

Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Insights: Unraveling Wuyi's Furniture Design from Late Qing to Republic Era

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Abstract

Furniture utilised by the Overseas Chinese in the Five Yiyi region during the latter years of the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China can be classified under the Guangzuo furniture category, constituting an integral component of contemporary Chinese furniture. The aforementioned entity possesses considerable cultural significance. One must duly recognise that the traditional culture of the Five Yiyi region has encountered significant influence due to the presence of overseas Chinese, alongside the pervasive impact of advanced Western technological culture and distinctive ethnic customs. An issue arises with a dearth of information about Wuyi furniture design. This study explores pertinent theories and past empirical pertaining to Wuyi furniture design. It is entirely grounded in qualitative methodology. The data was collected through an in-depth semi-structured interview. Purposive sampling was employed in the selection process of a distinguished scholar. Simultaneously, snowball sampling was employed to ascertain an optimal interview sample. The duration of the interview was 200 minutes. The aforementioned findings put forth two theories and Chinese Design. The findings hold significant importance with regard to references. The aforementioned statement posits that there are significant ramifications for forthcoming scholars in art and design when engaging in the practice of referencing literature reviews.

Keywords: Wuyi, Furniture Design, Theories, Past Empirical

Introduction

As an essential period of China's transition from an ancient monarchy to a modern state, the modern transformation of the coastal regions, including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Tianjin, and the Wuyi area, has been the subject of extensive attention by scholars for examining the socio-historical changes in China's modern era as well as the historical process of China's integration into globalisation (Wu, 2016).

Located on the coast of Guangdong, China, the Wuyi region, also known as "Wuyi", comprises five county-level administrative districts, namely Heshan, Xinhui, Taishan, Enping and Kaiping, and was an important node on the Maritime Silk Road. In modern times, many people migrated overseas due to war and natural disasters. Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan compatriots in Wuyi are now in 192 countries and regions in Europe, North and South America, Oceania and Southeast Asia. A large number of immigrants frequently travelled to and from North America, Southeast Asia, Europe, and China, which led to an intense collision and intermingling of overseas and local cultures, forming the unique overseas Chinese culture of Wuyi during this period (Hu, 2014). Overseas Chinese sent back to the Wuyi area the considerable wealth they earned from their work using overseas remittances and silver letters. They used the money to plan villages, build houses, set up businesses, build railways, and hold public welfare activities (Liu, 2022). At this time, a large number of Chinese and Western fusion characteristics of the towers, riding towers, the formation of a peculiar architectural landscape, "Kaiping Watchtower and Village" as a representative of the local culture was recognised by the United Nations as a World Heritage Site (Du, 2005).

The architectural heritage, history and culture of Wuyi diaspora hometowns have long been the focus of researchers (Shi, 2012). However, in recent years, scholars have also advocated a focus on the microcosmic and everyday life domains (Chen, 2023; Shen, 2023). In addition to their rich architectural heritage culture, Wuyi diaspora villages have produced a rich and diverse design culture daily. On the one hand, they have been imbued with traditional Chinese culture for generations and have a heavy national cultural complex; on the other hand, the overseas Chinese have lived abroad for a long time, and the advanced science and technology culture of overseas societies as well as the very different ethnic flavours have also brought them a significant impact, resulting in the formation of a unique design that integrates local and overseas styles. Furniture is one of the most common and distinctive appliance designs. Modern Wuyi Overseas Chinese Furniture is part of modern Chinese Republican furniture design, but few researchers have turned their attention to them. Modern Wuyi Overseas Chinese Furniture has the uniqueness of the era and the region in terms of design style, and at the same time, reflects the cultural identity, aesthetic concepts, and lifestyle changes of the residents of the Overseas Chinese Townships, which reflects the process of integration of the Overseas Chinese Townships of Wuyi into the process of globalisation and the process of cultural exchanges in the period (Chen & Fu, 2022).

In fact, the furniture of Wuyi Overseas Chinese during the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China belongs to a part of modern Chinese furniture. A relatively systematic study on modern Chinese furniture has been formed, but the results are more concentrated in the big coastal cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou. With the deepening of the research, modern Chinese furniture from other regions has gradually aroused the interest of researchers and has been included in the research system of modern Chinese furniture (Dai & Wang, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

The temporal epoch spanning from the twilight of the Qing Dynasty to the advent of the Republic of China represents a pivotal juncture in the metamorphosis of Chinese society, wherein the nation transcended the confines of its conventional feudalistic structure and embarked upon a trajectory towards modernity. The topic at hand has garnered considerable scholarly scrutiny. Throughout this particular epoch, China found itself subjected to the

formidable influence of Western ideologies and cultural paradigms. Henceforth, it is imperative to scrutinise the epoch in question as a pivotal juncture for investigating the proliferation of contemporary globalisation, as well as the confluence and interplay of Eastern and Western cultural paradigms. In recent years, there has been a growing interest among scholars in the field of design, both domestically and internationally, to delve into the design culture of modern China, specifically from the late Qing dynasty to the Republican period. This particular lens of inquiry has been employed to examine China's societal metamorphosis and its cultural amalgamation within a global context (Zhang, 2017).

The period of time from the decline of the Qing Dynasty to the establishment of the Republic of China is a significant turning point in the transformation of traditional Chinese furniture into a modern form. During this epoch, a confluence of traditional Chinese furniture elements and Western influences engendered a distinctive manifestation of modern Chinese furniture, thereby ushering in a novel stylistic paradigm. While it is true that the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Region may not possess the same level of influence as prominent cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin, or Guangzhou, it is imperative to recognise the significance of modern Wuyi Overseas Chinese Furniture in shaping and redefining contemporary lifestyles and societal values. Furthermore, it serves as a conduit for the investigation of the intricate interplay between a specific geographic area and the phenomenon of globalisation within the temporal confines under scrutiny. By doing so, it facilitates the comprehension of the intricate trajectories of cultural dissemination and the various modalities of interaction that transpire during this epoch. The citation provided, namely Chen et al. (2015), serves as a reference to support the statements made in the preceding text.

