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The purpose of this study was to investigate the revival trends in furniture design during the period 1959-1969, and to understand the relationship of these adaptations to contemporary cultural objectives. An understanding of the design characteristics from the originals to the modern derivatives is useful for those who wish to select good design within their income range. There is virtually no information readily available to the consumer relative to the appropriate selection of adapted furniture designs for contemporary interiors.

The problem is dealt with in five specific aspects: (1) to ascertain the influences that caused the adaptations of historical styles; (2) to analyze the dominant furniture designs and to determine whether they have been modified relative to authentic pieces, and if so, in what way; (3) to recognize the contemporary style; (4) to gain a perspective of the use of adaptations in contemporary interiors; and

(5) to help establish a criterion on behalf of the consumer for better furniture selection.

The information was obtained through the observation of general trends, not through a statistical method. A number of sources including newspaper and magazine articles, books, personal correspondence and furniture catalogs from individual manufacturing companies were studied. As a basis for analysis, a written description and photographic evidence were used documenting the characteristics of the adaptations to their originals and to a contemporary composition.

One of the influences on the revival was the refurbishing of the White House during the early 1960's. Another is the need of manufacturers to produce two furniture collections each year for affluence in America has also given manufacturers and designers an enormous consumer market. The desire for traditional styles may also be reflected in the need to escape from the pressures of twentieth century living by seeking that security which many believe was associated with the time of their grandparents. In addition, due to a lack of understanding of contemporary design, the popularity of traditional adaptations may show a psychological reaction against contemporary furniture.

An analysis of the data revealed that the market offers furniture adaptations with influences dating back to Greek styling. Other general trends revert to the Renaissance period in Europe as well as the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and

America. In these adaptations the furniture designs tend to reflect characteristics, not the originals, of previous periods.

The section in this thesis which deals with the use of the adaptations in contemporary interiors showed that some adaptations can accent contemporary interiors by introducing a totally unorthodox element and thus achieve variety. Stylized patterns and bright colors for upholstery fabrics add to that variety. If furniture is scaled down in size, or the details or motifs on the furniture are understated, the adaptations become more compatible with the simplicity of contemporary interiors.

When viewed objectively, however, these adaptations have liabilities. The inference is that the designers who adapt furniture from previous periods do not appear to be fulfilling twentieth century needs of function and the objectives of honesty in design and materials. If these adaptations have to go into a contemporary format and a person believes that the furniture for an era should reflect that age, then the adaptations are not fulfilling contemporary cultural objectives. Historically each style of furniture was developed for a particular architectural structure and for the current needs of the people. In the same way, contemporary needs have altered the shape and purpose of rooms, and the furniture has to follow suit. However, the home furnishings market does not appear to reflect contemporary needs and designs. It is, instead, over-designed with traditional styles which are ill-adapted for twentieth century living.

Adaptations of Traditional Furniture in the Contemporary Home: 1959-1969

by

Nancy Panak Kwallek

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The fascination of furniture is never ending. Furniture design changes have been a subject for academic research year after year. Throughout history, man has devised many unique designs and motifs to decorate his home. These motifs have changed as man has changed his cultural outlook, for the culture of each individual country--its customs, mode of living, economy and wealth, and religious beliefs--has considerably influenced and contributed to the design and development of furniture. Each nation has its own approach to the decorative arts but to some degree they are influenced by what is being done elsewhere.

In the twentieth century, and more specifically in the last decade, the influences upon furniture design of our time can be readily seen. After several years in which contemporary designs dominated the furniture market, stylists are now considering historical designs for inspiration. Thus in the last decade, the consumer has been given a variety of furniture styles from which to choose. These styles consist mainly of traditional design ideas and motifs which have been updated and applied to present-day furniture. This has led to a situation in which traditional furniture adaptations

have become predominant in home furnishings, although the contemporary style is still popular. Thus traditional adaptations, contemporary designs or mixtures of the two are operative in the furniture of the contemporary home.

In furnishing a home of contemporary architecture, a problem of how these various furniture adaptations can be successfully used arises. Many individuals, including designers and architects, believe that the majority of these adaptations lack originality and make no contribution to sound design improvement. It has been suggested that these adaptations are out of harmony with the architecture, new materials, and new concepts of our present time and age.

Ideas gained in a home furnishings course at Oregon State University deeply interested the author and were part of the impetus for choosing to examine the designs and utilization of furniture now on the market. This investigation was seen as an opportunity to delve more deeply into the factors influencing furniture design changes, the use of the traditional adaptations, and also to strengthen an understanding of contemporary design.

Statement of the Problem

This study attempts to take a substantive look at the present revival trends in furniture design during the last decade. A design problem has evolved encompassing manufacturers, designers,

retailers, and consumers: designers design furniture which manufacturers sell to retailers; retailers offer these decorative arts which the consumer, in turn, purchases. The problem is--are the furniture designs which are offered and sold to the consumer satisfactory for today's needs? The author feels that too often the consumer is deluded into buying furniture simply on terms of newness and not by design or function. Since the consumer has the ultimate power to accept or reject the product, his knowledge of decorative arts and their function should be of utmost importance.

The proposed study, centering on the designs of traditional furniture adaptations presently dominating the market, deals with five specific aspects:

1. To ascertain and analyze the influences that brought about the resurgence of traditional furniture adaptations.
2. To examine and analyze the dominant furniture designs and determine how these designs have been adapted, changed or modified relative to authentic traditional pieces.
3. To recognize the style of contemporary times.
4. To gain a better perspective of ways in which the adaptations may be successfully combined or utilized for a twentieth century interior.
5. To help establish a criterion for better furniture choice on behalf of the consumer.

To fulfill these purposes, the findings will be presented by compiling information and illustrations and comparing through analysis the characteristics of the adaptations to their appropriate originals. Illustrations of authentic traditional designs will be handled when the adaptations are studied. A comparison will be made between the utilization of traditional furniture with traditional architecture and contemporary furniture with contemporary architecture. Through an analysis of the various furniture styles available, it is hoped that a contribution will be made to a greater understanding of adaptations and the utilization of them in contemporary homes.

Importance of the Study

A study such as this is very relevant at this time when our country possesses a wide variety of choices in home furnishings. Customers appear to be very fashion conscious when it comes to furniture purchases, for a great variety of styles are offered by the manufacturers. With various adaptations sharing the bulk of mass production at every price level, the American furniture market resembles a vast market-place where the buyer's freedom of choice is astounding and unparalleled in any other country or century (5). Herein lies the danger and the challenge.

Many of the recent furniture designs on the market illustrate a rising popularity for more embellishment and ornamentation. Not

all of the furniture is of high quality design, but perhaps the most general fault is an over-use of ornamentation and utilization of motifs from a number of different design periods. It is the author's opinion that better value in home furnishings may be obtained by selecting styles that have a minimum of ornamentation.

After study, it became apparent to the author how little some designers demonstrate the contemporary philosophy of good design. Many designers, stylists and manufacturers appear to be content to emulate the furniture motifs of the past without attempting to place them with their period: the furniture style, its appropriate interior setting, and its architecture. In other words, they do not believe in the substance of a past mode of living even though they eagerly adopt its traditional motifs. Many stylists and/or manufacturers fail to realize the significance involved in the development of a design criterion for our present day mode of living. They incorporate design characteristics representative of our own culture into traditional motifs but are unable to do this in a meaningful way to fully satisfy contemporary ideals. Our needs today are not the same as those of historical times.

The author certainly is not against any new designs nor does she want to be depicted as having a closed mind to any creative effort. But designers and manufacturers want consumers to be dazzled by something which is only superficially different, which is so obviously

a style of the moment, that it will be dated within a year. The present and future appropriateness of furniture purchases should be assured and one should feel confidence in their enduring qualities when choosing them. If furniture designs are not basically good, then they may be just fads and poorly designed, short-lived styles. The decorative arts however are far too expensive to be victims of fads, and to approach one of the biggest investments in a family's life time on these terms seems very unwise. Sherman Emery, editor of Interior Design, assesses the situation:

> Is the approach to furniture to be the same as that of the dress designer? The fact that a woman may wear a dress only once and then send it to the thrift shop is not considered such an extravagance in our affluent society today. But are we to do the same thing with a $1,000 sofa or a $500 chair? If we go along with some of the fashion fads that are being tossed at us, there will be no other choice. What is a "happening" today may be as passé tomorrow as the Bunny Hop is to today's teenagers (22, p. 91).

The author found herself in the situation of uncertainty in the appropriate selection of furniture and thus personally felt the need for this study, for the selection of appropriate design is an expression of a sense of good taste. Some present-day designers, however, who function more as stylists, attempt to satisfy the customer who has been subjected to badly designed decorative arts for so many years that he may not have a sense of good design. If opportunity is not provided for art in our everyday life through home

furnishings, then there is small chance of it being provided at all. An appreciation for beauty and good design must become an integral part of one's life, so that an awareness of good design becomes a part of the individual--the way he feels, thinks and sees his world.

This awareness has been the impetus for choosing to examine the state of design now available,for the home furnishings market is over-designed in terms of too many styles and too frequent change but under-designed in terms of good original design. In this sense decorative arts are under-designed, over-copied, and certainly too temporary. Even the rare original designs are victims of many variations.

The furniture in question is mass-produced and is not limited to the cheap, low-quality "borax" furniture of the lower grade retail stores. The author is referring to moderately-priced and expensive furniture.

The presence of an abundance of eclectic traditional styles on the market for contemporary homes thus calls for research and investigation of their design qualities and how they should be used. Although experts in the fields of interior design, architecture and industrial design frequently hint at and refer to the traditional design revival, as far as the author can find, no such study has been previously undertaken. To my knowledge there has been very little documentation concerning the characteristic designs of present-day

furniture styles. Apparently the experts recognize the revival, but no written material specifically approaching the topic in the manner of this thesis appears to be in existence, possibly because it is a very recent trend. Therefore, the author will attempt to evaluate and describe the present-day revival of traditional furniture adaptations for contemporary interiors.

Procedure and Technique

This comparative study employed historical research and recently recorded surveys of furniture styles. Available style illustrations, upholstery fabrics and literature were analyzed. The procedure involved an analysis of pertinent data, and attempts were made to compare the facts to the purposes.

The method of procedure consisted of four phases. First, an analysis of the probable factors influencing the revival of traditional furniture adaptations was given. Hopefully, this will help the reader comprehend the influences affecting present-day furniture design. Next examples of authentic traditional furniture styles were compared with their present-day adaptations. Through an analysis of the visual aspects and careful study of authentic designs and their correlation with the current adaptations, the study will hopefully show the accurate or inaccurate relationship between them. Analysis was made of the ways in which traditional styles have been adapted

for contemporary times by changes in motifs, scale, proportion, line, upholstery fabrics and wood finishes.

The development and relationship of contemporary furniture and architecture were explored. A comparison was also made between traditional furniture or its adaptations and contemporary furniture designs in relation to contemporary architecture.

Results of this investigation should allow conclusions to be drawn regarding the resurgence of traditional furniture adaptations in a contemporary home. Suggestions for the use of adaptations in contemporary interiors will be provided.

Resources of the Study

Primary information was obtained by personal investigation of literature on the subject. Data were gathered by surveying books, periodicals, and newspapers related to the topic. The William Jasper Kerr Library on the campus of Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, and the art and architecture library on the campus of the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, provided major sources of information for this study. Both libraries held more books relevant to the subject of historical furniture styles and periods than could be exhausted in the time allowed for this study. From her personal library books were lent by Miss Joan Patterson, Professor of Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts at Oregon State University.

Several books containing plates of authentic historical furniture were thoroughly studied. Plates of authentic traditional furniture pieces were compared with recently designed traditional furniture adaptations now found on the American market. The currently designed decorative arts that were studied and photographed were case goods and frame pieces with their respective upholstery fabrics and wood finishes. Photographs were taken of furniture displayed at Director's furniture store in Portland and Rubenstein's furniture store in Eugene. Watson's Drapery Den, Superior Upholstery, both of Eugene, and Meier and Frank Company in Portland provided specimens of upholstery fabrics.

Further sources, some with illustrations, were made available through personal correspondence with selected furniture companies, manufacturers and furniture designers. Several reprints of speeches written by prominent designers, stylists and directors of furniture companies also provided significant information. The designers and source people offered their opinions on the revival of traditional home furnishings adaptations and its impact on the basically contemporary home and interior. Most of the designers and directors who corresponded have designed or manufactured contemporary furniture as well as the traditional adaptations. These contributions were valuable to the study and illustrate and augment the ideas presented.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The broad scope of this study has made it necessary to set the following limitations in order to reduce it to a manageable size, and to determine the exact approach to the problem:

1. Only those specific authentic traditional styles or periods are selected which exert pronounced influences on the mass-produced furniture adaptations presently dominating the American market. Interpretations of these major historical influences are shown as they are reflected in the current market. An examination of representative style trends will provide an understanding of the general characteristics, similarities or dissimilarities between authentic traditional and current adaptations.
2. The author's purpose is not to examine innumerable historical analogies and specific motifs of eminent furniture adaptations on the market. The intention is to select some of the more pronounced characteristics which surround the factors of traditional furniture adaptations. The general characteristics which are currently adapted will be pointed out.
3. By exemplifying only one characteristic case piece and one frame piece for each authentic traditional period style and

their current adaptations, an opportunity will be provided to interpret and become acquainted with many of the characteristics of various types of work. In some instances it is sufficient to select only one authentic piece for comparison with the current adaptation.

4. Because the overlapping of furniture style trends makes the assignment of exact dates very difficult, the author arbitrarily accepts the time when the revival began in furniture design as approximately ten years ago. Periods as far back as Greek civilization will be documented in conjunction with the current traditional adaptations produced on the mass market after approximately 1959. Since the revival trend is continuing, the adaptations will be analyzed up to the time the study is completed. An additional limitation results when attempts are made to assess current trends because there is naturally the difficulty raised by living in the midst of them. The author is aware that personal bias enters into any selective process. In stating the basis for a choice, a bias and a point of view are declared as well as an attitude toward an idea. History has proven the choices of many critics to be unsound, but this does not prevent decisions from being made.

Although studies of traditional furniture designs are numerous,

research pertaining to the current traditional adaptations is relatively scarce, because of the very recent nature of this revival and is limited to market trend accounts and trade publications. Unfortunately many of these publications are oriented more to business and advertisement than toward unbiased editorial content. There has been much conjecture,however, about the factors influencing this revival and its approximate date of origin. The research showed that valid comparisons of present-day motifs to historical designs are nil. On the other hand, sufficient examples and specimens do exist on the market thus aiding in the formulation of a relationship between the two styles.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE REVIVAL

Of primary importance to this study is a question that is very often asked--what are the factors responsible for present-day revival trends in furniture design? Instead of continuing with contemporary design ideals many furniture designers and stylists are adapting traditional period designs. Why do some American designers and manufacturers have such a preoccupation with the past when many great strides have been made in contemporary design?

There is much conjecture and no complete agreement on this topic. It becomes apparent that the interest in a traditionally based furniture style has been attributed to many factors--from the impermanence of life created by the possibility of annihilation by the hydrogen bomb to the desires of the present mobile society for more stable times.

Refurbishing the White House

A primary factor that appears to have given the revival trend an impetus was the refurbishing of the White House in the early 1960's by Jacqueline Kennedy. The White House itself was first occupied in 1800. Unfortunately, many of the first families that lived in the White House treated it in much the same way as temporary residents

of any ordinary house: redecorating to their own tastes, with little reverence for what the previous tenants had left behind. In fact, almost nothing remained which dated from earlier than 1902. Up to the time of the Kennedy occupancy, White House furniture was considered more or less the personal property of the Presidents who, as likely as not, would move out at the end of their term with whatever they desired. One of Mrs. Kennedy's first accomplishments was to see that this practice was changed. Mrs. Kennedy has said of the situation:

> All these people come to see the White House . . . and once inside it they see practically nothing that dates back before 1948. Every boy that comes here should see things that develop his sense of history. For the girls, the house should look beautiful and lived-in. They should see what a fire in the fireplace and pretty flowers can do for a house; the White House rooms should give them a sense of all that (106, p. 56).

Mrs. Kennedy was never really interested in politics but had other interests such as antique-collecting. Possibly the turning point of her acceptance in America was the trip she took with President Kennedy to Europe in 1961, where she was greatly admired. From then on, she began to have a tremendous influence on the American population, particularly the women (70; 53, p. 288).

Early in 1961, shortly after her husband's inauguration to the Presidency, Jacqueline Kennedy instigated a program to acquire choice pieces of antique furniture, paintings and objets d'art for the

public rooms of the White House. The project which she assigned herself as her major task as First Lady was to assemble a permanent White House collection of art and antiques of high quality and relevance, a collection that would be preserved and added to under future administrations.

The First Lady started her project by working with a committee of experts to bring to the White House a greater feeling of authentic American history and artistry. The acquisition of historic pieces for the White House was entrusted to a fine arts committee composed of 14 prominent curators, directors and connoisseurs selected from principal American museums (34). She persuaded the late Henry Francis du Pont, known as one of the country's foremost authorities on American antiques, to accept its chairmanship. (He is famed among collectors as the founder of Winterthur, the great museum of American antiques at Winterthur, Delaware.)

The response of the public to the changes in the White House was immediate and enthusiastic. When it became widely known that Mrs. Kennedy was looking for antiques, the White House was deluged with offers of donations. People from all parts of the country "sent everything from paintings to chamber pots, from wallpaper to silverware" (47, p. 43). Most of them were declined. However, now and then real treasures were offered.

A special hour-long television tour on the refurbishing of the

White House was prepared and viewed by the public in February 1962. Mrs. Kennedy conducted the tour, and the viewing audience was exposed to rare American history. The Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc. estimated a total of "56 million different people witnessed the three broadcasts in February--more than all the visitors to the White House throughout its 162 year history" (51, n.p.). It was also rebroadcast on March 25, 1962. A writer in Home Furnishings Daily stated the possible impact of the television special on the restoration of the White House:

> The White House tour . . . may prove to have a punch. . . . While Mrs. Kennedy certainly wasn't trying to sell home furnishings, the nations purveyors of . . . period furniture may benefit greatly from her charm and intelligence. . . . It could hardly but leave the countless millions who watched her with less than new awareness of . . . reproduction furniture and possibly pique them to possess it (52, p. 1).

The influence created throughout the nation was reflected in the editorial comments of hundreds of newspapers (40). Many publications by referring to Mrs. Kennedy's enthusiasm for antiques and her refurbishing of the White House seem to have given a boost to the revival of traditional furniture adaptations and the collection of antiques by the American population.

Following the television presentation, increasing numbers of tourists visited the White House. An estimated 80,000 more persons visited the executive mansion from February through April 1961,

than for the same period a year earlier--a gain of 27.5 percent (50). In 1963, the number of visitors doubled that of 1960 (47).

Mrs. Kennedy then decided that a publication should be prepared to explain the contents of the White House. In 1963 more than one million copies (47) of The White House: An Historical Guide were printed by the White House Historical Association with the cooperation of the National Geographic Society. By 1966 the guide book was in its seventh edition. By making the interior of the White House richer, more tasteful, and more authentic, she gave the American citizens a new pride in America's artistic heritage.

Public taste in decorative arts was also influenced by the young President. A rocking chair was prescribed for the President by his physician, Dr. Janet Travell, as excellent therapy for his back problem. The rocking chair made news when President Kennedy was pictured sitting in it during a White House Conference in March 1961 (54). This resulted in a great demand for rockers of all styles, which gave a great impetus to the rocking chair industry (15, 50, 98). The small North Carolina factory that had sold President Kennedy his rocking chair was so overwhelmed with orders that its owners could not predict when they could fill them all. The rocker has had a long and illustrious history, "but it took young John F. Kennedy and the people's interest in everything he did, to make the old rocker a symbol of dynamism and progress" (92, p. 20).

But it is the First Lady who influenced Americans most. In December 1963 when she was preparing to leave the White House, her influence was briefly stated by the editors of Home Furnishings Daily:

> As First Lady she made America aware of the important role the White House has played in the history of the decorative arts. Either by television or personal tour, millions have been--and will continue to be influenced by the period decorations so thoughtfully and correctly presented in the White House (32, p. 2).

American Heritage

The current revival phase also coincides with a renewal of popular interest in the American heritage, possibly stimulated by the centennial (1965) of the Civil War. With restoration and reproduction programs, the American past has been among the dominant themes in recent furniture collections (114). A committee from a museum selects the pieces it would like to see reproduced. From these pieces, the manufacturer selects the furniture he thinks could be successfully reproduced and would be accepted by the buying public. The reproductions of furniture by some manufacturers, however, are not true reproductions but adaptations.

