The Production of Style: Aesthetic Diversity within the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1875–1914

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In the mid-1870s, at the dawn of the Arts and Crafts movement, Tiffany & Co. produced the coffee set presented in Plate 1. Decorating the matte silver base with other metals to provide depth and relief, Japanese-inspired flowers and vines wrap the coffee pot, sugar bowl, and cream pitcher. Their rounded forms encourage the eye to follow the encircling plant growth. A vine reaches to become the handle of the coffee pot lid; in doing so, it imparts a sense of unity and joins the lid and pot as a single piece.

Forty years later, in the waning years of the movement, Tiffany & Co. produced the coffee set presented in Plate 2. Again silver but now highly polished, this set is largely unadorned, save a small imprinting of the pieces and some finishing flourishes of the handles. Excepting the coffee pot’s ivory handle, foreign media are entirely absent. The reflectivity of the set permits us to see the craftsman’s hammerstrikes and appreciate his technique. It also emphasizes the hexagonal form of the pieces as each face mirrors a different scene. Multiplicity is likewise manifested by the spouts, handles, and lids which are clearly delineated as pieces unto themselves.

What accounts for the aesthetic differences between these pieces? Certainly, the distinctiveness of the particular Tiffany designer played a role. As did forty years of changing fashion. The business of the Arts and Crafts had changed during the intervening years as well: by the second decade of the twentieth century large firms such as Tiffany & Co. were targeting a larger share of the market for handcrafted table silver, previously having concentrated on commissioned pieces. But I propose that such explanations are not entirely satisfactory and that a complete understanding of cultural transformation requires that we also examine changes within the global political-economy.

1 The Research Question: Explaining Aesthetic Variation

Riegl (2004) described artistic works as a combination of five elements: purpose,
raw materials, technique, motif, and form and surface. The *purpose* of a work answers the question of why it was made, its reason for being. A piece may serve practical and utilitarian ends, it may satisfy aesthetic desires, or it may express a particular idea or set of ideas. Of course, a single piece may attend to more than one of these goals. The above coffee sets, for example, fulfill both utilitarian and aesthetic needs. In political-economic terms, the purpose of a work is its utility or use-value. The *raw materials* of a work answers the question of from what it was made while its *technique* explains the way in which it was made. A work's *motif* is its subject matter. Riegl argued that all motifs originate in nature and may be classified along a dimension ranging from animate and organic (the living) to inanimate and inorganic (the non-living). In contrast to the nineteenth century coffee set that is teeming with life, the twentieth century coffee set exhibits a prototypical “crystalline” motif: symmetry is present throughout the work, in the pieces themselves (the sugar bowl and tray, in particular, exhibit perfect symmetry) as well as their ornament; the handles, lids, and imprints are all symmetrical as are the spouts of the coffee pot and creamer.

The motif of a work is its theme; how that motif is presented is a matter of *form and surface*, what we conventionally refer to as *style*. Style refers to how the various elements of piece are presented and arranged. Whether a work is realistic or abstract, plain or ornate, harmonious or dissonant affects both how we feel about it and how we interpret it. We respond differently to works of the same motif but different styles; so too, works of the same style but different motifs.

Style has a collective reality: it is an aspect of artistic production that cannot be reduced to a single work but, rather, is shared among a collection of works (Blau 1988; Bergesen 2007). It denotes the relationships among works of art produced at particular time and place. “The virtue of the concept of style is that by defining relationships it makes various kinds of order out of what otherwise would be a vast continuum of self-sufficient products” (Ackerman 1962:228, emphasis in original). Style, then, is what Durkheim (1982) referred to as a social fact and, therefore, requires a social explanation, an explanation situated at the level of the social system. It is this explanation that I aim to develop through the proposed research.

### 1.1 Why Study Style?

As Ackerman (1962) observed, we construct styles so as to impose order upon and make sense of the ever-expanding world of art. It is therefore useless, Ackerman argued, to ask “What is style?” Rather, we must ask how well our theories of style help us to make sense of artistic works (Zangwill 1995). Traditionally, sociologists have had little use for theories of style, either denying that artistic works have any intrinsic value or declaring its irrelevance. White and White (1965:2), for example, introduced their analysis of the rise of French Impressionism by stating that “In our view too much is made of the change in painting itself,” and concluded that Impressionism is best thought of not
as a novel aesthetic style but institutional transformation: “The Impressionists seemed to mark a basic new era in art primarily because they ushered in a new structure for the art world.” According to Bourdieu (1993:227, emphasis in original), artistic work is not inherently meaningful; rather, meaning is imposed:

> Since the work of art only exists as such to the extent that it is perceived, or, in other words, deciphered, it goes without saying that the satisfactions attached to this perception . . . are only accessible to those who are disposed to appropriate them because they attribute a value to them, it being understood that they can do this only if they have the means to appropriate them.

This dismissal of the aesthetic—which continues to dominate contemporary discourse among sociologists of culture—may be traced to Mannheim (1952) who first argued for the separation of meaning from form. But Mannheim’s intent was not to cast form as a tabula rasa upon which arbitrary meaning may be inscribed. Rather, his argument was more subtle: how we make sense of the world is contingent upon our place within it.

> Once we recognize that all historical knowledge is relational knowledge, and can only be formulated with reference to the position of the observer, we are faced, once more, with the task of discriminating between what is true and what is false in such knowledge. The question then arises: which social standpoint vis-à-vis of history offers the best chance for reaching an optimum of truth? (Mannheim 1936:79–80).

To make sense of artistic style, then, demands an appreciation of the social context within which particular styles arise. And to understand how it changes demands that we examine transformations in the social order. This does not imply that stylistic variation can be reduced to social change. Zangwill (2002:447, emphasis in original) cautioned against committing such logical fallacies.

> It is true that our aesthetic judgments are subject to psychological and social forces. And these forces can be empirically investigated. If our aesthetic judgements could be entirely explained by sociological factors, then perhaps aesthetic scepticism would be vindicated. . . . But all that we have been presented with so far by sociologists is evidence (if such it is) that our judgments are affected by social circumstances. But that is compatible with the fact that these circumstances do not exhaust all the causal factors that are at work. If so, our aesthetic judgments cannot be completely explained in social terms.

In fact, and contrary to those who would reduce all to either the material or the ideal, what Mannheim (1936:199) sought was to rescue Marx’s method of dialectical materialism:
every age allows to arise . . . those ideas and values in which are contained in condensed form the unrealized and the unfulfilled tendencies which represent the needs of each age. These intellectual elements then become the explosive material for bursting the limits of the existing order. The existing order gives birth to utopias which in turn break the bonds of the existing order, leaving it free to develop in the direction of the next order of existence.

I suggest that style is one manifestation of “those ideas and values . . . which represent the needs of each age.” Sociologists should not neglect the study of aesthetic variation but embrace it as an additional method of studying social transformation.

1.2 The Function of Style: Art as Problem Solving

Ackerman (1962) argued that artistic styles are best understood as products of communal problem solving and that different styles represent different attempts to resolve different problems. Such an interpretation is rooted in Riegl’s (2004:299–300) argument that art serves to resolve social-psychological discord:

Man yearns incessantly for harmony. He sees this harmony constantly disrupted and threatened by things and phenomena of nature that exist in a state of perpetual struggle, both with one another and with humanity. If nature were really the way it appears in the individual human senses, man would never be able to attain harmony. Consequently, man creates a vision of nature in his art that frees him from nature’s perpetual instability; he imagines nature to be better than it looks. He seeks to bring order to the apparent chaos, to push aside those raw random occurrences to which he is otherwise subject and vulnerable.

For Riegl (2004:300), this challenge is “a contest with nature with the aim of bringing to expression a harmonious worldview.” Panofsky (1955) recounted the history of art as a search for proper rules of proportion, correlating deployed rules with the associated culture’s Kunstwollen. Roughly translated as “the will of art” (Binstock 2001), Riegl coined the term Kunstwollen to refer to the ever-evolving purposes for which art is produced. The ancient Egyptian theory of proportion was one of few in which common proportions were maintained across works and corrections for perspective were dispensed with. Panofsky (1955) argued that this was because Egyptian representations of the human form were produced to house the ka (life force) after death. Egyptian artists therefore pursued idealized forms in anticipation of future reanimation. In contrast, the artists of Classical Greece sought realistic reproductions and, consequently, valued attention to perspective and how the various parts of the body appeared to relate to one another.

To the Greeks the plastic effigy commemorates a human being that lived; to the Egyptians it is a body that waits to be reenlivened. For
the Greeks, the work of art exists in a sphere of aesthetic ideality; for the Egyptians, in a sphere of magical reality. For the former, the goal of the artist is imitation; for the latter, reconstruction (Panofsky 1955:61–62).

Problems and challenges arise at both the individual and collective levels. But this poses a potential paradox. Since, at any given moment, there exist potentially infinite problems to address and different artists may pursue different solutions, how are styles—a persistence of form and surface—ever possible? Bergesen (2007:4–5) contends that, according to the logic of the “style-as-solution” theory, they aren’t:

How do hundreds of artists making thousands of their own personal decisions result in one style? . . . How these problems are solved depends on so many complex factors that commonality of artistic response becomes virtually impossible, and with that the idea of coherent style becomes impossible too.