One of the issues at hand pertains to the domain of furniture research spanning from the late Qing to the Republican era. It is worth noting that scholars have predominantly directed their research endeavours towards the major coastal cities, namely Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou (Gerth, 2016; Wang, 2016). Consequently, a comprehensive investigation has been undertaken with regard to Haipai furniture, Jinpai furniture, and Guangzuo furniture during the aforementioned historical epoch. Nevertheless, it is imperative to allocate a greater degree of focus towards the advancement and progression of furniture within certain geographically isolated areas. Therefore, the researcher's personal interest and motivation serve as the impetus for undertaking the present study. There exist two primary inquiries that necessitate resolution, specifically:

- i) What are the pertinent theoretical frameworks associated with the domain of Wuyi furniture design?
- II) What are the significant past empirical pertaining to the domain of Wuyi furniture design?

Literature Review

The progression of a particular subject is propelled forward through the meticulous synthesis of antecedent investigations, wherein the logical amalgamation of said studies is predicated upon the discernible findings of aforementioned studies (Kumar et al., 2019). The utilisation of literature reviews as a research methodology, as expounded upon by Snyder (2019), holds considerable merit in its capacity to make substantial contributions to the conceptual, methodological, and thematic advancement across various domains, as elucidated by Hulland and Houston (2020). Review papers, as defined by Bem (1995), encompass the indispensable task of conducting critical evaluations of previously published studies. These evaluations serve as a means to assess the merits and limitations of the existing body of research in a given field. Included within the repertoire of scholarly works are various

forms of comprehensive analyses, such as systematic reviews and meta-analytical reviews, which delve into the realm of quantitative effects, among other pertinent subjects. Review articles meticulously ascertain and amalgamate pertinent literature in order to juxtapose and discern the discoveries of antecedent investigations within a specific field. Review articles serve as a valuable resource for readers, offering them an up-to-date comprehension of the research topic at hand. In addition, these articles aid in the identification of research gaps and serve as indicators for potential future research directions.

It is of considerable significance to acknowledge that a multitude of research papers have been disseminated employing conventional theories, measures, and methodologies. One of the paramount objectives of a review article entails the discernment and elucidation of crucial lacunae in research. This is accomplished by scrutinising the prevalent employment of constructs, theories, and methodologies across diverse settings, as well as the specific contexts in which studies have been conducted, encompassing both industrial and national domains. In accordance with scholarly convention, the authors of a seminal review article aptly furnish guidance for prospective investigations, alluding to innovative and original concepts, theories, metrics, methodologies, and unexplored research inquiries. Henceforth, it is imperative to acknowledge that a review article possesses the capacity to function as a fundamental framework upon which future research endeavours can be constructed. The objective was established with the intention of dissuading researchers from employing redundant and abundant theories and methodologies in a repetitive manner.

A meticulously constructed literature review article possesses the inherent capacity to function as a foundational platform, a discerning lens, or a dynamic springboard for forthcoming research endeavours. This is primarily due to the article's explicit and comprehensive synthesis of contemporary knowledge, its discerning identification of research lacunae, and its thought-provoking propositions for novel avenues of investigation within a specific domain of scholarly inquiry. These propositions are formulated with due consideration to the methodological approaches employed, the constructs or variables under scrutiny, the theoretical frameworks utilised, and the contextual factors that shape the research landscape. In a comparable vein, the utilisation of theoretical models, which are formulated as an integral component of literature review investigations, can be employed by both scholars and professionals as frameworks or perspectives in their respective research endeavours, employing either quantitative or qualitative methodologies and/or practical applications. Consequently, subsequent to their publication, these works typically assume a highly esteemed and commendable status within the realm of scholarly literature. This scholarly investigation delves into pertinent theoretical frameworks and conducts a comprehensive review of significant prior empirical research. The primary objective is to offer valuable insights for the purpose of bridging the existing gap in Wuyi furniture design.

Methodology

The present study utilises a qualitative research methodology. In the pursuit of acquiring pertinent theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence from a distinguished academician, the utilisation of purposive and snowball sampling techniques is employed to discern a singular scholar who exhibits exceptional suitability for an interview. The present discourse shall expound upon the criteria and procedures employed in the identification of a singular sample.

Table 1

Sampling Criteria (Inclusion and Exclusion)

Inclusion	Exclusion
PhD holder in Art and Design	Diploma, bachelor and master degree in Art and Design
Concurrently occupying a teaching position at a distinguished university	Do not occupy a teaching position at a distinguished university
Accumulating over a decade of profound expertise in the field of furniture design.	Do not accumulate over a decade of profound expertise in the field of furniture design.
Actively engaged in the furniture design industry.	Passively engaged in the furniture design industry.
Expertise in managing projects with a valuation surpassing 1 million RMB.	Not an expertise in managing projects with a valuation surpassing 1 million RMB.
Authorship of publications featured in high-indexed academic journals.	No authorship of publications featured in high-indexed academic journals.

In light of the aforementioned sampling criteria, it is imperative for the researcher to employ the method of snowball sampling in order to discern the appropriate scholar for inclusion in the study. The aforementioned process necessitates a duration of three months in order to successfully ascertain a singular scholar who meets the criteria for subsequent interview. The presented visual representation delineates the sequential steps involved in the sampling procedures.

