Nomads at a crossroads (X-roads): a framework for ethical design in South Africa

Duncan Reyburn

In our quest for respect, [we] designers spend a lot of time trying to muscle our way to center stage. Maybe we – and the rest of the world – would be better off if we spent less time worrying about the spotlight and more time worrying about all those people out there in the dark. – Michael Bierut (2007:229).

Introduction

In various discussions on design,[1] it is evident that the idea of competition is a central concern (Bonsiepe 2006: 27, Buchanan 1985:7, Lasn 2006:14, Margolin 2007:6). Owing to its rhetorical nature, design automatically fosters a culture of comparison,[2] and competition is merely its logical *dénouement*. Design frequently, if not primarily, deals with demonstrating to an audience that a single information product or brand is superior, and not just different, to another. This fact alone is not problematic. Design can often be used, however, to create a perceived hierarchy of difference where no actual hierarchy exists. This idea is perfectly sensible in a capitalistic culture, since competition and the creation of perceived difference are matters of economic survival. Nevertheless, the ethical implications of this competitive streak in design are clear when applied to the way cultures are represented in a complex communication context such as that of South Africa.

In particular, there are three ethical concerns that I wish to address in this article. The first ethical concern follows from Marian Sauthoff's (2004:41) observation that 'South African graphic design freely and generously uses and draws from its rich cultural and ethnic mix'. This allows for the indiscriminate use of imagery that 'often results in cultural forms, indigenous creative expressions, and visual traditions being symbolically devalued, commodified, and invested with alien meanings' (Sauthoff 2004: 41). This observation indicates that designers are able to and often assume a position of authorship or dominance over their subject matter that may not be rightfully theirs. One may be inclined to suggest that designers can either be shapers of culture (authors) or servants of culture (readers).

However, I would suggest that the designer's relationship to culture falls somewhere in the tension between the two, for designers both shape and serve culture, produce and consume culture, and inform and are informed by culture.

The second ethical concern stems from the first. When designers carelessly appropriate cultural symbols and forms, context is easily lost. Thus, complex cultural systems and problems are often oversimplified or stereotyped. For example, in South Africa, a country with eleven official languages and several dominant cultural groups[3] of different economic stations each vying for attention and allegiance, it is possible to represent inherent conflicts in terms of the self and the other, the subject and the object, or the viewer and the viewed. In more tangible terms, the struggle is often expressed in terms of binary opposites: rich and poor, white and black, oppressor and oppressed, the centre and the periphery (Reyburn & Viljoen 2008:1). Thus, for example, tensions between people of different races are reduced to being an issue of variance of skin colour, whereas the clash may more likely be the result of the misapprehension of multifarious cultural differences. If there is a communication solution to the conflicts that inevitably arise because of the differences of opinion that exist when different cultural groups meet, it will not be found in mere superficial polemical reductionism.

The third ethical concern is implicit in the first two. When one pulls cultural symbols out of context, thereby negating the inherent complexities of those symbols, one is more likely to impose hierarchies of difference that are both unfair and untrue. For example, it is one thing to represent wealth as being better than poverty, but it is quite another thing when one infers that the wealthy are better or of greater value than the poor: a statement concerning material wealth may be confused with a statement about individual worth.[4] It is one thing to suggest that black culture is different from white culture, but quite another to suggest that black culture is better or worse than white culture.[5]

These ethical concerns arise, I believe, from a misunderstanding not only of the role of design in South Africa but from a misunderstanding of the ontology of design in general. Therefore, this article has three primary aims. Firstly, it discusses how and why ethics and design are related. Secondly, it demonstrates that the nature of design is bound up in paradoxes. And, finally, it explains how these paradoxes, when kept in tension with each other, create an ethical framework for design praxis. A number of works from the *X-ings: Shaping culture through design* exhibition are referred to in order to substantiate the argument.[6] The discussion connects what is (the nature of design) with what *ought to be* (how design should operate), in accordance with Ayn Rand's (1964:18) contention that the 'fact that a living entity[7] is, determines what it ought to do'. At the outset, it should be noted that the proposed framework for ethical design suggests how design and its purpose may be understood, and as such allows for other possibilities and suggestions. This article is therefore conjectural or suppositional rather than purely prescriptive. Indeed, it can be argued that prescriptive ethics cannot be applied to design, since it is such a malleable practice.