But Bergesen is mistaken. In fact, just two conditions are necessary for the emergence of new styles. First, a single problem (or set of problems) must emerge to challenge a group of artists. Second, these artists (or a subset of them) must arrive at a common solution. Conventionally, we refer to such groups as “schools” or “movements.”

One plausible explanation, then, for patterns of change in style is that where a certain problem posed at the start of a style continues to challenge artists over an extended span of time, and only where it suggests one type of solution rather than another, the process will show progressive refinement toward the preferred type of solution. When similar patterns are exhibited in different cultures, it is likely that the preferred type of solution is in some way similar (Ackerman 1962:235).

Bergesen’s (2007) conclusion is based upon two faulty assumptions: that from among the myriad problems which artists may choose to address, all are equally salient and none are related to one another. But recall Mannheim’s insight that “each age allows to arise . . . those ideas and values . . . which represent the needs of each age” (see page 4, above)—or, as Marx (1986:187) famously put it,

The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.

What Marx and Mannheim proposed was that, in any given era, there will arise particular common concerns, concerns that resonate across society and, therefore, are of greater salience. This is not to say, of course, that individuals
are not confronted with their own particular problems and challenges. It does suggest that these seemingly-disparate personal troubles of various individuals may at times derive from the same social issues (Mills 1959) and, therefore, be related to one another. Specifically, what I wish to propose is that structural transformation at the global level may give rise to new styles at the local level. Because the effects of globological transformation is experienced differently at different locations, the resultant styles will vary by locale. This variation should be, at least partially, systematic as these styles all engage a shared problem: that of adapting to globological structural change.

1.3 Toward a Globological Theory of Style

With the advent of theories of “globalization,” social researchers added a new unit of analysis to their repertoire: the world-system.¹ In contrast to conventional views of society as circumscribed by political borders or ethnic identities, the concept of the world-system proclaims the presence of a society spanning these boundaries.

There is certainly no debate that today’s world seems smaller than that of the past, that technological developments have compressed our sense of space and time. But a world-system implies more than simply greater linkages among disparate peoples. At a minimum, it also suggests the presence of global structures that shape social life. One goal of contemporary globological research, therefore, has been to identify these structures, distinguishing between those that are fundamental and those that are epiphenomenal. Indeed, one the most vibrant debates among contemporary globalization theorists—the question of the age of the modern world-system—is, in practice, a debate over its essential structures. Restrictive definitions of the modern world-system produce younger estimates of its age. Wallerstein’s argument that the modern world-system is 500 years old is based upon a particular model of capitalism as composed of institutions that promote and sustain “the endless accumulation of capital” (Wallerstein 2004:24, emphasis in original)—namely, the core/periphery division of labor, the international state system, and capitalist commodity production (Chase-Dunn and Rubinson 1977). In contrast, Frank (1998) rejects the centrality of a capitalist division of labor and defines the modern world-system in terms of economic exchange and the pursuit of profit. This broader definition permits Frank to model the modern world-system as a network of international trade routes, a network that Frank determines is 5,000 years old.

A second goal of contemporary globalization scholars—and the subject of the research proposed herein—is to identify and make sense of how the world-system

¹Some researchers include the hyphen while others do not. Frequently this is simply a matter of personal idiosyncrasy but it may also connote one’s position in the ongoing debate over whether there have existed multiple “world-systems” (with hyphen) or only ever a single “world system” (without hyphen). In this project I do not speak to this debate: the research examines the forty years between 1875 and 1914 and those on both sides of the debate agree that a single world-[system] has existed for at least the past 500 years. I include the hyphen only to emphasize that we are discussing a distinct unit of analysis that constitutes “a world unto itself.”
affects social life. In the late-1970s and early-1980s, the PEWS school made a name for itself by demonstrating that a country’s position within the world-system was a crucial determinant of both its level of development and degree of economic inequality. This research tradition continues today as scholars seek to improve our understanding of how the international state system influences the construction of political and economic policy within states. Globalization researchers also investigate the effects of the world-system by examining how the world-system changes over time and what the consequences are. Over the past few decades, researchers have devoted an increasing amount of time and energy to mapping the historical trends of the world-system.

The most ambitious of these investigations have discovered a correspondence between the political-economic trends of the world-system and cultural production patterns. Kiser and Drass (1987) found that the publication of utopian literature increases as the global economy contracts while the publication of dystopian literature increases as it expands. Blazak (1991) found the opposite pattern with regard to bohemian enclaves: as the global economy expands, bohemias emphasizing creativity and expressive freedom emerge; with economic contraction, they dissolve. Bergesen (1996) demonstrated that artistic styles cycle in accord with the rise and fall of hegemonies. During periods of hegemonic dominance, art tends toward classical styles that emphasize clarity, unity, balance and symmetry. In contrast, periods of interstate rivalry are characterized by art that tends toward the baroque, art in which balance and symmetry give way to movement, unity to multiplicity, and clarity to opacity. Kwan (2005) demonstrated that world-systemic trends affect even the seemingly innocuous—such as dessert preferences. She showed that the winning entries of the Pillsbury Bake-Off reflect America’s position within the international order. Cakes of the 1950s—a period of uncontested hegemonic dominance—were simple, well-formed, and elegant. But as America’s power began to decline in the late-1960s and 1970s, bakers turned to tube and Bundt pans and began producing cakes without centers. When the decline of the U.S. became undeniable in the 1980s and 1990s, cakes collapsed in upon themselves: winning entries were short, squat, and ill-formed. Exhibiting neither balance nor symmetry, the concept of cake, itself, broke down as fusion pieces such as the “Almond-Filled Cookie Cake” and the “Pennsylvania Dutch Cake and Custard Pie” began to take over.

The correspondence between political-economic trends in the world-system and the production of particular cultural forms is intriguing. But it is far from compelling: to date, work in this area has been exclusively descriptive. Nobody has yet established causality much less identified the mechanisms that relate world-systemic trends and cultural forms. This is the goal of the research proposed herein: I seek to identify and explain (some of) the processes that relate political-economic trends in the modern world-system to cultural production patterns. More specifically, I suggest transformations within the world-system affect the problems that artists confront which, in turn, shape the emergence of artistic styles.
1.4  Proximate Causes of Style: the Charge, the Brief, and the Art-World

Casting artistic style as a form of problem-solving naturally draws attention to both the types of problems that artists confront and the resources that they bring to bear upon them. In explaining the creation of artistic works, Baxandall (1985) usefully develops the concepts of the *charge* and the *brief*. Modified slightly and coupled with Becker’s (1982) concept of the *art-world*, I wish to suggest a basic framework that we can use to understand the emergence of particular aesthetic styles.

1.4.1  The Charge

Evocative of a patron’s commissioning of a specific work, the term *charge* refers to the general problem that an artist confronts. Baxandall (1985) suggests that all artists carry a single charge—“to provide ‘intense visual interest’”—a proposition that, while perhaps true, I find rather banal. As I have already suggested (see page 6), I propose that a more productive conception of the charge will recognize that artists confront a variety of problems in their work, problems that arise from a variety of sources. In paying greater attention to the specific questions challenging artists, then, my usage of *charge* is more specific than Baxandall’s.

At present, I do not wish to belabor the present discussion except to state that I believe it will prove fruitful to problematize the concept of the charge and I will suggest that useful operationalizations will enumerate the competing tensions that artists confront in their work.

1.4.2  The Brief

The brief contextualizes the problems that artists confront. In a sense, the brief serves to articulate *Kunstwollen* (see page 4). The reason that the artists of classical Greece resolved the problem of proportion differently than those of ancient Egypt is due to the different ways that these cultures understood the purpose of artistic representation. The brief also encompasses an individual artist’s personal history. Artists’ works are incorporated into their briefs and their personal styles evolve as they react to those earlier works. Paying attention to both artists’ personal life histories and the social circumstances within which they work, then, the brief is fundamentally a social document.

I wish to modify Baxandall’s conception of the brief in two ways. First, as referenced above, I relocate the specific questions that an artist confronts, designating them the artist’s charge. This action permits me to restrict the definition of the brief to the elements that need to be considered as we attempt to make sense of how an artist sought to resolve a particular problem. My motivation for making this distinction—a distinction that, admittedly, is purely analytic—is because I suspect that artists may, at times, be confronting the same problem (e.g., globological political-economic transformation) but drawing upon
different tools (e.g., local customs) in their work. By distinguishing between, on the one hand, the questions asked and, on the other, the elements leveraged, I hope to encourage clarity of thought as we try to make sense of the solutions arrived at.