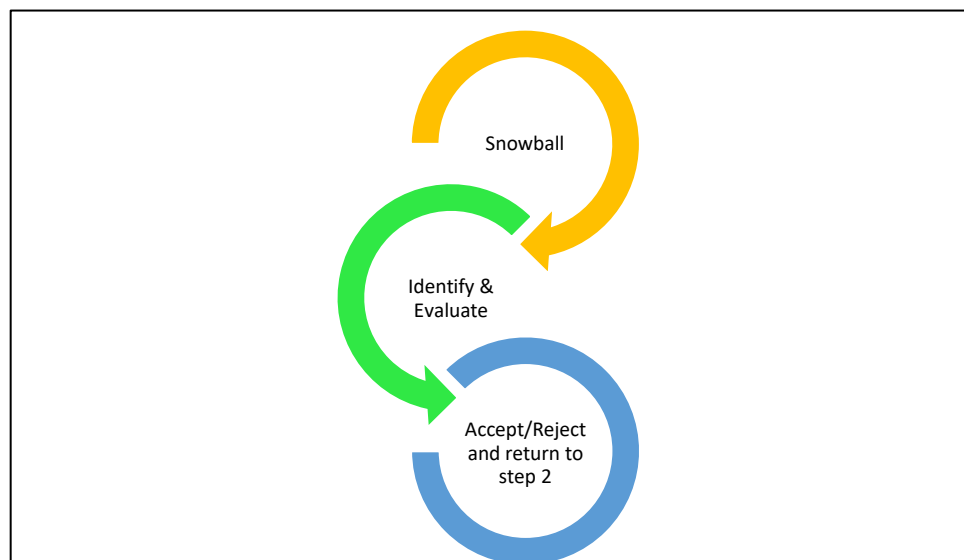


Figure 2. Sampling Procedures

With reference to Figure 2, the researcher employed the snowball sampling technique to ascertain an appropriate academician. Each suggestion undergoes an evaluation process that adheres strictly to the inclusion criteria outlined in the sampling criteria. Over the course of a three-month period, the diligent researcher successfully identified a total of thirteen esteemed scholars. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that among the various Professors under consideration, there exists a solitary individual who satisfies all the specified criteria, with the

exception of having publications in esteemed, high-indexed journals. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the aforementioned sample exhibits a commendable collection of publications within esteemed indexed-journals. After careful deliberation, it has been determined that the aforementioned sample has been chosen for the purpose of conducting an interview. The data has been meticulously analysed and subsequently presented in the findings section, alongside pertinent theoretical frameworks and previously established empirical evidence.

Findings

The first research question posits: What are the pertinent theoretical frameworks associated with the domain of Wuyi furniture design? Two theories have been proposed. First and foremost, we are discussing the theory pertaining to the analysis of image forms. The present research questions aims to undertake an examination of the design attributes inherent in the furniture produced during the transitional period spanning from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China in Wuyi Overseas Chinese Township. This study endeavours to elucidate the underlying visual forms and images that manifest within said furniture. Wolfring's method of formal analysis and Novelsky's method of iconographic analysis represent two prominent critical approaches employed in the examination of fine art and artworks within the Western context during the 20th century (Han & He, 2011). It is worth noting that the amalgamation of these two methods also yields a fundamental instrument for the interpretation and analysis of design attributes inherent in design objects (Huang & Liu, 2021).

Wolfring's scholarly investigation in the field of art history is distinguished by his notable emphasis on the visual symbols inherent in artistic expression, directing his scholarly scrutiny towards the formal aspects of artworks and the nuances of artistic style. As posited by Wolfring, the fundamental objective of art historical inquiry resides in the rational explication of the progression of artistic style, predominantly manifested through the artist's utilisation of visual symbols. Consequently, it can be argued that the paramount objective of art historical inquiry lies in the meticulous examination of the historical trajectory pertaining to the development and transformation of visual symbols within the realm of art (Wolfring, 1932; 2015). According to Wolfring's analysis of the interplay among visual symbols, visual style, and the progression of artistic style, it is posited that each historical epoch and cultural milieu possesses its distinctive lens through which the world is perceived, thereby engendering a distinct artistic style. Consequently, it is asserted that no hierarchical relationship of superiority or inferiority can be ascribed to divergent artistic styles (Panofsky & Chen, 2022). The conspicuous shortcomings of Wolfring's art historical theory are equally apparent. The aforementioned individual exhibits an excessive preoccupation with art forms, displaying a notable disregard for the pivotal role played by the artist's subject matter. Furthermore, they appear to overlook the intrinsic and symbiotic relationship between the evolution of artistic expression and the broader fabric of societal existence. Regrettably, this individual seems to perceive the development of art solely through the lens of visual transformations, neglecting the multifaceted dimensions that contribute to its growth and progression (Zhang, 2009).

The genesis of the contemporary notion of iconography can be traced back to the erudite German scholar Aby Warburg. The inception of the "iconographic approach" was initially posited during a scholarly discourse delivered by the esteemed individual at the International Conference on the History of Art in Rome in the year 1912. This approach, as expounded, espoused the notion of situating the genesis of an artwork within a more

expansive cultural and historical framework, thereby facilitating the reinstatement of the work's "historical environment" (Yang, 2010). Following this, Panofsky, a student of the aforementioned individual, proceeded to author a seminal publication titled "Studies in Pictorialism" in the year 1939. This scholarly work served to establish a methodical elucidation of the contemporary pictorialism movement, thereby signifying the official inception of the modern pictorial approach (Liu, 2013). Within the confines of this literary work, Pan undertook the task of further organising and conceptualising Wahlberg's "iconographic method." In doing so, Pan put forth a framework consisting of three distinct levels of iconographic interpretation. These levels, namely pre-iconographic description, iconographic analysis, and iconographic interpretation, serve to unveil the inherent significance of an image. More specifically, they shed light on its primary visually recognisable features, its conventional meaning, and its deeper, underlying significance, respectively (Panofsky, 2011).

