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1504981

BA Surface Pattern Design

CULTURE PATTERN
DÉCOR

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Word count: 2620

The aim of this writing is to explore 3 keywords supported by thinkers and designers such as Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and Jen Jones, along with several supporting images. I aim to research and make connections between the words Culture, Pattern, and Décor, as these words reflect the interests within my own practice. I will be looking at how folk-art patterns have been applied to modern day by current designers and companies, particularly within Wales, but also looking at other cultures, therefore the research will be written in both English and Welsh. This will lead me to a proposal for my independent inquiry question, along with a vast bibliography.

Culture is a vast yet developed word, and its contemporary meaning is defined as 'the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time' (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2020). To understand the different approaches to Culture, research was conducted into cultural theorists including Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams.

Raymond Williams (1985, p.87) discusses how the definition of culture has changed over time, through its historic development in numerous European languages and usage in multiple concepts. After conducting research on the contemporary view of Culture, the most widespread use of the word culture is identified as music, literature, painting, sculpture, culture-based art (Williams, 1985, p.90). Another book that would be useful in understanding Culture would be *Culture and Society* by Raymond Williams (1958).

Stuart Hall's approach to Cultural studies remains different to Williams, as Hall is known for reframing of culture as a 'theoretical idea and as a political practice in educational thinking' (Roman, 2015, p165). This can be seen in *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History* (Hall 1983), a theoretical journey that poses questions to do with modern culture, instead of looking at where

we came from, Hall questions what might we become (Ang, 2000, p.1). Consequently, Hall tends to focus on the future and present day of Culture through his cultural studies, which will be useful as a more modern concept of Culture compared to Raymond Williams when researching further into a more specific subject.

To focus on one area of culture specifically, research was conducted on the culture of Wales. Wales has a strong sense of culture and there are many elements and traditions that hold a strong Welsh identity, with the language being an apparent example. Reflecting on Raymond Williams' concept of the word Culture, it is clear to see the significance of the language as a part of culture in Wales. A useful article that discusses this and folk culture is *Perceptions of the past in Welsh folklore studies* (Wood, 1997).

Focusing on art within culture, this has led the research to focus on folk art, and how tradition and culture is reflected in folk art. With the plural 'folk' meaning people, joined with the word 'art', creates a different meaning, which may be decorative utilitarian, handmade, or a tradition that reflects cultural aesthetics (International folk art, n.d). Folk art is generally seen through two categories, including culture and individual. Focusing on the cultural side, cultural art has an ethnic base (Harper, 2019). As the research focuses on folk art in Wales, examples of cultural objects and traditions will be discussed, including garments and décor objects. An example of a traditionally worn garment in Wales is the Welsh costume (Figure 1). The costume was worn as an everyday outfit, and by the end of the 19th century it was worn to maintain the tradition and as celebrate the Welsh identity (Johnson, n.d). It is interesting to look at the journey of this garment and how it was used as a function a century ago, but today it is symbolic for Wales and is worn on St David's day as

a tradition. *Welsh costume in the 18th and 19th century* (Etheridge, 1958), has useful information on the journey of this garment and its history.



Figure 1. Smith, C. (1999) *Welsh National Dress at LlanfairPG*

Like the Welsh costume, Welsh quilts and blankets are traditional handmade textile objects with a unique pattern (Figure 2). This completely homemade piece of textile is a tradition that dates back from the 18th and 19th century (Jenkins, n.d) was seen in a traditional home in Wales, but it is debatable that now it is used as decoration and for aesthetic. What is interesting is the similarities between Welsh quilts and Amish Quilts located in Pennsylvania, (Osler, 2013) these quilts have a very similar aesthetic and how it might have happened due to cross culture during the 1850's, this is supported by the journal article *Did Welsh Immigrants Influence Amish Quiltmaking?* (Osler, 2013). Also The journal 'Textile and Cloth' has several useful articles about textile objects, which has been useful in understanding the relationship between a culture and its textile history.

This research leads to the second keyword of this essay, Pattern. Pattern is a word that can be used in different contexts, in the Cambridge dictionary, pattern is defined as ‘a particular way in which something is done, is organized, or happens’ but also a ‘repeated arrangement, especially a design made from repeated lines, shapes, or colours on a surface’ (2020). Both definitions have a similar wording, ‘organize’ and ‘arrangement’ are similar words that link these different concepts. Focusing more on the second definition, research will be conducted on pattern applied on a surface. Exploring how colour and shape are applied onto cloth, textile objects and décor, and the relationship between Culture and Pattern.

