may say, of course, that this is a matter of each designer's individual character and taste. Nevertheless, design is an art that operates within social contexts. Here the term social connotes not only that it is a mine in which a designer unearths precious materials (money), but also that a designer must be closely correlated to a consciousness about the context within which s/he is located. Is it not the inherent responsibility of design to observe a society-at-large and make statements about it as a subject? I have begun to discern some instances of this in the young generation of designers in Korea. I will avoid disclosure of these names and their genetic compositions. For it is my hope to sincerely wait and watch the next generation of designers who believe in themselves, while they continue their diligent labors.

AUTHOR NOTE

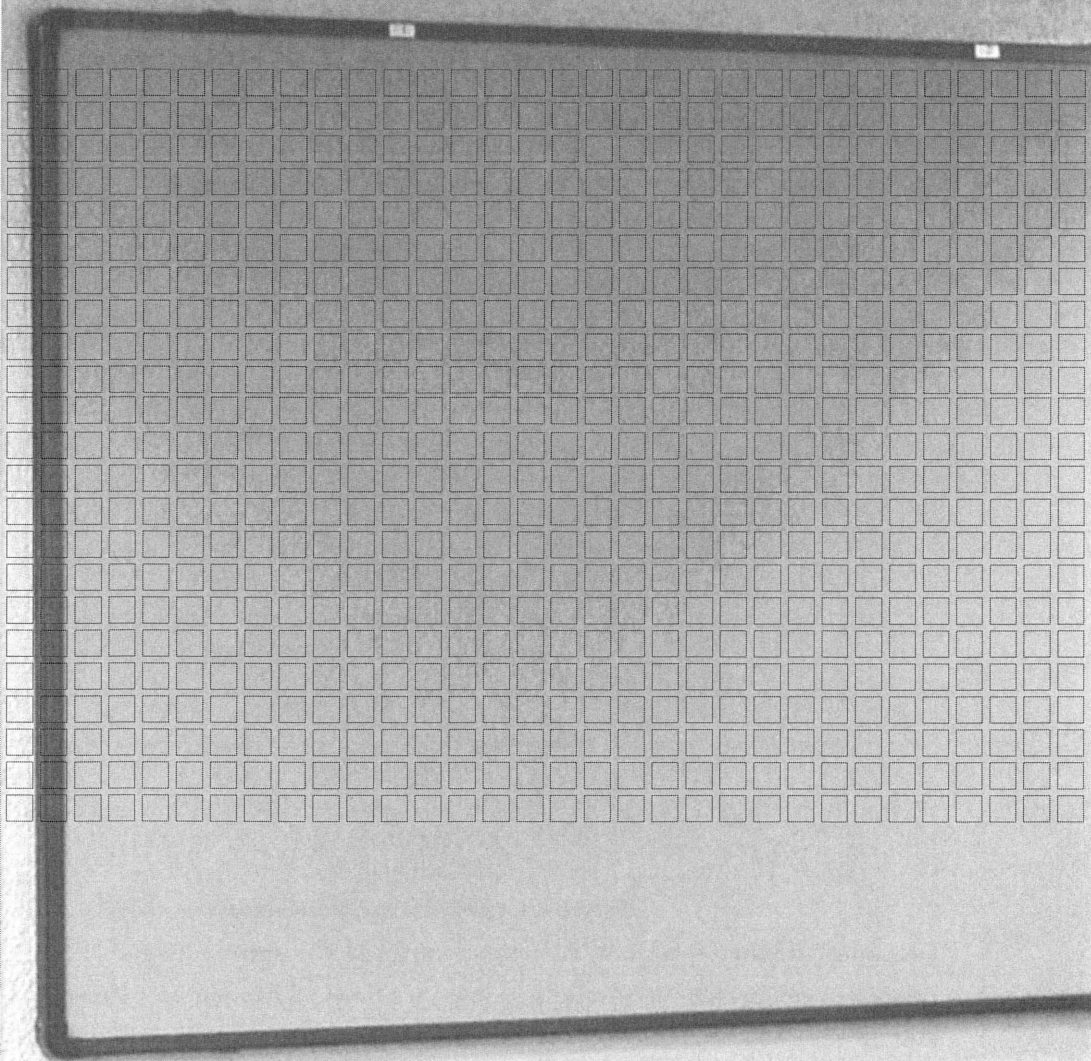
Min-Soo Kim, Ph.D. is former professor of design history and criticism at Seoul National University. He received his Ph.D from New York University in 1991. He is the director of the Design Culture Laboratory (DCL) in Seoul and editor of *The Journal of Design Culture and Criticism (JDCC)*, first published in autumn of 1999 and the first Korean journal of cultural theory and criticism on design. Dr. Kim now serves as a board member of the Korean Society for Visual Culture. He is playing an active role as a design critic in digital media and visual culture. He has published three major critical books for Korean readers: *Criticism on Modern Design: Understanding Postmodernism and Deconstruction* (1994), *A Cultural Navigation on the 21st Century's Design: Dialectics of Design, Culture, and Symbol* (1997), *Thus Spake Yi Sang, the Multimedia Man* (1999), and *Kim, Min-Soo's Culture Design* (2002).

クリーンは
みんなの

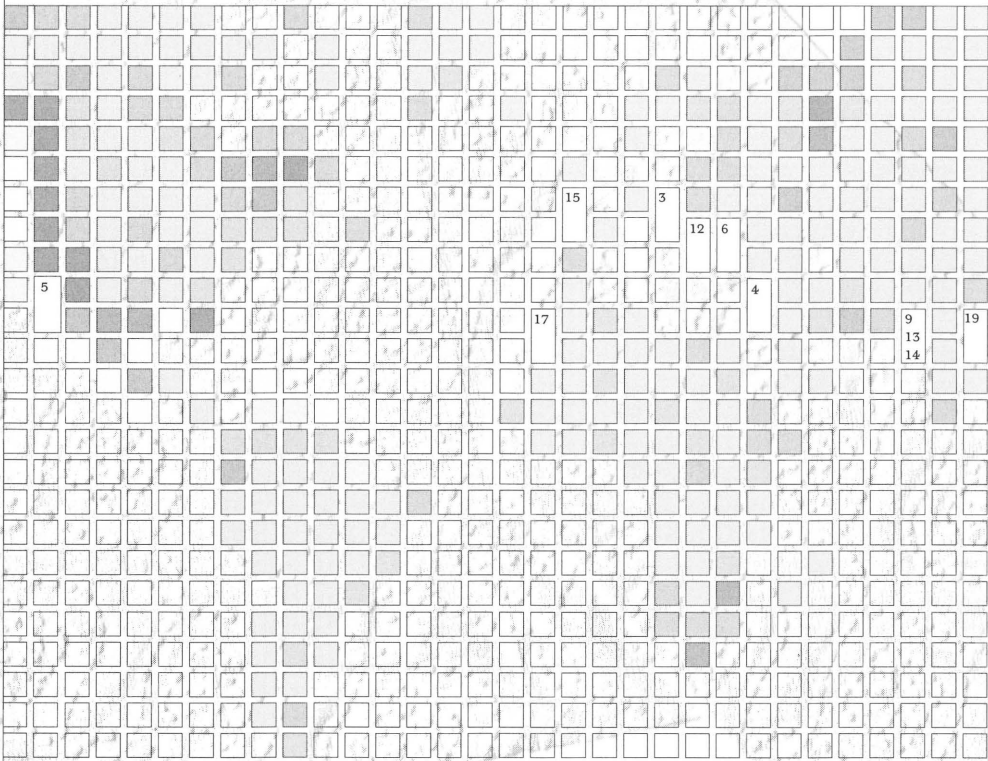


TEL 0120-4

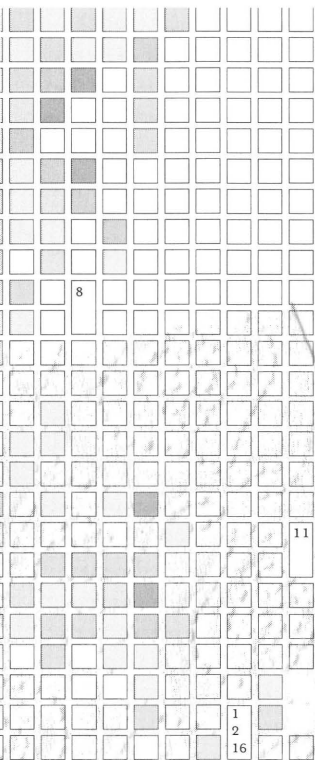




Lynne Ciochetto



The need for clear cross-cultural signage is related to increasing international business, recreational travel as well as significant world events like the Olympics. Using toilet signage as the occasion for examining cultural diversity and similarity, the author takes an historical approach to sanitary habits, contextualizing cultural habit and its manifestation in signage. Visual documentary evidence from many cultures accompanies the discussion. Analysis and investigation of these images in terms of uniformity within diversity locate the key functional characteristics of toilet signage as identification and segregation. A high level of consistency in use of male and female images to identify toilets, along with a great diversity in visual treatment characterize this study.