Among the restoration organizations featuring reproduction programs are the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan (74). For the first time, permission has been

given to reproduce antiques found in the museum and in the historical buildings that comprise the village. The reproductions range in style from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. In addition to furniture, copies and adaptations have been made of wallpapers, fabrics and accessories. These reproductions like the true reproductions of eighteenth century furnishings from Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, are made under the control of museum officials. Other organizations active in selecting furniture for reproduction include Sleepy Hollow Restoration in the Hudson River Valley in New York State; Cooperstown, New York; Historic Newport, Rhode Island; Old Sturbridge, Sturbridge, Massachusetts; and the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware (8).

Two Collections Each Year

A further reason for the resurgence of traditional furniture is the need of manufacturers to produce two collections each year. In general, there is a steady rate of decline after the first full year exposure of a line, so that the manufacturers can predict with some degree of accuracy how much business they will be doing with each group in its second year, and plan accordingly. Hence, "they search for the style that they believe will have news value and will satisfy their customers" (105, n.p.). Changes in furniture design come from the competitive nature of the furniture business which has

created a seasonal "quick-change act" in the marketing requirements of many manufacturers.

According to Sherman Emery, a furniture market held a few years ago included those manufacturers who introduced new furniture for no apparent reason other than to say they had something new (23). But it was only relevant to their production facilities--not from any other point of view. Their designers did not make a study of what was needed on the market; they only made a survey of what sold best the previous year. They did not originate new designs but copied, adapted and "improved" on the French, Spanish, Mediterranean and several other design styles widely seen at previous markets (23).

Manufacturers try to adjust to the demand for novelty, for the economic gains go to those who introduce styles that start major trends. Hugh De Pree, president of Herman Miller Furniture Company, commented on the June 1966 furniture market: "The style message for 1966 was 'think English' because that is what American manufacturers are doing" (16, p. 85). The 1966 English trend may have come, to a great degree, from the fact that the Spanish, Italian and French themes were greatly exploited in the three previous years. Manufacturers have adopted the lucrative path of stylizing furniture by adapting Spanish one year, English the next. The dealers, to a certain extent, depend on the artificial stimulation of these cyclical changes to capture the attention of their market. David

Brumm, president of Drexel Furniture Company confirms the emphasis on design changes: "This industry has always believed that there are only two ways to stimulate business. Bring out something new or cut prices" (81, p. 145). Consistent design changes seem to be quite necessary for many dealers, chiefly because they have not discovered other ways of creating the necessary merchandising excitement.

The need for the continuous flow of adapted "new" styles and groups in furniture for business and the consumer might be questioned. The point is certainly debatable. The author feels that for good design, frequent changes may be detrimental to acquiring a sensitivity for good design or any lasting enjoyment by the indiscriminating consumer. The first concern of designers should be on creating a climate in which emphasis would be placed on good, improved design rather than on change for its own sake.

This forced competition raging in the furniture industry is ultimately a disservice to the customer. Rarely do furniture companies take the time to develop new designs. Nor do they take the time to undertake long-term market research. Manufacturers hereby produce a variety of styles and variations each year and appear to wait to see if buyers for the nation's 60,000 furniture outlets will buy them. When there is a constant pressure on designers and manufacturers to come up with something new, there is not time enough to

thoroughly develop and test ideas resulting in an enduring good design. What can designers possibly produce in terms of quality if they have to have a new line every six months? What would designers and architects like Mies van der Rohe, Charles Eames or Eero Saarinen have produced under these conditions? In a report on a home furnishings show held in 1967 in San Francisco, several merchants expressed complete confusion about the new styling. One furniture store owner commented:

> This is one of the saddest markets I've seen, ... It seems everyone is scrounging around desperately looking for something new and they aren't coming up with much that's understandable. I absolutely don't know what's going on and I truly don't know what I'm going to buy at this market. Mediterranean is out, . . . but I can't tell which way the market is going (82, p. 13).

Thomas O'Hanlon comments on this situation: "Stop 50 buyers at any furniture market and ask, 'Mister, what are you looking for?' . . . . Most of them don't know. They simply are not consumer-oriented" (81, p. 145).

The dealer very often will depend on newness for the basis of his advertising campaign and his displays. This may reflect a deficiency in his own ability to interest his consumer in what he already has to offer, so he might point to the consumer as the one who is demanding the change. But the furniture companies, due to an affluent society, population expansion and selling methods, have prospered handsomely since World War II. And, furniture companies'

executives have made no attempt to alter their approach (81).

Affluence

In addition to accusing the furniture industry for so many stylistic changes in furniture, available sources also, rightfully, attribute the desire for change to the consumer. Affluence in America has given manufacturers and designers clients who have unprecedented economic power: an enormous consumer market. Industry has attempted to meet individuals' demands by creating a wide range of choices in various products for they appear to be willing to experiment.

The presence of affluence may have also caused the unfortunate impression that buying traditional furniture is synonymous with luxury and good taste. Interior designer Emily Malino comments that there is no cultural elite today in America which sets standards of taste and uses the best work of its own day. A century ago, for example, children of the cultural elite were sent to England and were schooled in the business of art, form, proportion and appropriateness. She says the abundance of decorative styles on the market can be attributed to the affluence of a middle-class society:

> Why do people today put up with . . . a rehash of French Provincial in their living rooms, put hi-fi sets in their fake eighteenth century armoires? We get back to the middle class. Nobody has ever taught them to discriminate between

> the shoddy copy and the real thing.... We are in a cultural lag between affluence and good taste (20, p. 134, 135).

Affluence, more leisure time and greater mobility allow Americans to travel more thereby broadening their horizons. With the narrowing of distance in the jet age, when many places are only a few hours away, all countries seem closer together. Americans are seeing the fine decorative arts about which they have read or heard and many seek these which bring them closer to the past. Many people strive to create from these new associations a more sophisticated taste in the environment of their homes. They seek to link the past with the present by combining the old with the new and for inspiration they turn to the world's great classics, the antiques, and adapt them to modern means.

What is going on in the antique market can be an important factor in commercial style trends, as many trends in furniture design start with the antique collectors and leading decorators and filter down through the more commercial levels (105, p. 12). For example, a manufacturer might know there has been greater and greater interest in Spanish antiques for the last few years. This fact might indicate that the "sophisticated" people liked this style of furniture.

Similarly those of lesser means find a tremendous interest in merchandise having an "antiqued look." Hence, adaptations of

Spanish, variations of Early American, English, French and Italian furniture are antiqued by furniture producers who are trying to bridge the gap between antique elegance and modern living.

Lack of Good Designers

Another factor which could be involved in the revival of past furniture designs is the conflict of "good" versus "bad" design. A feasible reason for so many stylistic changes in products today could be attributed to designers who have not thoroughly qualified themselves in available technology which relates to contemporary needs. Hugh De Pree offers this point of view (16). Designers and manufacturers generally endorse change and innovation but it may have degenerated into idle talk. Thus designers, manufacturers and consumers take advantage of the fashionable trend of using furniture adaptations of historical times without regard for a design which should convey genuine expression of contemporary living. Designer Charles Eames says the key to the problem is setting an objective which includes the solving of people's needs:

> A good design must have an objective. Originality for its own sake can only be disastrous. If you can pursue an objective, say, a chair, to its logical conclusion, then you get something good. It isn't easy because between recognizing an objective, which is in itself quite an accomplishment, and its logical conclusion are difficulties and many, many mistakes (16, p. 85).

Designers and manufacturers seem to depend on the truly

"great designers" who have made notable contributions to our time. As stated earlier, rarely do furniture industries take the time to develop new designs nor do they readily risk new innovations. As Emily Malino points out:

> In industry manufacturers of primary goods know enough to hire professionals. The manufacturers of secondary goods--the purveyors of furniture--do not. So they bastardize (20, p. 135).

This may be one reason for some of the mediocre "new" furniture designs on the market. Truly good design depends on the ability and integrity of the designer to produce something outstanding. For a designer to deny inspiration from past design achievements is of course unrealistic. An individual trained in furniture design has a working knowledge of historical periods of design through exposure to school, library and museum. Nevertheless, the truly capable designer can be inspired by any period or by any challenging material to create an individual design that is his personal statement. On the other hand, the weaker designer relies on specific motifs. As interior designer Ruth Clark states: "The crux of the matter, . . . , is the manner and intent of his [the designer's] use of the available material" (13, p. 10). The poor designer's lack of understanding the "whys" of the historical furniture make it impossible for him to contribute any fresh, meaningful contribution that would make an original product.

Twentieth Century Pressures

The changing social scene of the twentieth century has been claimed by various sources as another factor contributing to the revival trend (117, 119). Life in most urban-suburban areas in the United States is lived at a fast, pressured pace. Designer Milo Baughman states that it is precisely this pace that may drive many people to get out of living in this century (5, p. 1). Possibly due to the pressures of America's world of jet travel and computers, super-technological society, super-urbanization and super-highways, there seems to be a need to escape from twentieth century living. In terms of design, the desire for traditional styles may be a reflection of the need to escape from the contemporary scene. By reverting to the influences of the past, by becoming traditionalists in their tastes, many people may be seeking the sense of security which they think belonged to the world of their grandparents.

Charles Shaughnessy, president of a large furniture company, attributes this sense of nostalgia to psychological and emotional aspects. He relates an experience:

> Some years ago I had an occasion to be in contact with one of the country's outstanding industrial designers--a modernist in his approach to the products he was working on. My contact with him developed because he was furnishing a little cottage that he had just bought out in the country. He was furnishing it in Early American furniture. I asked him how come when he is a great modernist in his own work. His reply was that when he went out for the weekends he

> wanted a completely different kind of atmosphere--one more closely related to his background and to his antecedents (105, p. 7).

Some individuals may feel more comfortable and content in historically related surroundings. They have a sentimental attachment to the past because they think such surroundings produce an atmosphere of luxury and comfort and a slower, more graceful age even though for those living at that time life may not have been graceful and luxurious.

Reaction Against Contemporary

Many people believe the reason for the revival in traditional furniture adaptations has been a reaction against too many years of "cold, hard" contemporary. Many decry contemporary furniture for its uncompromising "austere, clinical" simplicity and are in favor of "warm, safe" traditional. Some homemakers see contemporary furniture in offices and medical buildings and think it is suitable for clinics but not for homes. Apparently many misunderstand the philosophy of contemporary design (to be explained in Chapter V). In decrying the "cold, hard, clinical" simplicity, many people do not understand the subtle beauty and softened transitional lines characteristic of contemporary forms. Some furniture producers also say the public feels that contemporary furniture is only utilitarian and without real decorative beauty. Herein lies the misunderstanding, and many

designers disagree with this concept. Those proponents for contemporary design claim that true beauty is in simplicity and proper use of line, shape and form. Function is not the only purpose of contemporary design, but honesty in design and an honest use of materials is also a primary objective (43, p. 10). Designer John Van Koert adds: "the one element coming out of the traditional revival is that we're getting too much of everything, like over-scaled furniture for small rooms." He labeled as "fundamentally unmodern" today's "visual-clutter" (43, p. 10).

Due to these misunderstandings and the lack of appreciation of the contemporary philosophy of design, traditional adaptations may be the public's psychological reaction against the straighter angles and lines of contemporary furniture. To fulfill this aim consumers seek accessories and furniture of the traditional formal periods such as French or Early American.

In an era where the design field can look forward continuously and tolerantly to the next popular revival trend, the abandonment of an ethical approach to the aesthetics of good design is exemplified. On this point the editor of Interiors, Olga Gueft, has said that we used to ask "whether design was good or bad, honest or dishonest, rather than whether it was beautiful or ugly" [meaning at the present time] (36, p. 69). Designer Charles Eames was vigorously critical of the justification for more ornamentation by the selection of traditional

adaptations when he said: "After a decade of neat beautiful rectilinear drawings [meaning contemporary design] and somebody shows you squiggles, [meaning more ornamentation] you fall upon squiggles as the answer to the world" (20, p. 130).

CHAPTER III

CURRENT TRADITIONAL FURNITURE ADAPTATIONS RELATIVE TO AUTHENTIC TRADITIONAL PIECES

Even while these influences were bringing about adapted traditional motifs, a few manufacturers are actually concerned in documenting only authentic furniture. The Kittinger Company, Inc. of Buffalo, the only authorized maker of Williamsburg furniture reproductions, or the Arts De Mexico Internacionales, Inc. of Dallas, makers of authentic reproductions of furniture and accessories from around the world, are firms respected in this field. However, most of the furniture items in the present market which are claimed as reproductions are not found to be so. George O'Brien, home furnishings editor of the New York Times Magazine, has stated that most furniture manufacturers produce "compatible" furniture styles (79), and fulfill two demands, that of incorporating traditional motifs and of reaching a public desirous of contemporary materials. If traditional furniture is desired, manufacturers and stylists feel the furniture pieces have to be adapted because furniture is used differently nowadays (118).

The Furniture Markets

The best previews of what styles American consumers will be selecting in the near future are at the Chicago and Grand Rapids home

furnishings shows and the mart at High Point, North Carolina, where furniture collections are shown in January and June each year. To the shows come approximately 40,000 buyers, and hundreds of manufacturers exhibit new styles, materials and marketing ideas at these displays in hopes of making many sales. The manufacturers display approximately 8,000 pieces of furniture and decorate about 700 sample display rooms (46).

After several decades in which contemporary international influences dominated the home furnishings market, by far the majority of furniture pieces shown at recent markets were based on traditional designs (84). The variety of furniture styles continues to grow, with no single period taking leadership. In January 1961 traditional furniture styles dominated the wholesale furniture showings held in Chicago, Grand Rapids and High Point. In June 1963 at Chicago and Grand Rapids, traditional furniture exhibits outnumbered contemporary for the first time in approximately 30 years--though contemporary still claimed 30% of the display (7). French Provincial, Italian, Spanish, seventeenth and eighteenth century English, Early American traditional, all mingled with the simpler contemporary to share the market.

In January 1967 an interview was conducted with several of the industry's stylists, designers and directors by the writers for Home Furnishings Daily. These individuals noted for their high percentage of accuracy predicted good contemporary and good traditional

side-by-side in a balanced eclecticism, touches of foreign motifs, mixing of periods and styles, related but unmatched collections, eighteenth century traditional, less embellishments, more refinements, increase in the use of chintz, polished cottons and taffetas (118). The majority of dealers interviewed claimed traditional types of furnishings--French Provincial, Early American and Spanish influences--were the most in demand, and that sales of contemporary were down (82).

Various furniture styles have claimed to dominate the market from time to time. For example, the following references and quotations gathered at various times between 1960 and 1967 show the variety of traditional styles claimed to have shown precedence: styles span "19th century periods, from stately Federal to ornate Victorian" (84, p. 51); "adaptations and free translations of period designs; ranging from rustic simplicity to formal elegance" shown against contemporary backgrounds and new materials, are abundantly available (91, p. 6); "furniture styles of the two preceding centuries as developed on both sides of the Atlantic are the strongest influence upon the present " (91, p. 6); furniture "pieces in keeping with the eighteenth and nineteenth century English tradition" are selling (78, p.67); "American [traditional] furniture styles are still the homemaker's first choice" (57, p. 100); "French and Italian" are being selected by dealers; "A miscellaneous poll showed Spanish Colonial

ranks first in popularity" (116, p. 14). "Mediterranean is much in vogue; country English is starting to catch on," but "French [is] to be the next big 'look' in home furnishings" (28, p. 9).

The preceding references indicate the various traditional styles dominating the furniture markets from time to time in approximately the last ten years. The quotations can also indicate some of the contradictions about which particular styles show precedence over others on the market. The author is not attempting to draw a neat theory about which particular adaptation is the trend setter, since the divisions of style are almost as numerous as the variety of people's tastes. However, it appears to be clear that traditional style adaptations are much in vogue, and dealers have been selecting these adaptations in furniture for major buying purchases. The basic styling reflects previous periods, yet none of the pieces are reproductions.

Greek Adaptations

Having discussed background, it is time to consider the adaptations themselves. The first furniture adaptations to be considered are those furniture styles related to classical Greece. In the fifth century B. C., the highly cultured civilization of ancient Greece created its immortal classical architecture. This greatest period of Greek design lasted approximately two hundred years, but Greek designs--the beauty of form and proportion, columns, pilasters,

pediments and moldings--have been the inspiration for practically every other furniture design period which followed.

The interiors and furnishings of the ancient Greek era have long vanished. Virtually no moveable pieces nor detailed pictures of furniture of Grecian times survive (39, p. 14). Fortunately, from about the sixth century B.C., sculptured reliefs and painted pottery reveal Greek furniture in mythological times and contemporary events. By exploiting these sources of information it is possible to develop some knowledge of domestic Greek furniture.

There were seven basic types of Greek furniture--throne-like chairs, couches, stools, footstools, tables, chests and klismos chairs (97, p. 32). Throughout the greatest period of Greek design these basic pieces were perfected. In the home the favorite type of chair was the klismos.

Grecian furniture was decorated with inlays of fine woods, gems and precious metals, and the feet of chairs and tables were occasionally of silver or ivory. Furniture pieces were finished with wax or painted. The seats of the frame pieces were simply strung with fiber or leather thongs. Wool or linen mattresses and pillow covers, woven and embroidered in multicolored designs, were the chief types of upholstery materials for the frame pieces. Deer or other animal skins were sometimes placed under cushions (97, p. 32). Numerous vase paintings (Plate 1, upper left) show the klismos to be predominant

Plate 1. The walnut chair (Klismos) with leather thongs on seat is a re-creation of a fifth century B. C. Greek chair shown at the upper left-hand corner.

in scenes of daily life. It is considered to be a Greek invention, possibly a development from the Egyptian chairs or Greek thrones with animal legs. Developed and perfected over a long period of time, the klismos chair "has no Eastern prototype and is truly Greek" (97, p. 30). A description of a klismos follows:

> It consists of a plaited seat standing on sweeping curved legs, with a back composed of three uprights fitted into a [deep elliptical] curved board at shoulder level. Light and comfortable, it was easily carried about, and by the 5th century when its curves achieve ideal proportions, it had become a more graceful and delightful piece of furniture (39, p. 15).

Due to the limited amount of furniture used in Grecian times, it is the motifs which are generally copied in later periods rather than the actual furniture pieces. However, occasionally the basic pieces of furniture are translated in our times. One such United States furniture designer, architect and author who has done so is T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. For at least ten years he successfully designed contemporary furniture for a number of top United States manufacturers. He had been a long-time admirer of the timelessness and durability of classic Greek forms (97, p. 14-15). Growing increasingly disenchanted (in his own words) with "greedy assembly lines and hungry home furnishing floors," (97, p. 16) he decided to fulfill a personal desire by producing furniture of Greek character.

Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings describes Greek perfection in design and the attributes of Greek furniture this way:

> In its highest development, the furniture suggests the lean sinewy modeling of an athlete, the grace of a wild animal in repose. Where constructional strength is increased at the intersection of vertical and horizontal members, the form assumes the frank beauty of a muscle in a shoulder or a thigh. Leather strapping instead of upholstery leaves the form bare. Never again would furniture forms reflect such total responsiveness to life (97, p. 34, 36).

Gathering ideas from museums and private art collections all over Europe and the United States, he borrowed, copied and faithfully translated ideas from drawings on ancient Greek pottery and sculptured reliefs. Based on his research of approximately twenty-five years ago, he designed a new line of Greek-inspired furniture. These new designs have clean, simple lines and gracefully sweeping curves (Plate 1), representing the characteristics of Greek antiquity. These characteristics probably make adaptations of Greek furniture more commensurate with contemporary design than many other stylistic trends. Styled in walnut, bronze and leather, the collection of nineteen pieces is now mass produced. The designs, re-created from the sixth to the fourth century B. C., became available in the United States in 1962. The designs are translated from early Greek antiquity, and do not consist only of borrowed classical themes; contemporary techniques of wood and fabric are used in construction.

Renaissance Adaptations

Other than the Greek designs previously referred to and general

reference to certain motifs and ornamentation of the ancient periods, most of the present-day references do not go back beyond the Renaissance era which started about the middle of the fifteenth century A.D. in Italy. After four hundred years of Gothic domination in Europe during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance generated a revival of interest in early Greek and Roman ideals and culture. As all the arts flourished tremendously during this period, it was natural that this cultural interest and creativity be extended to furniture.