Design::ethics[8]

Perhaps one of the most fascinating concerns in the history of design discourse revolves around how theorists have attempted to define *design*. As Martin Pawley observes, '[d]esign is a process that has been *variously defined* over the years, a process over which many different interest groups have claimed hegemony' (in Flusser 1999:7; emphasis added). Often the reason for the varied conceptions of design stems from how different fields apply the term (Baranauskas & Bonacin 2008:30). In addition, there seems to be some confusion concerning which taxonomy design may fall into: art, science, business, craft or language (McCoy 2001:3). The reason for this may be that design is an amalgam of art and craftsmanship (Narváez 2000:39). Moreover, it draws from various kinds of thinking that fall under the term 'design thinking' (Owen 2006:2-5).

While it is not practical to explore every possible definition of design here, I mention just a few definitions in order to highlight the verity of the above observation. The English word 'design' is derived from the Latin *designare* which means to *delineate, outline, depict, mark out,* and *contrive* (Mitcham 1995:173). Thus, at its heart, design implies the determination of limits or boundaries for any message. Design is also commonly understood, or possibly misunderstood, as mere *planning*, but can also be seen as synonymous with terms such as innovation, novelty,

origination, alteration, intervention, interface, progression, and domination (Julier 2007:40, Terzidis 2007:69-73). Richard Buchanan's (2001b:9) eloquent definition is more universally applicable: 'Design is the human power to conceive, plan, and realize products that serve human beings in the accomplishment of any individual or collective purpose'. However, Buchanan (2001b:9) admits that he, like many other theorists, tends to vary his use of formal and informal definitions of design depending on the context in which the definition is required. Consequently, broader definitions are easier to come by. Jorge Frascara's (2006:3) explanation that design aims to 'create conditions that favor the interpretation of a message in a certain (approximate) predictable direction' is one case in point. J Abbot Miller focuses on design's creative properties in his own rather more extravagant definition: 'Graphic design is a meta-language that can be used to magnify, obscure, dramatize, or redirect words and images. It can be powerful, elegant, banal or irrelevant. It is not anything at all but pure potential' (in White 2007:2).

Implicit in these definitions is the notion that design deals directly with how it may affect an audience. Thus, it resides within an ethics of consequentialism, meaning that the ethics of design is largely determined by its results or effects (Mitcham 1995:180). This idea is complemented by Frascara's (2001:17) view that design exists for three primary purposes: to support, facilitate and improve life. The first two of these purposes concern the material, functional aspects of human life. The final purpose, however, is where design reaches its apex, where human life is seen as more than a collection of mechanical operations. As Frascara (2001:17) mentions, this purpose of design includes the ethical and spiritual dimensions of design.

Carl Mitcham (1995:173) explains that ethics 'constitutes an attempt to articulate and reflect on guidelines for human activity and conduct'. The central idea in this definition is founded on a conceptual loop that exists in the relationship between thought and action: ethics is the translation of thought into action, but it is also the translation of action into thought. As Aristotle explains, the study of ethics depends on the practice of ethics (in Mitcham 1995:183); action and thought are thus inseparable. Consequently, even the material and functional aspects of human life that Frascara writes about are imbued with ethical purpose. The interconnection of thought (the nonmaterial) and action (the material manifestation of the nonmaterial) in culture is further elaborated by Luz María Jiménez Narváez (2000:38):

> As a dynamic expression, culture incorporates two processes: the material process – which is also symbolic – constituted by artifacts, tools, and environments produced by human beings, and the nonmaterial process, 'an idealized cognitive system – a system of knowledge, beliefs, and values – that exists in the minds of members of society.

Narváez (2000:38) explains that the material and nonmaterial processes are always interdependent, meaning that 'the presence of material culture relies on nonmaterial culture, and vice versa'. Design plays an open-ended role in the mediation of these two processes and is concerned with meeting material reality with subjective interpretation. As Frascara (2002) suggests, '[while] design has traditionally been concerned with objects and processes, we have to recognize the impact that those objects have on people'.