represents figure number in context of location

Massey University
Visible Language 37.2
Ciochetto, 208-221

©Visible Language, 2003
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, Rhode Island 20903

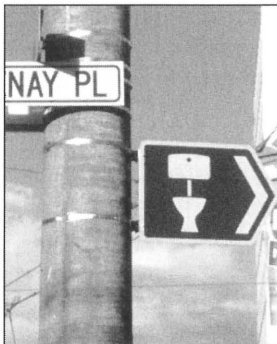


The widespread use of pictorial signage for toilets is a product of the acceleration of mass tourism, along with the internationalization of business and the economy that has taken place since the 1960s, but is also part of the processes and changes in society that commenced in the nineteenth century and arose out of the Industrial Revolution. In the contemporary period toilet signs are almost universally indicated by images of men and women, and the segregation of the sexes seems to occur in most cultures. I consider that this phenomenon is a product of the expansion of western culture internationally both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. The development of pictorial information systems was a product of changes in the post World War II period, but the dissemination of these systems followed the expansion of US business, the internationalism of commerce and culture that occurred in the post war period which was driven by the United States. The use of these symbols paralleled the 'international style' of graphic design adopted by corporations for their communications (internal and external), based on a European visual and philosophical tradition, but driven by American and European business requirements. Toilet signs tend to be more abstract and stylized when they are in locations of high density traffic and tend to be in the international pictograph style reflecting a dominance of western form and culture. The vernacular and more popular forms tend to be in third world countries or in locations that experience low density traffic flows.

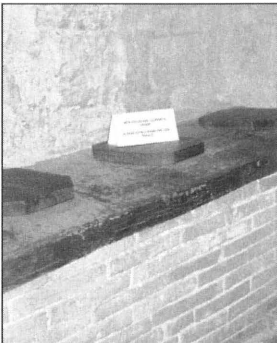
INTRODUCTION: **definitions and function**

(identification and segregation)

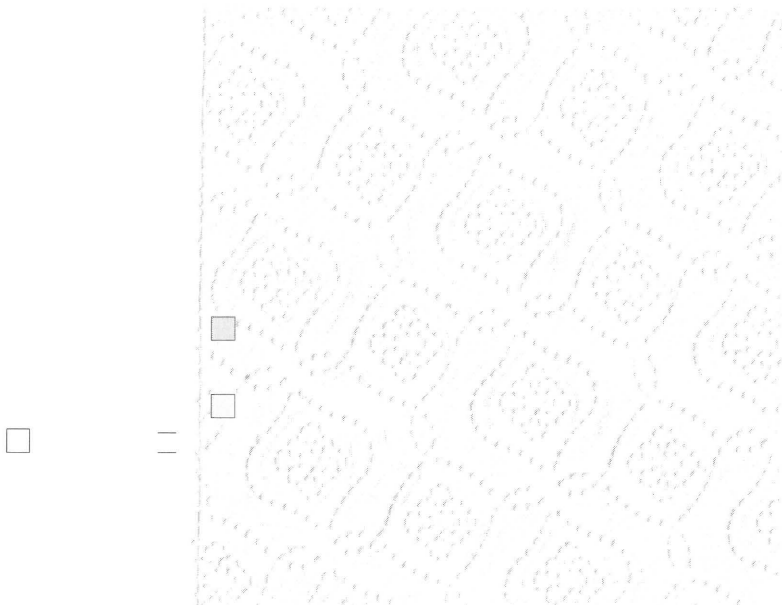
The signs identifying public toilets are some of the most common images existing cross-culturally in the contemporary era. Charles Saunders Peirce's definitions are useful to clarify different functional characteristics of signage. He defined signs in terms of three categories: icons, indices and symbols (Fiske, 1991). Toilet signage demonstrates characteristics of each category. The icon is defined as a sign that resembles the object. I found only a few examples that actually depict the toilet itself, and these were recently introduced in New Zealand (FIGURE 1). More often toilets signs represent users, differentiated into men and women, (and sometimes children), which I consider to be an iconic function. The index provides a direct link between the sign and the object, and toilet signage most commonly does this by indicating location, usually on the door of the toilet or a street sign near to the facility (FIGURE 2). The toilet sign also has a symbolic function as it does not, in most cases, depict the facility or the activity of using a toilet and thus involves learned behavior and culturally accepted conventions on segregation of the sexes and use of toilet facilities. Words also fall into the symbolic category as language involves learned behavior, as written words do not directly depict meaning (FIGURE 3). The commonly seen combination of both image and text raises the issue of the effectiveness of the pictorial image alone. While I consider that toilet signage falls into the category of signage that has elements of the icon, index and symbol, Fiske considers signs denoting men's and women's toilets as iconic (1991: 47).



The symbolic function of toilet signs in segregating the sexes is closely tied to cultural values. Historically in Europe, there is evidence of communal toilets in garrisons, castles and monasteries, but except for the latter it is not known if these were segregated (FIGURE 4). The segregation of toilets in the nineteenth century seems to be the product of Victorian values and the creation of different spheres of influence for men and women and the Victorian culture of prudery about sexual matters. Most cultures today have evolved privacy codes that forbid members of the opposite sex viewing the genital area of the opposite sex, as well as restrictions on the same gender using the facilities except for children and sometimes the disabled (FIGURE 5). Issues regarding the safety of women are another factor reinforcing segregation. In contemporary societies toilets are differentiated by gender in most cultures even when the toilets are shut behind doors in cubicles. The nature of toilet provision differs according to gender in most places. Privacy is provided in cubicles for women to both urinate and defecate, but not for men. Men publicly use urinals, while cubicles are provided for defecation, though some male toilets only provide urinals. The physical activity is rarely reflected in the signage (FIGURE 6). This segregated combination of toilet facility has been exported internationally as part of the western cultural package in colonial and post-colonial period and the signage used is part of the same tradition.




Though the history of toilet signage is relatively recent, dealing with human waste is part of the history of society and has been an issue wherever significant numbers of people are concentrated. Societies have developed systems for dealing with waste with varying degrees of success. The earliest example of toilet provision is in Skara Brae in the Orkney Islands, where there is evidence of indoor toilets and a drainage system 5,000 years ago (Kilroy, 1984). There are remains of sewage systems in the Minoan cities of Crete from 2,500-950 BC; the Sumerians of the Indus valley and the Etruscans in 500 BC and Rome (Hugo-Brun, 1972). In castles, toilets were often placed on the outer walls and waste dropped to the moats or containers below. In the middle ages until the nineteenth century, waste was often collected in chamber pots that were poured out the windows into the streets. Different arrangements accommodated these pots, which were often enclosed in cabinets or portable commodes. The flushing toilet, common in the contemporary era, came into common usage in Europe in the late nineteenth century.