The Renaissance began in Italy almost a century before it spread through Europe to Spain, France and England. At the beginning, the styles of these countries were quite similar, based as they were on the same Greco-Roman influences. By the seventeenth century, however, each country had begun to create its own interpretations, and many different styles resulted. Order and clarity were interpreted and adapted in individualized ways by different peoples to their own needs and environments. In general however, the character of Renaissance interiors and furnishings may be summarized as having moderate-to-large scale; strongly architectural designs combining strength and dignity; few colors which were of strong, rich, primary hues in medium to dark tones; symmetrical balance; major forms and shapes predominantly rectangular and horizontal, with controlled curves employed where needed for variety; and classical motifs such as columns, cornices, arches, acanthus leaves, and egg-and-dart

moldings. These decorative themes of Renaissance furniture from Italy, Spain and England have been revived today.

Italian

Italian Renaissance interiors were sparsely furnished, but the enormous rooms and high ceilings required furniture built to a massive scale. "Early Renaissance furniture designed to harmonize with architecture rather than to fit the people, became increasingly formal and classical" (24, p. 491). Walnut wood was used almost exclusively for the furniture which was frequently left without finish, or treated with wax.

Seating consisted of benches, simple stools and two types of chairs. One type was large, rectangular high-backed chair. But the most characteristic type was the folding armchair of the X or scissors type (Plate 2). The X-shaped frame in which arms and legs formed continuous curves was known in ancient Egypt and Rome and was revived again during the Renaissance. This fifteenth century Italian variation, often referred to as a savonarola chair, has interlacing curved slats with simply-carved back and base.

Low chests, enriched with classical carving or paint were the major case goods. The credenza was one of the very early pieces of Italian cabinetwork and one of the most typical and important pieces of wall furniture. In form and structure it was closely related to

Plate 2. Fifteenth century Italian Renaissance X-chair.

Plate 3. Early fifteenth century Italian Renaissance carved walnut credenza (sacristy cupboard) of architectural character. Tuscany, 1490-1500.

cupboards in which church vestments were kept. By the fifteenth century it reflected all the characteristics of early Renaissance design. The early credenzas had flat tops and the designs of their fronts were architectural (Plate 3). As illustrated, there was usually a continuous molded base or plinth. Above the molded base the front panelling contained two or more doors with pilaster work at the ends and also often between the doors.

In a modern adaptation of this furniture the spirit of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy has been reinterpreted although the general feeling of the original Renaissance style is retained[1] (Plate 4). The dresser and night table are architectural in form. The carved doors and cabinets that rest directly on the floor produce a scale similar to that of the Italian Renaissance credenza (Plate 3). The trestle cocktail table is similar to the larger board-and-trestle type of that era that could be folded up and put away (21, p. 65) but this cannot be done with the adaptation. The material is deep-toned oak veneer and solid wood.

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[1] Many of the illustrated rooms are of settings and not of actual interiors. Some of the pictures are not altogether practical, with furniture maneuvered to make the best picture or to establish a point regardless of possible distortions. Nevertheless, despite these shortcomings from the reader's viewpoint, some pictures have been selected because they incorporate a number of pieces from a particular collection to illustrate the motifs and lines of that collection as effectively as possible.

Plate 4. Bedroom furniture showing modern adaptation of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian Renaissance style.

Spanish

Interpretation of the Spanish style has been a popular decorating trend. As stated in Home Furnishings Daily, January 11, 1968, "Spanish fever has not abated . . . still the hottest style category in the market . . . manufacturers see no design replacement on the horizon" (43, p. 10).

Although both Italy and Spain are southern Mediterranean countries, Spain is a land of bold contrasts in geography, climate and temperament. These influences might explain some dissimilarities in Italian and Spanish Renaissance design. In 1492 the discovery of America by Columbus coincided with the Spaniards regaining control of their country from the Moors. The effects of these two events changed Spanish culture and the sixteenth century became the greatest age for Spain. Author Ray Faulkner explains the result this way:

> . . . , an unmistakably distinctive character evolved. Whereas, most Italian work was assured and coherent, Spanish work often seemed a tense combination of starkness relieved by densely concentrated embellishment (24, p. 498).

The general feeling of Spanish interiors was masculine, conservative, rich and dignified (21, p. 179). Rectangular rooms of plain or plaster walls, beamed ceilings and inlaid floors contrasted with the furnishings.

The proportions of the Spanish furniture were more squat, and the structures heavier than Italian pieces. Typical Spanish furniture

has a rough-hewn, heavily carved look. Furniture was of large massive, masculine proportion, rugged yet dignified and grand with heavy panelling, strappings of leather, elaborately carved surfaces, horseshoe arches, and handsome combinations of wood and iron.

During the Renaissance when European influences were introduced into Spain, classical motifs, derived from Italy, were freely adopted while retaining Moorish ornamentation. Decorative latticework, intricate geometric designs and small geometric patterns, showing Moorish influences, were used. The craftsmanship of each article and the richness of the materials made the interiors bold in contrasts (70, p. 34).

Chests and desks were distinctive Spanish achievements of the sixteenth century. The chests were usually made of walnut, heavily carved or detailed with spindles. A special type of desk known as a vargueño is probably the most distinctly Spanish piece of furniture (Plate 5). It was built in two parts. The lower base might be a carved stand or cupboard. The face of the upper part was hinged and opened downward to form a writing space. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the manufacture of vargueño cabinets continued and reached their highest point of excellence (21, p. 187). In the late Renaissance, the chests were not only carved but were often lacquered in red or black, or covered in velvet or leather and had exquisite wrought iron locks, hinges and medallions for decoration.

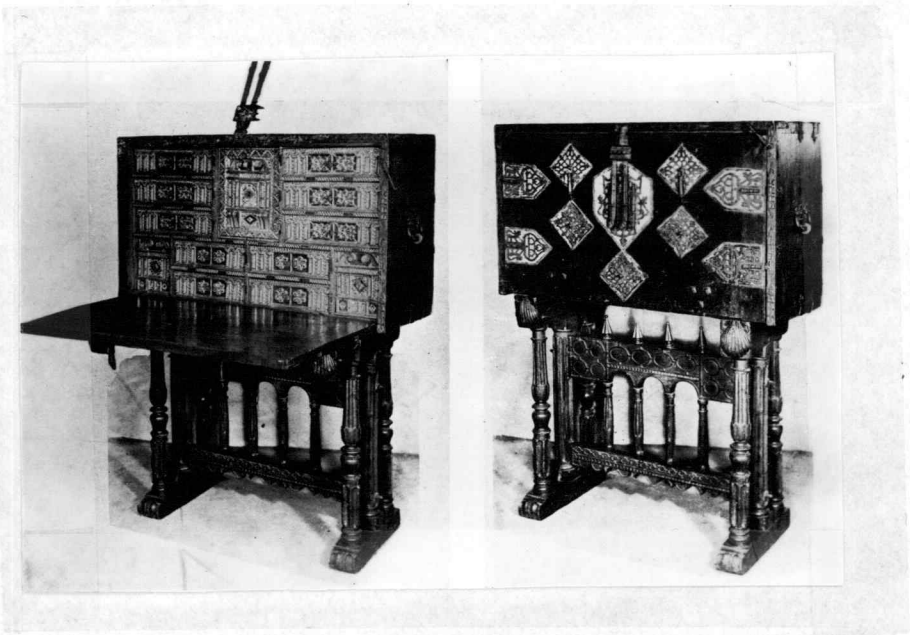


Plate 5. Sixteenth century Spanish Vargueño cabinet on carved walnut stand (left open; right closed).

Plate 6. Current adaptation of Spanish Vargueño. Plastic face on drop lid. Has adjustable drawer compartments, convertible as desk or bar. In natural wood or charcoal green finish.

A modern styling includes a faithful interpretation of the old Spanish vargueño, contributing to the Spanish look with its long latches and burnished brass hinges (Plate 6). The proportion and division of spaces of the authentic sixteenth century piece, however, are much more satisfying than those of the modern counterpart. For example, the authentic piece is more in keeping with the horizontal division of approximately 2:3 ratio, whereas the adaptation has more nearly a 50: 50 horizontal division.

There were two main types of Spanish Renaissance chairs. Spain adapted the early Italian Renaissance X-chair but provided a sturdier frame and used leather for the sling seat (Plate 7, D). The dantesca (7, D left) and savarolona (7, D right) walnut chairs generally had backs and seats consisting of pieces of leather, velvet or brocade (21, p. 71). The other main type of Spanish chair was the walnut armchair with rectangular seat and back of leather or velvet (Plate 7, A, B, C). Leather seats were stretched from the seat frame and fastened with hand-wrought large headed iron or brass nails. The backs were stretched and fastened in the same way with leather, often hand-tooled or embossed with intricate geometrical figures (72, p. 34). The broad front stretchers of the Spanish Renaissance chairs (Plate 7, A, B, C) were generally the object of considerable carved, molded or fretted decoration. Oftentimes there were no finials on the backposts; at other times the finials were either turned or carved.

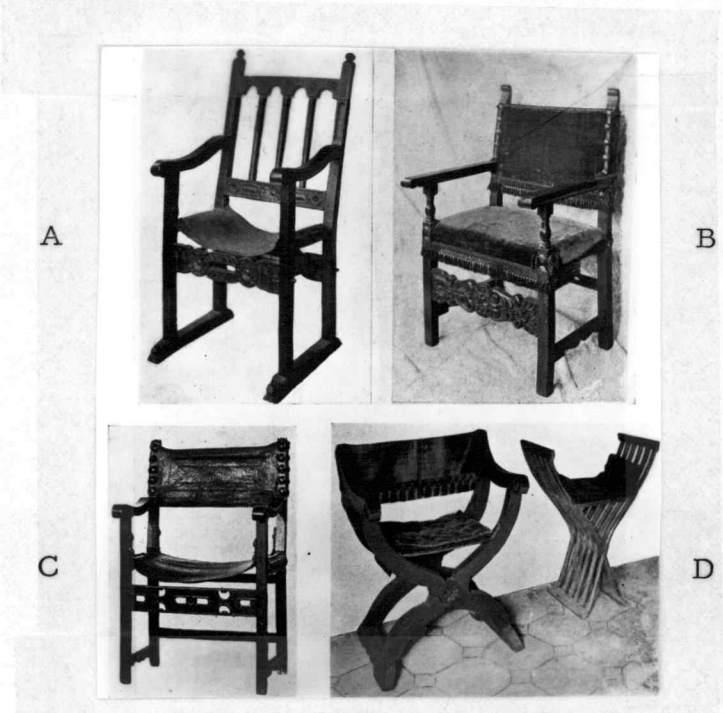


Plate 7. Chairs of the sixteenth century Spanish Renaissance.

A. Suspended leather seat, arcaded back and runner feet.
B. Broad decorated front stretcher, turned armposts, rectangular seat and back, upholstered.
C. Slung leather seat, broad front stretcher, carved and fretted, stretched and brass-studded leather back.
D. Scissors chairs--dantesca on left, savonarola on right.

Plate 8. Late Spanish Renaissance chairs, Portuguese type.

A. Armchair, stamped leather seat and back studded with brass-headed nails, shaped back, turned legs and armposts, scrolled and curved front stretchers.
B. Chair with "Spanish Scroll" feet, shaped back.

A later Spanish Renaissance chair was known as the Portuguese style (Plate 8, A, B), which had richly tooled leather back and seat. Both seat and back were fastened to the frame with large brass-headed nails. The back was often arched and the top had either two or three pointed brass finials (21, p. 212). The legs and stretchers were turned and there was an elaborately carved and arched front stretcher.

A modern adaptation of the Spanish Renaissance Portuguese-style chair (Plate 9) utilizes embossed vinyl to simulate tooled leather. The high-back rectangular chairs are similar to those in Plate 8 and can also be compared to the rectangular chairs in Plate 7, with carved finials on each sidepost. The legs on the adaptations are not like their counterparts, for the authentic Spanish chair legs are straight, carved or spiral turned. Nor do the adaptations have the characteristic carved stretchers.

Many of the embellishments and elaborate carvings of the furniture in Plate 9 are freely adapted from Spanish architecture and furniture. The boldly outlined and deeply carved effect of the doors of the buffet and serving cart was probably influenced by Spanish Moorish tile motifs (21, p. 180, 181). The intricately designed motifs on the door fronts also imply decorative latticework or heavy carving associated with Spanish furniture. With the heavily molded base treatment in the cabinets, a solid "built to the floor" effect is produced, characteristic of both Italian and Spanish Renaissance pieces

Plate 9. Current adaptation of Spanish style including serving cart with black plastic top, side and arm chairs in vinyl upholstery, rectangular table, and a composite of china cabinet and buffet.

Plate 10. Coffee table is a modern adaptation of the Spanish style.

(refer to Plate 3). In order to resemble the heavily carved Spanish style, antique painted finishes are used. With two different types of wood finishes (in the serving cart and buffet), emphasis is on the individual effect of each piece. At the same time, emphasis is on a blending of all illustrated pieces through an identical decorative motif. Although at times the wood of the Spanish Renaissance style was painted, the usual finish for Spanish Renaissance furniture was neither paint nor gilt, but of an olive oil or rubbed wax finish (21, p. 186). The antiqued brass-finished hardware represents a variation of old Spanish chain latches. The brass-finished grill work, in the glass doors of the china cabinet, is in a variation of the Spanish scroll motif. The curved pediment at the top of the china cabinet is possibly adapted from the Moorish horseshoe arch, formed from columns used in Moorish buildings. No original Spanish piece has been found to resemble this composite of china cabinet and buffet. The manufacturer, therefore, has adapted a furniture piece from more recent centuries than from the Spanish Renaissance.

The Spanish style was truly characterized by tables with wrought iron stretchers or braces. The trestle table was one of the best known of all Spanish pieces. Splayed lyre-shaped trestle legs were usually braced by curved, wrought iron braces which also supported the heavy table top (72, p. 49). Very often the wrought iron braces were important items of decoration. The tops of the large tables were

sometimes sixteen to eighteen feet long and sometimes made from one four-foot plank. The tops were cut off straight with plain square edges, neither molded nor carved (21, p. 206).

Today, adaptations of Spanish tables come in all sizes, from bedside to dining. The dining table (Plate 9) utilizes a combination of wood and scrolled wrought iron. The coffee table (Plate 10) utilizes the scrolled wrought iron motif which is used both as ornamentation and support.

Mediterranean

Apart from the specific designs of Italy and Spain, a modern term is being applied to other furniture adapations of the Renaissance period: Mediterranean. During recent years the term has erroneously been used to designate Spanish furnishings, but inspiration for the Mediterranean look comes from many different sources and places. Modern in its treatment, it offers designs and decorative motifs of France, Italy, Spain, with sometimes an English influence. As one of the most popular furniture themes on the market, manufacturers claim:

> Whether your decorating theme is formal or informal, sophisticated or country style, this . . . furniture has an elegant simplicity that goes along, but never goes out of style. You can switch from traditional to contemporary decor, you can mix it with French and Italian accent pieces. . . . It goes anywhere, with anything, in any style [of] home (121, n. p.).

The adaptations (Plates 11, 12) styled after furniture of the Mediterranean countries utilizes fluted bands, block door fronts, and panels framed with moldings to create patterns of light and shadow. This collection is described as "A blending of Mediterranean moods and styles attuned to today's renaissance of elegance" (19, n. p.). Many pieces have a deeply carved block front design creating a massively proportioned effect. The modern credenza in a Mediterranean style (Plate 12) can be related in massiveness and carving to that of the Italian Renaissance (Plate 2). The chairs (Plate 11) are adaptations of a variation of the Spanish or Italian X-chair, called a dantesca (Plate 7, D), but these modern adaptations have been simplified and are not folding chairs. These adaptations with ornate stretchers, upholstered in vinyl, are quite massive in scale. The massiveness and design motifs reflect the Italian and Spanish Renaissance influence. In this collection, emphasis is on the blending of pieces, not in wood finish, but in basic lines and motifs.

Many other collections by various companies found on the market can be grouped into this Mediterranean classification. Another one is called Collage (an unusual combination of various materials). The collection was designed and scaled to be more adaptable for contemporary homes (Plates 13, 14) and uses butternut wood veneers and solid pecan wood, whose sandstone finishes are achieved with a twenty-one step bleached, distressed, spattered, and hand-padded

Plate 11. Modern adaptations of the Mediterranean style.

Plate 12. Mediterranean style credenza in dark-toned finish.

Plate 13. Cocktail table in the Mediterranean style with latticework on doors. Latticework is of plastic.

Plate 14. China cabinet on buffet, round table and chairs are all of the Mediterranean style.

finish. The collection has been described as having "a dash of the East--a splash of Mediterranean" (18, n. p.). This claim can be seen in the details of the cocktail table utilizing latticework--possibly producing the Eastern feeling as latticework was used in China. Also, the patterned panelling of the buffet can be related to the Italian and Spanish Renaissance cabinets producing a Mediterranean influence.

English

Although English interiors and furniture absorbed influences from the Italian and Spanish Renaissance, the periods are not identical in date and character. The English climate did not allow full acceptance of architecture created for warmer countries with a deeper classical tradition.

In the Gothic period prior to the sixteenth century, no distinctly English style of furniture was created. Little furniture was used, even in the monasteries and castles. However, the chest was an important piece of furniture where all the valuables of the lord of the manor were kept. In many instances, it was used as a seat and bed. As the need for the protection of the monasteries and abbeys decreased, a greater need for furniture variations arose. This caused the chest piece to change in various ways. Legs were added, compartments and drawers evolved. "The chest-on-chest and the

vast variety of cabinet furniture used today were derived from the original chest of medieval times" (72, p. 56). English Renaissance of the sixteenth and seventeenth century can be divided into the Elizabethan phase and the Early Jacobean period during the reigns respectively of Elizabeth and James I. The influence of the Italian and Spanish Renaissance grew during this time. Gradually the English combined symmetry with their desire for asymmetry. Rectangular or round-arched openings gradually replaced pointed arches. Horizontality rather than verticality was gradually accepted. During the Elizabethan and Early Jacobean periods the interiors of the Tudor manor homes consisted of spacious, dignified rooms. And wood wainscoting, divided into small rectangular panels, separated by broad stiles and rails, was a typical covering for all or most of the walls (9, p. 60; 72, p. 79). Pilasters and sometimes columns divided the wainscoting into boldly outlined units, the style being borrowed from the Italian Renaissance period (compare Plate 3 with Plate 15). Furniture was large, boldly-scaled and with a predominant rectangularity; there was a distinctive feature of the over-sized melon-bulb swelling on vertical members. The bulbous legs replaced the trestle and were heavily decorated. Chairs, influenced by Italian Renaissance, became more widely used in the sixteenth century when they developed from ecclesiastical seats used in church stalls in cathedrals. Classical motifs as columns and acanthus leaves were

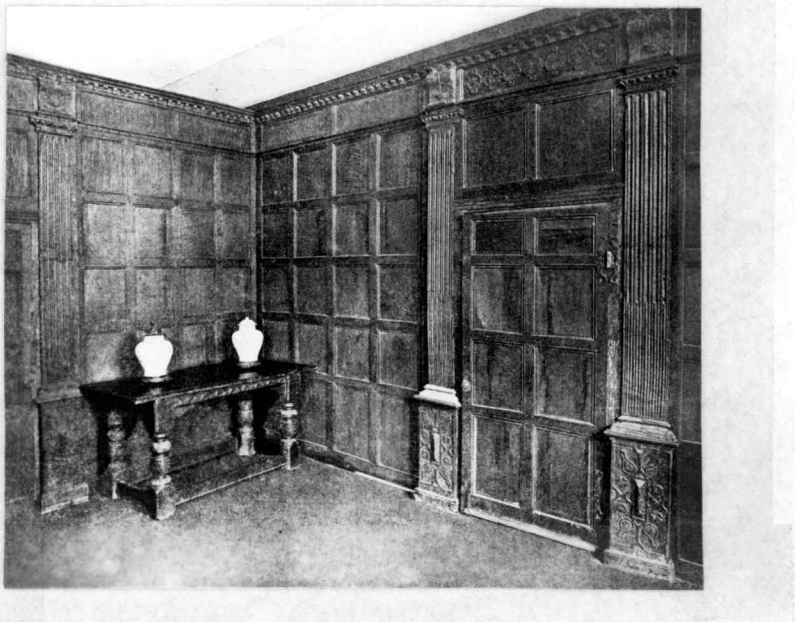


Plate 15. Oak-panelled room. A typical example of the 1640 English Renaissance period.

Plate 16. Walnut armchair with caned seat and back (1660-1685) from the English Restoration period of Charles II and James II (Baroque).

incorporated. Such influences were found on chairs which had their upholstery nailed to the frames, and the X-chair of Italian and Spanish inspiration was commonly used.