In light of the above, one might make the mistake of assuming that design is relativistic in nature. This is not and cannot be accurate, since relativism would assume two things that are not true of design: firstly, that design is solely driven by personal opinion and pure subjectivism, and secondly, that there are no means available to measure how design ought to be understood. Indeed, means are always available to guide design practice. Consequently, the available definitions of design all imply that it is *relational*, and is thus always reliant on external factors for its sense of purpose (Papanek 1995:7). In other words, design is concerned with how designed products and communications work in relation to both personal and public perceptions of any given communication context. This means that design is centred on a rather delicate balancing act between innumerable factors. As the next section demonstrates, however, it is this balancing act – especially pertaining to the tension between paradoxes in the nature of design – that helps to create an ethical framework that is neither too rigid nor too lax.

Design::paradox

The tensions that exist between various perspectives on the world within any communication context ought to encourage designers to constantly reflect on and review their assumptions concerning design praxis. After all, as Sauthoff (2004:38) suggests, the designer has a dual position both within and outside of a culture. In addition, design is mediation and consequently, I would argue, is bound to an array of paradoxes (Figure 1). These paradoxes are examined below in order to shed light on the nature of design, as well on the ethical role of design.

The first and most obvious paradox is found in the word *design*, which is both a noun and a verb, and thus refers to an artifact and an action, a product as well as a process. In common parlance, one may view the journey and the destination as separate, but the nature of design indicates that they are one. Design is the result of multiple causes and thus demands a variety of processes; design also results in unpredictable ends – an array of products (Buchanan 2001a:77) – and yet it operates within the bounds of human perception and experience. Thus design may be understood as that which is both infinite (or transfinite)[9] and finite – it allows for innumerable possibilities of imagination while working within the limited constraints of application and experience.

The second paradox in the nature of design, namely that it is both *adaptive* and *generative*, is observed by Wolfgang Jonas (2001:74). Stated differently, design is both derivative and creative (Terzidis 2007:74). It should not be one or the other, but always a combination of the two. Design draws from existing material, knowledge, scenarios and ideas in order to create new material, knowledge, scenarios and ideas. In doing so, design is forced to be both reflective/reflexive and predictive/projective. As a Janus-faced discipline, it looks back in order to look ahead. To quote Michael Bierut (2007:168), design is 'the fiction that anticipates the fact'. Within this paradox, design has no predetermined boundaries, since designers are always compelled to make their own choices concerning what to adapt and what to generate. And yet, as mentioned above, boundaries must be found or created in order to keep design relevant. The reason for this is that design is context-sensitive (Jonas 2001: 66), and is therefore compelled to operate within a semi-flexible framework of knowledge. As an interface between communicators and audiences, design is by necessity always caught in a tension between parties that may have differing, even conflicting, worldviews.

The third paradox in the nature of design is that it is an interdisciplinary discipline (Friedman 2003:508); it gains knowledge from other disciplines in order to inform its own praxis. Design is an integrative discipline that is concerned with the synthesis of ideas and behaviours (Buchanan 2001a:14; Dorst 2006:10; Jonas 2001:66). As such, design is forever entwined in a process of negotiation. By definition, negotiation pertains to a course of action in which various viewpoints are considered before a final decision is made (Eco 2003:6). This course of action implies the search for compromise. In other words, once again there is no absolutely fixed, definable end. Horst Rittel (1973:6) explains that this is one facet of the 'wicked problems' nature of design. In a sense, this paradox makes design both purposeful and arbitrary: purposes are met through directed but non-specific decisions.

The fourth paradox, and another one that is often written about on the nature of design, is that it is both theoretical and pragmatic. It concerns not only making things but thinking about making things. Design is a praxiological discipline, one that constantly explores the relations of theory to practice and practice to theory. In relation to the third paradox, design theory draws from design's interdisciplinary nature. Design's own epistmological construction therefore tends to draw a great deal from preexisting theories that are found beyond design discourse (Friedman 2003:508).

Both theory and practice fall within the realm of knowledge. Theory concerns pure knowledge (Gk. *gnosis*) while practice is applied or experiential knowledge (Gk. *epignosis* or *doxa*). Practical knowledge then feeds back into theory. It is this tension-paradox that makes design particularly special; one can know internally *about* something in an abstract sense, but knowledge runs deeper when it is based on the communion between the internal and the external world of people, between thought and action, understanding and experience.[10] The level of experience also affects the relationship between theory and practice.