There are examples of public toilet provision in Roman cities and garrisons and even in British city ordinances in the twelfth century (Wright, 1960: 47-49). The need for public toilet provision was intensified by changes in society brought about by the industrialization of the nineteenth century that resulted in increased mobility and increased segregation of people among work, home and leisure activities. Some of these changes included: improvements in standards of living, the growth of cities, the expansion of the railways and transportation and the expansion of travel. The expansion of the railways stimulated the growth of mass tourism. There was an expansion in organized travel — travel was previously arranged by individuals and only a small number of wealthy elite travelled. In 1844 Thomas Cook introduced his first 'pleasure excursion' and by 1864 over a million passengers had travelled with him (Urry, 1990: 24). The first public toilet for men in the United Kingdom was opened in 1854 (Allen, 1991). Railway companies provided the first public toilets in Britain on station platforms in the nineteenth century. On the trains the first public toilets were provided in first class in 1874 and for the second classes in the 1880s (Horan, 1996). Travel stimulated the building of large hotels, the first being beside the railway stations. In the later nineteenth century the first department stores were built which also provided public toilets and rest rooms for 'ladies' (Adburgham, 1981; Davis, 1966). In 1851, six million people visited The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. Events like the Great Exhibition were soon duplicated throughout Europe and North America. The middle classes started eating outside their homes in public restaurants and hotels for the first time. At the same time, the need for toilet provision was intensified by this expansion of public life outside the workplace and home.

—
——
—

□



The provision of public toilets generated the need for signage as a means of identification. The earliest example of toilet signage comes from a French ball in 1739, where close stools (jars) were placed in small cabinets and inscribed 'Garderobe pour les Femmes' and 'Garderobe pour les Hommes' (Wright, 1960, 103). In the nineteenth century, English public toilets were identified by the words 'LADIES and GENTLEMEN, or LADIES CLOAKROOM, which were waiting rooms for women that contained toilets or GENTLEMENS' CLOAKROOM (FIGURE 7). These were the words the Victorians used for toilets (Greed, 1995). Such oblique references continue to be used in the present day and include; Men, Women, WC (short for water closet), Toilets, Gents and Powder Room. In the United States the term 'Bathroom' is used to describe toilets, though a bath is not provided.

Further social, cultural and economic changes in the twentieth century brought about the introduction of pictorial images for the identification of toilets, though pictorial images have been used for millenia to communicate ideas or identify groups. The modern development of the visual image as sign was part of the early twentieth century modernist movement that developed in central and northern Europe. It was a product of a central European intellectual and artistic tradition with origins in the Enlightenment and was characterized by a celebration of and a striving for universal aesthetic forms (Habermas, 1983, quoted by Lester, 1994, 16). The ideal of an international pictorial language has been part of modernist design since the 1920s. Otto Neurath, one of the early modern inventors of the pictogram, developed stylized abstracted images to visually communicate complex statistical information. His aim was clear cross-cultural communication. His system of abstract images, called 'Isotype', (International System of Typographic Picture Education), included male and female figures (Lupton and Miller, 1996). His perspective related to the philosophical tradition of logical positivism, which aimed to create universal scientifically based bodies of knowledge.

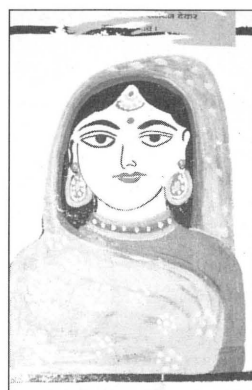
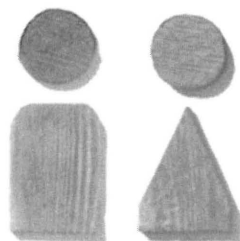
The need for the communication of information within and across cultures arose from the further expansion of international business and growth in travel and tourism, especially after World War II. Increased mobility, facilitated by the growth of car ownership after the 1920s, was later expanded by air travel. The 1938 Holidays Act in Britain introducing the paid holiday reinforced the institution of travel as part of contemporary life. By World War II there was widespread acceptance of the view that going on holiday was beneficial and a right of citizenship. The expansion of internationalized travel and mass tourism is one of the phenomena of the post war period. The first international jet service was established in 1957 (Urry, 1995). Mass tourism became internationalized in the mid-1960s and by 1984 there were almost 300 million tourist arrivals worldwide and international tourism was recognised by the International Monetary Fund as the second largest item in world trade (Urry, 1990: 47). The increased numbers of people on the move created a need for support facilities and toilets as part of the essential services. Signage is necessary as a means of identifying location at airports and railway stations and locations of mass activity and transit as well as public places, workplaces and throughout society wherever groups of people congregate. The signage systems implemented were usually part of the design and construction package.

The ideas of comprehensive design systems for organizations and public events took hold at this time. Other significant international public events of the post war period included the Tokyo Olympics in 1964,



the Mexico Olympics in 1967 and the Munich Olympics in 1970 and World Fairs, all of which had signage systems developed to facilitate communication to large numbers of people who spoke different languages. Visual way-finding systems were developed to facilitate these processes and toilet signs always play a crucial role in these symbol systems (Meggs, 1984).

One of the most thorough systems was developed by the United States Department of Transportation in 1974 (Meggs, 1984). Mass tourism in the United States tended to be national rather than international. There was a massive expansion in the ownership of motor cars in the United States compared to Europe and it was also the time in which the major freeway systems were constructed. The D.O.T. images are the ones that seem to have become standardized internationally in public places. The reason for this was that American business led the way in international expansion at this time. American businesses led the world in overseas investment in the post war period, starting with the Marshall Plan that rebuilt Europe. The organizations of the United Nations, such as the World Bank and IMF, also provided much of the finance and expertise in major projects such as building the international airports that were built in the 'development decades' after the 1960s (Meggs, 1984). The development of these symbol systems for public information paralleled the rise of corporate identity programs that were also a product of growth and expansion of international business and the growth of multinational corporations. Lupton and Miller see these processes as part of the emergence of an 'international hieroglyphics of communication' (1996), which was part of the expansion of the 'International Style' in graphic design that characterized corporate design in the 1960s and 1970s. The widespread adoption of these visual image systems internationally came about because they met a real communication need to convey information to large numbers of people who speak different languages. The visual information systems that have been adopted vary in detail but the more public they are the more they tend to follow standardized forms derived from the D.O.T. system.



8: Japan

9: Mandawa, India

10: D.O.T. US

VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS **of toilet**
signage

Most toilet signs take the form of stylized male and female figures, they range in style from minimal abstraction to detailed illustration in many media (plastic label, wood, copper, ceramics or simply painted on the door). At one end of the spectrum there is abstraction of the human form by using geometric shapes (FIGURE 8) at the other end detailed illustration (FIGURE 9).

The most commonly occurring signs are those derived from the D.O.T. and the Olympic signage systems of the 1960s. In these symbol systems the male and female toilet symbols differentiate toilets with the male form showing legs or trousers, and the female differentiated by a fin-like skirt (FIGURE 10). The generic form for humanity is the male figure and it is used throughout the systems except for the toilets where the woman is introduced. One instance when there are two figures depicted in the D.O.T. information system, the woman is waiting on the man, this reinforces the innate gender bias of most cultures reflected in these signs (Lupton, 1993: 225) and is similar in function to the word 'human' where 'man' is the default word for all people. These signs are culturally specific and their precise meanings (toilet here) are learned. As Lupton and Miller point out, the image of a woman conveys the service 'toilet' rather than 'brothel' where women's services can be bought. Also the clean, geometric forms are loaded with the cultural associations 'public,' 'neutral,' 'modern' (1996:44). Some problems result from the cultural bias of the internationalization of visual images, for example, in Saudi Arabia men and women wear the long skirt. Lupton provides an example where the female is differentiated by a veil, but this is reinforced by text in English and Arabic (1993: 229).