In the Late Jacobean and Late Stuart or Restoration period (reigns of Charles II and James II, 1660-1688), the interiors and furnishings reflected a new tendency. Incongruities of poverty and wealth, national order and international disorder of the seventeenth century persisted.

These forces led to a quality in design known as Baroque. The Renaissance style was replaced by heavier, greater ornamental forms in which "pediments were broken and columns were twisted" (24, p. 485). Walnut replaced the more straightforward, structural oaken designs. Spiral-twist turnings were used on the supports of chairs and tables; non-geometric C- and S-shaped scrolls were introduced. The Baroque use of ornate curves was manifested in an English walnut chair with cane seat and back (Plate 16). The high-backed chair with Flemish scrolls and carved stretchers developed during the Restoration period (72, p. 72). This chair, dating between 1660 and 1685,(10, vol. 2, p. 226) is a typical example of the manifestation of English Baroque with Flemish details and turned legs and rails.

The current adaptations (Plate 17) take their inspiration from furniture of the wealthy homes built in the sixteenth and seventeenth

Plate 17. Current adaptations of English Renaissance style in china cabinet, oval table, bench, panelled headboard, night stand, mirror frame and the savonarola chair.

The side chair (left) is a current adaptation of the walnut chairs of the English Restoration (Baroque) period.

century English Renaissance period. In size and massiveness, the pieces are similar to the chests, cabinets and chairs of the period. The panelled effect in the china cabinet is more characteristic of Jacobean panelling and wainscoting rather than the chests or cabinets of the period (see Plate 15). The arches in the china cabinet, headboard and mirror frame are possibly derived from Tudor (Henry VIII) times, as arch motifs were used architecturally during the Tudor era (72, p. 68). Italian and Spanish Renaissance influences can be seen in the savonarola chair. The turned legs of the bench are similar to those found on English shuffleboard tables circa 1620. During the first half of the seventeenth century (Early Stuart period), tables had turned legs with astragal rings (10, vol. 2, p. 134). Italian Renaissance carving is characterized by the panels in the china cabinet, the classical diamond motif in the mirror frame and the modified egg-and-dart frieze on the table apron, the egg-and-dart motif being an old Greek design (72, p. 23). A mellow-brown finish of dappled, antiqued, pecan veneer used with solid oak and pecan resembles the warm old oak woods of sixteenth and seventeenth century England.

The bold carving of the English Restoration period can be seen in the left-hand chair of Plate 17. This high ladderback chair with semi-attached cushion is an adapted Restoration period design. This chair has the characteristic carved front stretcher, turned stretchers,

turned legs and side rails, and the spiral Flemish scroll interpreted in the front legs and ladder back, but its ladder back is not typical for the Restoration period. The painted chair in this collection is an example of the trend of mixing various periods.

French Provincial Adaptations

In contrast to the many revised trends previously mentioned, the French style of furniture has been prominent for many years. French Provincial adaptations have had several revivals in this country. And of course, the French influence still plays a part in the present furniture adaptations.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the court styles of France set the tone for furniture design. In the French Baroque period of Louis XIV, the furniture ranged from the extremes of the highly ornate, (with paint, gilt, silver and ormolu) of the rich court styles of Versailles and Fontainebleau, to the rural adaptations of the provinces. Baroque Louis XIV pieces were decorative, massive, architectural and masculine in proportion and line (72, p. 240). Ornamentation was very large on these pieces, thus complementing walls and high ceilings decorated with carvings, panelling, paintings, tapestries and mirrors.

Under the influence of Madame de Pompadour, the French Rococo style of Louis XV became even more ornate, luxurious, and

feminine, with curving lines. It was more delicate, graceful and smaller in scale than the preceding period. Right angles and straight lines were minimized. Every possible device was employed to coax straight lines into soft curves. Flowing lines and delicate curves gave furniture a new character. Interiors became smaller in size and of delicate scale. Walls were divided into panels and filled with paintings.

The neoclassic Louis XVI style which followed turned for inspiration to classical art with elegant simplicity and restraint in decoration. Curves were not as extensive and legs of furniture became straighter.

Paralleling these traditional courtly styles (between 1643 and 1793) was the informal French Provincial--a less ornate, heavier, more practical version of the formal styles. Provincial furniture belonged to the bourgeoisie and peasant classes of people. They revised and discarded laws, shapes and ornamentation borrowed from architecture and the courtly styles. Few provincial pieces were painted, gilded or embellished with ormolu (72, p. 236). Each piece had its own richness, achieved by intricate carving and painstakingly finished wood, but much of the overstuffing and carving was eliminated, and more delicate cabriole legs were used. The peasants considered function and comfort first, and as a result a great deal of furniture, although often poorly styled, served many purposes.

French Provincial pieces are less pretentious and more comfortable, which makes them more adaptable to contemporary domestic architecture than the courtly styles.

In the French Renaissance period of the sixteenth century, cabinets reached one of their highest developments. They were usually heavy and double-bodied with a slightly narrower upper section. However, during the French Baroque period of the seventeenth century, both heavier, all-purpose cabinets and smaller, more specialized pieces were used, giving more variety to furnishings. Commodes with drawers for clothes appeared during this period. After the commode was perfected and made popular--acquiring low legs and divided into convenient drawers--it developed into a beautiful piece of furniture. During the time of Louis XV the commode was frequently made of fruitwood and the serpentine front became more popular. The commode was made in many sizes (Plate 18). The larger ones usually measured about four feet long and stood about three feet high.

The triple dresser (Plate 19) is an adaptation and a blending of the many styles of French Provincial chests. The carvings, decorative motifs and finishes are crafted in the manner of old provincial designs. Large, stylized, acanthus leaf drawer pulls are used, while the sweeping curved apron and cabriole legs with scroll feet are outlined with carved edging. Sculptured drawer fronts and deeply shaped,

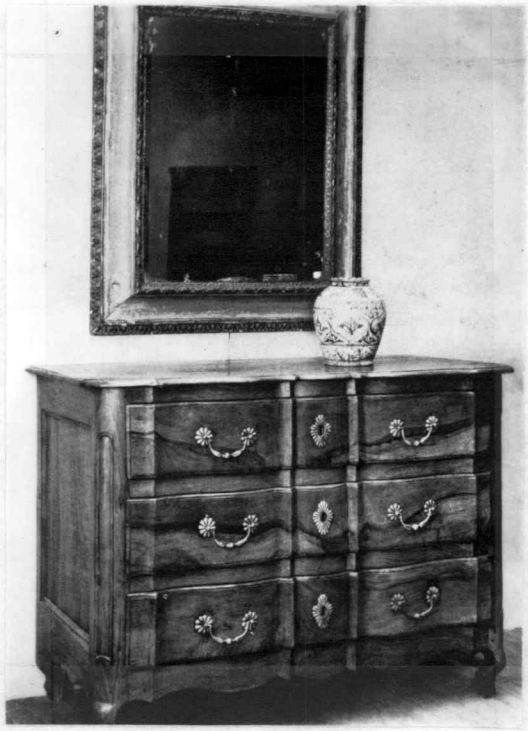


Plate 18. Late eighteenth century (Louis XV) French Provincial commode.

Plate 19. Triple dresser is current adaptation of French Provincial style.

recessed door panels are typical French Provincial lines. Although few French Provincial pieces were gilded or painted, pieces of this collection are available in a painted oyster white finish with hand-painted gold trim or soft grey-green trim emphasizing the curves. They are also scaled down in proportion for smaller homes or adapted in original size suitable for larger homes.

A dominant feature of the French Provincial home during the early eighteenth century was a large cupboard called an armoire (80, p. 35). Built on a sturdy architectural frame, it stood on low legs (Plate 20).

The armoire (Plate 21) has become a popular choice of furniture in many current collections. It produces an impression of great size and its massiveness commands attention. The carved armoire is an adaptation of a French Provincial piece and can be related to Plate 20. This armoire can be fitted with shelves and drawers, or adapted as a bar or fitted for music installations. In this country with its contemporary domestic architecture including built-in closets, armoires seldom hold clothes; they are more likely to be converted into cabinets for stereos or china.

In the Rococo period (Louis XV) the structural parts of French Provincial furniture legs and apron were carved out of one piece of wood. The cabriole leg was slightly curved, and the curves were changed so that the legs and seats of chairs were smoothly joined.

Plate 20. Louis XV French Provincial fruitwood armoire.

Plate 21. Two-piece armoire, chairs and dining table are current adaptations of French Provincial style.

The lines of the French Provincial chairs became more rounded and acquired cane backs and seats, the frames being carved with Rococo ornaments (80, p. 58). Chairs were broad and low, with senuously curved frames. The lines were often broken by carvings of flowers at the top and along the front top of the chair back (Plate 22).

An adaptation of the French Provincial chair can be seen in Plate 21. The chairs (excluding those against the wall) have gently curved legs and aprons and can be compared to Plate 22. The scroll design on the backs of the chairs and panels of the cabinet is a typical motif adapted from the court styles. These adaptations utilize two different types of upholstery fabric. Many authentic provincial chairs had contrasting upholstery fabrics, and the two sides of the backs were often upholstered in different fabrics. A modern painting on the wall is combined with the French Provincial adaptations to produce the current trend of mixing various periods.

Italian Neo-Classic Adaptations

The highly decorated French Rococo style, which held the leadership in exterior and interior design in Europe during the early and mid-eighteenth century, did not survive the influences of the latter half of the eighteenth century that led to the French Revolution. Many people rejected the light-hearted French Rococo and once again returned to classical sources for inspiration. The Neo-Classic style

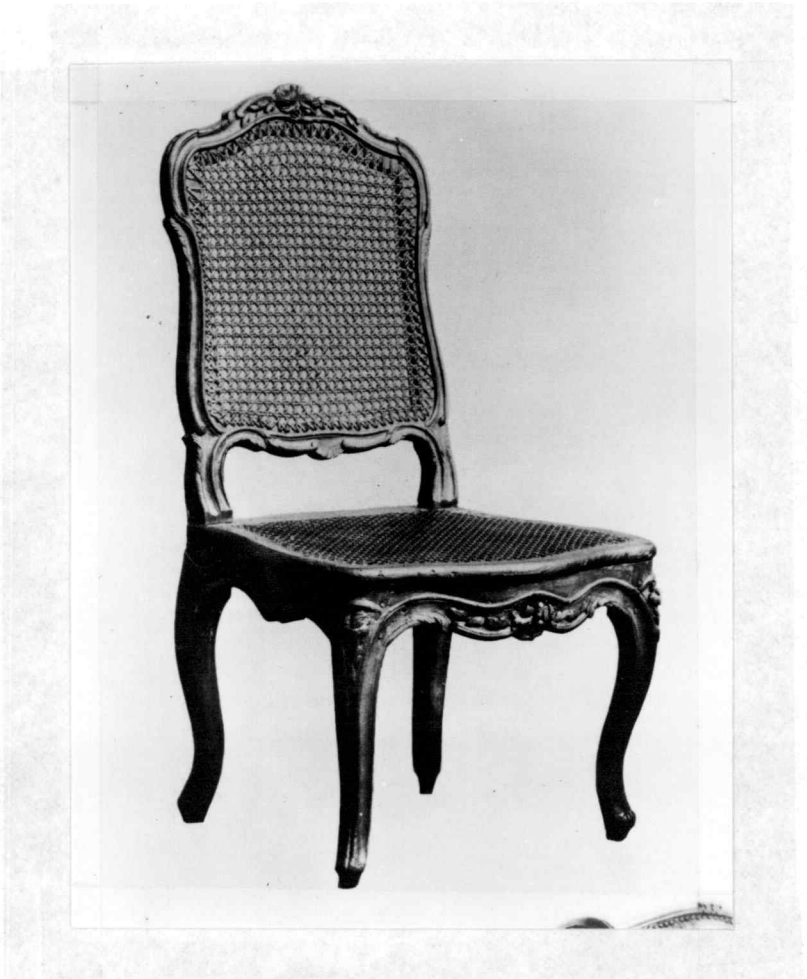


Plate 22. Louis XV French Provincial side chair of walnut with cane seat and back.

which followed was a reaction against the Rococo.

The initial impetus for the Neo-Classic style came from Rome and Naples but the Italians made little use of the style until it filtered through the French medium. After Neo-Classicism made its impact on French design, the Italians were influenced by it.

Although the Neo-Classic styles developed in France and England had a much greater effect on American homes than those of Italy, there were notable developments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century styles of Italy. Italian Neo-Classical furniture adaptations are currently popular in this revival trend, warranting discussion of them in this chapter.

Generally, no characteristic Italian Neo-Classic architectural or interior changes were evident during the latter eighteenth century and opening years of the nineteenth century. A few older interiors were redecorated and cleaned of their Rococo embellishments, bringing them more into conformity with the prevailing Neo-Classic taste. Although there were comparatively few consistently Neo-Classic interiors, the situation is very different in the case of furniture. "The amount of neo-classic furniture produced and used in Italy is astonishing" (21, p. 144). As a contrast to the Baroque style of the previous period, Italian Neo-Classic furniture as a whole is distinguished by its relative simplicity. Emphasis is on continuous straight lines relieved by oval and circular curves, regulated

rhythms, and comparatively plain surfaces.

The Italian craftsman borrowed foreign inspiration, but he always succeeded in making the result essentially Italian. Although the chair designs of this period were borrowed from French and English sources, Italian craftsmen interpreted and imparted individuality to their work. Chairs in the Neo-Classic style are undeniably Italian by their splay-footed square tapered legs, camfered on the corners; legs larger at the top than at the bottom; pronounced outward flare of the chair backs; sunburst rosette on the tops of the front legs, a motif not used in English or French furniture (21, p. 148, 161).

Of the early nineteenth century chairs in Plate 23, A is identified as Italian by the gilding of the delicate beadings and rosettes. The curves and patterns of the chair backs are enough to distinguish their origin as Italian Neo-Classic. In the case of the two chairs in C, the additional evidence of the leg contours is unmistakably Italian.

Typical current interpretations of the late eighteenth century Italian Neo-Classic style are shown in the tapered and subtly splayed legs of the chairs in Plate 26. Characteristic of Italian Neo-Classic styling are the stylized rosette carvings on the tops of the front legs. The interlacing motifs on the left-hand arm chair can be traced to Neo-Classic chair splats with similar motifs.

The side chair (Plate 24) is a modern adaptation of the Italian

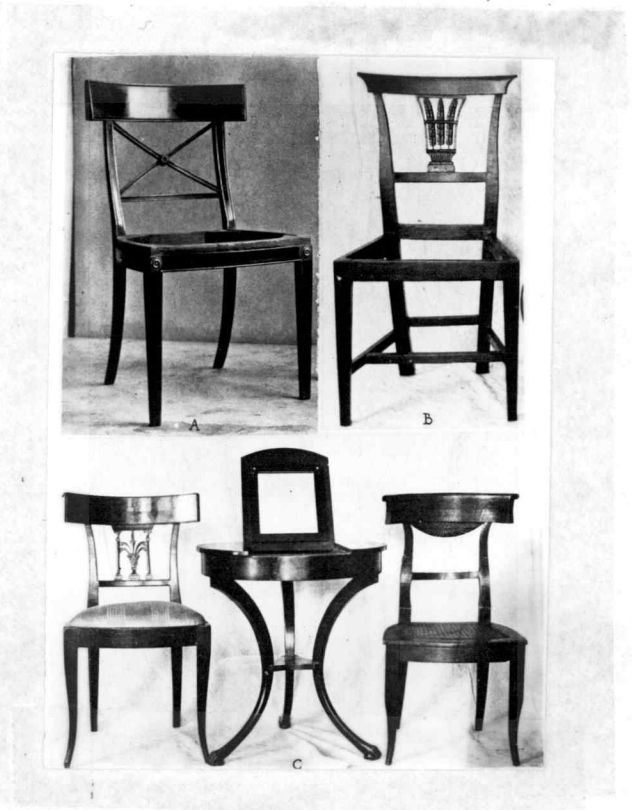


Plate 23. All early nineteenth century Italian Neo-Classic styles, French Directoire inspiration.

A. Curule chair, painted and gilded.
B. Walnut chair, carved three-feather splat.
C. Walnut chairs, and three-legged circular walnut table.

Plate 24. Pecan side chair in antique cherry finish is current adaptation of the Italian Neo-Classic style.

Styles of other pieces (desk and coffee table) are a blending of motifs from a number of different periods. Desk has walnut veneer top in a light antique fruitwood finish; solid pecan apron, legs and moldings in light antique green finish.

Neo-Classic style. The square, tapered, outward splayed legs of the chair are comparable with those in Plate 23, C. The relative simplicity of the chair design is similar to and can be compared with Italian Neo-Classic chair styles having square backs ornamented with the guilloche. The furniture of this particular collection was designed to achieve a mixture of styles. Stylists reshaped and rescaled furniture pieces of the past so that the collection provides, in effect, furniture that could possibly conform to any decor. The design theme appears to be a synthesis of Italian and possibly French, Biedermeier, Directoire and Spanish styling. The desk cannot be easily related to any specific country, unless the country might be France. It has predominantly French overtones as characterized in the lines of the legs and table apron.

Through related design motifs--geometric patterns, curved lines, wood carvings and moldings--hardware and finishes, the stylists have tried to reflect an old world appearance characteristic of the continental countries. Walnut, cherry, pecan and oak are used to capture the original formality of the design themes. Stained wood finishes, unusual painted accents and subtle distressing are used to give the pieces the appearance of European antiques. The pictures, lamp bases, books, the various bibelots and the bouillotte lamp all add to the semblance of a collection of various periods without accenting any particular one.

During the Neo-Classic period, the influence of classical column motifs from the Italian Renaissance can be seen in the bases and legs for tables. Differing from the Italian Renaissance, this type of base became more simplified in carving and design. In a current design, the influence of classical columns can be seen in the pedestal coffee table (Plate 26). The decorative gilded treatment to further embellish the table is reminiscent of Neo-Classic craftsmanship. Painted finishes are often found in Italian furniture, possibly because of the Italian flare for decorating or because the craftsmen wished to disguise inferior wood.

Large credenzas characteristic of the Italian Renaissance had gone out of fashion, but during the Neo-Classic period longer commodes served the same purpose. Commodes of this period were sometimes made with doors only (Plate 25), with drawers only, or with a combination of doors and drawers. Considerable variation was found in the lengths and widths of the rectangular commodes.

Aside from the relative simplicity of Italian Neo-Classicism, the style was characterized as a time of great elegance and wide variety in the use of distinctive materials. Commodes generally were made of walnut, often with marble tops. Richly colored and strongly figured veneered door panels (Plate 25) were frequently the only decoration aside from a few carved and gilded moldings. Carving did not play a conspicuous part in the decoration of Neo-Classic

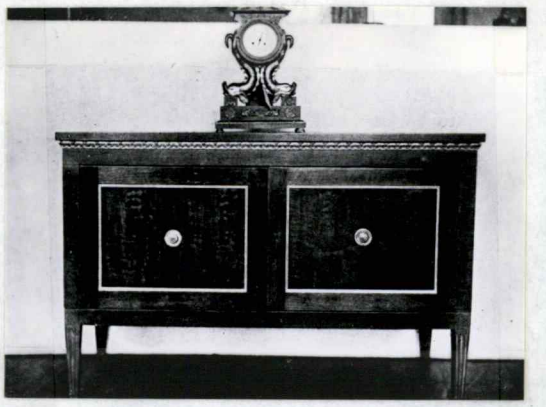


Plate 25. Late eighteenth century Italian Neo-Classic mohagany commode with doors, gilded moldings and figured veneer panels.

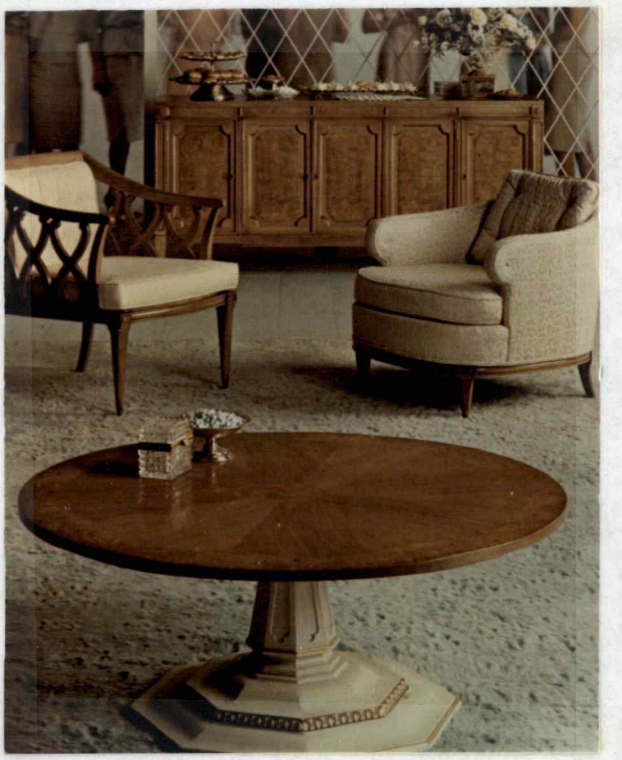


Plate 26. Coffee table, chairs and buffet are current adaptations of Italian Neo-Classic style. Antique white base and gilt on coffee table; all others of fruitwood finish.

commodes: when used at all it was of simple character. Plate 26 also depicts a commode similar to that in Plate 25. Both the traditional commode and the adaptation employ straight lines with cabinet facades of veneered panels. The pieces of this collection are available in distressed bleached finishes or dark-toned walnut combined with elm burl, painted and gilded accents.