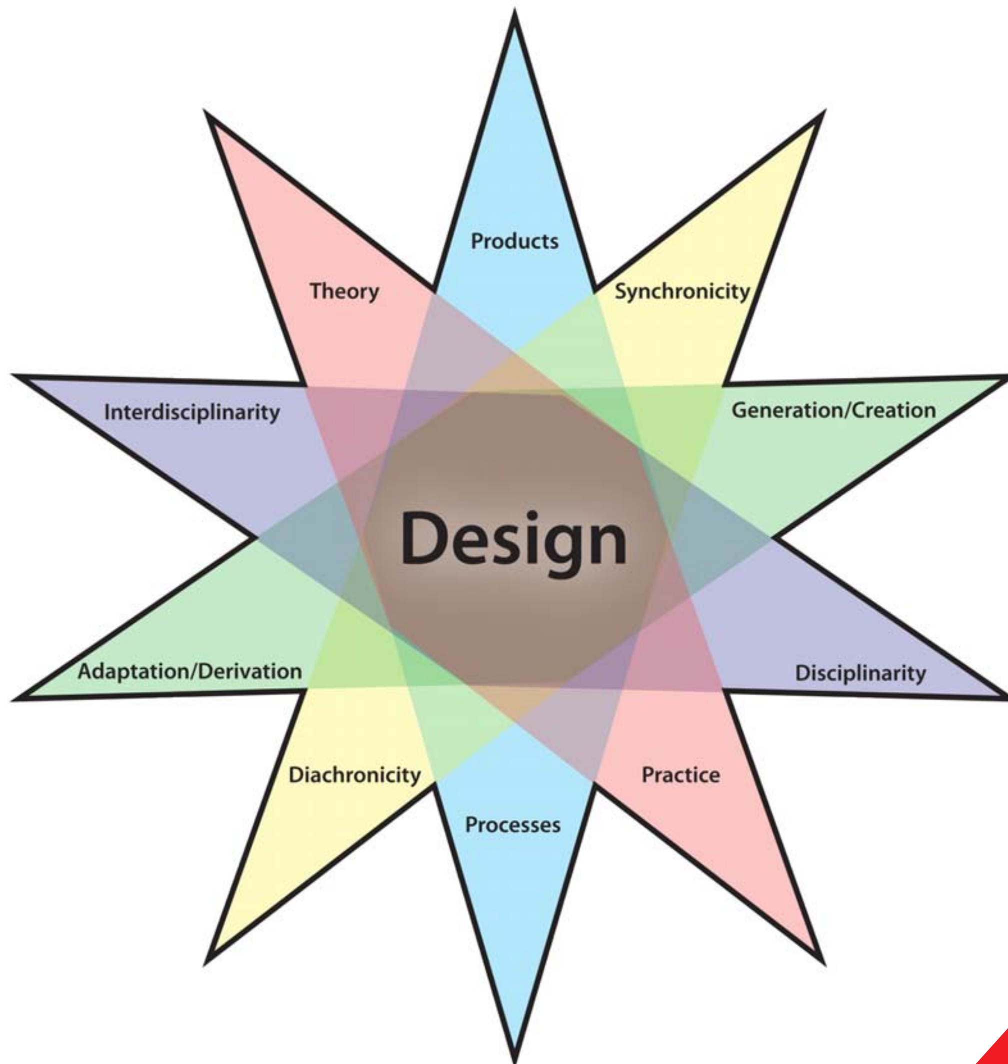

Figure 1: The paradoxes of design. The diagram indicates that one cannot define design apart from the paradoxes that are inherent in the design discipline.

The fifth and final paradox in the nature of design to be discussed here, and one that should be held in balance with the second paradox, is that it is both synchronic and diachronic. In other words, design can be understood as part of an ongoing continuum, informed by history and its own anticipative nature, as well as that which may be understood at any isolated point in time. It is the present text that points to an ongoing historical context. Design is a discipline that operates in the present continuous tense. The application of this is that designers ought to be compelled to be aware of how their work stands in historical context, as well as how their work stands alone, apart from its historical context: its contextual value is thus held in tension with its intrinsic value. The first awareness of value concerns whether the designed communication/object is appropriate or suitable, and the second awareness of value concerns whether or not the designed product succeeds in meeting the parameters set out at the start of a project.