Often there is a lack of connection between the images used and contemporary cultural practices. The most common signs are those based on western dress with the male figure in trousers and the female in a skirt. They are culturally specific and are not obvious to those cultures where women wear trousers, for example, in China and Vietnam or in India where women wear a sari over pants and men wear a skirt-like wrap. Increasingly women in western industrialized countries wear trousers as well as men, but I have not seen a woman's toilet indicated by an image of a woman in trousers. Images of the sexes do not necessarily correlate with dress conventions in a society.

Explicit representation of actions associated with toilets is usually reserved for men (FIGURE 11) and seem to refer to urinals rather than full facilities, though examples from Spain and Budapest has a child sitting on a toilet (FIGURE 12). Age seems to make it acceptable to represent the act of using the toilet.

Partial representation in terms of the head and shoulders (frontal or profile) rely on length of hair or hairstyle (FIGURE 13). Another type of representation, largely seen in western locations, is with objects associated with men and women, such as top hats and gloves for men and cosmetics for women.

The most interesting forms of signage are often in restaurants and bars. Here there is a much higher incidence of local character and visual reference, because they are more likely to reflect local humor or vernacular tastes (FIGURE 14, 15 AND 16). They seem to be more often locally produced using local crafts or techniques (FIGURE 17).

There doesn't seem to be any relationship between style of signage and style of facility except that recently introduced unisex toilets have male and female signs on the toilet doors and sometimes a smaller image of the forms is used to represent a child (FIGURE 18).

There does not seem to be any correlation between signage and cultural differences in the use of public toilets. The main differences in toilets are the toilet



11 12



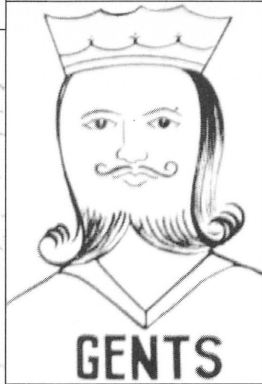
14 14



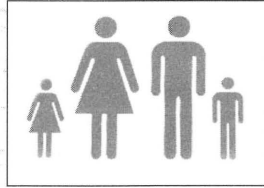
13 13



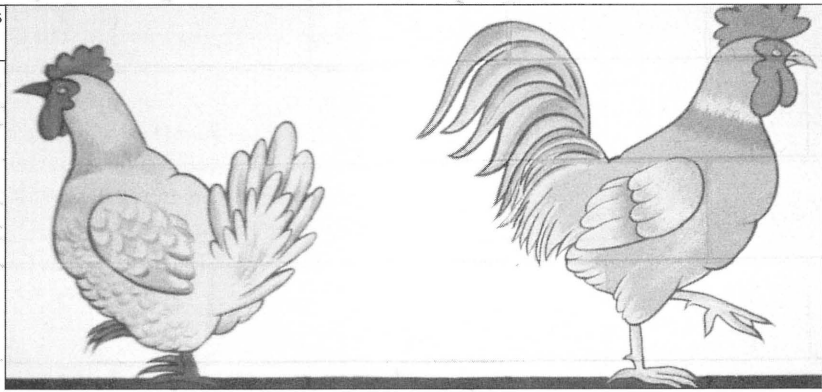
15 17



18



19 16



20



1: Rarotonga (Jen Cheyne)

12: Budapest, Hungary

13: India

13: India

4: India

14: India

15: London, England

17: Morocco

9: Bhaktapur, Nepal

16: Oamaru, New Zealand

10: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

18: Wellington, New Zealand

with a bowl and seat, the urinal and the toilet that is hole in the ground with footrests. In some countries the former is differentiated by the term 'western toilet' or 'tourist toilet' (FIGURE 19). Signs tend to be more abstract in the more public locations and in international venues like airports or in public institutions where there are likely to be greater numbers of people from diverse cultures.

In many cases the word and sign are used (FIGURE 20) which implies a doubt that the images alone are sufficient as a means of communication.

CONCLUSION

The most common form of signage for public toilets that exists cross-culturally are the stylized forms of men and women that are derived from the signage systems developed for the major Olympic events of the 1960s and 1970s and the 1974 U.S. Department of Transport symbol system. The need to communicate to vast numbers of people who do not speak the same language prompted the development of these systems, but they have been exported internationally following the massive expansion of tourism and business in the period since 1960. The signs tend to be more illustrative, playful and culturally specific the further they are from the public arena.



AUTHOR NOTE

Lynne Giochetto is associate professor and head of two-dimensional design at the College of Design, Fine Arts and Music at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand. With degrees in Sociology and Anthropology, a Masters in Sociology, a post-graduate diploma in Development Studies, she also has three years post-graduate study at the Kuntsgewerbeschule, Basel, in Graphic Design. Her approach is interdisciplinary and her passion for travel is reflected in her research. She has published articles on contemporary advertising and cultural change in Russia and in Vietnam. She is currently working on papers on advertising in India and China. In the course of her travels she collects interesting visual images, including the toilet signage seen in this essay.

GRAPHIC
ASSIMILATION:

New immigrants and social identity

*Barbara Martinson
Sauman Chu*



social service
community
assimilation
identity

Delivery of essential social service information to immigrant groups in the United States raises issues of language, cultural imagery, social status and identity. Two perspectives on these issues are offered. From a formal viewpoint, theories of materiality of meaning and the construction of social identity provide insight regarding perception of identity based on representation in print publications. From a grassroots viewpoint, Hmong and Somali focus group discussions explore the character and practical nature of information available to their respective communities. The goal of the paper is to explore appropriate design strategies for bilingual communication for new (Somali) and more integrated (Hmong) residents of Minnesota.

An increase in refugee immigration has challenged professional communicators to develop multilingual informational materials. A recently completed study examined the visual communication of public service information from community service organizations to an audience of culturally diverse readers who have been in the United States less than five years.

Focus groups of recent Hmong and Somali immigrants participated in two sessions to determine appropriate design strategies for bilingual communication. Subjects preferred bilingual publications (English/Hmong; English/Somali) with layouts that were clear, used limited text, organized information with bulleted lists, used a simple bold font and contained culturally appropriate imagery. Recommendations for design procedures included using several translators from different sub-groups within each culture and testing the information with focus groups before publishing (Chu & Martinson, 2000).

In addition to the pragmatic issues of designing for a multilingual audience, a number of social issues emerged during the focus group discussions. There were distinct differences between Hmong and Somali participants regarding their reactions to currently available publications targeted at each group. While the participants in both focus groups had been in the United States for less than five years, the first Hmong refugees had begun arriving in Minnesota in the late 1970s and they established connections within the community and created social service agencies and political organizations (Minnesota has the first Hmong state legislator).



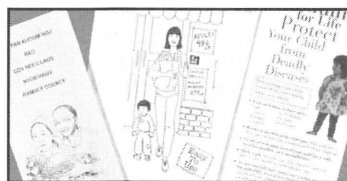
Participants in the Hmong focus group expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of publications that are available specifically for Hmong immigrants. Many of the publications have been developed by non-profit community service organizations with restricted budgets. The resulting publications are inexpensively produced, and most have not been created by designers. Members of the focus group asserted that poor production quality makes a negative social statement. Lesser quality indicates lower status within the social system. Many of the publications included images of Hmong in ceremonial dress. This is not typical everyday dress for the Hmong, and these images cause potential Hmong readers to assume that the information pertains to a special event, when in fact it may provide instructions on how to attain medical help. Service organizations have used such images to signify Hmong culture in general. There seems to be a disconnect between intended and perceived representation. Hmong participants perceived the slickness of typical American print communications to signify a position of power over the groups depicted in lesser quality publications.

The Somali focus group enthusiastically embraced any publications that included the Somali language. As a more recent immigrant group in Minnesota, printed information is scarce. Quality of production was not of great concern; access to information was deemed most important. Both the Hmong and Somali have been primarily verbal cultures, so the concept of print communication is relatively recent.