Eighteenth Century English and Early American Adaptations

Styles and design motifs do not instantaneously develop and die just as suddenly. But they gradually develop and carry over into different design periods and from influences of neighboring countries. Such influences contributed to the artistic growth of England and America. Although England absorbed style influences from the European continent and from the Orient, she designed beautiful furniture of excellent craftsmanship uniquely her own.

Increased trade with the Orient during the reign of William and Mary (1688-1702) awakened the English gentry class to new beauty and spread the desire for Oriental furniture. With excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii, "the discovery of the colorfully decorated and carefully planned livable homes . . . brought to light an aspect of classical life quite different from the monumental Roman ruins known in the Renaissance" (24, p. 487).

The eighteenth century was a great age of English homes and

furniture, both of which were strongly repeated in the United States. The English were quick to make their furniture functional and comfortable. The custom of serving afternoon tea called for many small tables. The search for comfort was shown in furniture with padded seats and backs. The wing chair, developed during this period, was designed to obstruct the drafts that came blowing through the palaces and homes (83, p. 84). Chairs became more graceful and conformed to human dimensions. Delicate lines and distinctive motifs, like the gentle curve of the cabriole legs with shell decorations in the knees and duck bill feet, became very prominent (Plate 27).

Perhaps Early American traditional furniture should now be mentioned as English homes and furnishings were the most lasting influences on American traditional furniture. When the earliest English colonists settled along the Atlantic coast, they brought with them the building traditions of their homeland.

The pilgrims built modified versions of the homes they remembered in England. The earliest homes were economical, small, compact and rectangular with one large, low-ceilinged, multipurpose room, dominated by a large, unornamented fireplace. As the family grew and resources increased, other rooms were added.

Likewise, each colony imported its furniture or its way of making furniture chiefly from England. The first settlers in New England adapted, combined and simplified Elizabethan, Jacobean, and

Plate 27. Queen Anne chair of circa 1705 has simple cabriole legs with shell motifs on the knees.

William and Mary designs, developing crude but efficient frontier styles which were affected by climatic conditions, available materials, economic resources, and the scarcity of craftsmen. Maple, pine, and cherry were more available in America, and soon those woods replaced the less available oak and walnut. Each wood works differently, and each craftsman was apt to add his particular variation.

In America, as in most countries, two types of furniture developed: the informal, provincial or colonial style (briefly described above), and the formal, more conservative Early American or eighteenth century style (72, p. 141).

With increased wealth and population toward the end of the seventeenth century, many Americans desired more elegance and refinement in their homes. From these desires the Early American style developed. The new needs were influenced by what was being done in England. The larger homes of this period, built in the American cities and on large southern estates, developed from the new way of building and designing assimilated from eighteenth century England.

Lighter, more elegant furniture replaced the sturdy pieces of the seventeenth century. As the colonies prospered in the eighteenth century, the workmanship improved until it became difficult for lay persons to determine whether some of the furniture was made in America or imported from England (72, p. 145). New craftsmen

also arrived, bringing with them styles that were promptly copied and assimilated by the Americans. By 1750, distinct American styles of furniture made of maple, pine, cherry, chestnut, walnut and mahogany developed in Boston, Newport, New York and Philadelphia. Although American eighteenth century furniture closely resembled English designs, it had different proportions from corresponding English pieces: the curves such as in the cabriole legs were more reserved than those of English design, and rhythmic lines were emphasized more than rich ornament or materials.

Queen Anne chairs with spoon-shaped splats and cabriole legs were typical (Plate 27). Case goods consisted of chest-on-chests, secretaries and lowboys (Plate 28), enriched with carved panels, finials and fluting, often supported on slender cabriole legs (72, p. 151).

As the colonists became prosperous, the golden age of cabinetmaking was at its height in late eighteenth century England. Thomas Chippendale was probably the best known cabinetmaker of this period. His was the first furniture style named after the designer (83, p. 106). Chippendale's fame spread rapidly because of his book, The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Directory, published in 1754. The publication influenced furniture design enormously and connected his name with much he never saw. Chippendale's work was so varied that nothing but exhaustive research would disclose all the details he used.

Plate 28. Five drawer Queen Anne Early American lowboy, circa 1740-60.

Plate 29. Current adaptation of Early American Queen Anne style lowboy.

Queen Anne and Chippendale eighteenth century styles of furniture developed in the northern, middle and southern colonies in America (17, p. xi). In like manner, many interpretations of these designs are part of the current revival of English furniture styles. The lowboy (Plate 29) in Queen Anne styling is an adaptation and composite of several dressing tables made in New England in the mid-eighteenth century (42, p. 8). Inspiration for this piece and for much of this collection came from museum collections, from fine old Colonial mansions, and from private collections. Motifs were chosen to try to give each individual piece authenticity of design.

Adaptations of the Queen Anne style chair (compare with Plate 27) are illustrated in Plate 30 with the duck bill foot and relatively reserved curved cabriole legs. The flared-out arms are typical. However, the backs of the chairs are distinctly adaptations. Although used during the William and Mary period, and carried over to the Queen Anne period, the use of cane disappeared entirely early in her reign and is not typically Queen Anne (72, p. 95). A broad central splat and fiddle-shaped chair back, spooned to fit the back and providing comfort, are distinctly Queen Anne (Plate 27).

The broken pediment at the top of the breakfront (Plate 30) is a feature adapted from architecture to cabinets (72, p. 96). This piece shows many Chippendale characteristics and can be compared with Plate 31, an original Chippendale drawing of a breakfront. The

Plate 30. Current adaptations of Chippendale style breakfront and Queen Anne style chairs.

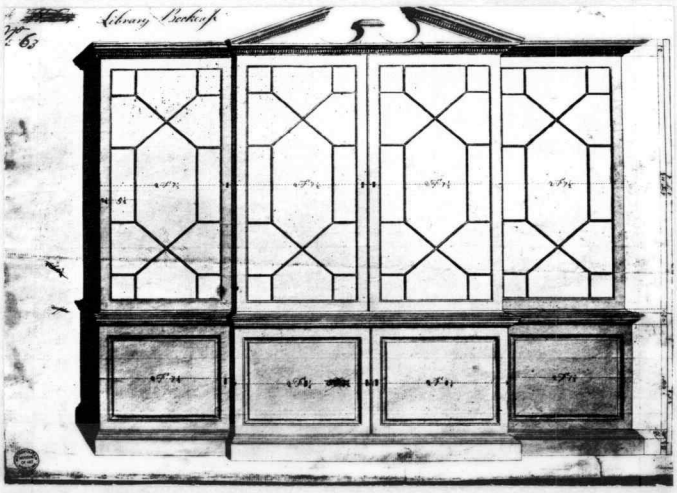


Plate 31. An original Chippendale drawing of a breakfront.

drawing has the appearance of having been made from a finished piece of furniture, probably done as a record. The style is one common to the Chippendale period. The adaptation is similar in proportion than its counterpart.

The arm chair and side chair shown with the Queen Anne styled oval dining table (Plate 32) are composite adaptations from several Chippendale ladderback chairs (42, p. 12). The arm chair can be compared with Plate 33, a transitional Chippendale-Hepplewhite ladderback chair in which the top rail meets the balusters in one unbroken curve. However, the adaptations have a more rounded continuous line in the upper chair backs.

Upholstered couches and chairs became popular in mid-eighteenth century America. Arched camel backs with high rolled-over arms and cabriole or straight legs were characteristic (72, p. 115) (Plate 34). The roll arm was probably originally taken from the spiral scroll on the Classic Ionic column. The loveseat (Plate 35) can be traced to many Chippendale styled sofas of the late eighteenth century Georgian period. This interpretation has strong overtones of an English Chippendale theme with high curved arms and subtly shaped camel back. The straight legs are typical. Generally, the wood was of varnished red mahogany (83, p. 108), rather than oiled walnut, as in this instance.

George Hepplewhite is also known for a noteworthy style of

Plate 32. Current adaptations of Queen Anne style table and Chippendale style chairs.

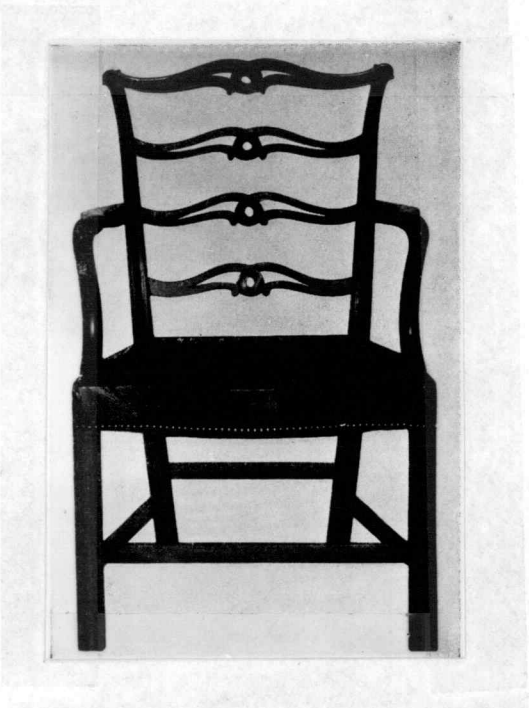


Plate 33. Chippendale style ladder (pierced) back, lightly carved chair, circa 1760-75.

Plate 34. Chippendale style Early American mahogany sofa from the Winterthur collection, circa 1750. Upholstery fabric is green and white satin.

Plate 35. Current adaptation of Chippendale style sofa. Solid walnut base, oil walnut finish.

English furniture. Whereas the Chippendale style is largely one of mahogany wood, Hepplewhite introduced lighter toned woods. "Satinwood was frequently inlaid with architectural motifs, but much of the furniture had painted decoration" (24, p. 528).

Hepplewhite is considered the innovator of the sideboard with drawers (9, p. 356). He used both convex and concave forms in his work, but emphasized concave forms. A serpentine curve was a dominant contour of his sideboard (Plate 36). Typical legs on his cabinets were tapered with spade or thimble feet. The sideboard in Plate 36 can be compared with a recent adaptation (Plate 37) taken from an American rendering of the Hepplewhite style (42, p. 12). As illustrated in this adaptation, highly figured veneers (although this adaptation is in mahogany) with inlays were features of many of the Hepplewhite pieces.

Simplicity of line is the main characteristic of another late eighteenth century furniture deisgner, Thomas Sheraton. His earlier pieces resembled Hepplewhite's with inlays, fluting, reeding, slender graceful forms and painted decoration. However, his style differed from Hepplewhite's in that Sheraton placed a greater emphasis on straight lines. "He used a straight-line style, refined, in excellent proportion and extremely delicate in appearance" (72, p. 122).

Some of the sideboards and tables he designed were long, with six or eight reeded legs (Plate 38). This is an Early American

Plate 36. A Hepplewhite mahogany inlaid sideboard.

Plate 37. Current adaptation of a Hepplewhite style sideboard with brass gallery. Top, drawer fronts and side panels of African mahogany veneer. Solid mahogany legs and moldings.

Plate 38. Sheraton style Early American eight-legged table, circa 1790-99.

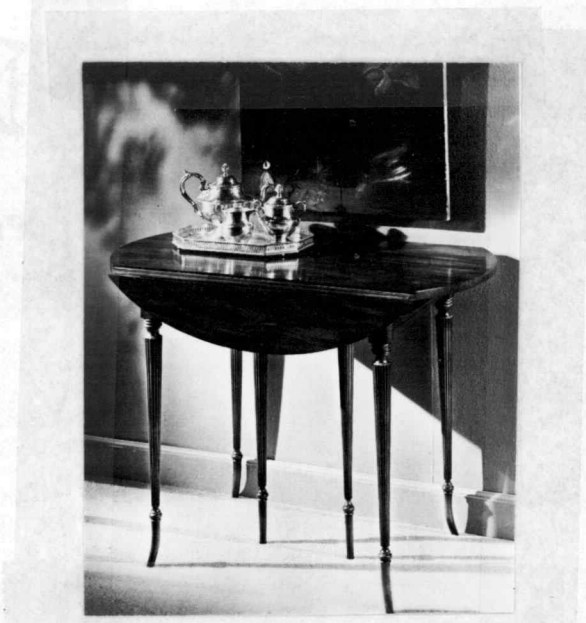


Plate 39. Current adaptation of Sheraton style table. This drop leaf dining table of Sheraton styling with fluted legs expands to 100 1/2 inches to seat ten people.

eight-legged Sheraton style table--"said to have been used by Washington" (75, n. p.). A current adaptation of this basic Sheraton style is shown as a drop-leaf table (Plate 39). When this table is extended, it very much resembles Plate 38. This adaptation (as well as its counterpart) has a contemporary semblance of simplicity and therefore it is more compatible in a contemporary architectural setting.

In the American Federal period (1790 and 1810), the chief sources of inspiration were the Directoire and French Empire styles mixed with the simplicity of late eighteenth century English designs.

Although there were many designers and craftsmen in America, Duncan Phyfe (1768-1854), a Scottish cabinetmaker, was America's best known furniture designer from New York. Duncan Phyfe took designs from the English designers and adapted his own ideas to the major forms (83, p. 126). He adapted the evolving styles beginning with the English Sheraton style, and continued with the French Empire and Directoire designs which followed.

He adapted the lyre motif, used reeding on the legs of chairs and tables, lion's paw brass hardware, and the tripod-base table with the concave or saber curves in the legs (72, p. 156) (Plate 40). The drum top table, on the other hand, (Plate 41) is an adaptation from two museum pieces of late eighteenth century Duncan Phyfe designs (42, p. 8). It illustrates the motif of lion's paw brass feet. However, instead of using brass lion's head drawer pulls, these pulls

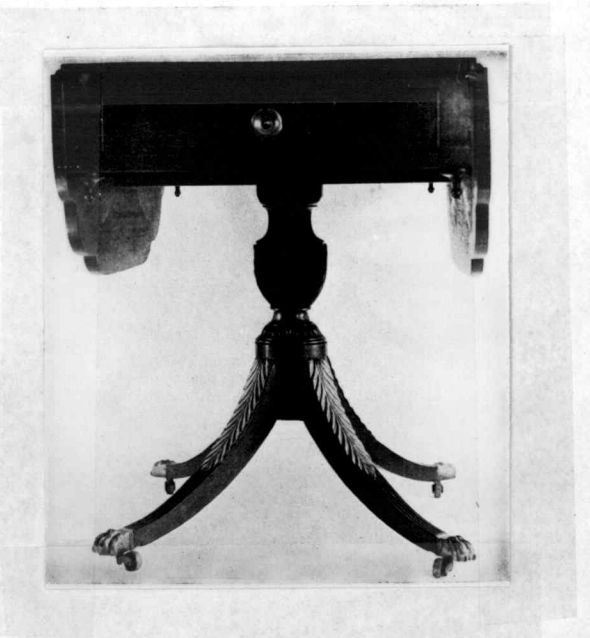


Plate 40. Duncan Phyfe occasional table. Drops at corners. Brass feet. Circa, 1800-15.

Plate 41. Current adaptation of Duncan Phyfe style drum top table. Gold tooled leather top. Panels of African mahogany veneer with solid mahogany base.

follow Sheraton hardware design. Although the authentic Duncan Phyfe piece does not have a drum top, the brass feet, concave carved legs and carved standard are typical of authentic Duncan Phyfe occasional tables (Plate 40).

CHAPTER IV

UPHOLSTERY FABRICS AND WOOD FINISHES FOR THE ADAPTATIONS

Upholstery Fabrics

In addition to inspirations derived from historical design, the upholstery fabrics for the adaptations appear to be a strong unifying element and help link these adaptations with contemporary interiors. Period likeness is maintained by relating the upholstered furniture to the scheme by a choice of fabric complementary to the traditional period. The traditional effect is achieved by fabrics such as bright and muted prints; vinyl-coated fabrics to simulate leather (Plates 9, 11, 17); deep quilted floral fabrics; brocades; plain, crushed, antique and cut velvets; damasks; matelasses; striped taffetas; and brocatelles.

Most of the corresponding upholstery fabrics are changed in design to correlate the adaptations with more contemporary furniture and interiors, although some are similar to their original counterparts. Many companies borrow from artists of previous eras in order to create more adaptable styles for the 1960's (109). Most are not of truly historical design, color or scale. The patterns are only inspirations from traditional themes, being generally of more transitional designs in contemporary colors. This change may be one

of the possible keys to their successful or unsuccessful use in a contemporary interior.

Modern patterns are more stylized, less realistic and more contemporary in nature (Plate 42). By such a change, the patterned fabrics produce a sophisticated and yet informal effect when combined with a range of neutral wood or background tones. The upholstery fabric in Plate 43 also reflects the current interest in updated historical motifs. The green and blue hues blend softly together. The combination of analagous colors is a contemporary characteristic. The tonal variations of this fabric make it more adaptable for contemporary use. The smaller subtle pattern gives the fabric a textural effect.

Large, bright, floral compositions are commonly used. However, the floral motifs are generally stylized in order to blend traditional adaptations skillfully in contemporary interiors (Plate 44).

Until the beginning of the eighteenth century, cotton fabrics were imported from India and created a great vogue in the capitals of Europe. They were used for furniture coverings and window hangings. The English soon learned how to print their own (72, p. 88). Since they are fond of gardens and the rose is their symbol of royalty, they created beautiful floral prints using roses and other flowers. The word chintz has always been associated with gay and colorful fabrics--usually floral fabrics. Chintz became the rage in

Plate 42. Stylized, large floral patterned matelasse.

65% rayon
35% cotton

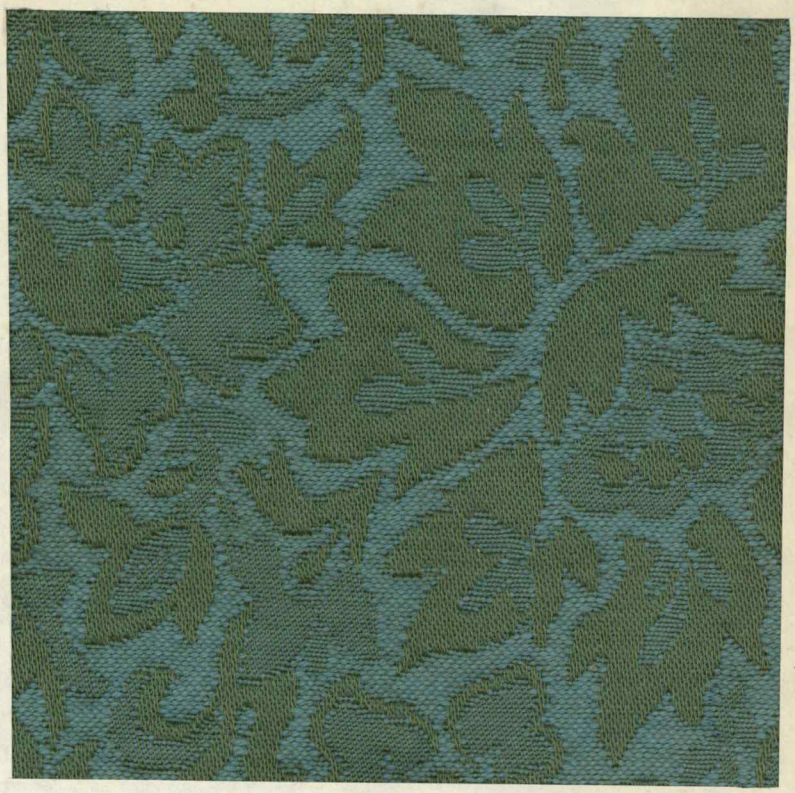


Plate 43. Blue and green matelasse fabric.