The second modification I wish to make is to further restrict the concept of the brief to cultural elements; that is, symbols that artists may draw upon so as to imbue their work with meaning. In restricting its content to symbolic elements and excluding the social relations that an artist possesses (these social relations are captured by introducing Becker’s concept of the art-world, discussed below) and by acknowledging that artists selectively draw upon its elements, I cast the brief as an application of Swidler’s (1986) toolkit metaphor. Swidler (1986:273) proposes that culture may be understood as a “toolkit” of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems.” The difference between a brief and a toolkit lies with the explicit construction of the former. Whereas Swidler (1986, 2001) portrays the cultural toolkit as existing sui generis, as something that gets filled up as one proceeds through life, Baxandall (1985) describes the brief as something that artists actively construct. Asking “Who set Picasso’s brief?” in reference to Picasso’s Portrait of Kahnweiler, Baxandall (1985:46–7) concludes that Picasso set it himself:

A preliminary half-answer would be that Picasso at least formulated his own. The painter registers his individuality very much by his particular perception of the circumstances he must address. Indeed, if one is to think of a painter ‘expressing himself’, it is most of all here, in the analysis of his environment which schematically speaking … precedes the process of painting itself, that one can most securely locate an individuality.

This is not to say that Baxandall seeks to dismiss the role of the social system in shaping the brief’s content. In fact, he is particularly sensitive to the complex relationship between artists, the social structure, and their briefs:

However, if Picasso is to be thought of as formulating his own Brief, he did so as a social being in cultural circumstances. And how to think or talk tactfully about this relation between Picasso and his culture is a real difficulty. The difficulty lies in the structure of the relation: one wants to keep it very loose and very reciprocal (Baxandall 1985:47).

To formulate the relationship between an artist and his or her social structure, Baxandall (1985:47–50) develops the concept of troc. Through the concept of troc, Baxandall (1985) seeks to draw attention to the institutional framework within which artists work and how various institutions (in particular, market institutions) shape the work. Baxandall’s discussion of both troc and the role of market forces, however, is fairly complex: a clearer exposition is provided by Becker’s (1982) discussion of art-worlds.
1.4.3 The Art-World

Becker (1982) develops the concept of the art-world\(^2\) as a means by which to understand how artistic works are created. An exemplar of the “production of culture” perspective (Kaufman 2004), the analysis of art-worlds does not seek to make sense of the meaning of art works but, rather, emphasizes that the production of art is a collective activity.

The art-world may be understood as the structural complement of the cultural brief. Hays (1994) observes that that the concept of social structure is too frequently set in contrast to that of agency, suggesting a resilience that social relations do not actually possess. In fact, a given social system may encompass multiple social structures or—to use Hays’ (1994) preferred terminology—“systems of relations.” These systems of relations do change over time and although they all may be involved in the production of an art work, they are not necessarily complementary and may collide with one another. An analysis of art-worlds, then, seeks to delineate the various social relationships and institutions that are involved in the process of bringing a work of art to life.

1.4.4 Relations among the Charge, the Brief, and the Art-World

In line with Baxandall (1985), I propose that we may interpret any particular work of art to be the product of an artist’s charge, brief, and art-world. This is not to say that their combination will always result in the production of an artistic work. Rather that when confronting an existing work, we may be certain that there exists a charge, a brief, and an art-world to be investigated. The charge, brief, and art-world are, in combination, necessary but not sufficient for the production of art.

In keeping with the discussions of Baxandall (1985), Swidler (2001, 1986), and Becker (1982, 1974), all of whom emphasize the actions of individuals, I have referenced the activities of individual artists in the course of this discussion. Gilmore (2000), however, extends Baxandall (1985) to the level of the artistic movement. As discussed, the brief and the art-world are fundamentally social; if, as is posited on page 5, a group of artists confront the same problem (or set of problems), their charge is also shared. At the level of the individual, the combination of a charge, brief, and art-world may culminate in the creation of a new artistic work; at the level of the movement, a new artistic style (Gilmore 2000).

This relationship is diagrammed in Figure 1. Note that Figure 1 presents a combinatorial (or genomic) model and not a conventional linear model. The

\(^2\)Although Becker does not hyphenate the term, I do in order to underline the analytic similitude between the theoretical constructs of art-world and world-system as “worlds unto themselves.” Indeed, Becker (1982:7–14) and Wallerstein (2000:75) define their worlds in the same manner: as characterized by a division of labor, boundaries of which are delimited by exchange of an “essential” (Wallerstein 2000:82) or non-peripheral (Becker 1982:34) nature.

The broader point that I wish to make here is to recognize the self-similarity (Abbott 2001) of the concepts herein developed: art-worlds, which constitute a single division of labor, arise within the world-system, itself constituting a single division of labor.
circled elements represent the theoretic constructs that have been discussed. Lines from each of the three causal constructs (the charge, the brief, and the art-world) terminate in an ‘AND gate,’ an icon borrowed from symbolic logic, representing the combination of the three elements. The output of the AND gate is annotated with a superscript ‘N,’ indicating that the combination of charge, brief, and art-world is necessary (but not sufficient) for the production of an artistic style. Lines connecting causal constructs indicate the presence of a relationship between two theoretic entities. The solid arrowhead indicates the expectation of a causal relationship: Baxandall (1985) and Gilmore (2000) both argue that briefs are constructed in response to the emergence of a charge. Open dots indicate that the nature of the relationship between the entities is unknown. Could the process of constructing a brief affect the content of the charge or the structure of the art-world? Do the relations present within the art-world influence the content of the brief? Might the form of the charge and the systems of relations affect one another? To my knowledge, these questions have not yet been asked. Among my goals for the proposed research, therefore, is to answer the question of how these constituent components of artistic style affect one another.

1.5 Mediated Causes of Style: Global and Regional Political-Economies

In Section 1.4, I argued that to make sense of a particular aesthetic style, we must examine the charge, brief, and art-world that gave birth to it. From such a proposition immediately arises additional questions. These are the questions that motivate my dissertation research: Where do charges, briefs, and art-worlds come from? How do they change?

One answer commonly offered in response to these questions is that of evolution. Gilmore (2000), for example, argues that any given style—that is, a particular way of approaching particular problems—embodies natural limits. A
Figure 2: Possible Model of Globological Style Creation

movement’s brief describes the legitimate means of engaging its charge. When those means are no longer capable of successfully resolving the charge, when the limits of its brief are reached, a movement’s members either seek new ways of confronting the charge or they seek new charges to confront. Either situation signals the exhaustion of the movement and, analogous to Kuhn’s (1996) model of scientific paradigm shifts, new styles are borne of previous ones.

Another answer is offered by Becker (1982) who suggests that the rise and demise of art-worlds is essentially an epiphenomenal consequence of innovation. As new techniques, concepts, and audiences are discovered, they create opportunities for new forms of collaboration and disrupt existing ones. Most innovations fail to gain sufficient traction to birth a new art-world; those that succeed do so through the spread and adoption of the emerging brief. The art-world dies as people abandon the brief.

Both these approaches pay little attention to the social context within which a movement exists. While neither author dismisses the role of exogenous factors, the locus of explanation is an internal dynamic of the movement: either the movement runs up against the limitations of its own brief or its social relations are destabilized in some way. I agree that an understanding of aesthetic transformation requires that we examine the actions and activities of those individuals directly involved in bringing the style to life. I suggest, however, that this is but half the story and the current focus upon endogenous factors must be complemented by an examination of exogenous factors.

In Figure 2, I present a possible model of how the world-system might affect the rise, spread, and decline of artistic style. I suggest that we do not experience the effects of globological transformation directly; rather, these effects are mediated by regional locales and it is regional transformations that shape the charges, briefs, and art-worlds that give rise to artistic styles.

In Figure 2, single-headed arrows are read as shaping or determining a single instance of an entity; double-headed arrows, multiple instances. Bidirectional arrows indicate the presence of a dialectical relationship. Solid arrowheads represent observable effects that may be empirically measured. Open arrowheads, on the other hand, represent potential effects; that is, the entity at the base of the arrow may or may not actually affect the entity at the head of the arrow. In evaluating the validity of potential effects, the relevant question is not whether one finds evidence of a significant effect but, rather, whether the explanans is
functionally congruent with the explanandum (Hempel and Oppenheim 1948). ζ represents variation not explained by the model. Figure 2 should, therefore, be read as follows:

1. Transformation of the world-system begets transformation of various regional-systems.
2. Transformation of these geographic regions combine to produce transformation of the world-system.
3. Regional transformation affects (creates, modifies, destroys) the charges that local artists confront.
4. Regional transformation affects (creates, modifies, destroys) the briefs held by various local artists.
5. Regional transformation affects (creates, modifies, destroys) the structure of various local art worlds.
6. Transformation of local art-worlds potentially affects the social relations of the associated region.
7. Transformation of local briefs potentially affects the meaning systems of the associated region.
8. Transformations in local charges, briefs, and art-worlds all affect one another.
9. A given aesthetic style is the product of the combination of a charge, brief, and art-world as well as other factors omitted from the model.

This is, admittedly, a fairly complex model. Although logically plausible, it is largely speculative. I therefore propose it not as a definitive statement nor as a hypothesis to be tested but, rather, as a heuristic to provoke my exploration of the social determinants of aesthetic variation. As noted when discussing the proximate causes of style in Section 1.4, the relationships among the charge, brief, and art-world is currently unknown. Indeed, all of the specified relationships must be considered hypothetical and subject to revision. One product of the proposed research will be a revision (likely, a substantial revision) of Figure 2. I therefore defer further discussion of the model details and turn to the case that I will use to explore the questions I have herein proposed regarding the production of style.