In considering the above paradoxes, one might conclude, to borrow from the rhetoric of postmodern philosophers, that design is best understood as that which is beyond any isolated definition, or at the very least as a practice/theory that cannot be delineated in purely stable or linear terms. Design, far from being a fixed thing is concerned with framing things. Design is not a *what*, but a *how*. It is concerned with finding ways and means of communication that are suitable in specific instances. As Richard Buchanan (1995:13) notes, 'many designers are engaged in rethinking the nature of products – communicative symbols and images as *well* as physical objects – in the context of action'. These methods or actions may or may not change over time, meaning that uncertainty is at the heart of design theory and practice. In other words, the *being* of design is always bound to the *becoming* of design. The means of design are tied to the unforeseen ends of design.

Guy Julier (2007:40) observes that design's meaning is 'much contested' and argues that 'the debate concerning its origins is unlikely to be resolved given the breadth of interpretations that the word takes'. I would suggest, however, that the various seeming contestations of the definition of design arise from misunderstanding the nature of design. Design is not a thing to be confined to fixed definitions, nor should any given definitions be seen as refutations of previous definitions. As the above definitions of design indicate, design is a normative concept: it adapts in accordance with how it is needed. Design is nomadic, rather than predetermined.

To summarise the above, the nature of design may be understood as being noun/verb, artifact/action, process/product, infinite/finite, adaptive/generative, derivative/creative, reflective/predictive, reflexive/projective, disciplinary/interdisciplinary, thesis/synthesis, purposeful/arbitrary, face/interface, theoretical/pragmatic, synchronic/diachronic, text/context, and finally being/becoming.

Paradoxes::ethics

These paradoxes are of little or no significance unless there is some concrete application to design praxis, and the application is this: it is in the tension between such paradoxes that the ethical practice of design is best understood. This idea is borrowed from the French philosopher Simone Weil (1949:12), who explains that human needs are 'arranged in antithetical pairs and have to combine together to form a balance'. Weil (1949:12) expands on this idea by means of three short examples: 'Man requires food, but also an interval between his meals; he requires warmth and coolness, rest and exercise'.

The above paradoxes express one of the most fundamental characteristics of design: it is primarily a means to an end, and as such is amoral or, as Weil (1952:52) would say, 'something other than good'. However, as Weil (1952:52) suggests, when a means is set up as an end, it is 'further from the good': the amoral becomes immoral, the non-ethical becomes unethical. In addition, it is the end or purpose of design that justifies the means. If the purpose is ethically dubious, the means is imbued with an unethical status. The medium is thus held accountable for the message. It is Marshall McLuhan's (1964:15) assertion that the 'medium is the message' that I am acknowledging here. While McLuhan does not refer directly to design, I believe his discussions on the role and purpose of a medium do have some implications for ethical design. Specifically, McLuhan (1964:15) argues that any medium, as an extension of human beings, has both personal and social consequences.

To determine how the above paradoxes help to create an ethical framework for design praxis, it is useful to hypothesise scenarios in which one facet of each paradox is absent or disproportionately present. For example, where design is a process without a product, there is a loss of purpose or design intent. When too much emphasis is placed on product, there is a loss of meaning. Where design is adaptive or derivative without being creative, there is a loss of innovation as well as a loss of authorial respect. Where design is more reflective than predictive, relevance to a changing world is lost.

Indeed, the most common measure found in an ethical framework informed by the above paradoxes is that of relevance or appropriateness. Appropriateness is central to ethics because it is shaped by and for a chosen context. Appropriateness relates to context on three levels: firstly temporal or historical, secondly socio-cultural and thirdly global. Simply put, what is appropriate in one context may not be appropriate in another. Perhaps this is why Bierut (2007:49) believes that 'context is everything' and why branding guru Seth Godin (2007:94) observes that people do not relate to facts unless those facts are contextualised.