Reactions to this social phenomenon will be examined in relation to the role that materiality plays in social identity. A theoretical approach, adapted from Manuel Castells' project identity will be used to discuss how the perception of identity is based on representation in print publications (Castells, 1997). Moya's realist theory of identity will be used to describe the notion of identity development when settling in a new culture (2002). The recent immigrants must build a new identity that defines their position in society. In that process their cultural identity and the identity of the communities that they inhabit will change.

FIGURE 1: | *Hmong brochures*

FIGURE 2: | *Somali brochures*





identity and *social location*

The construction of a collective identity is essential for the members within the immigrant group and for those outside of the group.

The recent immigrants' ability to forge an identity within a community will depend on their ability to learn about social and economic variables related to their position in society and their own community (Moya, 2002). This lesson will be learned in many different ways — interactions with others within the cultural group, interactions with established citizens of the community, media, the physical environment and community organizations. The immigrants' social location within the new culture will depend on their skills at understanding how the world works and what they need to know and do to survive and thrive within the community.

Hmong immigrants in Minnesota have established networks of support organizations and have achieved a solid identity as a cultural group that is cohesive and flourishing. The newer immigrants from Somalia are only just beginning to determine their social location. Media is essential to this process. Visual representation is the "privileged space of politics, without it there is no chance of exercising power" (Castells, 1997, 311). Identity-based initiatives have the potential to affect marginalized people in the United States. Images, bilingual ballots and signage are forces in developing an identity and a place within society (Moya, 2002). Identity is constructed from history, geography, economic variables, aspects of housing and education and a variety of associations. The construction of a collective identity is essential for the members within the immigrant group and for those outside of the group. Cultural self-definition is essential to survival in a new context; identity is influenced from both within and outside of the group (Castells, 1997).



Various social categories combine to form a person's social location — the type of work one is involved in, religious beliefs, where one lives, behavior, ethnicity and the activities that one is involved with. Immigrants often straddle between categories with regard to work, beliefs and belonging exclusively to a particular ethnic group. The way in which members of the group are depicted in the media and printed publications, and how they are depicted in society determines their social location. The mutual interaction of categories determines social location and situates members of the group within the social, cultural and historical matrix in which they exist (Moya, 2002).

Identity is the primary source of meaning and experience. It involves distinctions between the self and others, contains a plurality of identities and adapts with new social interactions and social representations (Castells, 1997). Adaptation of identity can cause stress as an individual or group adjusts to a new culture. According to de Ventos, identity is constructed through the interaction of four variables:

- 1 | primary factors such as ethnicity and language;
- 2 | generative factors such as the development of communications;
- 3 | induced factors such as codification of language; and
- 4 | reactive factors such as the search for alternative identities (Castells, 1997, 31).

Both the Hmong and Somali immigrants have had radical changes in communication and language during the resettlement process because they have been primarily oral cultures.

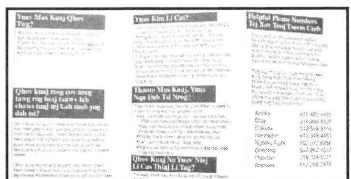
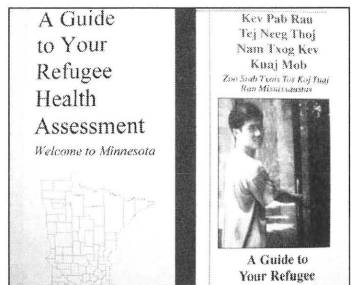
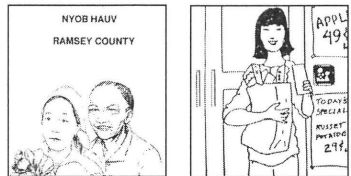
Castells identifies three forms of identity building. The first is Legitimizing Identity, which is introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize authority and nationalism. The second is Resistance Identity, which is generated by those in stigmatized positions. Finally, Project Identity refers to the construction of a new identity that redefines a new position in society and works toward a transformation of the overall social structure (Castells, 1997). Hmong immigrants, who, as a group have been in the United States for approximately twenty-five years, have built a new identity as an ethnicity within Minnesota — their project identity has resulted in a growing Hmong community, participation in community life and positions of leadership both within and outside of the Hmong community. The Somali immigrants, on the other hand, are only just beginning to construct their identity in Minnesota. Service organizations are gaining strength and Somali immigrants are finding employment and housing. They are creating a distinct community. Perhaps the most distinguishing element of Somali women is their dress. Clothing can both identify and stigmatize a cultural group. Moya asserts that some social identities are fictitious and even dangerous because fictions are treated as facts. This can be especially true shortly after the arrival of a new immigrant group. Many Somali women had a difficult time finding employment because of their dress. A negatively constructed identity can serve oppressive and ideological functions that shift one group's status in relation to others in the same society (Moya, 2002) The effort to integrate new immigrants into an existing culture is challenging.


During the nineteenth century, de Tocqueville saw such integration as embodying democracy and civility; Foucault and Sennett see, in the same phenomenon, domination and legitimization of an over-imposed, undifferentiated normalizing identity (Castells, 1997). With new immigrant groups there is a conflict or interplay between two forces: the struggle to maintain a distinct cultural identity while also becoming part of an established civil society. How do visual representations maintain this distinctness, but also align part of the identity with the new society? How can this dual nature of new citizens be represented?

FIGURE 3: | *Hmong Ramsey County*

FIGURE 4: | *WIC Hmong*

FIGURES 5, 6: | *Hmong Redesign*



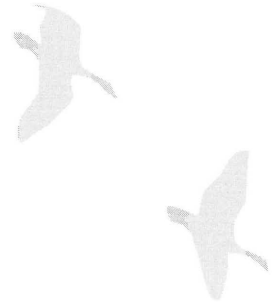


Identities are not singular. Moya (2002, 41) asserts that identities "are subject to multiple determinations and to a continual process of verification that takes place over the course of an individual's life through her interaction with the society she lives in." By depicting Hmong immigrants in ceremonial dress, community service organizations were hoping to communicate that the printed information was intended for Hmong. These representations influenced Hmong identity in a contradictory way to the Hmong community — they did not dress in ceremonial dress on an everyday basis and so the Hmong read the image as referring to a ceremony rather than to healthcare. To non-Hmong viewers these images stereotype the new refugees and may have further distanced the Hmong from society-at-large. This certainly was not the intention of the community service organization. Nonetheless, the interpretation did not match the intention of signaling that the publication was aimed at a Hmong audience. This depiction of ethnicity was intended to be supportive of a communal identity and to appeal to new immigrants. Instead it was a subtle (albeit unintentional) form of cultural hegemony.


The use of ceremonial dress in publications established the new immigrants as different, as people very unlike those who already live in Minnesota. The dress displayed an identity that referred outward to the social world — we would know the Hmong as those who wore that type of ceremonial dress. This representation created a distinct identity of Hmong immigrants. An analysis of the way these identities are constructed can provide important insights about fundamental aspects of United States society (Moya, 2002). Images in publications positioned the immigrants in the society, but showed them as being set apart from it. While their physical location was the inner city, their social location was as the 'other,' as individuals quite different from the mainstream population, many of whom are of northern European descent.

The realist theory of identity insists that we acknowledge and interrogate the consequences of social location and how that location is symbolized overtly within society. The categories and positions have real material effects (Moya, 2002). This theory is in opposition to the essentialist stance that asserts the notion that individual and discoverable essence constitute one social category that is determinate for the cultural individual or group in question (Moya, 2002). The realist theory of identity claims that cultural identity is in constant formation based on one's experience. The way in which new immigrants are represented influences the construction of their identity within and outside of the group. Each individual will interpret his or her experience somewhat differently and so identities are not so homogeneous as assumed by the essentialist theory. Participants in the Hmong focus group discussed the disconnect between the way that Hmong immigrants were represented and their sense of identity in everyday life. The challenge in designing for new cultural groups is to develop appropriate representations that will maintain the integrity of those represented and communicate positively their place in society.