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3In functional explanation, causality is established by explaining the presence of X by its effect on Y. “Birds have hollow bones because hollow bones facilitate flight” is an example of functional explanation: the presence of hollow bones is explained by the fact that they permit birds to fly. Cohen (1986:15) provides a formal definition: a functional explanation of the presence of e exists when it may be demonstrated that “e occurred because the situation was such that an event like e would cause an event like f.” In the model presented in Figure 2, the open arrow pointing from Art-World to Geographic Region suggests that the form of the art-world is, in part, explained by the effect that such a form might have on the geographic region. Note that for the explanation to be valid, the art-world need not have the specified effect upon the region but, rather, that such potential exists.
2 The Case

The Arts and Crafts movement arose during the first world-wide depression. Born in England during the late 19th century, the movement spread throughout Western Europe and as far as Russia, Australia, and the United States before being effectively annihilated by the First World War. While remnants of the movement survived the War, never again would its techniques and ideology resonate as strongly. The conventional story of the movement’s birth is well known: reacting to the degradation of human labor accompanying the rise of industrial capitalism, Ruskin, Morris, and their compatriots sought to recover the romance and dignity of craftsmanship by reinvoking the spirit of a bygone era wherein artisans, working side by side, created art with their hands rather than producing commodities as part of a machine. Reacquainting work with grace would reintroduce meaning to labor. And realized as home and furniture, housewares and decor—what has been called the “stuff of life”—the Arts and Crafts movement would restore beauty to the world.

As the movement spread from country to country, it attracted a diverse group of practitioners. Some joined with the movement’s founders, eschewing industrial production and returning to traditional craftsmanship, standing against capitalism and joining the blossoming socialist program. Others departed from the founding ideologies in one or more ways: declining the socialist call, tolerating or embracing the machine, abiding or encouraging the commercialization of one’s craft. More overtly, a variety of styles and design techniques emerged. The intricate designs of Morris’ textiles and Tiffany’s glasswork were joined by the simple elegance of Stickley’s Mission furniture and Wright’s Prairie houses.

While many have recognized the diversity found within the Arts and Crafts movement, few have sought to understand it. Typically, artistic movements are defined by a particular aesthetic style. But the Arts and Crafts are not defined as such. Aesthetic styles varied within countries, across countries, and over time. A recent Los Angeles County Museum of Art retrospective, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America, 1880–1920: Design for the Modern World, was the first exhibition devoted to exploring and appreciating how various countries adapted and transformed the ideals of the movement “to suit their own national identities and economic needs amid rapid industrialization” (Kaplan 2004b:7). I propose the analytic complement of this exhibition: a comparative-historical research project investigating the variety of works produced by the Arts and Crafts movement. Examining the Arts and Crafts movement across space and time, under the various political-economic circumstances of different countries at different periods, I seek to understand the material basis of aesthetic diversity. More generally, I seek to understand cultural responses to a period of prolonged global economic instability.

2.1 Why the Arts and Crafts Movement?

The four decades between 1875 and 1914 which saw the rise, spread, and decline of the Arts and Crafts movement—the period which Hobsbawm (1989) refers
to as *The Age of Empire*—are the same as those which constitute the valley of the Kondratieff cycle, wherein the decline of the B-phase transitions to the ascent of the A-phase. During the first half of this period, world productivity and international trade boomed; paradoxically, this led to saturated markets in which production began to outpace consumption. Demand failed to keep up with supply: prices dropped, interest rates stagnated, and profits began to fall. The recovery of the global economy began in the second half of the period with the acceleration of imperialist expansion. The agricultural sector flourished with the opening of new production zones. And while industry continued to strain against the costs of production, the rapid wage growth of the prior years began to recede. Most notably, the output of Germany and the United States overtook that of Great Britain.

It is not a coincidence that the Arts and Crafts movement arose during this period of global political and economic transition. British hegemony would give way to American hegemony; laissez-faire industrial capitalism, characterized by the invisible hand and “free” labor, would give way to Fordism, characterized by state intervention and the disciplined worker. It was during this period that industrial capitalism brought the physical comfort that we now associate with the bourgeois lifestyle. But this comfort was accompanied by psychological discord as the recovery of the global economy brought with it an expansion of the middle classes. As conditions improved, more and more workers lay claim to middle class membership and, with it, equal consideration in both the political-economic and cultural realms. Working-class movements that appealed to shared economic situations and nationalistic movements that appealed to shared ethnic identification both sought the protections afforded the bourgeoisie and the representation they enjoyed. This pursuit of democratization was a defining characteristic of the period (Hobsbawm 1989). And as capitalist and worker redefined their relationship with one another, so did artist and audience. Exemplified by the rise of cinema and jazz, the creative arts began to be transformed into commodities for sale on the mass market, consumed by all.

The founders of the Arts and Crafts movement embraced the democratization of art, maintaining that all deserve the opportunity to experience art’s beauty. But they decried the effects of industrial production which, in stripping the artisan of his creativity, could not produce beauty but only banal uniformity. The proposed solution, drawn from Ruskin, was to eschew industrial production and return an earlier time of handcrafted goods. Handicraft would both reacquaint the worker with his humanity and infuse the world with beauty. The movement’s aim, then, was not to retreat into the past as is sometimes claimed but, rather, to draw upon it in realizing a future consistent with the bourgeois ideals of “life, liberty, and fraternity.”

Envisioning this utopian future, the Arts and Crafts movement sought to transform both the ideological and material conditions of handicraft production. By reforming both how people thought of handicraft as well as how it was produced, members of the movement hoped to ignite a total societal revolution. The Arts and Crafts movement, then, was explicitly directed at transforming both the cultural and structural dimensions of the production process and, as
such, provides an ideal vantage from which to survey the relationship between social structure and culture.

Within the Arts and Crafts scholarly literature, studies of the political and economic aspects of the movement tend to be conducted by social scientists while art historians tend toward aesthetic analysis. While this division of labor is not surprising, the consequence is that there exist few attempts to bridge these arenas and we do not yet have a clear understanding of the relationship between them. The proposed research seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

The movement serves as a “most-likely” test (Eckstein 1992) of the world-system’s influence on cultural formation. The Arts and Crafts movement was an international one that spread across Western Europe (what world-system theorists define as the “core” of the capitalist world-economy) and to Russia, Australia, and the United States (in the late 19th century, all part of the semi-periphery). As it did so, the ideologies and principles of the movement were interpreted by local practitioners and put into practice in light of prevailing political, economic, and cultural conditions. Again: if a country’s position within the world-system does influence the form of cultural products produced, an analysis of the Arts and Crafts movement will reveal it.

2.2 The Movement’s Charge

Building upon the philosophy of Ruskin, Morris founded the Arts and Crafts movement in late-nineteenth century England. Ruskin’s philosophy also inspired Gandhi (Brantlinger 1996:467) who summarized Ruskin’s anti-industrial utopianism:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

Ruskin’s “main concern, however, was art, and his most original contributions were on the relationship between art and society” (Evans 1988:251). Most fundamentally, Ruskin did not distinguish between “fine art” and “craft” arguing that “in a healthy society, art incorporates both of these dimensions and is appreciated by everyone, not just an elite, educated class” (Evans 1988:251). From this premise derive a number of propositions which Morris incorporated as the moral basis of the Arts and Crafts movement:

Vitality of the vernacular Ruskin did not believe in “art for art’s sake” (Evans 1988:251), insisting that crafts should be both beautiful and functional. The design of an object should reflect its nature and purpose. While elaborate ornament is characteristic of the Arts and Crafts movement, “it does not embellish it unduly or make it look like something
else” (Crawford 1997:20). The ornament should never interfere with the object’s functionality.

**Joy in labor** Ruskin and Morris echoed Marx’s indictment of the capitalist production process as alienating. Revolutionizing the production process will transform labor into art (Boris 1989:175): “real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labor—an art made by the people and for the people, as happiness to the maker and user” (Weingarden 1985:9).

**Art as part of everyday life** Those of the Arts and Crafts movement hoped to infuse daily life with beauty. But art is not simply to be consumed by the masses, it is to be produced by them. (Crawford 1997:20) argues that this proposition lies at the heat of the Arts and Crafts movement:

That is the idea that creativity can be part of the daily experience of ordinary people at work; that it is not something special, not the preserve of fine artists and geniuses... The hope of the Arts and Crafts movement was that experience might become general.

**Community** Fundamental to the elimination of alienation was the fostering of community:

It was not technology per se that Morris fought against, but rather mass production, and the repetition and alienation which he thought accompanied it. What he ultimately was against was any force that tended to break up the small, intimate communities which he saw as natural to human life...

“Community” was not simply something existing out there, but was, in fact, the ultimate political and cultural goal of the whole movement. It was seen as an antidote to alienation, as a way of keeping human needs the central aim of production rather than financial gain or growth for its own sake, and as a way of preserving love and intimacy in the face of greed and depersonalization (Evans 1988:264–65).