Because contexts are variable, relevance or appropriateness is a principle rather than a rule, to borrow from a distinction made by Robert McKee (1999:3). A rule demands a fixed, black-and-white, yes-or-no solution, whereas a principle sets boundaries within which a solution will work. One may propose that a principle is a rule that has been humanised. It suggests a direction without determining the final destination. Design, as a humanistic enterprise, is based on principles and not rules. Thus, it is unlikely that an ethical framework for design would operate any differently.

The above paradoxes also point to what Weil (1949:10) argues is the most important human need, namely, the need for order. She defines order as 'a texture of social relationships so that no one is compelled to violate imperative obligations in order to carry out other ones' (Weil 1949:10). A balanced state is an ordered state in which antithetical needs are both fully satisfied in turn (Weil 1949:12). While Weil may not be referring to design, her contentions here are helpful for understanding the place of ethics in design. To design is to create order. To design ethically is to create order that is appropriate, relevant, respectful and sensitive to context. However, there is one proviso: in order for the audience to understand the designer's ethical intention, that intention needs to be communicated. If imagery or symbolism is re-appropriated and re-contextualised, one cannot assume that the audience will automatically understand the reason for the use of that imagery or symbolism.

An application of the above ideas is found in Iaan Bekker's design of the new South African national coat of arms (Figure 2) that was launched on April 27, 2000. The coat of arms draws from a number of symbols, giving them a new context. Western symbols, such as wheat for fertility and growth and the rising sun for rebirth and natural energy, are amalgamated with African symbols, such as the elephant tusks for wisdom, strength and moderation, to create a rich, meaning-filled symbol for the country. Traditional symbols have been given a new, weightier relevance. The coat of arms lives up to the philosophy expressed by the Khoisan words *!ke e: /xarra //ke* inscribed at the base of the coat of arms, which when translated mean *in diversity we unite*. The intention behind the design is clear, but the symbols may not necessarily be so. For this reason, the South African government has made a downloadable document and poster available to the South African public to facilitate interpretation. Thus, it appears that educating the audience is a vital part of communicating design intent.

Paul Hinch's and Nathan Reddy's *Lekgotla* visual identity (Figure 3) is another, simpler example of an application of the above ideas on ethical design. The corporate identity refers to three African symbols: a three-legged pot, a drum and the fire of the traditional meeting circle. These symbols, enhanced by the use of African pattern, are given a new context that reflects the original context of a gathering or meeting. In doing so, the visual identity pays homage to tradition. In the above two examples, the maintained tension between design's adaptive and generative, reflective and predictive, synchronic and diachronic, as well as textual and contextual nature are particularly evident.

The use of cross-cultural symbolism is not the only application of the above ideas on ethical design. Indeed, one may appropriate such ideas even when creating work

for one's own socio-cultural context. A fine example of how this is done is found in the form of Asia Matuszak-Masters's and Joanna Peters's *Afrokaans* branding campaign (Figure 4). The campaign centres on newly created symbols that play on the direct translation of Afrikaans words (such as *kameelperd*) into English (*comb/giraffe*). The effect, paradoxically, is that the campaign both pokes fun at the Afrikaans language and highlights its rich, expressive nature. It also comments on the dissolution of the tension that once existed between Afrikaans- and English-speaking people in South Africa. Once again, it is evident that in creating a visual appeal and conceptual impetus for the campaign, the designers have been careful to pay attention to notions of appropriateness and respect, albeit with a touch of humour.

Finally, before concluding, I would like to acknowledge the fact that that to some extent the concepts discussed here concerning an ethical framework for design in a

Figure 2: Iaan Bekker, 2000.
Stationery applications of the National Coat of Arms of South Africa **(*X-ings* 2008).**

Figure 3: Nathan Reddy and Paul Hinch. 2005.
Legotla: the dining room at Nelson Mandela Square, South Africa **(*X-ings* 2008).**