The social construction of identity involves material considerations. The representational theory of language relies on the mistaken assumption that there is direct correspondence between signs and their real-world referents — that intrinsic meaning exists in those real-world referents (Moya, 2002). Castells (1997) asserts that power lies in the codes of information and in the “images of representation around which societies organize their institutions, and people build their lives and decide their behavior” (359). Visual language works to establish identity and denotes location in the society.



Identities are not singular.



materiality and
social location

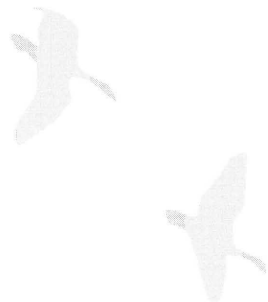
Participants in the Hmong focus group were quite fervent in their discussion of the quality of the printed publications provided in Hmong. Many of the publications are photocopied on poor quality copier paper. Others are produced with a dot-matrix printer and are barely legible. Hmong participants said that the poor quality of reproduction signaled a lower worth than professionally designed brochures, which are typical of medical centers and other organizations. When the Hmong group was asked how they would design a brochure, the first items they mentioned were the use of a quality paper and professional-looking photographs. The physical quality of the publication played an important role in indicating social location. "The hastily torn scrap of paper has different sets of potentials as a signifier than does the beautifully made weighty sheet. Glossy paper has the possibility of signals of a different kind to matte and serves as a signifier of value" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 232). Many of the publications were produced by service organizations on very limited budgets, using older computers, printers and copy machines. These organizations were doing the best that they could with the materials at hand. From their perspective, the information contained in the publications was more essential than the look or quality. However, the implied communication of the materials used was understood by the focus group as denoting a lower class of importance.

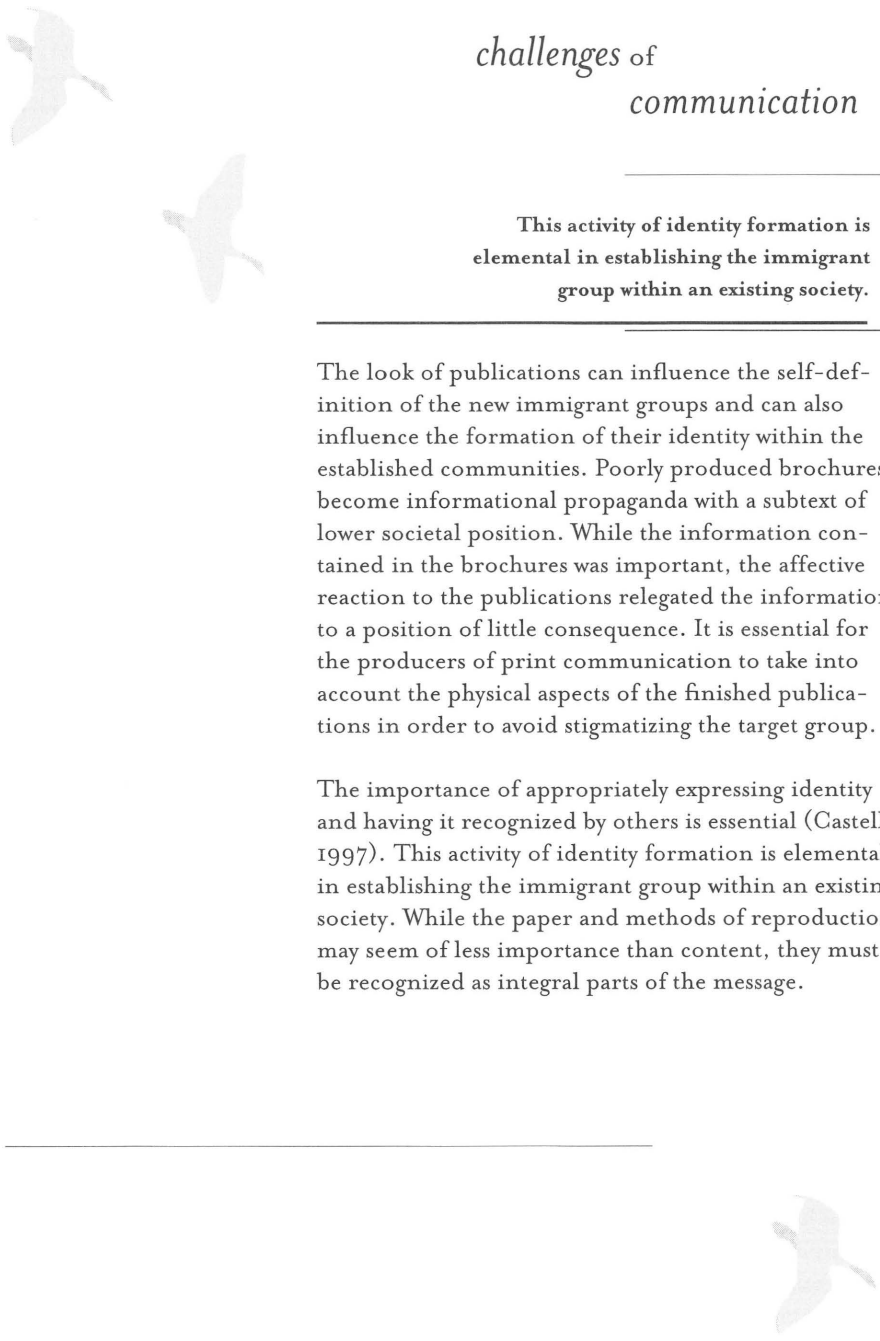
The reproduction method of photocopying resulted in a cheap and unfinished look. Reproductive technology, so pervasive in our culture, carries a message in terms of the quality of the printing, the images and the paper. "There is power in mass production . . . in images, in technologies" (Touraine, 1995; quoted in Castells, 1997, 309). Pragmatic means of production were at odds with the intent of the community organizations. The subtle communication of poor quality paper, type and production methods lowered the import of the content.

**The subtle communication of poor quality paper, type
and production methods lowered
the import of the content.**

Each visual piece of communication is a combination of signifying systems; the means of production is of no lesser importance than the content. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) assert the importance of the material aspects of the message and its means of inscription — how the marks have been made on the paper or canvas: “The mode of inscription changes the text — this aspect of text is gaining importance . . . the material presentation of the text is always significant; it is a separately variable semiotic feature. Texts are material objects which result from a variety of representational practices that make use of a variety of signifying systems, each of which contributes to the meaning of a text in its own particular way” (231). The informational brochures contained text on a literal level and the overall signifying text that combined the content with the images, layout and paper. This overall text signified a class differential between publications for the new immigrants and those produced for the established general public.

Technological advances have increased the quality of typical print projects in the United States. Poorly produced materials are seen with less frequency. In United States culture, a fairly polished look is expected in most print communications. “Every culture has systems of meanings coded in materials and in the means of processes of inscription” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 232). Technology has had a significant impact on the forms of inscription. Technology itself becomes visually semiotic. Walter Benjamin discussed the nature of mechanical reproduction, the idea of reproducibility and how reproduction could change forms of social organization in society. Social hierarchy is implied in the quality of print publications. The nature of an inscription and the surface that the inscription occurs upon will alter the reception of the message; the physicality of the object has an effect on the overall meaning.





challenges of communication

This activity of identity formation is elemental in establishing the immigrant group within an existing society.

The look of publications can influence the self-definition of the new immigrant groups and can also influence the formation of their identity within the established communities. Poorly produced brochures become informational propaganda with a subtext of lower societal position. While the information contained in the brochures was important, the affective reaction to the publications relegated the information to a position of little consequence. It is essential for the producers of print communication to take into account the physical aspects of the finished publications in order to avoid stigmatizing the target group.

The importance of appropriately expressing identity and having it recognized by others is essential (Castells, 1997). This activity of identity formation is elemental in establishing the immigrant group within an existing society. While the paper and methods of reproduction may seem of less importance than content, they must be recognized as integral parts of the message.