Next, we shall delve into the theoretical framework known as the Thick Deion. The utilisation of profound elucidation is notably well-suited for the purpose of comprehending the underlying significance inherent in various phenomena (Wang, 2006). In accordance with the scholarly insights of Geertz, it is posited that scholars are constrained to construe artefacts within particular "contexts" solely by means of the technique of "deep description." This method, also referred to as "recording a series of ephemeral cultural events," entails a meticulous focus on delineating the contextual and environmental particulars in which said events transpired, thereby enabling the extraction of cultural significance from the minutiae (Geertz, 1999). The aforementioned statement elucidates the act of meticulously documenting a sequence of transitory cultural occurrences, with a specific emphasis on delineating the contextual and environmental factors surrounding said events. Such an approach enables the extraction of cultural significance from the intricate particulars, as expounded upon by Geertz (1999). The assertion posits that cultural phenomena, in their entirety, can be understood as symbolic representations that possess varying degrees of significance. The objective of deep description is to meticulously expound upon and meticulously reconstruct cultural phenomena within various contextual frameworks to the greatest extent feasible.

The concept of "Thick Deion" was appropriated by Geertz from the erudite philosopher Ryle, with the original intention of delving into the profound inquiry of the cognitive activities undertaken by intellectuals, namely the acts of cogitation and introspection, as well as the contemplation of cognition itself. Shallow drawing, in stark contrast to its counterpart deep drawing, can be identified as a distinct phenomenon. The dichotomy between these two phenomena lies in the distinction between shallow description, which pertains to the mere articulation of the act in question, and deep description, which delves into the underlying significance and implications inherent to said act. Let us consider the physiological phenomenon of blinking, if you will. The present study endeavours to elucidate the concept of shallow description, specifically in relation to the action behaviour of blinking.

However, it is imperative to engage in a comprehensive analysis in order to unravel the underlying significance of the act of blinking. It is plausible to assert that the individual who engages in this ocular activity may be effectively communicating a message to the external environment through the deliberate movement of their eyelids (Zou, 2007). The elucidation of semantic organisation entails the undertaking of a profound exposition, one that transcends the mere explication of behavioural patterns or discursive manifestations. Rather, it involves a discerning analysis of both conduct and linguistic expressions, thereby

facilitating an interpretive comprehension. In the realm of profound elucidation, culture assumes the role of a vital conduit through which social phenomena are engendered and brought forth.

In the context of Balinese culture, it is noteworthy to examine the multifaceted dimensions that are ostensibly associated with the practise of cockfighting. While the surface-level perception may suggest a mere engagement in a recreational activity, a closer analysis reveals that this traditional pastime holds significant implications pertaining to social standing, ethical considerations, the sanctity of bloodlines, preservation of honour, and the intricate interplay of gambling dynamics. The aforementioned statement pertains to a Balinese rendition of their internal cognitive encounters, a narrative that they construct to elucidate their own identity. The cockfighting game serves as a manifestation of the Balinese character, social structure, and ideology, functioning as a medium for power dynamics and a conduit for the nuanced cultural psychology of the Balinese people (Wei, 2017). The examination of "situation" or "context" is a pivotal aspect underscored in the realm of art and design research, wherein the object of study is situated within a particular moment's specific circumstances to facilitate dynamic observation and documentation (Wang & Hu, 2021). When engaging in the scholarly pursuit of investigating design objects, it is imperative to not only manifest and explicate their constituent elements, encompassing shape, colour, material, and function, but also to delve further into the particular contextual milieu in order to discern the profound symbolic significance that underlies the design object. Theoretical framework posited by Wang (2021) elucidates that the application of the Theory of deep description holds the potential to address the prevailing issues of a fragmented perspective and the absence of a comprehensive research dimension within the research process.

The utilisation of the Theory of deep description as a pertinent theoretical underpinning for this project is deemed appropriate in order to navigate the third inquiry confronted by the project, namely, the elucidation of the social and cultural import of the furniture originating from Wuyi Hometown of overseas Chinese during the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China. Through the contextualization of the Wuyi Hometown of overseas Chinese furniture within its socio-historical milieu, we endeavour to uncover symbolic significances that transcend the mere visual and functional aspects. In the contemporary epoch marked by cultural pluralism, the theoretical construct of "deep description" emerges as a valuable tool facilitating individuals' comprehension of the distinctive attributes inherent to their respective cultural milieus. Moreover, this theoretical framework serves as a catalyst for fostering profound intercultural communication and exchange among human beings. The value of cultural diversity lies in its facilitation of communication, exchange, and understanding. According to Liu (2006), a more comprehensive comprehension of oneself can be achieved solely by means of comprehending the other through the lens of "following the customs." By engaging in a comprehensive analysis of cultural significations, one can attain a heightened comprehension of the intricate interplay between culture and social existence, thereby facilitating a more profound comprehension of the intricacies of the human psyche.