77% polyester
23% cotton

Plate 44. Gold/green/orange matelasse upholstery fabric.

63.5% rayon
36.5% cotton

eighteenth century England, France and America (72, p. 158), and is now being re-created for present-day use (Plate 45). The lightweight upholstery fabric (generally quilted) is adapted from a nineteenth century British "mille fleur" design (12). The designs for the collection from which this fabric is derived come from original chintz designs once popular in France, England and America (12). From their original source, the motifs have been simplified and the colors have been brightened to make them more adaptable to both traditional adaptations and contemporary interior design.

Another great English eighteenth century favorite was the Tree of Life design which was inspired by prints from India. The pattern was generally executed as a crewel embroidery on hand-woven linen (72, p. 97). A more contemporary, stylized version of the Tree of Life design is utilized on the current adaptation of a Chippendale style sofa (Plate 35).

The move toward more traditional upholstery fabrics in the last few years is visible in the use of plush, soft fabrics--crushed, antique and voided velvets--for the traditional adaptations (Plate 46). A reason for the uptrend for soft plush fabrics could be the public's reaction against the simplicity of contemporary furniture. The increasing urge and desire for intricate ornamentation is most readily and inexpensively satisfied with the more luxurious feel of plush fabrics.

Plate 45. Spring Song - 100% cotton chintz, adapted from a nineteenth century British mille fleur design, has been simplified and enlarged for contemporary times.

Plate 46. Lime green crushed velvet.

65% rayon
35% cotton

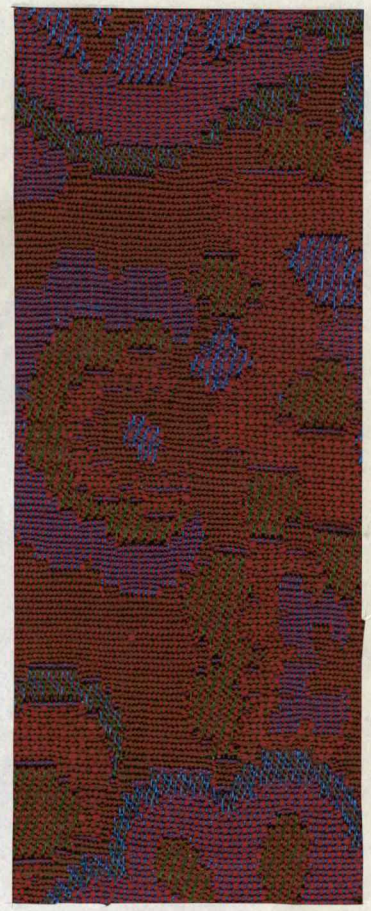
The use of rich velvet was characteristic of the early Italian and Spanish sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (72, p. 15). Voided velvets were used during these periods. Venetian traders brought back velvets from the Damascus area where they were made in patterns with the pile forming a design on a satin background. Velvet used for upholstery and elaborate trimmings was much in evidence in seventeenth and eighteenth century England (72, p, 58, 104, 124). A voided velvet (Plate 47) upholstery fabric for the traditional adaptations is of a stylized floral pattern, probably adapted from traditional motifs. (The mixture of analagous colors like olive green and burnt orange is a contemporary treatment.)

For more successful use, the traditional adaptations of upholstery fabrics are more colorful than their earlier counterparts. Many patterns are of bold, two- and three-color combinations such as the two matelasses with overall conventionalized floral designs in Plate 48.

The success of traditional upholstery fabrics adapted to our present mode of living is based on changes to more contemporary design and color, plus better colorfastness (68). Some fabrics have historically authentic color. Generally, however, the colors are only reminiscent of the masterpieces of the period and are varied for contemporary acceptance. Contemporary colors appear repeatedly in traditional adapted floral patterns and are being used with all the

Plate 47. Floral patterned voided velvet.

79% rayon (Total pile)
21% cotton (Total backing)



B. Red/blue/green matelasse

A. Blue and green matelasse

Plate 48. Traditionally adapted upholstery fabrics in vibrated colors.

73% rayon
27% cotton

traditional styled adaptations, in order to mix the past styles with present.

Construction Materials and Finishes

In addition to the variations in upholstery fabrics, are those of woods, other materials and finishes. Today's furniture manufacturers use many new techniques and construction materials. In contemporary times the tendency has been to use fewer finishes that cover up the natural grain and more finishes that bring out the warmth and natural color tones of the wood. The contemporary concept is to make the finish less noticeable than the material underneath so that transparent, colorless, dull finishes are preferred. Oiled, rubbed surfaces bring out the natural characteristics of many woods. And simple sealer finishes produce a natural soft glow on the product. Woods that have been honestly finished this way are also less apt to show wear over long periods of time.

Contrary to contemporary techniques for wood finishing, finishes for the adaptations are being used to simulate the handiwork of antiques. Many manufacturers of the traditional furniture adaptations try to reproduce in the factory the patina found on antiques--the marks that wear and tear and time leave in a totally random way on objects. This patina of age is thought to reproduce richness. A furniture piece may be deliberately marred with simulated wormholes, or with

spatter specks and brush marks to give the adaptations an appearance similar to the mellowed patina of antique cabinetry (Plates 4, 9, 12, 17, 24).

In addition to the use of simulated finishes, many companies manufacturing complete suites of furniture, make their pieces more individual by using unmatched woods and finishes (116) (Plates 9, 11, 17, 21, 24). In this way the manufacturer desires to emulate a fine collection of antiques. In turn, he is hoping for more consumer interest through the variety of his collection.

To increase these variations in furniture appearances, painted finishes are being used on woods (a characteristic of the courtly French and Italian styles). The colors are often bolder and clearer than those found in the traditional, and might be brightly lacquered in vivid hues. Some pieces are antiqued and glazes may be applied with washes of dirt tones to reduce the surface brillance of paint, thus suggesting an uneven old quality and also hiding the natural grain of the wood (125, p. 245) (Plate 17). Optional finishes might be in antique white (Plate 26), antique gold, bronze green (Plates 9, 24), red or yellow. These antiqued and painted processes are used not only for accent on small occasional pieces but might also be used in a number of pieces to establish a room's color scheme.

In addition, manufacturers might stain and finish certain woods to imitate other expensive cabinet woods. Naturally dark woods can

be made lighter in value. For many traditional furniture adaptations, for example, mahogany is no longer found in the characteristic dark red-brown of the eighteenth century, but in a paler, lighter, mellow brown--more acceptable to the contemporary interior (125, p. 209) (Plates 30, 37). On the other hand, dark rich brown finishes are available in Italian, Spanish or Mediterranean adaptations (Plates 4, 11, 12). The darker brown finishes are characteristic of the Renaissance period and accentuate the deep carved block front surfaces.

Furthermore, technological developments have enabled present-day furniture manufacturers to simulate expensive hand-crafted furniture of the past. With these developments adaptations of traditional furniture are produced less expensively than formerly. Machine-made ornamentation of wood can be affixed to wood furniture in such a manner as to emulate an expensive hand-carved appearance or block front (Plates 4, 12, 14, 17).

Though the development of wood products has simplified furniture production, developments and refinements of plastics exceed even wood products in the ease of simulating ornamental design. In the more ornately styled adaptations, some companies use molded plastic components to take the place of hand-carved wood. Most consumers are unaware of this, since the moldings are similar in appearance and have a density similar to that of wood (79, p. 149)

(Plates 9, 13, 49). To use mass-produced contemporary materials such as plastics or any other newly developed fabrications in the forms of ornate embellishments which try to imitate the appearance of real craftsmanship of previous eras, seems very unfitting. The man-mades (particularly plastics) should be explored for their own design potential. Such a step appears to be a reversion to times when plastics were first used as cheap substitutes for more costly materials and were undistinguished in appearance. Faulkner comments on what he feels to be the appropriate use of plastics in contemporary times:

> Successful ornament in plastics is still largely the structural type, where the inherent possibilities for varied colors, different degrees of transparency, translucency, or opacity, embedded materials, and molded form and surface texture seem to be in the nature of the materials and in the processes used to form them (24, p. 195, 196).

In contrast, plastics are directly related to technological advancements and uses, so that designers of contemporary furniture very often design furniture without the severe restrictions of the qualities of wood. In other words, the designer has at his disposal through the use of plastics nearly complete freedom of form, uniformity and strength. Plastic can be used to bend strips of laminated wood or "make softwood hard by impregnation" (3, p. 217), thus adding greater strength. In addition, the designer has a material that can be used as laminated surfaces on tables and on cabinets designed as servers or buffets (Plate 9). The practical

A

B

Plate 49. Ornamental parts on these pieces are made from plastic.

advantage of plastic surfaces is that they are impervious to moisture, resistant to heat, and easily cleaned with soap and water. Numerous pieces are made with wood as the basic material but are finished with a matching laminated plastic surface to make it more serviceable and easier to maintain (Plate 6).

Thus, it seems a pity to adapt plastics to forms for which they are not suited and equally objectionable to use plastics to simulate the fine craftsmanship in producing an exquisite reproduction.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

It is perhaps appropriate that every age should produce its own designs and forms consistent with its philosophy of living. Old style traditional furniture should thus be considered against a background of contemporary compositions. This can be accomplished by taking a quick glance at contemporary design and its origins.

It is impossible to establish the beginning of the contemporary movement in furniture with one date, name or event, but various influences have been important for its development and acceptance. The conception of the contemporary style might be indirectly traced to the Industrial Revolution or the beginning of the Machine Age.

The machine had created a new rich middle class whose interest lay not in culture but in profits. As members of the nouveau riche, they felt constrained to adopt the cultural facade of the aristocracy, and turned to machine-made copies of hand-made products. This resulted in an overabundance of poor design and poor construction, satisfying the wants of the uneducated masses but killing the handicrafts. Popular taste was at a level that readily accepted imitation and ostentation of the pretentious, over-elaborate Victorian style which was reaching an extreme point of eclectic design (100, p. 7).

It was in England, the richest mass-production country of the

period, where honest artists and critics rebelled. The rebellious felt that none of the revived styles "arose spontaneously out of the needs of contemporary civilization" (100, p. 2). Out of the rebellion came an art movement for which William Morris (1843-1896) can be held directly responsible. Morris believed that designs should have simplicity and sincerity as well as logical structure, and he protested strongly against the highly decorated ostentatious furnishings and copied ornament of the Victorian Age. He believed that machine production meant the end of hand-made articles and craftsmen.

Some kind of understanding, however, had to be made between the artist and the manufacturer which was by the end of the nineteenth century a permanent feature in industrial nations. As a result, a new movement, Art Nouveau, evolved. Designers of this period felt that ornament could be expressed in the structure of the design, and they saw beauty in the products of machines (115, p. 39). Architects and artists of the period were also concerned with suitable furnishings for their buildings, for they believed that "the beauty of an object lives in the purity with which its material is expressed. . . . Form should emphasize construction and make the function of an object clear" (100, p. 27, 28). The Art Nouveau concepts were new, so that the basic lines of furnishings which were influenced by them differed sharply from any others being made at that time. The curves of the furniture had a purpose, so that

a chair back, for example, conformed to the human body (100, p. 25).

Art Nouveau initiated a response by the twentieth century designers to the technology of their age, and artists and architects began experimenting with forms toward the development of ornament honestly expressive of their times (39, p. 290) as a reaction against Victorian eclecticism (3, p. 273). The movement itself produced a number of designers, craftsmen and architects, and served as a stepping-stone to more permanent design philosophies, but it failed to solve the chief problem of our time, that of large-scale machine production.

Following World War I, a new movement, known as de Stijl also motivated new concepts in contemporary design. All reminiscences of past styles were eliminated (115, p. 50) and architects adopted its flat planes and right angles, producing a new asymmetrical approach to design that replaced symmetrical balance.

In addition to architecture, de Stijl ideas influenced furniture and interior design to a minor degree. This last aspect was demonstrated in the emphasis upon large, unbroken wall surfaces, simplified furniture forms and a rejection of unnecessary decorations (39, p. 291). The aesthetic development from de Stijl had a lasting impact, and much of twentieth century American design, for example, can be traced to this European root (115, p. 50).

An even greater influence can be traced to the Bauhaus

movement founded in 1919 by architect Walter Gropius (1883-) in Weimar, Germany (115, p. 61). The Bauhaus was a college of design for products of every kind and "a school where architecture was understood to be the all-embracing art" (38, p. 16). It revolutionized the training of designers and was staffed by leading architects, designers and painters.

The birth of the Bauhaus helped to diminish hostility towards the machine, for one of its purposes was to unify art and technology (3, p. 273). Students were taught to search, probe and experiment, and to seek a solution which would relate form and function, and be a rational result of the materials and tools employed (39, p. 291). Thus, a new kind of artist, the industrial designer was born.

The members of the Bauhaus felt the function of an object should determine its design, and the beauty of an object should result from the form and the material used. The designers rejected stylistic imitation and developed a style that was simple and untraditional. Author Gerd Hatje describes the Bauhaus philosophy of contemporary design:

> The point of departure was not a certain historic shape such as a Chippendale chair, . . . or a Baroque cabinet, but an investigation of the functions involved. How can a chair, an armchair, or a settee be best developed to conform with human posture; how can the process of manufacture be most honestly revealed; how can it most convincingly express the feeling for shape and the sensibility of both its designer and its owner? . . . It was a matter of honesty and sincerity: no more borrowed styles that were out of keeping with the realities of modern life, no more unjustified desire to make a

> social impression such as the overbearing magnificence of 'antique' furniture had blantantly proclaimed, no pretense of craftsmanship when ornaments and moldings were merely mass-produced (38, p. 16).

The spirit of functional design tremendously influenced both the applied arts and architecture. As far as architecture was concerned, the Bauhaus' aim consisted of room arrangements and proportions which followed technical demands and contemporary social needs. Spaciousness was a dominant impression conveyed by the interior designs of the Bauhaus. Large sheets of glass added the space outside the room to the interior (3, p. 275). Walls were freed from their load-bearing function and served solely as partitions between room areas.

Also, out of the school came furnishings that are familiar to contemporary life, such as steel furniture (Plate 50), handwoven fabrics, sculptured light fixtures, sleek silhouettes combined with rugged materials, the use of woods, metal, plastics and glass in totally new combinations. Before the noted school's experiments, no designers had used such different materials together.

The unique tubular steel chair by architect Marcel Breuer illustrates the Bauhaus idea of functional furniture and is a Bauhaus classic (circa 1928) (Plate 51). Maximum comfort and perfection of form were achieved with a minimum of materials, effort and cost. Breuer's introduction of the tubular metal chair created a new

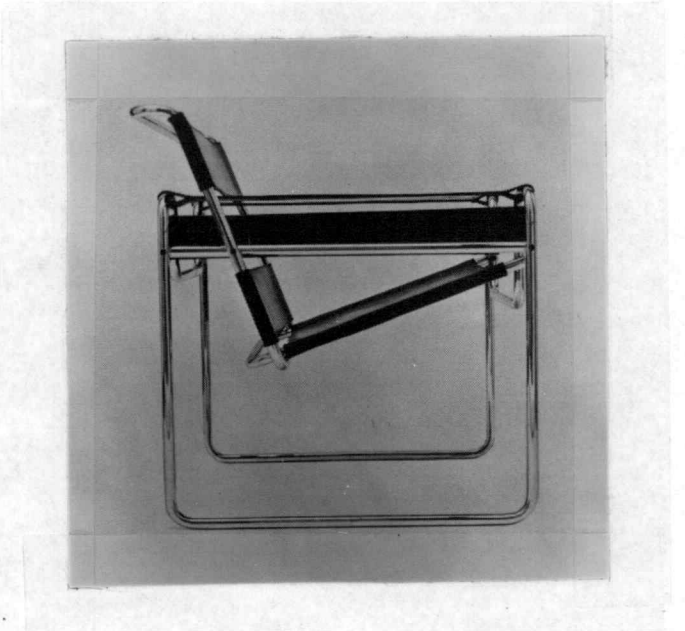


Plate 50. "Wassily" armchair of chromium-plated steel tubing and canvas designed in 1925 by Marcel Breuer. This is the first chair ever to be made of tubular steel.

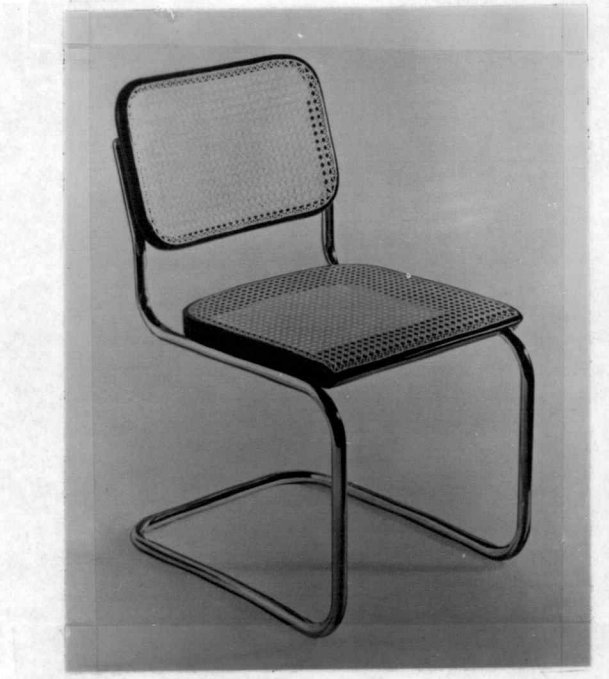


Plate 51. Side chair of chromium-plated steel tubing, wood and cane designed by Marcel Breuer in 1928.

approach to furniture design. Being simple and useful it became the forerunner of all kitchenette copies that flooded the market in the 1940's and 1950's. To understand how revolutionary this chromium-plated steel furniture was in the twenties, the popular taste of that era has to be recalled. At that time furnishings were over-stuffed and silks and polished ebony were the epitome of elegance.

The Paris International Exposition of 1925 is credited with having been the real starting point for popularizing the new functional design philosophy of the Bauhaus (100, p. 46). At the time a number of countries, which had been lagging behind in the movement, discarded much of their traditional work. Many of the exhibits were later sent to America where they attracted a great deal of attention. It was quickly apparent that period styles had long given way in half-a-dozen continental countries to contemporary design and that America had no comparable designs. Soon afterward, the style in every country entered the functional phase. The printing press, easy travel, shipping facilities and machine processes made the forms originated largely by the Bauhaus so similar throughout Europe that it was called the International Style (100, p. 46). Western civilization as a whole was profoundly influenced by the aesthetics and philosophy of the Bauhaus and its all-embracing style of design.

The Bauhaus philosophy developed almost concurrently with that of contemporary design in Scandinavia. Here, as in other

countries in Europe, industrialization had interrupted the craft traditions. However in the 1920's, craftsmen and designers' organizations created a new approach toward Scandinavian values and once again a keen appreciation for craftsmanship supported the development of a contemporary style.

Scandinavian designers and craftsmen combined the functional industrial approach inspired by the Bauhaus with a concern for their own social needs, using materials and techniques derived from earlier craft practices and folk arts (39, p. 293; 100, p. 107). The tradition of a simple life style and honest craftsmanship is very old, and the character of rural living can be seen in the simple lines and form of Scandinavian furniture. This unaffected style won favor partly because the new designs are characterized by a graceful airiness, combined with a lack of elaborate ornamentation. Emphasis is on softened sculptured forms. The structure of a piece of furniture, however, is not regarded as a support that should be concealed, but as an integral part that contributes substantially to the design. This is structural honesty.

By 1949 (after World War II), the United States had become strongly influenced by Scandinavian design. Original designs were imported and manufactured under license, or else they were copied (not always successfully) by local producers. Popular response to this furniture was great and the first of the Scandinavian countries to

meet the new demand for furniture in quantity was Denmark, so that the new furnishings became known as "Danish Modern." By this time the basic principles that had helped to shape Scandinavian contemporary designs were also influencing American designers. They became interested in ways in which machines could be used, and became concerned with honest use of materials.

The new emphasis on contemporary design during the inter-war years had had its counterpart in architecture. One of the greatest contributors in its development was architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959). His "contributions to architecture have been so numerous that they outweigh those of any other architect in this century" (115, p. 73).

Mr. Wright believed that new technology and materials should be used honestly in new forms and not adapted to traditional ones. He could, for example, see how central heating could revolutionize house plan designs. Boxy airtight rooms were no longer necessary for warmth for Wright discovered that they could be kept comfortable and yet flow freely into one another. This led to the idea that doors and whole walls could be eliminated. The spaciousness of his open plan enabled him to create beautiful interiors which were brought closer to nature by including terraces and gardens. Thus, even though the demand for simpler, smaller homes grew because of social and economic conditions, his open floor plans gave an unusual feeling

of space. Wright also believed that all furniture should be designed by the architect as an integral part of the whole design. He thus treated furniture pieces as structural details of the building (39, p. 294).