**Restorational ideology** The Arts and Crafts movement looked to the past for relief. Arguing that the division between “fine art” and “craft” did not exist during the Middle Ages (Nakayama 1996:276; Crawford 1997:16), the movement’s adherents had in common the belief that elements of pre-industrial folklife, especially traditional crafts, needed to be revived as an antidote to the alienation of modern industrial, mass society. Ultimate goals could be anything from individual therapy to revolution, but tended to revolve around the idea of bringing handmade goods and the process of making them into everyday life (Evans 1988:257).
These five testimonies provide an initial formulation of the movement’s charge. But to them, we must of course add survival which, within capitalism, entails dependence upon—and subjugation to—the market (Wood 2002). Members of the Arts and Crafts movement quickly found that the imperatives of the market conflicted with their ideals. The joy found in labor is threatened when one must work to live. Attending to quality rather than quantity meant that artisans could not compete with mass producers on price. And, yet, when subjected to market forces, finely crafted goods were be priced beyond the means of most consumers. Cooperative ventures such as Morris and Company and the Guild of Handicraft fostered communities dedicated to the implementation of the Arts and Crafts ideology but struggled as they, too, were forced to compete on the market.

High ideals, unfortunately, could not often be reconciled with practice. Ironically, the movement could only flourish in an age of prosperity created through industrial achievement: the architectural profession in particular depended on rich clients who were perhaps gentrify but more often industrialists or members of the expanding professional classes. In object design there were similar problems: handwork using the finest materials was expensive and out of the reach of most consumers. The anti-industrial ideal—that of a single person conceiving and making an object from start to finish—was rarely achieved and frequently viewed as an elitist activity. More often furniture designers looked to the traditional, intuitive skills of local craftsmen. To a considerable extent craft-designers also depended on multiple production. Enamellers took their copper plaques to commercial jewellers to be set, and the most common practice in ceramic studios remained the hand-painting of factory-fired blanks (Cumming and Kaplan 1991).

In confronting their charge, artists seek to accommodate contradictory demands. When multiple artists sharing the same charge, brief, and art-world arrive at a similar solution, a new style is born. Conventionally, we refer to the shepherds of this style as belonging to the same artistic movement. In the case of the Arts and Crafts, however, a single movement produced multiple styles. What explains this diversity of style? Did the Arts and Crafts movement encompass disparate charges, briefs, and art-worlds? If so, how did the expansion of the movement from England to the United States and across Europe affect their contents? Is it even appropriate to refer to a single Arts and Crafts movement or did distinct regional variants exist? That Arts and Crafts practitioners pursued a variety of aesthetic approaches permits us to distinguish the movement from its accompany styles. The examination of the rise, spread, and decline of the Arts and Crafts movement, therefore, provides a unique opportunity to explore the production of style.
3 Proposed Research: “Casing” the Movement

I have proposed to develop a globological model of style—that is, a model that details how the dynamics of the world-system produce aesthetic variation—through an examination of the life-course of the Arts and Crafts movement. The proposed project is, in this sense, a single case study of the Arts and Crafts movement. In practice, however, I will conduct a series of case studies allowing me to examine how the movement differed across time and space. From this perspective, I am proposing a comparative research project. In this section, I outline the planned research process. First, however, it is necessary to problematize the notion that the Arts and Crafts movement constitutes a single coherent “case.”

Until this point in the discussion, I have engaged the polite fiction that a reference to “the Arts and Crafts movement” need not be qualified, that there exists a general consensus as to what that phrase refers. But truthfully, it is by no means clear how to delimit the movement’s boundaries—either empirically or theoretically. The process of bounding the breadth and scope of one’s case—a process that Ragin (1992) refers to as “casing”—is fundamental to social research, though not generally recognized as such.

In the course of any given project, social researchers must identify both their unit(s) of analysis and their unit(s) of observation. Confusingly, the term case is used to refer to both. More troubling is that these constructs are frequently confounded with one another. Researchers collect data on units of observation so that they may speak to units of analysis (Babbie 1989). Units of analysis and units of observation are constructed by the researcher as part of the research process (Ragin 1992). Frequently, this aspect of the project is not explicitly discussed. Variable-oriented researchers are particularly prone to neglect this step as their analytic frames tend to be fixed by their choice of dataset (Ragin 1994) and, furthermore, because their methods tend to veil cases (Rubinson and Ragin 2007). The techniques of case-oriented researchers, on the other hand, bring cases to the foreground of the analysis and draw attention to the process by which units of observation and units of analysis are constructed. Ragin (1992:218) recommends that we

consider cases not as empirical units or theoretical categories, but as the products of basic research operations. Specifically, making something into a case or “casing” it can bring operational closure to some problematic relationship between ideas and evidence, between theory and data.

The process of casing is a form of social research in its own right: through it, social researchers construct “representations of social life” (Ragin 1994) and “tell about society” (Becker 1986). When confronting a problematic unit of analysis—one in which the linkages between theory and evidence are ambiguous—as case-oriented researchers frequently do, and as characterizes the “case” of the Arts and Crafts movement, casing is the preferred research strategy.
3.1 The Problematic Nature of the Arts and Crafts

Although the label of “Arts and Crafts” was not affixed until 1887 with the founding of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, the ideals of the movement had been pursued for decades. An attractive option for marking the founding of the movement in 1861, the year in which Morris opened his firm. Yet the ideals that motivated Morris and his associates had been articulated by Ruskin the previous decade and by Pugin the decade before that one. Dating the demise of the movement is likewise dubious: While a number of authors (e.g. Winter 1971; Seddon 1975; Weingarden 1985) identify the First World War and the rise of Modernism as bringing an end to the movement, Crawford (2004:65) observes that through the 1920s and 1930s “its heart survived in many little workshops, and its influence was still strong in art schools.” Even more problematic is that the movement arrived in Japan only in the early 20th century as the Mingei movement, persisting through the Second World War when it was transformed into a Buddhist aesthetic theory (Kikuchi 2005).

It is similarly difficult to circumscribe the movement’s geographic span. Most Arts and Crafts research focuses on England and the United States where its influence was most prominent. But the movement was truly international and spread throughout Western Europe and into Eastern Europe, reaching as far as Australia and, as noted above, Japan.

If demarcating the geographic and temporal scope of the movement is problematic, characterizing its ideological content is even more so. In reviewing the Arts and Crafts literature, I counted fifteen distinct “fundamental” principles of the Arts and Crafts. The five I chose to enumerate in Section 2.2 were simply those most commonly cited, an especially crude technique of determining the movement’s charge and one that leaves considerable doubt as to its foundational principles.

Theoretic classification of the Arts and Crafts is equally problematic. As already discussed, the Arts and Crafts movement does not conform to definitions that associate a given artistic movement with a single aesthetic style. Might it instead be considered a social movement? Many of its members identified as socialists and saw their work as an attempt at reforming capitalist production relations. Indeed, Morris worked with Eleanor Marx and Engels in founding the socialist movement in Britain. But others were politically agnostic or overtly supportive of capitalism.

The contested nature of the movement provides an opportunity to explore the research questions that I have posed throughout this proposal. By casing the Arts and Crafts movement—by seeking to answer “What is the Arts and Crafts movement a case of?”—I will bring both theory and data to bear upon the question of why the Arts and Crafts movement produced such a plethora of aesthetic styles. By drawing upon a variety of theoretical perspectives, I seek to make sense of the empirical complexity that is the Arts and Crafts movement. And by engaging this empirical complexity, by collecting rich, in-depth data on

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4Some authors even provide different sets of principles in different articles!
the Arts and Crafts movement, I seek to improve our theoretical understanding of how we produce style.

3.2 Theoretical Perspectives

Broadly speaking, there are, within sociology, two approaches to investigating the production and transformation of cultural objects such as aesthetic style. *Exogenous models*, which emphasize the role of the social structure, locate the source of artistic construction outside of the cultural system. *Endogenous models*, on the other hand, identify mechanisms and processes within the cultural system—mechanisms and processes independent of the social structure—that generate cultural change.

Obviously, both exogenous and endogenous processes participate in the production of artistic style. In this research project, however, my primary concern regards the role of exogenous factors; specifically, the relationship between the world-system and regional political-economies and their effect on artistic production. In this section, I discuss three ways in which we might view this relationship: as a regime of accumulation, as an antisystemic movement, and as a production nexus. These accounts are not mutually exclusive and, as such, may each help to explain the variety of aesthetic styles arising from the Arts and Crafts movement. For each of the models presented, I ask “How would we know if it applies to the Arts and Crafts?” That is, I discuss how the Arts and Crafts movement might be considered an instance—a case—of that model. This is the essence of casing. By interrogating both theory and data in light of one another, I seek to produce a coherent description of the Arts and Crafts movement, one that serves to explain aesthetic variation.