The subsequent research question that arises pertains to the paramount antecedent empirical investigations that bear relevance to the domain of Wuyi furniture design. The discourse at hand delves into the examination of two pivotal dimensions. First and foremost, the subject matter under scrutiny pertains to an investigation of Chinese design during the Late Qing to Republican periods. Notably, numerous scholars have placed considerable emphasis on the exploration of design during the Republic of China era, as evidenced by their scholarly endeavours (Li, 2021). As posited by Chen (2010), the Republican period in China's

history stands out as a remarkably internationalised epoch, characterised by a tightly woven integration with the global community. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the major occurrences during this period were deeply rooted in international dynamics. This encompassing influence extended beyond mere political and economic realms, permeating various facets of society, including but not limited to social trends and the quo. The presence of foreign influence can be discerned through the identification of traces within a given context.

As China's economy burgeoned into the second largest globally, there arose a pressing imperative to bolster national soft power, encompassing the realm of design competitiveness, with the ultimate aim of gradually extricating itself from the hegemony of Western design and cultivating its own design subjectivity (Zhu, 2021). The recognition of Chinese design history's distinct identity materialised in 2007, when Shanghai University orchestrated the annual "Design and Chinese Design History Research Conference," and the China Academy of Art convened an international symposium aptly titled "Design in China." Subsequently, matters pertaining to the historical genealogy and nationalistic essence of Chinese design have progressively emerged as a novel area of scholarly contemplation.

In contemporary discourse, Chinese design researchers undertake the task of retracing the historical trajectory and evolution of modern Chinese design, thereby necessitating a retrospective examination of the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China as pivotal periods (Zhang, 2017). The Opium War, commencing in the year 1840, engendered a significant disruption in China's longstanding feudal dynastic governance, spanning over two millennia, thereby ushering the nation into a state characterised by a hybrid amalgamation of colonial and feudal attributes. The People's Republic of China embarked upon its integration into the contemporary global order and assimilation into the phenomenon of globalisation, as elucidated by Shen (2016).

In the scholarly work conducted by Li (2007), a comprehensive examination of the hundred-year trajectory of Chinese design in the twentieth century is presented. The author meticulously dissects China's design evolution during this period, delineating it into three distinct phases. The first phase spans from 1900 to 1949, followed by the second phase from 1949 to 1980, and ultimately culminating in the third phase from 1980 to 2000. One of the aforementioned time periods, specifically spanning from 1900 to 1949, aligns with the historical epoch encompassing the late Qing Dynasty through the Republic of China, which is the subject of investigation within the present scholarly discourse. The aforementioned phase can be effectively delineated into three distinct temporal segments, namely: 1900-1930, which witnessed the intricate process of Chineseisation of emerging capitalism; 1930-1945, characterised by the arduous period of the War of Resistance Against Japan; and 1945-1949, marked by the intense civil war between the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang.

The Birth of Modern Design in China (Guo & Su, 2008), which has been edited by Eun-Chi Kwok, an esteemed faculty member at the School of Design of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, along with her diligent students, represents a commendable scholarly endeavour aimed at expanding the scope of the historical understanding of Chinese design to encompass the era predating the 1850s. The opus entitled "The Emergence of Modern Chinese Design" is bifurcated into two principal segments: a meticulous examination of events in a sequential order, and an in-depth analysis of a specific instance. Within the temporal framework delineated by the author, the epoch spanning from 1842 to 1949 is meticulously partitioned into five distinct phases. The inaugural phase, commencing in 1842 and culminating in 1895, is characterised by the gradual emergence and maturation of the Chinese modern

consciousness. The subsequent phase, spanning from 1896 to 1918, witnessed the nascent emergence of the design industry, propelled by the swift advancement of private enterprise and commercial activities. The third stage encompasses the years 1919 to 1926, during which designers ardently pursued the ideals of scientific advancement and democratic principles within the context of the pick-up era. The fourth stage, spanning from 1927 to 1936, corresponds to the epoch of China's modernist design movement, aligning itself with the prevailing global aesthetic tendencies of the time. The fifth stage encompasses the period from 1937 to 1949, which witnessed a significant shift in the trajectory of China's design industry.

Wang (2016) undertakes a pioneering endeavour by amalgamating the field of design with the vantage point of livelihood design, spanning from the waning years of the Qing Dynasty to the era of the Republic of China. The temporal framework embraced by Wanghun's comprehensive compendium on design history diverges from that of its preceding counterparts. The commencement of the centenary period, commonly referred to as the "100 years," can be traced back to the year 1894, coinciding with the onset of the Sino-Japanese War, a significant conflict between the nations of China and Japan. This protracted military engagement ultimately culminated in the triumph of the Japanese forces, resulting in the downfall of the Chinese Qing Dynasty.

The aspect of design known as "Haipai" has garnered significant attention from scholars and researchers alike. The "Haipai culture" denotes a multifaceted cultural phenomenon that emerged within the confines of Shanghai during the latter years of the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China. The cultural landscape of Shanghai, situated within the broader regional cultural spectrum of China, is distinguished by its embodiment of four key characteristics: innovation, tolerance, commercial awareness, and civic interest. Notably, this cultural phenomenon can be attributed to Shanghai's status as the preeminent bastion of open-mindedness in China during the period under scrutiny (Sun, 2010). As a consequence of the Chinese Qing Dynasty's downfall, a momentous event unfolded in the form of the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing on the 29th of August in the year 1842. This pivotal agreement outlined the specific provisions that mandated the opening of Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Xiamen, and Guangzhou as designated ports of entry, thereby facilitating foreign trade. Furthermore, this treaty granted the British the privilege of establishing their residence and engaging in commercial activities within these newly accessible regions. Subsequently, an increasing number of concessions were established within the confines of Shanghai. The architectural structures situated along the banks of the Huangpu River have acquired the appellation of the "Complex of Nations" as posited by Ge et al. (2014).