REFERENCES

- Castells, M. 1997. *The Power of Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Chu, S., Martinson, B. 2000. Designing Multilingual Communication. *Journal of Applied Communication*, 84:2.
- Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. 1996. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Moya, P. 2002. *Learning from Experiences: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Touraine, A. 1995. *Lettre à Lionel, Michel, Jacques, Martine, Bernard, Dominique ... et vous*. Paris: Fayard.

AUTHOR NOTE

Sauman Chu, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the Department of Design, Housing and Apparel at the University of Minnesota. She teaches courses on graphic design and computer applications. Her research interests include cross-cultural comparison of visual perception and symbols, cultural perspectives of classroom teaching and design variables in multilingual printed material.

Barbara Martinson, Ph.D. is the Buckman Professor of Design Education in the Department of Design, Housing and Apparel at the University of Minnesota. Her research interests include cross-cultural aspects of design and perception, human factors and graphic design and design education.

BOOK
REVIEW:

Language Culture Type

International Type Design in the
Age of Unicode

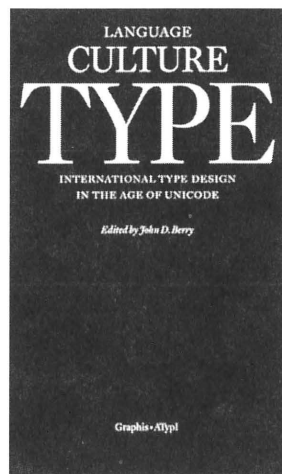
John D. Berry, editor

New York: Association
Typographique Internationale
(AtypI), 2002

Hardbound, 374 pages
extensively illustrated, some
signatures in color, \$60

Designed by Maxim Zhukov

ISBN 1-932026-01-0



Initiated by a desire to promote cultural pluralism, this handsome book is ATypI's first large scale foray into publishing. Based on a type design competition, titled 'bukva:raz!' ('letter:one!' in Russian), it coincided with the United Nation's Year of Dialogue among Civilizations in 2001.

The book contains two large sections: the first is a series of articles about various aspects of type design and its use; the second is the result of the competition. The book is best examined in reverse order. The competition celebrates the best typefaces designed over five years from 1996 to 2001. Over one hundred typefaces featuring fourteen different alphabets and writing systems are represented in five categories: text designs, display designs, text/display type systems, type superfamilies and pi fonts.

Winning entries are presented as a spread with the typeface, a brief biography of its designer, the typeface as used in a setting and a brief reflection on the development of the font, which includes historical references, descriptions of the experimental context for letterform development or calligraphic origins as appropriate. The end result is a feast for the eyes.

Two entries in particular characterize the spirit of this enterprise. DenHaag, designed by Alexander Tarbeev and Manvel Shmavonyan, is a multilingual sans serif typeface supporting Armenian, Cyrillic, Greek, Hebrew and Latin scripts. Pigiarniq, designed by Wm. Ross Mills and commissioned by the Canadian Territorial Government of Nunavut, is a family of multiscript fonts used for Latin and syllabic scripts. The fonts are simplified sans serifs to support combined settings of these scripts. Yet another cross-writing system entry is Really, a serif font family designed by Gary Munch, for Cyrillic, Greek and Latin systems.

*The end result
is a feast for
the eyes.*

The quality of 'bukva:raz!' is exceptional. Given the linguistic limitations of most individuals (judges included), examining and judging the fonts submitted for language systems others than one's own or one closely associated with the norms of one's writing system, must have been a serious challenge. Appreciating the visual rhythm of the written language, its peculiarities whether positive or negative in regard to both form and space from an aesthetic point of view, must have engendered some interesting discussion among the judges. The judges included: Matthew Carter, Yuri Gherchuk, Akira Kobayashi, Lyubov Kuznetsova, Gerry Leonidas, Fiona Ross and Vladimir Yefimov. Maxim Zhukov, who has focused years of attention and much experience on multilingual typography, chaired the judging.

Switching now to the first half of the book, there are eleven essays. Robert Bringhurst's essay, *Voices, languages and scripts around the globe*, observes that the most prominent alphabets are Latin, Greek and Cyrillic. But their distribution and use among language families is not systematic based on sound systems or similarity across languages. For example, Latin script is used beyond English or the romance languages for such diverse tongues as Finnish, Turkish, Basque, Vietnamese and Native American languages to name a few. This essay provides a global context in which to appreciate the contents of the book.

Bringhurst applauds and criticizes the 'official' nature of *The World's Writing Systems* (Daniels & Bright, 1996) and proposes a classification system based on the work of both Peter Daniels and his teacher I.J. Gelb. A handsome diagram at the end of the article demonstrates Bringhurst's classification in use. It is based on discriminating whether a visible language system is semographic, prosodic, syllabic or alphabetic and in what combination. Each aspect is defined by a quadrant of the circle. A specific language's position in a quadrant of the circle, whether near to or far from the center, together with the color and shape of the position marker, all have meaning. Bringhurst refers to the diagram as taxonomic wheels for writing systems used in twelve of the world's languages. Among the spoken languages are Cree, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, English, Arabic and Hebrew. For comparative purposes and to better reveal the nature of the diagram's system of meaning, he also includes Algebra and Classical European Music as other languages.

John Hudson's article, Unicode from text to type, is technical in nature but clear in its description of the problem of developing a universal coding system to accommodate the distinct units of various global languages. The original 8-bit character encoding system that provided 256 discrete positions for characters accommodated most European languages with limited character sets. But Chinese with 80,000 characters was not so lucky. A double-byte encoding increases the number of unique codepoints to 65,536 (256 x 256), but even this was inadequate and has now evolved into a 32-bit encoding that accommodates 1,114,111 characters. The need for such a universal and agreed upon system reflects cross platform needs, accelerating cross-cultural communication and problems associated with multilingual settings. Put in the context of global languages or examined more specifically in terms of variant characters such as ligatures, variable addition of diacritics and writing systems with complex positioning requirements to name few, makes the need for and operational use of so many unique codepoints clear.

Other essays include Maxim Zhukov's ITC Cyrillics, 1992 -; Akira Kobayashi's How do the Japanese read?; Fiona Ross' An approach to non-Latin type design; Gerry Leonidas' A primer on Greek type design; Misha Beletsky's Zvi Narkiss and Hebrew type design; Saki Mafundikwa's Type ramblings from Afrika; Thomas Milo's Arabic script and typography; Vladimir Yefimov's Civil Type and Kis Cyrillic; and Adam Twardoch's Pickled herring and strawberry ice cream. These essays serve to expand on the international nature of this project but in more local terms.