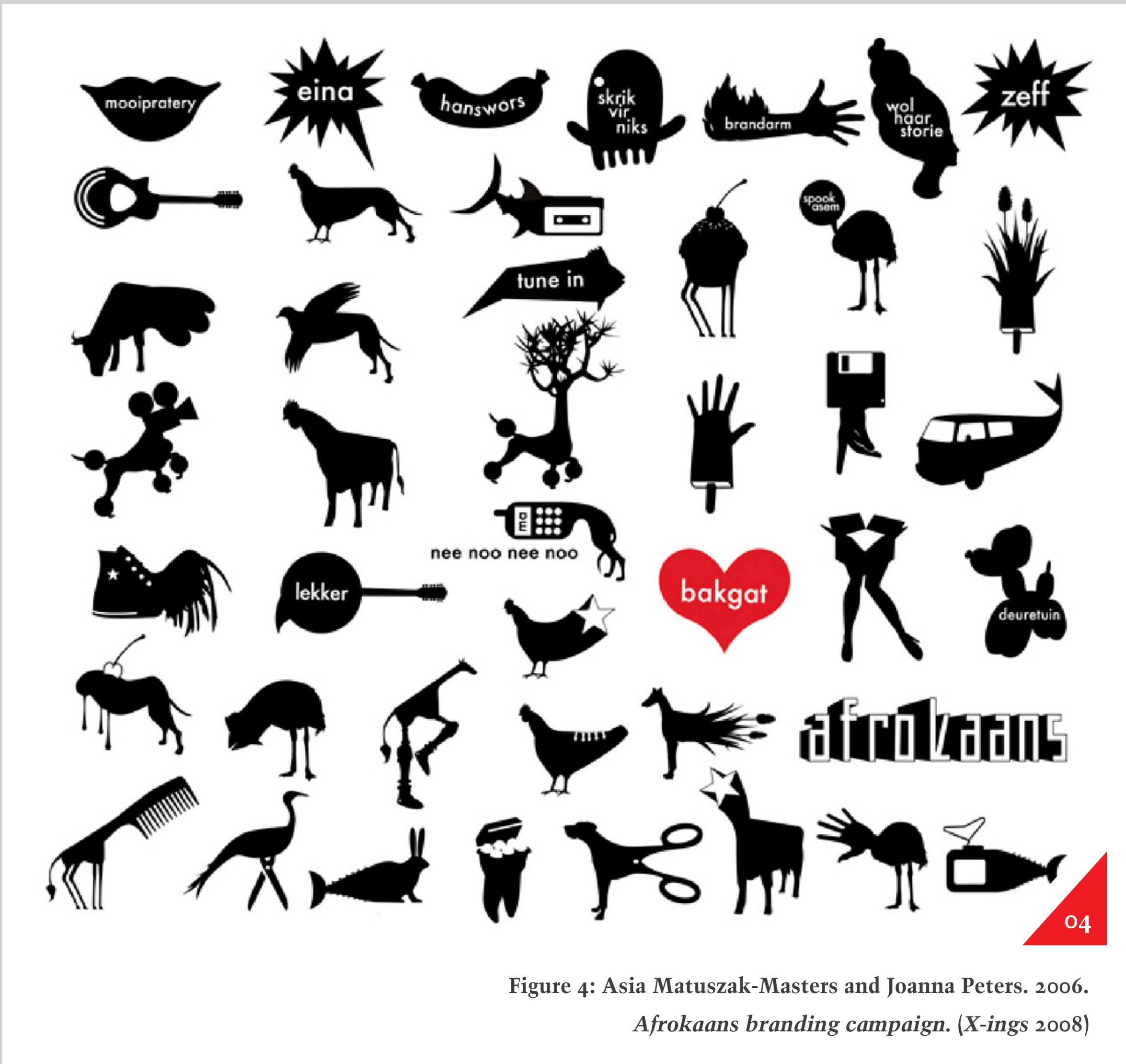

Figure 4: Asia Matuszak-Masters and Joanna Peters. 2006.
Afrokaans branding campaign. **(*X-ings* 2008)**

multi-cultural landscape are already evident in the approaches of many South African designers. Indeed, it has been my aim to present an argument that brings certain implicit ideas in design praxis to light. Notions of what is good and what is right in ethics are not new, and yet, when re-addressed and re-applied, it seems that neither are they too old.