The nomenclature "Haipai" initially emerged within the realm of artistic expression, specifically within the domain of Chinese painting during the Qing Dynasty. It was initially referred to as the "Hai Shang School of Painting" during that period, and subsequently found its way into literary works, operatic productions, and other creative domains. Subsequently, this cultural phenomenon found its way into the realm of literary works and musical compositions, thereby progressively permeating various facets of individuals' quotidian existence, including but not limited to the realms of sartorial choices, architectural structures, and domestic furnishings, thus giving rise to an expansive and resplendent Haipai culture (Murphy, 1986).

In addition to the examination of Haipai's design, scholars and researchers have directed their attention towards other coastal urban centres. Li's (2021) scholarly inquiry was dedicated to the intricate realm of design art within the Jiangnan region, spanning from the

late Qing dynasty to the Republican era. The Jiangnan region, encompassing prominent urban centres such as Shanghai, Nanjing, Ningbo, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and various other cities situated within the lower Yangtze River basin, is of considerable scholarly interest. Furthermore, they have also been at the forefront of exposure to Western cultural influences, enjoying an earlier and more sustained engagement with these external forces. Noteworthy examples include the scholarly endeavours of Tan and Qiao (2021) in relation to Guangzhou, Zhao (2013) with respect to Macau, and the comprehensive study conducted by Cheng et al. (2022) concerning Qingdao.

Xie's (2019) scholarly endeavours have been distinguished by their focus on the hinterland regions during the transitional period from the late Qing dynasty to the Republican era. It is worth noting that Xie's work stands out among the limited number of scholars who have ventured to explore this particular domain beyond the confines of the coastal cities. The individual under scrutiny directs his attention towards the present circumstances and industrial context of livelihood design in Northwest China. Specifically, he delves into the social and contemporary situation, public sentiment and folklore, as well as production characteristics. These factors are deemed to be of utmost significance as primary conditions that contribute to the advancement of design in modern China. By conducting a comprehensive examination of livelihood design in Northwest.

This scholarly investigation delves into the realm of graphic design artefacts spanning the historical period from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China. The genesis of contemporary Chinese design exhibits a profound interconnection with the realm of graphic design. In light of an incipient industrial system, owing to the propagation of contemporary printing techniques, the realm of graphic design emerged as the foremost design category within the domain of modern Chinese design, thereby establishing a harmonious rapport with Western design paradigms (Zhang, 2017).

The scholarly investigation pertaining to the field of graphic design during the transitional period from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China has encompassed a comprehensive examination of the following principal categories:

The initial item under consideration is the informational pamphlet titled "monthly licence." The brochures commonly referred to as "Monthly" publications are meticulously crafted and manufactured by merchants with the explicit intention of promoting their respective merchandise. The central motif encapsulated within the brochures pertains to the portrayal of aesthetically pleasing female figures during the aforementioned era (Huang, 2009). Scholars have undertaken meticulous examinations of the methodologies, hues, and motifs employed in month-plate brochures, thereby progressively transitioning from an exploration of visual image composition to a sociological investigation of women's portrayal and the construction of female identity (Xu, 2023).

The second aspect pertains to the domain of trade mark design. The genesis of trademark design can be traced back to the burgeoning brand awareness and heightened commercial consciousness that have permeated contemporary China. The investigation of contemporary Chinese trademarks' nomenclature, semantic elements, structural arrangements, and design methodologies has been the subject of scholarly inquiry, as evidenced by the work of Cao and Xie (2012). Furthermore, it has been posited that the configuration of contemporary trademarks exhibits a profound correlation with the burgeoning sense of national identity in China during the latter stages of the Qing dynasty and the Republican era (Han, 2009).

According to Wu's (2012) scholarly perspective, the emergence of contemporary Chinese advertising media can be attributed to the evolution of newspaper advertising. The genesis of contemporary Chinese newspapers can be attributed to the amalgamation of Chinese and Western civilizations, as well as the consequential propagation of Western knowledge towards the East. In a scholarly investigation conducted by Li (2015), the visual manifestation of contemporary Chinese newspaper advertisement design was meticulously examined. The study ultimately ascertained that said design harmoniously amalgamates contemporary Western design techniques with the enduring elements of traditional Chinese painting.

Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the artistic design techniques employed in bookbinding within contemporary China. Moreover, these scholars contend that bookbinding design serves as a manifestation of the prevailing design style within modern China (Tian, 2016). Simultaneously, it is noteworthy to acknowledge that the practise of bookbinding in contemporary China serves as a conduit for intellectuals to disseminate novel ideas (Huang, 2014).

This study endeavour delves into an examination of the collective of architects and designers who operated during the transitional period from the late Qing dynasty to the Republican era. In the scholarly work conducted by Yang (2003), a comprehensive examination was undertaken to document the memoirs of architects who were active during the late Qing to Republican era. In the seminal work by Lai (2006), a comprehensive compilation is presented, encompassing a total of 250 contemporary architects. Within this scholarly endeavour, meticulous attention is devoted to delineating the curriculum vitae of each architect, expounding upon their notable works, elucidating their written contributions to the field, and meticulously documenting other pertinent credentials. Moreover, the scholarly expedition undertaken by Lai (2006) extends beyond the individual architects, The aforementioned resource offers a formidable instrument for the examination of contemporary Chinese architectural practitioners. In the scholarly work conducted by Lu (2009), an in-depth examination is undertaken to elucidate the intricate process of professionalisation within the architects' community during the Republican period. The primary focus of this investigation is to shed light on the pivotal role played by this professionalisation process in the broader context of modernising Chinese architecture. In contrast, the scholarly work conducted by Zheng (2014) delved into an examination of a cohort of British architects who were actively involved in architectural endeavours within the geographical confines of China during the period spanning from 1840 to 1949.