Another of his significant contributions to the American home was his belief that the structure should be related to the surrounding environment and setting, both in form and material. In the 1920's and 1930's he tried to integrate the function of a building with its architectural background, thus anticipating developments of the 1960's.

Because of the wide acceptance of his contribution to contemporary design, other designers were motivated to produce furniture consistent with contemporary structures. These eminent designers have produced a considerable number of creative and inventive furniture forms. For this reason, it becomes most important to understand why historical furniture is being adapted without the utilization of modern day technology, innovations and concepts.

Many stylists and designers who adapt previous periods do not appear to be fulfilling twentieth century needs. Throughout the development of contemporary furniture from the late 1800's to the present time, function has been a purpose, and honesty in design and materials have been primary objectives. Contemporary designers appreciate an intrinsic type of beauty, one that is achieved through

structure and substance. They admire hand craftsmanship but they recognize that beauty of form and texture may be achieved even with mass production.

This is the art, this is the aesthetic choice of the twentieth century, and this is the way people are living, though many people are buying the adaptations. Each age should create beautiful forms which serve its needs and express its culture. The only style which will live as art in this age will be that which truly reflects its culture.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMPARISON OF CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE, INTERIORS AND FURNITURE

In the previous chapter, the development and importance of contemporary concepts are seen as products of cultural evolution and there is little doubt that contemporary design will continue to innovate and will once again be popularized on the consumer market.

Meanwhile, traditional adaptations appear to be considered by the majority of consumers as the desired style of today. With this in mind, the author will attempt to show the differences between the structure for which traditional furniture was designed and the structure for which contemporary was designed so that the reader will have a better understanding in the utilization of appropriate furniture styles.

Facade

Thanks to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and other contemporary architects, American homes in the twentieth century have reached a very high standard compared with the homes of previous centuries and other countries. As a result of Mr. Wright's influence, and of social economic, technological and cultural changes, a nominal number of authentic traditional homes are being built at the

present time. The cost for such reproductions is also exceedingly high, and only the wealthy can afford them. The rest of the population obtain an historical "flavor" by adapting various hybrid styles that are inspired by the traditional periods. But the basic plan and architecture for these "pseudo" traditional forms are really contemporary in nature. They generally incorporate the open plan, contemporary concepts of form and function, and use contemporary building methods and materials.

This contemporary architecture incorporates outdoor living and patios with indoor space, and houses are integrated with garden areas. Covered walks, carports and fenced gardens join the structure to its site, indicating that contemporary designers are more concerned with the relationship of the inside to outdoor living space than with matters of style. The exterior form is an outgrowth of the interior plan in which wall positions determine the exterior facade (Plate 52).

The natural beauty of materials such as wood, glass, rock, steel and plastics is allowed to be seen and is now considered as important as the ornaments, cornices or pillars found in historical architecture. This sympathetic understanding and use of materials in their natural form, and the integration of the dwelling to its site, is in direct contrast to traditional architectural designs, where emphasis was on sensitive detail, such as can be seen in the

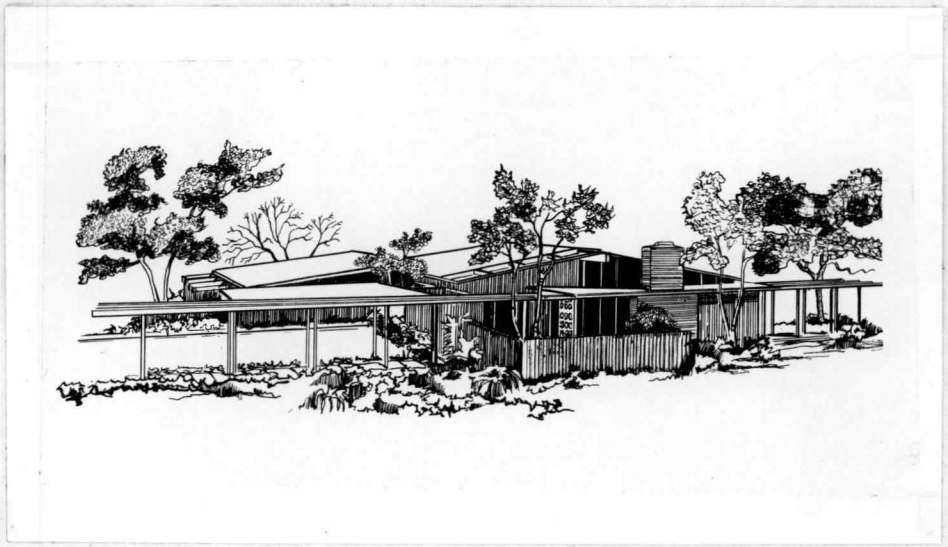


Plate 52. Typical contemporary exterior facade. Emphasis is on naturalism and pleasing indoor-outdoor living relationship rather than a particular style.

Plate 53. Typical traditional exterior facade of the eighteenth century, circa 1730, influenced by the English Georgian style. Emphasis is on symmetry, order and precision of facade.

architectural style of the eighteenth century.

As can be seen from Plate 53, the exterior facade is impressively formal, with the focal point on the symmetrically balanced main entrance. Choice of materials, the orientation of interior rooms to exterior view and sun, and location of entrance, door, or windows were quite standard and not usually adapted to personal needs and tastes.

Floor Plans

Eighteenth century architectural plans were likely to have a basic, stereotyped center hall, allowing access to the four rectangular rooms on the first and second floors (Plate 54). This hall also aided in keeping the house cool, as it extended from the front to the back of the house. It can be seen that the interior plan developed from the exterior facade in that the arrangement of rooms from the central hall was strictly symmetrical, oriented in such a way that the parlor overlooked the street, even if it was on the sunless northern exposure. But this situation has now reversed itself: contemporary architecture is dictated by the styles of the interior plan. Designers do not start with outside facades or historical ideologies, but go directly to the heart of the problems of circulation, storage areas and organization of work space. While the exterior design integrates the building with the landscape, the interior becomes better designed,

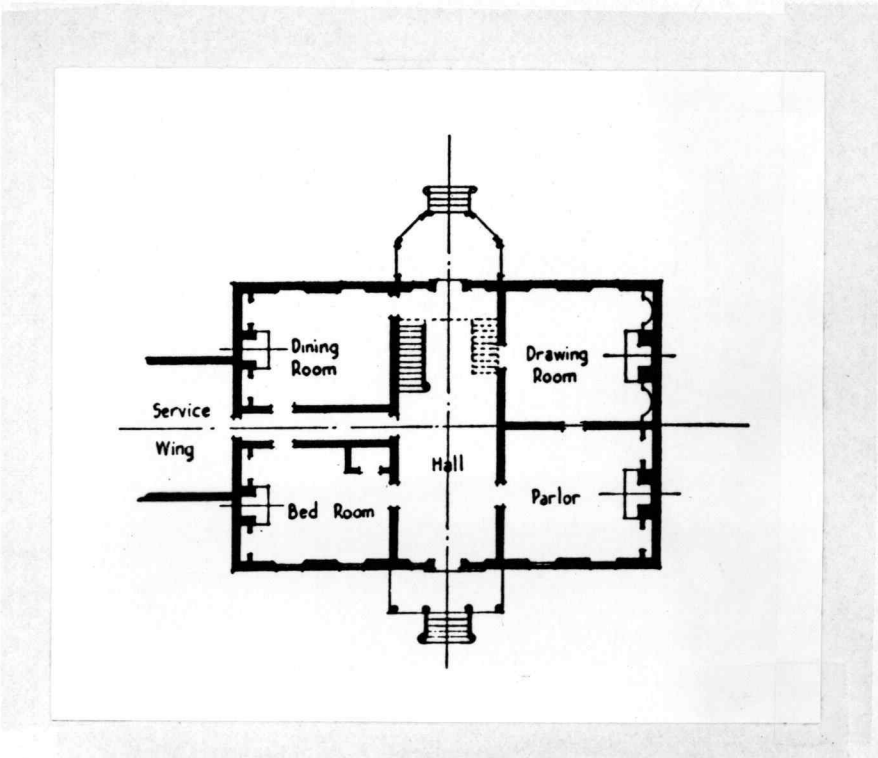


Plate 54. First floor (one of three floors) house plan of a typical Early American eighteenth century house.

equipped and planned.

The basic functions of the house determine the layout of rooms, their number, size, and amount of interior space. With the postwar (World War II) population explosion, a need for smaller, compact houses developed because of higher land and material costs and lack of domestic servants. In the eighteenth century house, almost every room in the house had a particular role: sitting, eating, cooking, reading or studying (125, p. 72). The smaller rooms and the development of the open plan, however, led to living areas planned for multipurpose use, which rejected the concept of rooms for specific uses (Plate 55). Houses now utilize contemporary conveniences, such as lighting, heating and modern facilities, and are conspicuously different from eighteenth century homes. There is usually no central hallway and thermostatically controlled heating and proper orientation gives the whole house an even temperature.

Interior and Furniture

The two architectural styles are thus radically different, and similar differences can also be seen in their appropriate furnishings. But styles of architecture and interior structure cannot be adequately discussed without reference to the furniture of the period, for the prevailing architectural design sets the pattern for the furniture to be used.

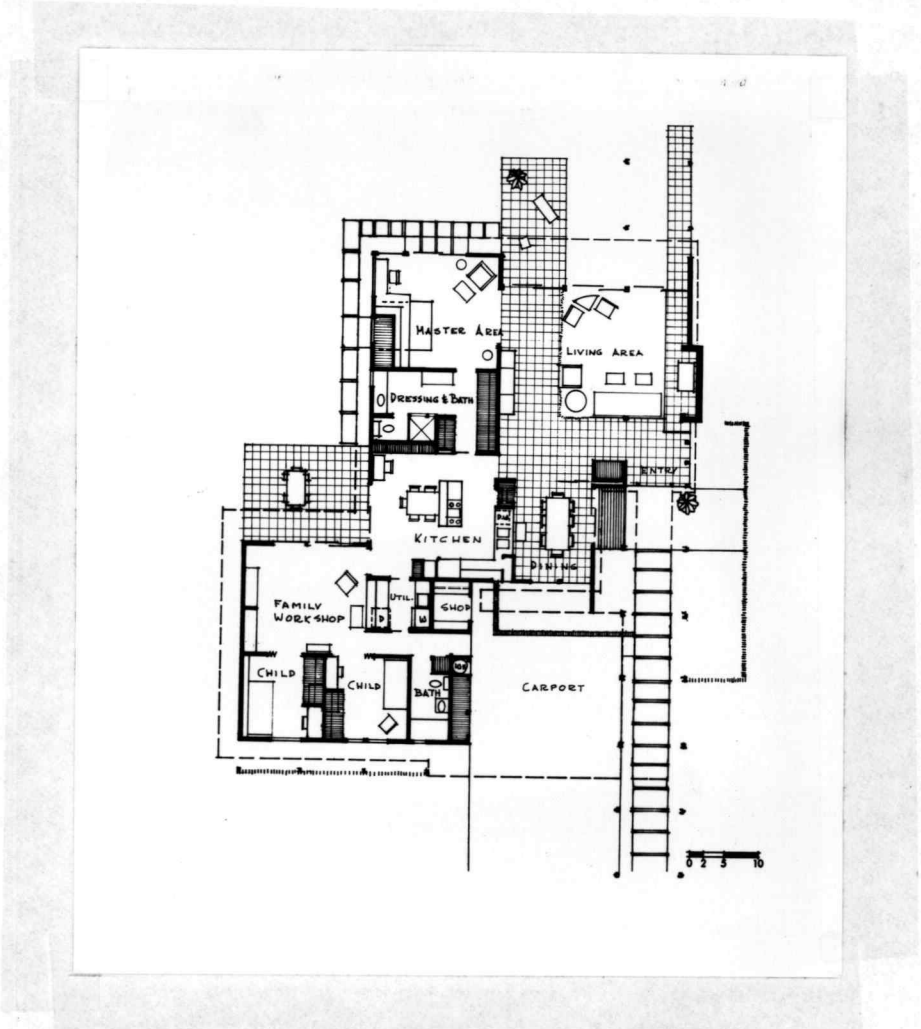


Plate 55. Typical floor plan for a contemporary house.

In some of the more formal historical interiors, the total composition did not take into foremost consideration the inhabitants and their human needs. When the furnishings from the artistic accomplishments of the eighteenth century are analyzed, it is found that they were highly ornate. The high wing-backed armchair of the eighteenth century functioned by fulfilling ideas of elegance, dignity and exaggerated comfort: the elegance of smooth mahogany and brocades, and comfort of overstuffed furniture (Plate 56).

The furniture and interiors of the eighteenth century satisfied the needs of formality, elegance and opulence, whereas contemporary furniture and interiors developed in response to the living needs of the people.

With fewer rooms in contemporary homes, the furniture pieces are likely to have more than one function. In the past it was sometimes customary to choose matched furniture intended for use in one room. The best contemporary furniture, however, is not offered in this form, and the reason lies in our mode of living. Because of the mobility of contemporary society, fixed, cumbersome groups of single-purpose furniture are impractical. Also, to achieve more space, built-in furniture and multipurpose single pieces have developed. One large built-in piece related to architectural structure appears more unified than several small pieces. Logical built-in storage areas for linen in dining rooms have replaced sideboards, as

Plate 56. Formal eighteenth century Early American Georgian interior, circa 1768.

Plate 57. Typical contemporary interior setting utilizing spaciousness and flexibility.

seen in Plate 55. Music systems, televisions, bookcases, cabinets, and other storage units are also built-in (39, p. 305). These features and ideas help to unify the furniture with contemporary architecture, achieving a total homogenous design.

An additional contemporary preference is for furniture that is light in weight and scale. Designers reasoned that the ideal solution to the open architectural areas was to substitute lineal, almost transparent pieces for heavy upholstered furniture (38, p. 23). Edges of furniture might be thin, thus emphasizing space, yet at the same time the structure and materials have strength (3, p. 290). The pieces can also be easily rearranged for various living activities, making them adaptable to contemporary architecture, living requirements, and family needs. Their generally simple lines make them suitable for an open-air, spacious atmosphere (Plate 57). The new aesthetic value of spaciousness produced a new principle, in which space is part of the design, in direct contrast to interiors of the eighteenth century. To create design in some traditional interiors, many objects are used, but it is simplicity in line and form which is emphasized in contemporary interiors and achieved by developing a few characteristics rather than many. As stated by Gerd Hatje, variety is introduced in open-planned interiors through:

> Recesses, narrow passages, partition walls projecting into the room, split levels, or lowered ceilings accentuate

> the separate areas architecturally without disrupting the continuity of the rooms (38, p. 23).

Other means are also used to separate one area from another and add variety and softness--particularly in the choice of upholstery fabrics, carpets and curtains. But, since these objects are often chosen in unpatterned fabrics and do not achieve the contrast formerly produced by furniture ornamentation, bolder fabric textures and colors are used to contrast with the natural grains of woods of furniture and walls.

Another difference between the eighteenth century furniture pieces and twentieth century contemporary designs is obviously the use of new technological materials. These materials enable the designers to create beautiful sculptural forms. Plastics and fiberglass make it possible to mold chairs in which the seats, backs and arms are shaped from one piece of material to fit the body (38, p. 27).

Suggestions for Utilization of Adaptations in Contemporary Interiors

The above comparisons point out that each style of furniture was developed for a particular architectural structure and for the particular needs of the people of that time. However, a current trend is to combine design periods without much concern for their relationships (48).

Eclecticism in contemporary interior design has evolved into a

distinct decorating trend which demands skill and knowledge in its use. Individuals are arranging and combining furniture styles in ways which were never before considered possible, some having successful results, but indiscriminate combinations can be disastrous by creating a hodgepodge of designs. Some of the groupings of the present era resemble the uninhibited expression of personal taste manifested in the eclectic possessions of the Victorian era.

As previously stated, contemporary architecture has altered the shape and purpose of rooms and has done much to abolish traditional decorating guidelines. For those who live in traditional homes, the use of the traditional adaptations would be more natural than to those who live in contemporary homes. Actually traditional furniture adaptations are more in character with "heavy door casings, mopboards, moldings, small windows, and the kind of closure and mass effects found in older buildings" (14, p. 6). It is more difficult, however, to furnish contemporary architecture with furniture of the past, although the adaptations can contrast with the average contemporary interior, accenting each piece and giving a contemporary home individuality. Nevertheless, decorative freedom has to be tempered with knowledge and taste in order to be successful.

The contemporary approach to interior design has not been to emphasize matched suites of furniture, which are almost impossible to fit into an interior with any sense of style, individuality or

originality. Matched suites produce an effect as impersonal as a store display. Many years ago eight- or nine-piece dining room suites represented the average dining room sale. Today, an average purchase might consist of one large wall piece such as a buffet in a specific design, a table of another, and chairs of still another contemporary design.

Following the contemporary approach to interior design, individuals desire to produce an individual "atmosphere" of various traditions. Influenced by this individualism and by prominant interior designers, many furniture manufacturers are relinquishing a one-style line in favor of diversified style groups. Matched collections are generally in small groupings, and most lines are of related but unmatched pieces, producing a style of many elements. As a result, by mixing and contrasting furniture of various shapes and sizes, materials and designs, colors and textures (118), manufacturers are producing traditional adaptation lines in which the pieces go together but do not necessarily look alike (Plates 17, 24).

As a part of this trend, the mixing of period and contemporary furnishings is widely utilized. Individuals seem to want "to preserve the past as well as . . . [select] from the present, to mix elements from several periods and places into a one-of-a-kind whole" (88, p. 10). Interior designer, David Weatherford explains that Americans are more susceptible to period mixing than Europeans:

> As well as being a melting pot of nationalities, this country also is an international melting pot of furnishing styles, ... And as Americans travel more and more, they see styles they want to incorporate in their homes. They see ways of combining the beauty of a past era with the simplicity of the new, creating something that is theirs alone (56, p. 14).

It is necessary, however, to know how styles relate to each other in order to blend a variety of styles. Expensive furniture and fabrics alone do not ensure an interesting interior, but a discriminating selection of all decorative arts can give a house its individuality. Whenever a contemporary focus is intended, it should be planned and should predominate. However, contemporary living does not necessarily mean living exclusively with contemporary furniture but allows for individual tastes. Personal taste in decorating does not have to be flamboyant and bizarre: taste "is less a preference for a particular style than a recognition of the good or bad in many styles--and combination of styles" (7, p. 58).

Thus, adaptations can accent a contemporary interior, but balance is very important. The whole room design must have lasting qualities because, if the novelty effect wears off, the interior might become a source of irritation. If there are too many adaptations, the whole interior may appear cluttered and "messy." As previously stated, many of the adaptations show a noticeable preoccupation with pretension and ornamentation, so that, if used at all, some would be appropriate only in rigidly interpreted period rooms with their own

style. However, some are not badly proportioned or scaled and are compatible with contemporary furniture.

A bridge between periods of design is necessary, and can be provided by simplicity and adherence to those aesthetic principles of design which stress restraint. Simplicity assures timelessness and depends upon subtle and sophisticated refinements rather than on garish embellishments. For simplicity, "A sort of elegant reticence is needed that is never stated and so never becomes 'old-hat'" (108, p. 164). If the details or motifs on the furniture are understated, the pieces fit better into contemporary interiors.

Therefore, contemporary pieces and traditional adaptations can be mixed if the selected adaptations relate to the simplicity of contemporary pieces. The adapted styles vary greatly from massive, heavily ornate Renaissance styles to the simpler versions of eighteenth century England. Generally, the latter types are more adaptable. Sheraton adaptations, for instance, have clean straight lines and unbroken geometric curves--more in harmony with a contemporary interior (Plate 39), for they repeat the contemporary emphasis on space rather than mass. Also, some of the Greek adaptations blend readily with contemporary in their use of plain surfaces and simple lines (Plate 1).