3.2.1 Constitutive Models

Constitutive models posit a symbiotic relationship between the social structure and cultural objects. In their most elementary form, they posit that culture mirrors social relations. So-called reflection models are typically associated with Marxist base/superstructure theory in which “[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas” (Marx 1978a:172). From such a perspective, culture merely manifests the underlying social relations and cultural change is but social change. Such models are too simplistic. Failing to specify the mechanisms which connect social relations to cultural change, these models produce little insight and “cultural forms are presented as empty boxes to be filled in by structural needs, with the result that the internal content of representations exercises little explanatory power” (Alexander and Smith 1993).

Moreover, such models misinterpret Marx’s understanding of the relationship between base and superstructure. Like all of his models, Marx’s base/superstructure model is dialectical: the base and superstructure constitute one another and their relationship is of a functional nature. The base which, due to inherent contradictions, tends toward crisis, gives rise to a superstructure that stabilizes the base. The superstructure stabilizes the base in two ways. First,
it codifies the property rights which define the relations of production. Second, and more relevant to the present discussion, it spawns agents that contain, regulate, or absorb the surplus produced by the overproduction crisis.

The Arts and Crafts Movement as a Regime of Accumulation Regulation theorists seek to explain the longevity of the capitalist economy, a system that—according to Marx—is characterized by contradiction and tends toward crisis. “How is it,” ask regulation theorists, “that capitalism hasn’t yet annihilated itself?” Their answer is that as capitalism tends toward crisis, production relations are restructured in such a manner as to (temporarily) resolve the crisis and permit the continued persistence of the capitalist mode of production (Dunford 1990). This restructuring of production relations is possible because not all aspects of modern capitalist society have been commodified. As new sectors of society are commodified and others are decommodified, a new regime of accumulation emerges. A regime of accumulation characterizes the way that production is organized and how surplus is distributed; it might be understood as a specific variant of the capitalist mode of production (Dunford 1990). Indeed, Hall and Soskice (2001) recognize the regulation school as a predecessor of the recent “varieties of capitalism” approach.

Theories of regulation delineate the relationships among four elements: the regime of accumulation, the industrial paradigm, the hegemonic structure, and the mode of regulation (Dunford 1990). The industrial paradigm refers to what Marx termed “forces of production.” The concept of the hegemonic structure invokes Gramsci’s (1971) arguments regarding the functions of the state and civil society in contemporary capitalist society. The mode of regulation describes the institutional arrangements that maintain the regime of accumulation. Regulation theory is essentially a refined application of Marx’s (1978b) base/superstructure theory; when synchronized, these four elements serve to stabilize one another and permit the continuous accumulation of capital to proceed.

I suggest that it may prove fruitful to examine the Arts and Crafts movement from the point of view of a regulation theorist. The Arts and Crafts movement arose during a crisis of overproduction, a crisis that would end with the implementation of Fordism. The simultaneous development of the Arts and Crafts movement and Fordism may not be coincidental. Like Henry Ford, the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement sought to reconfigure the relations of production—from a regulationist perspective, might both be understood as regimes of accumulation with the only significant difference between Morris and Ford being the success of the latter? The regulation school built its reputation on its analysis of Fordism; I propose to apply that same analysis to the Arts and Crafts. Both the Arts and Crafts movement and Fordism may have arisen as responses to the crisis of overproduction that characterized the end of the 19th century.
The Arts and Crafts Movement as an Antisystemic Movement

Antisystemic movements arise in opposition to the existing world-system order, seeking the realization of the French Revolution’s slogan of “liberty, equality, fraternity” (Wallerstein 2004, 1990; Arrighi et al. 1989). Wallerstein (2004, 1990) distinguishes between two types of antisystemic movements that arose during the nineteenth century. Worker movements seek to liberate the working classes; nationalistic movements seek to liberate the ethnic minorities. The distinction between these movements, argue Arrighi et al. (1989), is largely rhetorical. For both movements, the goal of liberating the oppressed requires the restructuring of the capitalist world-economy. The sole difference regards the site of critique: worker movements focus on the economic sphere of the global political-economy while nationalistic movements focus on the political sphere.

At the same time that antisystemic movements seek to restructure the existing world-system, they also serve to reinforce it in four ways (Wallerstein 2004:67–73). First, anti-systemic movements legitimate the dominant social order by accepting and promoting its fundamental ideology of “liberty, equality, fraternity.” The antisystemic critique is not levied against the ideology itself but, rather, at the existing social order which has failed to fully implement it (Harvey 2006, 2005). Second, antisystemic movements reify the dominant model of the social structure. By emphasizing the conflict between workers and capitalists, worker movements have no place for those who are not involved in capitalist commodity production (Wallerstein 2004:68). Such individuals are either wedged into the capitalist class structure or ignored entirely. Nationalist movements, similarly, suppress non-ethnic divisions and, in identifying the nation-state as the oppressor, reinforce its importance to the global order. Third, antisystemic movements provide an outlet through which to channel frustration and thereby regulate it (Wallerstein 2004:73). In particular, established antisystemic organizations with long-run objectives seek to restrain behavior that may threaten the organization’s legitimacy (Amin et al. 1990). Finally, to the extent that antisystemic movements are successful, they find themselves incorporated into and, thereby, dependent upon the existing social order (Wallerstein 2004, 1990; Arrighi et al. 1989).

The Arts and Crafts movement bears a resemblance to antisystemic movements that is worthy of further investigation. As noted, a defining characteristic of antisystemic movements is their contradictory nature: at the same time that an antisystemic movement is critiquing the existing social order, it acts to reinforce it. The Arts and Crafts movement exhibits this very schizophrenia. It arose in England as a critique of industrial capitalism and an attempt to reform production relations so as to liberate workers from the obscenity of industrial production. In America, however, the critique was exchanged for a capitalist apology: “Their interest was not in revolution but in reform, often in ways that were geared very specifically to preserving capitalism while reforming its worst abuses” (Evans 1988:258). Frank Lloyd Wright went so far as to jettison the

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5See, for example, Part III “Class and Gender” of Wright (1997) for a review of how Marxian theorists have attempted integrate women and, specifically, housewives into their conception of the capitalist class structure.
movement’s anti-industrial convictions and declared that,

My God is machinery. The art of the future will be the expression of the individual artist through the thousand powers of the machine, the machine doing all the things that the individual worker cannot do, and the creative artist is the man that controls all this and understands it (cited in Kimmel 1985:163).

Kaplan (2004b:274) argues that to make sense of this transformation of the movement’s central ideals, it must be understood that professors such as Triggs and architects like Wright were not the American harbingers of the Arts and Crafts movement. This was the achievement of the entrepreneurial manufacturers, who would spread the Morrisonian ideal widely, if not deeply, among the country’s broad middle classes. If in Britain many Arts and Crafts protagonists were architects, and in Germany, they were most often painters who had converted to design, in the United States they were businessmen.

According to Marx, capitalism continually revolutionizes both the forces and relations of production. Antisystemic movements function as a throttle; they regulate the velocity of this transformation, preventing it from spinning out of control and collapsing the system. Interpreting the Arts and Crafts movement as an instance of an antisystemic movement is one way of making sense of the contradictory ideals expressed by its adherents: regional differences of the Arts and Crafts ideology may reflect the uneven geographical development of capitalism (Harvey 2006).

3.2.2 Production Models

The production of culture perspective argues that cultural objects are best understood as socially constructed symbolic expressions produced within a “production nexus” (Peterson and Anand 2004). Understanding cultural change, then, requires understanding transformation of this nexus. The production nexus is made up of six interrelated facets: technology, law and regulation, industry structure, organization structure, occupational careers, and market. As these facets are tightly coupled, a shock to any one can destabilize the entire nexus. The subsequent reorganization of the nexus results in the production of new cultural objects.

The Arts and Crafts Movement as a Production Nexus  The aesthetic diversity of the Arts and Crafts movement might reflect differences in the institutional environments in which it was embedded. From this perspective, the variety of Arts and Crafts styles indicates a variety of distinct institutional environments. During the period under investigation—a period of prolonged political-economic instability—we should expect the continual emergence of new
styles as the production nexuses continually reorganize themselves in response to globological and regional transformation.

The production of culture perspective suggests that the term “Arts and Crafts movement” is misleading because it conveys a coherence that does not, in fact, exist. Instead, the movement is better understood as a myriad of more-or-less distinct systems of production. To the extent that these various production nexuses are tied to one another, the reorganization of one may indeed impact others. Nevertheless, the impact of globological and regional upheaval is indeterminate and will produce different effects across time and space. Because artistic production is tied to a particular production nexus, there is no reason to expect similar works to emerge from different nexuses simply because they share the moniker of “Arts and Crafts.” An understanding of the diversity of the Arts and Crafts, then, requires an understanding of the diversity of its production nexuses.

3.3 Research Methods

I intend to conduct my casing of the Arts and Crafts movement through the application of (1) process tracing and (2) comparative analysis. Process tracing is a technique in which social researchers convert a narrative of a particular sequence of events into a theoretical explanation of how various causal conditions interact to bring about a particular outcome (George and Bennett 2005). The goal of process tracing is to abstract from idiosyncratic explanations in order to generate portable theory, theory that may be usefully applied to different events. Where process tracing is technique applied to a single case, social researchers use the comparative method to examine the similarities and differences across a small or moderate number of cases (Ragin 1987). The goal of comparative research is to understand how different combinations of causal conditions lead to different outcomes. The methods of process tracing and comparative analysis complement one another: process tracing produces analytic elements (e.g., causal conditions and outcomes) that one may analyze using comparative technique.