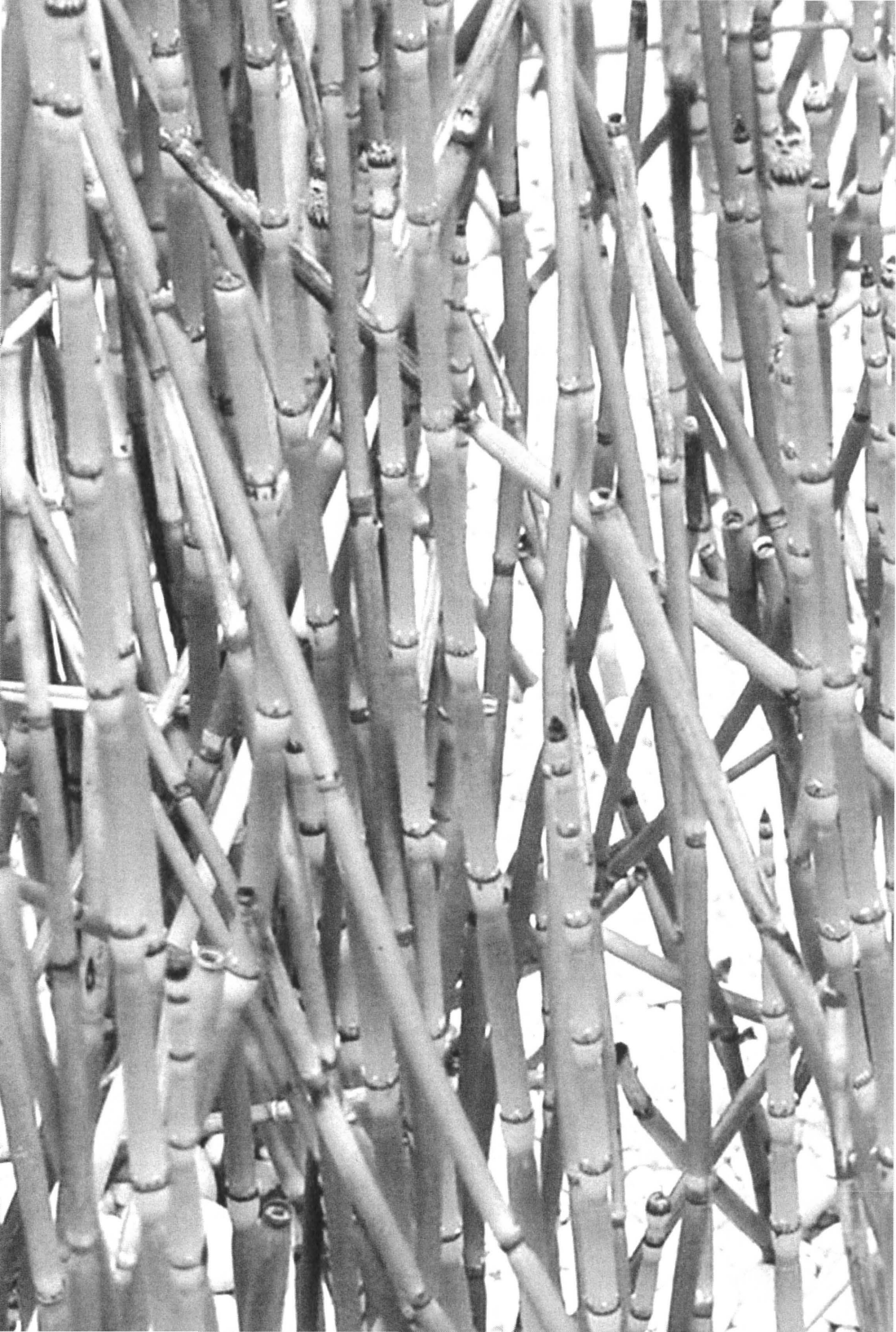
This book belongs on every typophile's shelf for ready reference. It is informative and inspirational. Born out of a need to communicate cross-culturally with multilingual settings in a digital realm and with political intent to provide dignity to language groups that have little or sparse typographic history, the work within this book, whether essay or font, bridges human community and extends the possibility for communication.

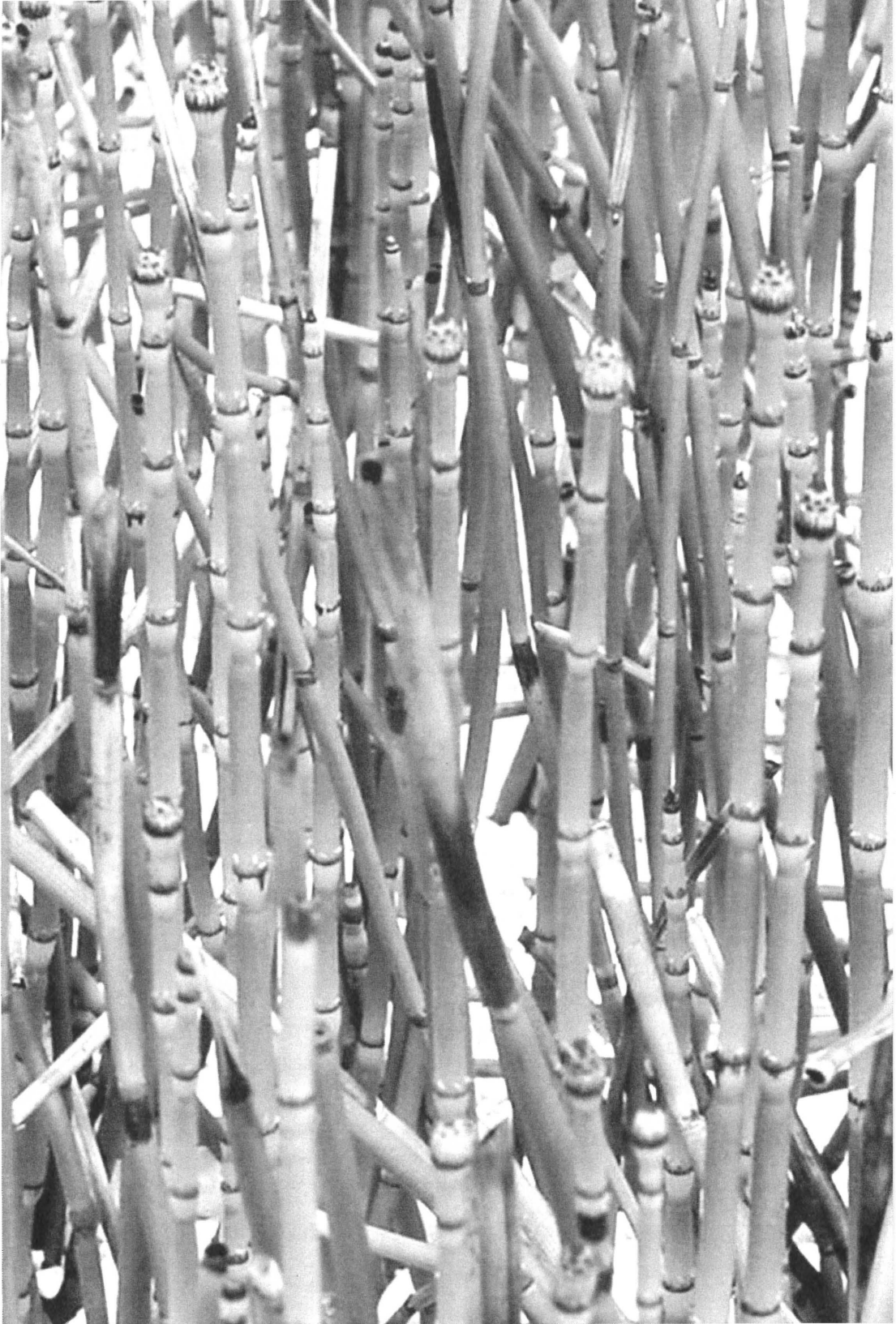
RESOURCE

Daniels, Peter T. and William Bright, editors. 1996. *The World's Writing Systems*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Sharon Poggenpohl, editor and publisher of *Visible Language*.

*This book
belongs on every
typophile's shelf
for ready
reference.*





Editorial Correspondence

Manuscripts, inquiries about research and other contributions to the journal should be addressed to the editor. Letters to the editor are welcome. The editor will also relay to the author questions or comments on any article. Your response — and the author's reply — will not be published without your permission and your approval of any editing. If you are interested in submitting an article to the journal and would like a copy of our Notes on the Preparation of a Manuscript, please request this information from the editor or obtain from the journal's website at www.id.iit.edu/visiblelanguage. Editorial correspondence should be addressed to:

Prof. Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl
Editor, *Visible Language*

Institute of Design, IIT
350 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Telephone 312.595.4921

Fax 312.595.4901

E-mail poggenpohl@id.iit.edu

If you are interested in serving as guest editor for a special issue devoted to your specific research interest, write to the editor, outlining the general ideas you have in mind and listing a half dozen or so topics and possible authors. If you would rather discuss the idea first, call the editor at: 312.595.4921.

Business Correspondence

Subscriptions, advertising and related matters should be addressed to:

Visible Language

Rhode Island School of Design

Graphic Design Department

2 College Street

Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Telephone 401.454.6171