In Li's (2004) seminal work, "Modern Transformation of Chinese Architecture", a comprehensive examination is undertaken to elucidate the progression of the architectural technology system within the context of contemporary China. This scholarly endeavour delves into the intricate evolution of associated institutions and concepts, employing a technical lens to analyse the subject matter at hand. In Xu's (2010) seminal work, "The Birth of Modern Chinese Architecture", a comprehensive examination is undertaken to elucidate the historical trajectory of China's architectural paradigm shift, spanning from antiquity to the advent of modernity during the late Qing Dynasty and the nascent Republican era. The present discourse employs a comparative framework to elucidate the advent of the Japanese architectural education system during the waning years of the Qing Dynasty. This pivotal development engendered a paradigm shift from conventional to contemporary construction practises. As per the scholarly work of Wang (2015), the matter pertaining to the "Chineseness" of architecture emerged during the 20th century. It necessitates a

comprehensive examination encompassing three key developmental indicators: China's indigenous architectural cultural traditions, the infusion of Western architectural concepts, and the formation of a distinct national identity within the modern Chinese context. In his seminal work entitled "History of Modern Chinese Ideas and History of Architecture," Lai (2016) undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted aspects pertaining to the articles, designs, and perspectives put forth by the esteemed figures of Liang Sicheng, Liu Dunmei, and Lin Huiyin. Lai's investigation delves into the intricate backdrop against which these individuals operated, elucidating their underlying objectives, methodological approaches, and the driving forces that propelled their intellectual endeavours. The author astutely highlights that the focal point of inquiry within the realm of architectural history resides in the meticulous examination of the intricate construction of the historical narrative surrounding architecture itself, as well as the underlying ideology that permeates it. Furthermore, the author emphasises the significance of comprehending the historical catalysts, interconnections, and developmental mechanisms that have contributed to the formation of architecture throughout time. The formation of this entity can be attributed to a myriad of historical factors, which have played a significant role in shaping its existence. Furthermore, the associations that have been established over time have further contributed to its historical significance. Lastly, the intricate historical processes that have unfolded have had a profound impact on the development and evolution of this entity.

This scholarly investigation delves into the realm of regional architecture in China, spanning the temporal spectrum from the late Qing dynasty to the Republican era. The contemporary architectural landscape and spatial configurations of Shanghai continue to captivate the scholarly community, serving as a focal point for diligent investigation and analysis. The scholarly inquiries encompassed within their research encompass the comprehensive examination of the historical and stylistic progression of Shanghai's architectural landscape, as expounded upon by Chai et al. (2022) and Wen et al. (2023). Additionally, the investigation delves into the historical underpinnings that have contributed to the establishment of modern architectural practises in Shanghai, as elucidated by Lu et al. (2016). Furthermore, the exploration extends to the realm of contemporary architectural technology within Shanghai, as explicated by Bai (2021) and Yang & Chen (2011). Lastly, the analysis encompasses the meticulous examination of interior spatial design within the context of Shanghai architecture, as scrutinised by Chu & Zuo (2021), Ding (2021), and Zhu (2016). In addition to the architectural landscape of Shanghai, it is noteworthy to acknowledge the significance of Lingnan architecture in the realm of modern Chinese architectural discourse. Hailing from the Guangdong Province and its environs in China, Lingnan architecture stands as a testament to the profound impact of both Chinese and Western cultural influences on the development of this architectural tradition (Xu & Liao, 2020).

Scholars have conducted extensive investigations into the cultural and aesthetic aspects of architecture within the Lingnan region (Tang, 2002). Furthermore, scholarly attention has been devoted to the examination of architectural embellishments specific to the Lingnan region (Xue, 2012). Additionally, researchers have delved into the distinctive typologies and regional attributes of Lingnan architecture, including the utilisation of timber-frame construction (Wang, 2018) and the architectural manifestations found in Macao (Wu, 2004).

The present research question pertains to the categorization and subdivision of the historical continuum of Chinese sartorial practises, specifically focusing on the temporal span commencing from the late Qing Dynasty and extending through the era of the Republic of

China. This scholarly discourse aims to provide an introductory overview of the evolution of clothing development, specifically focusing on the transition from the late Qing dynasty to the Republic of China. The narrative will be presented in a meticulously organised chronological order, elucidating the key transformations that occurred during this period. Bao (2004; 2008) seminal works, namely *Actual Records of Modern Chinese Women's Clothing* and *Actual Records of Modern Chinese Men's Clothing*, deftly leverage the distinctive advantage conferred by the esteemed Costume Museum at Donghua University. These scholarly endeavours are underpinned by an extensive array of authentic photographs capturing the essence of various costumes, which are further augmented by meticulous style analyses. Hua's seminal work, "History of Modern Chinese Clothing" (2008), offers a comprehensive examination of Chinese attire spanning the years 1840 to 1949. This scholarly endeavour is organised into four distinct sections, each delving into crucial aspects of the subject matter. These sections encompass an exploration of the prevailing social conditions and trends, an analysis of popular clothing choices, an investigation into military and police attire, and an examination of the clothing industry itself. Through meticulous research and insightful analysis, Hua's work provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of Chinese clothing during this transformative historical period. Liao and Xu (2010) seminal work, "A Hundred Years of Chinese Clothing", offers a comprehensive and meticulous examination of Chinese attire spanning a remarkable century. The authors meticulously organise their analysis around various clothing categories, providing a nuanced understanding of the evolution and development of Chinese fashion. Furthermore, this scholarly endeavour is enriched by the inclusion of a plethora of invaluable visual resources, thereby enhancing the reader's engagement with the subject matter. In their seminal work titled "A Hundred Years of Clothing" (Yuan & Hu, 2010), the esteemed scholars delve into the intricate tapestry of sartorial transformations experienced by the Chinese populace over the course of a century, spanning from 1900 to 2000. Employing a multidimensional approach, the authors deftly navigate the realms of politics, society, and culture to construct a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of this evolution. Drawing upon a diverse array of sources, including literature, newspapers, novels, and colloquial vernacular, the researchers meticulously examine the subject of Chinese attire, encompassing the late Qing Dynasty through the Republic of China. Numerous erudite scholars have diligently undertaken extensive investigations pertaining to diverse classifications of attire.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the prevailing body of research continues to concentrate predominantly on the dichotomous classification of men's and women's apparel within the contemporary Chinese context. The scholarly examination pertains to the domain of men's attire, with a particular emphasis on the "Zhongshan dress" within the contemporary context of China. The focal point of scholarly inquiry lies in the examination of the evolutionary trajectory, structural configuration, and manufacturing procedures pertaining to Zhongshan garments (Tian, 2016). According to scholarly discourse, it is posited that the emergence and evolution of the Zhongshan dress, beyond its mere aesthetic transformation, can be attributed to a profound political impetus stemming from the societal revolution. This sartorial phenomenon served as a means to articulate and symbolise the social standing, political dispositions, and vocational categorizations characteristic of the contemporary epoch (Liu, 2022; Zhang, 2017).