3.3.1 Process Tracing

I will initially employ process tracing and conduct a series of case studies that follow the history of the development of the Arts and Crafts movement and its associated styles. Recognizing that, as previously discussed, the Arts and Crafts movement reached across the globe, I assume that the clearest expressions of its charge, brief, and art-world will be found in those regions in which it was most prominent. I therefore plan to study England, the United States, the Scandinavian states of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and the Germanic states of Austria, Hungary, and Germany. A similar assumption motivates my choice of time periods. While the the specific dates of its birth and death are

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6Stavenow-Hidemark (2004) includes Finland in her discussion of the Scandinavian Arts and Crafts movement. If appropriate, I may follow her lead and do the same.
debatable, there is a rough consensus that the Arts and Crafts movement was born in England during the mid-1870s and effectively died with the onset of the First World War. The movement came to different regions at different times: to America approximately ten years later and to the Continental regions in the late-19th century (Cumming and Kaplan 1991). To enable me to track aesthetic change over time, I will split the timeline into four ten-year periods: 1875–1884, 1885–1894, 1895–1904, 1905–1914. Combining these dimensions of region and time produces a matrix of sixteen cells. As depicted by Figure 3, eleven of these cells represent viable case studies. Both the regional groupings and the time spans are rather arbitrary but the technique of process tracing is quite flexible and I may adjust either or both over the course of the research. As a starting point, however, I expect that comparing across these cases will reveal any patterns of covariation between regional political-economics and aesthetic expression.7

3.3.2 Comparative Analysis

It is through the comparative analysis that I will seek an explanation for the diversity of styles evident within the Arts and Crafts movement. The results of the case studies will provide the form of the comparative analysis as well as the data for it. Due to this dependency, it is difficult at this point to adequately de-

7Eleven case studies is a substantial number and I am considering various ways of approaching the task. One option would be to restrict the analysis to England and the United States, deferring investigation of the Continental regions until later. A benefit of this approach is that it gives me additional time to collect data on the Germanic and Scandinavian regions which are significantly underrepresented in the literature (or, at least, the English literature that I have reviewed). My concern in eliminating these two regions from my analysis is that to do so may significantly undermine the validity of my project. A number of researchers have argued that the movement underwent a series of substantial transformations as it spread to and across the Continent (see, for example, the essays in Kaplan 2004b).

A second option suggested by a colleague would not omit regions but treat them “shadow cases,” similar to the manner in which Skocpol (1979) treats England, Prussia, and Japan and Moore (1966) treats Germany. I would not conduct in-depth analysis of the Germanic and Scandinavian regions but instead use them to complement the analyses of England and the United States. I could also use them as a basis for testing theories developed through the analysis. Depending upon the results of the case studies, I might be able to introduce the Continental regions in the comparative analysis. Regardless, the question how I will address the Germanic and Scandinavian case studies is one that may, at present, be deferred as I plan to begin with the case studies of England before turning to the United States.
scribe the comparative aspect of the project. Indeed, without having completed the case studies, it is unclear what units of observation I will be comparing nor what the salient causal conditions might be. Indeed, it is unknown whether the results of the process tracing will be complex enough to require the formal application of QCA and, if so, whether the analysis will make use of fuzzy or crisp sets. Perhaps the only thing that can be stated with certainty is that the outcome will be a measure of aesthetic style. As Section 3.4.4 describes, the intended operationalization of the outcome measure is as a fuzzy-set. But this measure, too, is subject to revision depending upon the results of the case studies.

3.3.3 Validity Concerns

The construction of in-depth historical narratives is both a strength and weakness of process tracing. On the one hand, the researcher’s expertise can lead to novel insights, lines of inquiry, and theoretical developments; on the other, personal bias may blind one to discrepant evidence, negative cases, or competing explanations. The comparative approach I propose encourages the former and limits the latter by inviting comparisons among detailed analyses of multiple cases. By making comparisons across a limited number of cases, I attempt to preclude the possibility of contingency that case studies invite while avoiding the generality of large-N studies which obscure cases and hinder in-depth understanding.

Furthermore, comparative analytic techniques facilitate dialogue between theory and evidence and encourage researchers to revise their theoretical categories and propositions as part of the research process. Because theory construction is embedded in the process of comparative research, empirical contradictions do not invalidate a particular theoretical notion but, instead, act as additional data points which call for the further development and refinement of theory.

3.4 Measures and Data Collection

The research that I have proposed spans multiple levels of analysis. At the macrolevel, I am concerned with how the structure of the global political-economy changed between 1875 and 1914 and the effects that globological transformation had on regional political-economies. At the microlevel, I will be examining variation in the aesthetics of individual artistic works. To bridge these levels I have invoked the concept of style, arguing that style is a product of the combination of a charge, a brief, and an art-world. My research, therefore, will be on these five entities, bridging these levels of analysis.

3.4.1 The World-System

At the globological level, my primary concerns regard structural transformations of the political-economy of the world-system. Chase-Dunn and Rubinson
identify three cyclical processes of the world-system. The first regards peripheral domination by the core which oscillates between direct (e.g., colonization) and indirect (e.g., free trade agreements) forms. The second is the distribution of power among core states which swings between periods of unicentrism, characterized by the dominance of a single hegemonic state, and periods of multicentrism, during which power is more equally shared. At their most extreme, periods of multicentrism degenerate into global wars as core states compete for hegemonic status. The third world-systemic cycle identified by world-system theorists is the Kondratieff cycle, the fifty-year waves of global economic expansion and contraction.

From a globological perspective, the forty year life span of the Arts and Crafts movement is quite short. Yet this was a defining period in the history of the world-system. As previously noted, the life cycle of the Arts and Crafts movement roughly coincides with the valley of the Kondratieff cycle. And it culminated in the First World War which, in combination with World War II, is recognized by world-system theorists as constituting the second such global conflict.

The impact of the world-system on the production of style might be direct, indirect, or both direct and indirect. The indirect impact of the world-system on style will be indicated if, through the case studies, I am able to tie changes of the structure of world-system to changes in the structure of geographical regions which, in turn, I am able to tie to changes in aesthetic style. The direct impact of the world-system will be indicated if, in addition, I find that these effects are similar across geographic regions.

There have been three decades of investigation into the cycles of the world-system by globalization scholars and, in particular, world-system researchers. I do not, therefore, see the need to collect additional data. However, different techniques of mapping the world-system do produce slightly different results and there remains controversy as to which method is most appropriate. I have not yet had an opportunity to thoroughly evaluate the range of different models available and do not yet know which I will choose to deploy in my analysis. It is my hope that my research may serve to shed some light on the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches.

### 3.4.2 Geographic Regions

At the regional level, I will examine how local political-economies responded to changes in the structure of the world-system. Note that globological change may affect different regions in different ways. For example, the shift from unicentrism to multicentrism that occurred during this period involved a redistribution of global power from Great Britain to other countries, including the United States—the rising hegemonic power. Obviously, globological transformation affects a myriad of economic variables and while I will, of course, examine conventional measures such as GDP, interest rates, and price waves, I suspect that the most useful measures will emerge during the case studies. As the collection of standardized, cross-regional economic data is a fairly recent phenomena and
I anticipate that I will confront a fair amount of locally-specific data, I presume that I will largely rely upon previously published research in order to make sense of the data that I do find. I do not discount the possibility that I will find it necessary to collect, analyze, and interpret some regional data myself; in fact, I suspect that, at times, such a task may prove imperative. But I recognize that I am not an expert in the interpretation of historical, locally-specific economic data and, so, plan to rely upon those who are.

3.4.3 Charges, Briefs, and Art- Worlds

I discuss the investigation of charges, briefs, and art-worlds together because of their intimate relationship with one another. The boundaries distinguishing the concepts are blurry. Conceivably, each affects the others. Section 1 suggested. Is the Arts and Crafts emphasis on making use of local raw materials part of its charge or brief? Such a question cannot be answered a priori and requires in-depth research. Becker (1982) argues that shared conventions are a defining characteristic of an art-world but according to the definitions that I have put forth, these conventions more properly belong to a brief. This suggests that the brief may be, in part, responsible for the structure of the art-world. Is such an understanding correct? Only in-depth case analysis will reveal the contents and boundaries of the causal constructs.

To explore the charges, briefs, and art-worlds of the Arts and Crafts movement, I will primarily rely upon secondary and primary source material. As a starting point, I plan to leverage the considerable amount of historical, critical, and interpretive research that already exists on the movement. But the members of the Arts and Crafts movement were, themselves, prolific writers, publishing a substantial number of books, magazines, and articles describing both the ideology and the practices of the Arts and Crafts. Exhibition catalogs will prove invaluable as I seek to define the boundaries of the movement’s art-worlds.