Conclusion

I would argue that nowhere are designers called to be more creatively nomadic and adaptable than in a rich, multi-cultural social context such as that of South Africa. Such a mixed cultural milieu ought to encourage a sense of context-sensitivity in the designer. Nonetheless, as suggested at the outset of this article, designers are not always aware of the ethical implications of their use of a wide range of available images, styles and symbols from such an array of visual traditions. This, I contended, is due, at least in part, to the fact that designers misunderstand the nature of design, and consequently they misunderstand their own role as designers. I would suggest, in accordance with what I have argued, that if designers are more aware of the tensions that exist in the paradoxical nature of design, they will be more likely to create ethical communication design. It was established that ethical design involves the creation of order that is appropriate, relevant, respectful and sensitive to context.

Design in South Africa has a long way to go before it becomes truly cross-culturally communicative. Thomas Oosthuizen (2004:63) contends that very few designers in South Africa are creating communication that is cross-culturally applicable. At the very least, South African designers ought to strive to create design that is cross-culturally sensitive. As was evident in the examples discussed, it is possible to use symbols in such a way that they gain additional weight and new relevance. But this requires a fair amount of discernment on the part of the designer.

At the outset of this article, I mentioned the fact that design exists to create difference. This, I believe, stems from the fact that difference is inherently part of being human. However, as Weil (1949:16) contends, 'the inevitable differences among men ought never to imply a difference in the degree of respect'.

Notes

1 While many of the authors referred to in this paper use the word 'design' to refer to a range of design disciplines, including industrial and engineering design, my use of the word primarily concerns communication or graphic design.

2 Language as the primary medium of design creates meaning by establishing difference (Fourie 1996:38; Robinson 1999:40). Meaning is thus created by the affirmative (what is said) and by the negative (what is implicit or unsaid).

3 While language and culture are mentioned separately here, the link between the two needs to be acknowledged. Christine Anthonissen and Russel Kaschula (1995:14, 21) argue that while culture and language are not inseparable, culture is certainly reflected in language. In addition, Anthonissen and Kaschula (1995:21) explain that it is not enough to merely speak the same language in order to communicate; an understanding of the broader context of a culture is imperative. An in-depth discussion on the implications of this observation goes beyond the scope of this article.

4 The Virgin Money campaign (2007) released on South African television and cinema screens is a case in point. While apparently humorous in the representation of audacious wealth, Virgin propagates materialism without any reference to ethics or human character.

5 The advertising campaigns of Metro FM by Johannesburg-based Network BBDO have been known to walk a dangerous line on this particular issue. Aimed at an audience comprising mainly twenty-something black people, Metro FM's strategy is to express the celebration of 'blackness'. In doing so, however, Metro FM has been known to take 'black pride' to a level of what may be termed 'black arrogance'. In one commercial, called 'Beat' released in 2000, a reinvented beat-poet exclaims, 'I am the beat, the original beat, the black beat, the beat that began it all'. If one were to employ a commutation test on this commercial, replacing the word *black* with the word *white*, the problematics of such a representation become evident.

6 The *X-ings: Shaping culture through design* exhibition, the first exhibition of its kind in South Africa showcased work by South African designers over the last three decades, all of whom have studied or taught information design at the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria. The exhibition ran during May 2008.

7 I am suggesting that design is in fact such a 'living entity' since it is inextricably connected to the life of people.

8 The use of the double colon or reversible colon is explained by fiction writer Jonathan Safran Foer (2005:7) as follows: 'Unlike the colon, which is used to mark a major division in a sentence, and to indicate that what follows is an elaboration, summation, implication, etc. of what precedes, the 'reversible colon' is used when what appears on either side elaborates, summates, implicates etc. what is on the other side. In other words, the two halves of the sentence explain each other'.

9 The difference between what is infinite and what is transfinite is a subtle one. While both concern what is apparently limitless, transfinitude refers to any number of possibilities within set constraints. For example, the number of *five-digit* combinations on a ten-digit keypad is transfinite. With the 'five-digit' constraint removed, the number of combinations on a ten digit keypad is infinite.

10 The English language does not have a word to expressly indicate a particularly deep, profound lived through experience as opposed to any simple, straightforward, everyday experience. However, the German language does. The word *erafahrung* can be used to refer to the later type of experience, whereas the word *erlebnis* beautifully connects life *(leben)* to action, thus referring to the former type of experience.

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