Conversely, the scholarly examination of women's attire centres its attention on the cheongsam classification. The enhancement of the cheongsam, a customary attire, can be attributed to the collaborative influence of Western culture and contemporary commercial

culture, as elucidated by Liu (2022). Simultaneously, the intricate construction of the cheongsam garment is intricately intertwined with the concomitant societal and aesthetic significance, which is inextricably linked to the progressive liberation of women in contemporary China, the utilisation of women's entitlements, and the burgeoning awareness of women's identity consciousness (Gong, 2017; Yu et al, 2022).

Discussion And Conclusion

The temporal epoch spanning from the twilight of the Qing Dynasty to the advent of the Republic of China played an indispensable role in facilitating China's metamorphosis from an era steeped in antiquity to one characterised by modernity, thereby establishing the bedrock upon which China's subsequent modernization endeavours were built. During this particular epoch, it is noteworthy to observe that Chinese design underwent a notable metamorphosis, transitioning from its classical manifestations to a more contemporary design aesthetic. The aforementioned transformation pertained to the realm of design style and lifestyle, encompassing various facets such as values, consumerism, as well as production and distribution, all of which played a pivotal role in shaping the design style. The occurrence under consideration transpired across diverse domains, encompassing graphic design, architecture, apparel, and furniture design, with particular emphasis placed upon the latter in the context of this scholarly investigation.

A significant advancement in scholarly inquiry has been achieved through the meticulous examination and organisation of the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the subject matter at hand. To commence, it is imperative to acknowledge that contemporary Chinese furniture occupies a pivotal position within the annals of China's furniture evolution. Significant findings have been derived pertaining to the contemporary furniture prevalent in major coastal metropolises, namely Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou. Nevertheless, it is imperative to further investigate the furniture pertaining to remote areas or smaller regions, in order to address the existing dearth of research on contemporary Chinese furniture. This ongoing research endeavour is essential to augment our understanding in this domain. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Region, renowned for its prominent status among Chinese diaspora, boasts an abundance of architectural marvels, cultural legacies, as well as a plethora of social and historical resources.

Contemporary scholarly investigations are presently directed towards the broader architectural and socio-historical aspects. Regrettably, the intricate domain of furniture artefact design has been largely overlooked by the majority of researchers for an extended period of time. Hence, the amalgamation of these two domains facilitates a comprehensive examination of the furniture design prevalent in the contemporary Wuyi Overseas Chinese Township. This endeavour not only contributes to the systematic analysis of modern Chinese furniture but also enriches our understanding of the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Township. Thirdly, with regards to the research methodology, it is imperative to note that the existing body of research necessitates a more comprehensive and systematic approach in terms of argumentation. Furthermore, it is evident that the current state of research is less inclined towards showcasing a more rigorous and meticulous methodology. Additionally, it is disconcerting to observe that the research framework is often overlooked and not given due attention. The present investigation necessitates a significant advancement in order to achieve a breakthrough.

In summation, this study delves into the transformative epoch spanning the twilight of the Qing Dynasty to the emergence of the Republic of China. The primary focus is directed

towards discerning consequential shifts in Chinese design, specifically within the domain of furniture aesthetics. While extant scholarship provides valuable insights into contemporary Chinese furniture within major coastal metropolises, a conspicuous lacuna persists in comprehending furniture dynamics in remote locales, typified by the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Region. This study endeavors to address this lacuna, proffering a thorough analysis of contemporary furniture design within the distinctive socio-historical milieu of the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Township. The theoretical and contextual import transcends mere analysis of design styles, intricately interweaving architectural and socio-historical dimensions. This illumination extends to the often-neglected realm of furniture artifact design, contributing not only to a profound comprehension of modern Chinese furniture but also augmenting the understanding of the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Township. In so doing, it rectifies historical oversights within the broader research landscape. Moreover, the research methodology departs from prevailing conventions, advocating for a more comprehensive and systematic approach. This departure addresses shortcomings in argumentation and research framework attention, marking a substantive advancement in the comprehension of contemporary Chinese furniture, particularly within the distinctive milieu of the Wuyi Overseas Chinese Township. Essentially, the research appends a valuable segment to the scholarly dialogue on the evolution of Chinese design and pioneers a paradigmatic shift in methodological approaches within the broader research domain on this subject matter.

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