In another way, some adaptations can accent a contemporary interior by introducing a totally unorthodox element. In this way

variety can be achieved. The traditional adaptation can contribute nonconformity to the whole composition. If carefully chosen, it can give a dramatic impact to an interior. As Van Dommelen has stated: "In a modern room, it is exciting to see a traditional object placed in contrast to machine-oriented furniture. The contrast adds warmth, color and variety" (115, p. 207). It can gain stature by being transposed in time. Starting with contemporary designs, a consistent fabric or wall-covering can be added, the interior then augmented by a traditional adaptation. For example, Plate 58 illustrates a contemporary interior that skillfully combines two Hepplewhite chairs with a French influence and English walnut occastional tables as accents with the other contemporary furniture. One wall of the room is all window and sliding glass doors. Therefore, if just a few traditional adaptations are effectively and imaginatively used in a contemporary setting, they can be treated as accent pieces or "works of art [if they are well-designed and proportioned] rather than pieces of furniture" (56, p. 14). As another illustration, the use of a Mediterranean style credenza (Plate 12) in a contemporary interior could easily be the focal point. Accordingly, if the contrasting pieces are reserved for important emphasis, they need to be of especially good quality.

In a contemporary interior with these traditional adaptations, unity can be achieved if the interior has a plain background to subdue

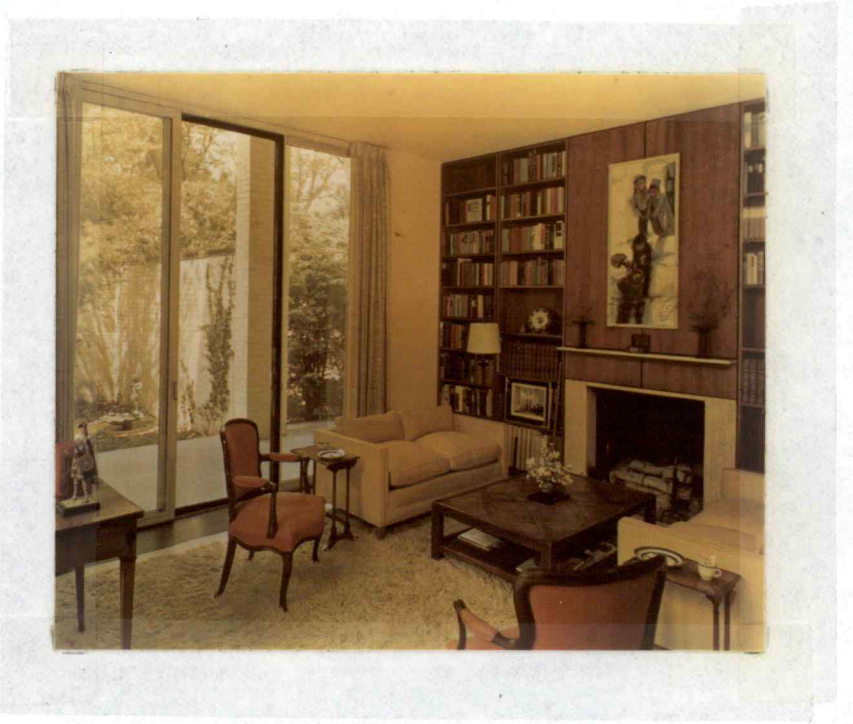


Plate 58. Adaptations with contemporary furniture and structure.

a heterogenous mixture of colors, shapes and styles. Colors, rhythmic designs, and patterns of fabrics and other articles must be carefully balanced with ornamentation of furniture. Other objects with too much color or pattern can very easily shift the focal point (115, p. 17). For a successful effect, dominant patterns (or colors) in other furniture should be kept to a minimum retaining the emphasis on the ornate or unusual adaptation. A resultant combination might be a purely contemporary room with homogenous materials of glass, metal and plastic contrasted with a nicely scaled and proportioned traditionally adapted secretary.

The scale of the adaptations is also very important when deciding on suitability. Van Dommelen had this to say about it:

> When large oversized pieces of furniture are used next to small delicate pieces, the eye is carried away from a delicate piece to a massive one, and there is no gradual movement of the eye as it passes around the room. Instead, it jumps and stops and often sees little of importance. Furniture pieces should be scaled equally, so that the eye will move quietly across the room from one object to another. Lines should be related to each other and to the surrounding factors (115, p. 5).

One way that the stylists have made the modern adaptations more compatible for our contemporary homes is to scale them down in size and select fewer embellishments; this portrays the general feeling and flavor of the traditional piece without dwarfing the contemporary interior. Its basic structure is then more in harmony with its architectural background. Adaptations of Chippendale and

Hepplewhite, for example, are smaller than their originals but produce approximately the same feeling of style.

On the other hand, many of the tall cabinets, armoires and buffets originally created for large, high-ceilinged rooms do not seem to be scaled appropriately for low-ceilinged contemporary domestic interiors. However, through its size, an adaptation can become the most dominant element in a room. Its dramatic shape and size, sometimes impossible to overlook, can be used as a focal point in rooms that lack a center of interest, such as a view window or fireplace (76). This is possibly the only way the large and elaborately detailed pieces can be used without creating a discrepancy in scale with contemporary interiors, and preferably only one piece would be selected.

It is this balance between unity and variety which is an important attribute of a living interior and which should be attempted when these adaptations are used. Unity can be carried too far and does not necessarily guarantee success. For example, when a homemaker purchases a suite of furniture, monotony can be the result because unity was carried to an extreme without adding a note of variety. Sameness and repetition of similar items are obvious methods of achieving unity but are also the least interesting methods, and if carried too far become monotonous (24, p. 79). However, Faulkner states that "rarely do homes have too much unity, and for those few

that do the simple remedy of introducing some marked variety gives them life" (24, p. 80). He goes on to say that one way to keep unity and variety hand in hand is to "establish a dominant theme, reinforced by one or more subordinate ones" (24, p. 81). A few compatible designs of traditional adaptations in a contemporary setting would be an illustration of this.

Thus, the introduction of more than one style of furniture can introduce individuality and variety in a contemporary interior. There are no rules or regulations which say that it cannot contain furniture of different periods or styles. Different styles can be put together very beautifully with care and understanding, but the principles of design must be utilized in order to create harmony.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the revival trends in furniture design during the period 1959-1969, and to understand the relationship of these adaptations to contemporary aesthetics or culture: a topic which has not been previously explored. The problem is dealt with in five specific aspects: (1) to ascertain the influences that caused the adaptations of historical styles; (2) to analyze the dominant furniture designs and to determine whether they have been modified relative to authentic pieces, and if so, in what way; (3) to recognize the contemporary style; (4) to gain a perspective of the use of adaptations in contemporary interiors; and (5) to help establish a criterion on behalf of the consumer for better furniture choice.

The information was obtained through the observation of general trends, not through a statistical method. It would have been an almost impossible task to designate facts which would provide calculations entirely supporting or contradicting the statements for such a method. Many qualifications and exceptions would have had to accompany each tally, since analysis in the arts is oftentimes subjective or personal. Because this study is obviously more subjective, it is hoped that the facts presented are organized and

explained well enough to maintain the purposes and conclusions of this thesis. An understanding of the design characteristics from the originals to the modern derivatives is useful for those who wish to select good design within their income range. Also, there is virtually no information readily available to the consumer relative to the appropriate selection of adapted furniture designs for contemporary architecture and interiors.

Data for this study were obtained by means of library research of newspaper and magazine articles, books, personal correspondence and furniture catalogs from various manufacturing companies. Within the thesis a written and photographic description documenting the characteristics of the adaptations to their originals and to a contemporary composition were used as a basis for analysis.

Important to an understanding of the furniture adaptations is an understanding by the consumer of possible reasons or influences that have contributed to this revival trend, particularly after so much creative design has been accomplished by outstanding designers in the contemporary field. Also, progress in techniques and new materials warrant the use of them in more honest, straightforward ways. The section in this thesis which dealt with the influences on the revival trend, revealed that the refurbishing of the White House during the early 1960's by Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy seems to have greatly contributed to the interest in traditional furniture by the

American population. Through further investigation a review of recently recorded surveys indicated that several other factors have also been influential. The revival phase, for example, coincides with restoration and reproduction projects in which manufacturers are permitted to copy and adapt antiques found in museums. Another reason is the apparent need of manufacturers to produce two collections each year, thereby establishing a scramble for new styles which will start major trends, and thus bring economic gains to the producer.

The actual desire for traditional styles may be reflected in the need to escape from the pressures of twentieth century living by seeking that sense of security which many believe was associated with the time of their grandparents. In addition, due to a lack of understanding of contemporary design, the popularity of traditional adaptations may show a psychological reaction against contemporary furniture.

The above comments offer reasons why most of the furniture shown at the markets during the 1959-1969 period have been based on traditional designs, after several decades in which contemporary design dominated the home furnishings market. An analysis of data revealed that the market offers furniture adaptations with influences dating back to Greek styling. Other general trends revert to the Renaissance period in Italy, Spain and England, as well as the

seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America. In all of these adaptations, the furniture designs tend to reflect characteristics of previous periods rather than reproduce exact copies of the originals, although the amount of resemblance varies a great deal. Though the adaptations bear this resemblance to furniture of the past, they are obviously made of new materials and produced by contemporary methods.

In a contemporary home, however, the problem is still to ensure that harmony results from a mixture of the adaptations and contemporary furniture. It has been found that one way the adapted designs blend more effectively in contemporary interiors is to stylize the patterns and to use brighter colors for the upholstery fabrics on the adaptations. Furniture wood tones of traditional adaptations are also generally selected in lighter hues, rather than the characteristic dark red eighteenth century mahoganies, to give a contemporary likeness.

These adaptations, however, should conform to a contemporary format, for it is perhaps appropriate that every age should produce its own designs and forms consistent with its philosophy of living. Therefore, it was found necessary to record briefly for the reader the development and basic philosophy of contemporary design, particularly in architecture, for it has been found that the prevailing architectural design throughout history has set the pattern for the

furniture.

The furnishings of the eighteenth century, for example, are highly ornate and functioned by fulfilling current ideas of elegance, dignity and exaggerated comfort. In the nineteenth century, when eclecticism was the accepted mode of design, there was little consideration of functional or structural problems, creating a falsification of forms. So in essence twentieth century design was a reaction against these forms of the Victorian era. The functional approach to design set the twentieth century apart from preceding historical periods, for after World War I design stressed the relationship between functionalism and aesthetics and created an illusion of space and unification of contemporary interiors and architecture.

There is little doubt that contemporary design will continue to innovate and will once again become popular. Contemporary architecture has altered the shape and purpose of rooms and has done much to abolish traditional decorating guidelines. But many stylists and/or manufacturers have so far failed to realize the significance involved in the development of a design criterion for our present-day mode of living. If, however, it is believed that the furniture of a period should complement the architectural structure, then twentieth century furniture designs should be used during the twentieth century. However, there is no reason to ignore the existence of traditional adaptations. The problem arises, however in their successful use.

Discretion has to be used in combining the formal characteristics of a bygone age with twentieth century living and, at the same time, to avoid the confusion of eclecticism.

The section in this thesis which deals with this problem showed that some adaptations might be suitable because they are similar in design to some contemporary pieces. If the details or motifs on the furniture are understated, for example, the adaptations are compatible with the simplicity of contemporary interiors. On the other hand, some adaptations can provide accent and variety in a room through introducing a totally unorthodox element. It was found that intricate detailing on a piece of furniture can contrast with the simpler rectangular planes of contemporary structures.

The evidence presented has shown that in the period from 1959-1969, the consumer has been given a variety of furniture styles from which to choose. Unfortunately, too often the consumer is deluded into buying furniture simply in terms of newness without consideration of design or function. From the available evidence, indeed, the home furnishings market presents a bewildering picture. Year after year, many new "fashions" for the furniture industry are brought to the market with a flourish. But the "fashions" are merely the result of designers modifying and combining motif of other styles as freely as their whim dictates. As a result, furniture store displays seem to be a conglomeration of oddly combined period adaptations, for it

appears that the furniture design field has no criteria for judgement on taste or compatibility of style. The trend seems to be to revive anything that looks old for the sake of being different.

The temptation to design something for this purpose can only result in an unhealthy attitude. It is unhealthy because it leads to a new vogue each season and concentrates on irrelevant details while avoiding real investigation of furniture purpose. Unfortunately there appears to be in America the conviction that the new and different product is better. This commercial attitude is allied to an affluent and expanding economy and means that any manufacturer who does not produce something new twice a year is liable to lose sales, despite the fact that ways of sitting or lying do not change with such chronological frequency. It is inexcusable for a designer to have to work with such a philosophy: he should work with the knowledge that for most people a house and its furnishings are the greatest investment of a lifetime and cannot be discarded easily for newer models.

Furniture which has nothing more than newness to distinguish it from the past will soon join its eclectic forebears in undistinguished obsolescence. The saleability of a design should not be the main criterion for its existence, but this appears to be the philosophy of the large companies, which do not wish to take the risk of new tools and time for major production changes. So it may be that the smaller

enterprises will have to make a bigger impression. The craftsman, after all, is still his own master working for a small audience who does not have to work within the findings of a market research department. As a result, his work is usually more personal, and as an artist who works with his hands and with small tools, he is generally more experimental.

The twentieth century is, however, a most exciting period to live in, but instead of relating to the times, many designers and/or manufacturers revert to the past. Many of the furniture pieces produced today are not related to present-day philosophy because they are over-embellished, and it is possible that ornamentation disguises a basic poverty of form. Gross imitations of materials take the place of an honest approach to design, while over-production in the mass market adds an obliteration and adulteration of materials, and a sense of cheapness creeps into the utilitarian household decorative arts.

Sales should therefore not be induced at the expense of aesthetic honesty and integrity. Instead, furniture should be based on honest, straightforward use of materials, with a closer relationship between designer and consumer. The consumer himself should have a greater understanding of furniture choice and thus a study such as this becomes important, for mistakes in furniture choices are not cheap.

When viewed objectively, therefore, the liabilities of these

adaptations can be seen. The inference is that the designers who adapt furniture from previous periods do not appear to be fulfilling twentieth century needs of function and the objectives of honesty in design and materials. If these adaptations have to go into a contemporary format and a person believes that the furniture for an era should reflect that age, then adaptations are not fulfilling contemporary objectives.

The home furnishings market, consisting as it does of vast quantities of traditional adaptations, does not appear to reflect contemporary needs and designs. It is, instead, over-designed with traditional styles which are ill-adapted for twentieth century living.

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Glossary

Adaptation - furnishings are marked as adaptations when the original appearance or dimensions of a piece of furniture or fabric have been altered in any way.

Antique - United States Customs regulations under the Tariff Act of 1930 defines an antique as anything made before 1830. This rather arbitrary classification is supposedly based on the year in which machine production, rather than handcraftsmanship, became customary. However, as of February 1, 1967, a new law took effect making one hundred years the arbitrary indication of antiquity (2).

Antiquing - The processes by which the furniture finish is altered to look old. Simulated worm holes, worn-off edges, acid baths, glazes to reduce surface brilliance may suggest an old quality (125, p. 245).

Borax - Colloquial for cheap, showy furniture, particularly intended for the installment trade. "Its style is generally a haphazard combination of many materials grotesquely adapted, featuring sheer weight and bulk" (1, p. 21), tasteless ornamentation and painted finishes. Construction is poor. Trickly nomenclature is used to sell.

Case goods - General term for the boxlike structure which forms the

shell of a chest of drawers, cabinet or desk.

Colonial - Indigenous to this country; furniture made by untrained laymen. Pieces show slight resemblance to Jacobean, William and Mary and Queen Anne styles.

Contemporary[1] - A rather broad category of furniture produced in our time; reflects the basic aesthetic concepts of present-day designs produced through the processes of social, economic and emotional changes. General characteristics may incorporate clean, curved lines in a graceul manner, elimination of inessential detail and ornamentation, utilization of new materials, modern methods of production and functionalism which excludes any piece that is not useful as well as beautiful and which emphasizes the proper use of machines and materials to create good designs. Honest and sincere use of materials are employed which bring out natural grains and color to best show the natural characteristics (125, p. 241).

Credenza - A low sideboard with doors and drawers.

Distressing - Finish designed to give apparent age to furniture, prematurely achieved through measures that include beating with

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[1] The terms contemporary and modern are rather difficult to define, because there is overlapping connotation and meaning. Individuals give them different interpretations and there is no agency to establish definitions that clearly mark the difference.

chains, stabbing with awls, or shooting with bee-bees.

Early American - The more elegant, formal American furniture assimilated from eighteenth century English designs.

Eclecticism - The method of using, blending and adapting at will the designs of any or several previous periods (1, p. 57).

Federal Period - Early American furniture between 1790 and 1810. At that time a federal government and federal political party were developed, and the federal city of Washington was constructed.

Fretwork or latticework - Wood either perforated or cut into decorative designs or geometric patterns.

Guilloche - Continuous running or band ornament of interlacing circles on furniture.

Mediterranean - Term applied to a blending of styles from various countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Modern - New and unusual proportions, lines, shapes, and present-day materials constitute this style; a style which has altered previous design characteristics without accentuating any particular period.

Plywood - The gluing of several layers of wood (veneers), arranged with the lengthwise grain in alternate directions, to the outer face of a core board. The face veneer is often selected for beauty of grain.

Provincial - Not a period of design but a conglomeration of styles developed by provincial craftsmen of a particular country, notably France. They translated the court styles of the nobility into simpler terms and materials.

Renaissance - or rebirth is applied to the decorative arts developed in the European countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was known as Italian Renaissance, Spanish Renaissance, French Renaissance and English Renaissance.

Reproduction - An object which has been made, in every exterior detail, exactly like the original in materials, line, form and color.

Styles - Occurred in a distinct design period and were often named for their originators or for a certain reign within that period. For the most part styles have overlapped and merged (125, p. 210).

Traditional - Where most of the essential ingredients and many of the sources are taken from the customs and case histories of past periods (87, p. 197).

Sources for Plates

Plate 1. Greek style chair (Klismos) with leather thongs on seat and original drawing from which design was taken.
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Plate 2. Fifteenth century Italian Renaissance X-chair.
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Plate 3. Early fifteenth century Italian Renaissance credenza (sacristy cupboard), Tuscany, 1490-1500.
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Viscaya collection of American of Martinsville Furniture Company, Martinsville, Virginia.

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Plate 6. Modern adaptation of Spanish Vargueño.
Spanish Classic collection of Broyhill-Premier Furniture Company, Lenoir, North Carolina.

Plate 7. Chairs of the sixteenth century Spanish Renaissance.
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Spanish Treasure collection of United Furniture Company, Lexington, North Carolina.

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Collage collection of Drexel Furniture Company, Drexel, North Carolina.

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Guildhall collection of Drexel Furniture Company, Drexel, North Carolina.

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Cross Countrée French collection of White Furniture Company, Melbane, North Carolina.

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Oblesby, Catharine. French Provincial decorative art. New York, Scribner's, 1951. p. 40.

Plate 21. Two-piece armoire, chairs and dining table are current adaptations of French Provincial style.
Country French collection of Baker Furniture Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Plate 22. Louis XV French Provincial side chair with cane seat and back.
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Plate 23. Early nineteenth century Italian chairs, French Directoire inspiration.
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Plate 25. Late eighteenth century Italian mahogany commode.
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Tribune collection of American of Martinsville Furniture Company, Martinsville, Virginia.

Plate 27. Queen Anne chair of circa 1705.
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Plate 28. Five drawer Queen Anne lowboy.
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Plate 29. Current adaptation of Early American Queen Anne style lowboy.
Signer's collection of Heritage Furniture Company, High Point, North Carolina.

Plate 30. Current adaptations of Chippendale style breakfront and Queen Anne style chairs.
Early American collection of United Furniture Company, Lexington, North Carolina.

Plate 31. An original Chippendale drawing of a breakfront.
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Plate 33. Ladder back, lightly carved chair circa 1760-75.
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Plate 34. Chippendale style sofa from the Winterthur collection.
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Plate 35. Current adaptation of Chippendale style sofa.
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Plate 36. A mahogany inlaid sideboard. Hepplewhite period.
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Plate 37. Current adaptation of a Hepplewhite style sideboard with brass gallery.
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Plate 38. Eight-legged Sheraton table.
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Plate 39. Current adaptation of Sheraton style table.
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Plate 40. Duncan Phyfe parlor or occasional table, circa 1800-15.
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Plate 41. Current adaptation of Duncan Phyfe style drum top table.
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B. Chest from Spanish Classic collection of Broyhill-Premier Furniture Company, Lenoir, North Carolina.

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Stendig Furniture Company, New York City, New York.

Plate 51. Side chair designed in 1928 by Marcel Breuer.
Stendig Furniture Company, New York City, New York.

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Faulkner, Ray and Sarah Faulkner. Inside today's home. 3d ed. New York, Holt, 1968. p. 6.

Plate 53. Typical traditional exterior facade of the eighteenth century.
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Plate 56. Formal eighteenth century Early American Georgian interior, circa 1768.
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