For my study of the Arts and Crafts in England and America, I have found that most of the necessary materials are readily available via interlibrary loan and I do not foresee a lack of information limiting my analysis. I do, however, hold some such concerns as to my investigations of the Germanic and Scandinavian regions. It appears that interest in the international aspects of the movement is largely a relatively recent phenomenon. Indeed, it is only within the past decade that museums have begun creating exhibitions that emphasize the international dimension of the movement as their thematic concern. I worry that a lack of research on Arts and Crafts outside of England and America may hinder my analysis. That being said, I have not yet examined the issue in depth and it is not yet clear whether a problem does, in fact, exist. The possibility of data limitations, however, provide an additional reason to concentrate on the English and American aspects of the movement and treat the European case studies as shadow cases (see Footnote 7, page 26).
3.4.4 Styles

Sampling Style As the dependent variable of the analysis—style—is a characteristic of a collection of artistic works, its measurement requires a set of works to analyze. How those sets are defined, the conditions by which works are included in or excluded from these sets, that is, the question of how I will sample artistic works is, therefore, a crucial methodological consideration.

The textbook approach would be to generate a representative sample of Arts and Crafts works. Analysis of this sample would reveal the characteristic styles of the movement. But such an approach is not feasible as it assumes a defined population. Until the goal of casing the Arts and Crafts movement is successfully accomplished, a registry of its works is, by definition, impossible.

A second approach would be to construct a multidimensional sampling frame of aesthetic variation. Here, the axes would represent different sampling criteria that might conceivably affect aesthetic variation. For the current project, these dimensions would include various political-economic measures, measures related to the content of charges, briefs, and art-worlds, and direct measures of style. This approach also assumes a better understanding of the determinants of aesthetic variation than we currently possess.

I intend to pursue an inductive approach that is more flexible than the two described above. The limitation of this approach is that it does not ensure that the results will be representative of all Arts and Crafts styles. Rather, the results will need to be understood as tentative and subject to revision in light of future research. Accompanying this limitation, however, is an increased confidence as to the validity of the explanation offered as to the determinants of aesthetic variation.

My sampling procedure, while remaining a bit vague as to the details, is fairly straightforward. For each of the case studies previously delineated, I will consult a variety of contemporary and historical documents, synthesizing them so as to develop a narrative—in the words of Ragin (1994), a “representation of social life”—that describes the Art and Crafts movement at that time and place, one that pays special attention to the content of its charges, briefs, and art-worlds. As part of constructing these narratives, I will identify important actors and events, the people, organizations, and exhibitions that defined the Arts and Crafts movement at that moment. My sample will consist of works selected from among the associated works. While I will be unable to claim that my sample is representative of the Arts and Crafts movement as a whole, I am not proposing to test theory and, therefore, am not hindered by the assumptions associated with hypothesis testing. Rather, my goal is to develop a new theory of how styles are produced and this sampling procedure provides a strong foundation from which to accomplish this task.

One restriction that I am imposing upon my sampling procedure regards the types of works that I will include. In examining how art changes over time, art historians conventionally distinguish among the three most prominent types of artistic expression: painting, sculture, and architecture. Parallels from the Arts and Crafts movement would include textiles and stained glass, housewares and

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furniture, and architecture. Restricting my sample to these three media will
serve to impose some order upon the analysis and emphasize its comparative
nature.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{Measuring Style}  Wölfflin (1950), who founded the formal analysis of art,
argued that the evolution of artistic style was not random but, instead, followed
a cyclical pattern, moving between classical and baroque forms. He formulated
five pairs of oppositional descriptors that, he argued, could be used to classify
all artistic works. In his schema, Wölfflin associate the initial term with the
classical style and the subsequent term with the baroque:

\textbf{Linear versus Painterly} A linear style emphasizes the outlines of forms within
the work and, consequently, distinguishes them from one another. Less
distinct outlines characterize the painterly style which results in a less
“tangible” design.

\textbf{Plane versus Recession} Planar composition restricts the depth of the work
by distributing the motif across a limited number of planes. In recessional
composition, the motif is arranged so as to connect the various planes so
that one’s eye is drawn into the depth of the work.

\textbf{Closed versus Open Form} All artistic works are limited in their scope. Whether
a work’s form is closed or open refers to the degree to which the work is
self-contained, whether one experiences it as complete in and of itself or
as penetrated by the surrounding environment.

\textbf{Multiplicity versus Unity} Do the various parts of the work maintain their
independence or do they blend into one another? Wölfflin argues that all
successful artistic works are characterized by a sense of completeness, of
holism. What differs is how that sense of holism is achieved. In a work
characterized by multiplicity, it arises from a harmonization of its various
elements. In one characterized by unity, it is through a unification of its
elements into a single theme.

\textbf{Clearness versus Unclearness} The clarity of a piece refers to degree to which
its form is immediately apprehended. In an unclear work, the form is
obscured in some manner and must be suggested through other composi-
tional elements such as light and color.

\textsuperscript{8}To reduce my analytic burden, I am considering eliminating textiles and stained glass
from the analysis. It is not clear to me that an analysis of them will reveal anything that an
analysis of housewares and furniture wouldn’t. Indeed, if I have to limit to just one media,
it would probably be housewares and furniture because it occupies a “middle of the road”
position. Importantly, housewares/furniture can be produced with or without a division
of labor, which was an ideological issue within the movement. However, there are great
advantages to including architecture, including the facts that (1) a great deal of research was
done on many of these homes and (2) many of these homes have been preserved, continue to
stand, and I could visit them.
Wölllin’s model of artistic style is best understood as a fuzzy-set measure (Ragin 2000). Each measure indicates the degree to which an art work exhibits, for example, “linear” or “recessional” characteristics. The combination of these measures express the degree to which an art work belong to the classical or baroque style.

The construction and measurement of fuzzy-sets, as the literature repeatedly emphasizes (see, e.g., Ragin and Rubinson 2007; Rubinson and Ragin 2007; Ragin 2004, 2000), entails careful calibration and close engagement of the cases by the researchers. And while the analysis of an artistic work’s form certainly require the latter, the calibration of these measures will not be as subjective as one might expect. Conducting a series of experiments to test the reliability of the classification schema, Goude and Derefeldt (1981) had two groups of undergraduate students apply Wölllin’s classification schema to a series of paintings. Art history majors who had formally studied Wölllin exhibited substantially similar patterns of scoring. More notably, psychology majors with no exposure to the schema prior to the experiment exhibited remarkably similar scoring patterns with only slightly greater variation, indicating that Wölllin’s schema is both highly reliable as well as easy to comprehend and apply.

4 Contributions of the Research

Initially arising as a critique of industrial capitalism, the Arts and Crafts movement came to encompass a wide range of diverse ideologies. Members of the movement consequently came to employ a diverse range of production techniques and realizing a myriad of aesthetic styles. I have proposed a research project which seeks to understand how the globological transformations of 1875–1914 contributed to the development of this aesthetic diversity. Beyond specifically advancing our appreciation and understanding of the Arts and Crafts movement, this research contributes to the larger goal of understanding how interaction in the world-system and regional political-economies affect cultural production. Recognizing that, for example, the Arts and Crafts movement was not merely an ideological reaction to the perceived evils of capitalism but, also, an economic response to the threat of a global depression helps to explain why there has been a resurgence of interest in the movement since the mid-1970s. Beginning with the oil crisis of 1973, the 1970s saw the onset of another period of extended economic instability that has continued with a series of economic recessions, the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the collapse of the dot-com bubble, the 2002 wave

\[ \text{Linear} = 1.0 - \text{Painterly} \]

Expressed in fuzzy algebra, Wölllin’s terms are pairs of qualitative descriptors representing the “fully in” and “fully out” anchors of a fuzzy score. See Ragin (2000) for a more complete discussion of fuzzy-set measures.

Interpreting Wölllin’s schema as a combinatorial model also helps to explain Bergesen’s (2006:106) observation that the latter three descriptive pairs appear to be derivative of the former two.
of accounting scandals, the recent spike in oil prices, and the current housing crash. Given these crises, it is not a surprise that we have looked backwards in our attempt to envision a better world: where Ruskin and Morris found the Romantic era, we found Ruskin and Morris.

References


Top right: Coffee set in silver, decorated in other materials by Tiffany and Co., New York.

Bottom left: Vase decorated by Matthew Daly at the Rockwood Pottery, Cincinnati, Ohio in 1899.
observed by the author in the marketplace.

The rarity of the "SPECIAL HAND MADE" mark is underscored by its omission in the catalogue for Tiffany silver: Charles H. Carpenter, Jr., Mary Grace Carpenter, Tiffany Silver (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1976). The author is not aware of any article that discusses the mark.

It is believed that Tiffany put the "SPECIAL HAND MADE" mark on lathe-spun work; see, Charles H. Carpenter, Jr., Gorham Silver (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1982), p. 109. In addition to the evidence of the objects themselves, Tiffany maintained that "SPECIAL HAND MADE" was used to denote the fact that the pieces were hand made. (Author's letter to Janet Zapata, Archives of Tiffany & Co., April 18, 1986.)