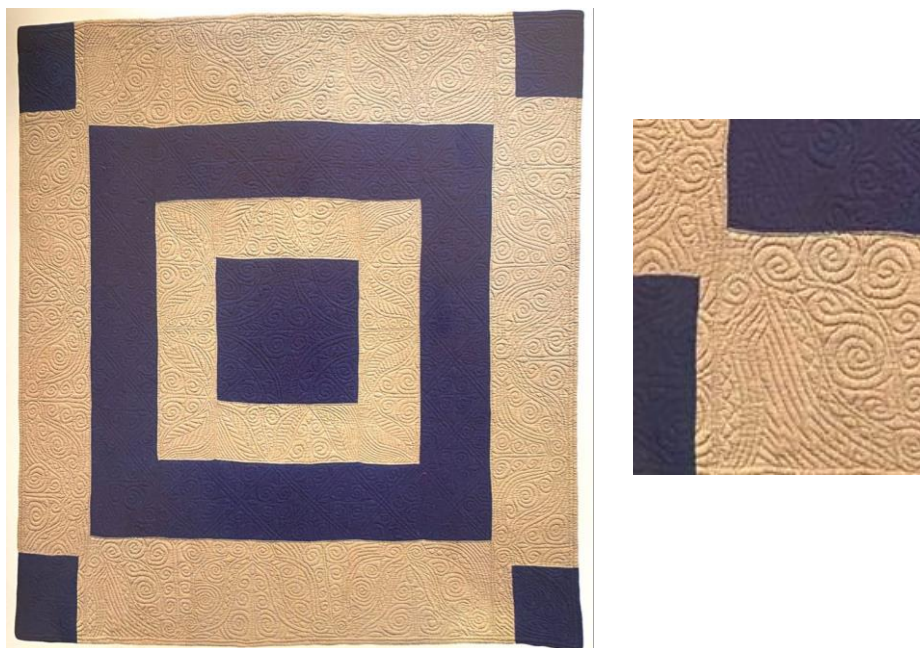


Figure 2. Jones, J. (1900) *Fine wool beige and blue squares, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire.*

After researching into different concepts on pattern, the article ‘*Textile Patterns and Their Epistemological Functions*’ (2015) by Kerstin Kraft approaches pattern through a mathematical approach, using terms such as

‘symmetry’ and ‘rhythm’ and identifies pattern as an ‘epistemological figure’, figure 3 is another example of a Welsh tapestry blanket which reflects Kraft’s concept, through the method of using large looms this has created the traditional geometric coloured pattern for the Welsh blankets and quilts. Through the research on Welsh quilts, *Welsh Quilts (Jones 2016)* and *Welsh Quilts : A Towy Guide (Jones 1997)* have been useful in understanding of the making of the quilts and it’s history. As it can be seen in figure 2 a pattern is created by intense stitching on two layers of fabric, a large circular medallion surrounded other motifs, but the colour does not coordinate with these, as it creates a bold geometric pattern.



Star quilt made by Sarah Lewis of Aberdare.
From the Jenn Jones Welsh Quilt Collection / Roger
Clive - Powell

Figure 3. Lewis, S. (n.d) *Star Quilt*

Specifically looking at motifs within pattern, research was made to see if pattern on a textile object can unlock something about its culture. By looking again at figure 2, the quilt has significant motifs including curve like shapes and spirals, to see if there is a similarity in patterns such as figure 4, which is the Celtic pattern dated back to the 1st century. From comparing the images, it is clear there are elements of Celtic cultural patterns coming through, more

imagery and useful research can be seen in *Celtic art: symbols and imagery* (Aldhouse-Green, 1997). Article 'Textile and Place (2019) by Alice Kettle' has been useful in understanding the role of textile movement among places.



Figure 4. Jane, M. (1st Century BC) *Crescent-Shaped plaque from Llyn Cerrig Bach of Anglesey*

As another example, Mexican patterns and embroidery will be looked at. Examples of traditional methods of applying pattern on cloth included whitework and linen embroidery, to create motifs such as birds, butterflies, and religious symbols (V&A 2018). The Victoria and Albert Museum have a vast collection of old traditional Mexican embroidery (see figure 5).



Figure 5. Unknown (1770-1799) *Sampler*

Frida Kahlo as a Mexican painter during the 19th Century focused her portraits and textile on the rich culture of Mexico her depiction of the female experience and form (Frida Kahlo foundation, n.d). Realising that both Mexican folk art and Welsh tapestry include bold motifs in their designs, such as a bird, flower or a monkey in Mexican art and embroidery, and hearts and circular medallions in Welsh tapestry, this led the research to see if these motifs signify or represent something. Spirals on the Welsh tapestry was believed by many to have been a sign of everlasting life (Jones,J. 2016, p26) it is very evident that a lot of these motifs may have a meaning and can be understood through semiotics. The book 'Semiotics: *The Basics*' (Chandler, 2002) has been useful in understanding the fundamentals of semiotics. As well as '*Man and His Symbols*' (Jung, 1964).

Looking at colours as a symbol, the colour red has a big significance in Wales, it seems to be used in in many different elements including the Welsh costume and the Welsh dragon. Julia Griffiths Jones (2020) speaks about this in an email interview, about the richness of red and how it is used, she emphasises that it is the colour of blood. Not only was this colour used in Welsh traditions, but from her own experience of travelling, the colour red is used in most Eastern European embroidery.

Moving on to the third keyword, the essay will continue to explore and discuss in the Welsh language.

Hyd at nawr mae ymchwiliad wedi cael ei wneud ar y perthynas rhwng 'diwylliant' a 'phatrwm', ac yn ffocysu rhan amlaf ar wrthrychau tecstilau. Yn symud ymlaen at y gair olaf, sef 'Addurn'. Yn debyg i wrthrych tecstilau, mae addurn yn rhywbeth i wneud a lliw, arddull, neu drefniant y gwrthrychau mewn ystafell (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2020). Mae gan y llyfr *Studies in Design*

(1988) gan Christopher, dylunydd a damcaniaethwr dylunio olygfeydd defnyddiol ar gelf addurniadol.

Trwy ffocysu ar addurn mewn tai yn benodol, gellir gweld newidiadau mewn addurniadau cartref dros y blynyddoedd oherwydd tueddiadau, traddodiadau, a hyd yn oed priodoli diwylliannol.

Gwelir cysylltiad rhwng y geiriau ‘diwylliant’ ac ‘addurn’, oherwydd mae diwylliant gwlad yn medru effeithio ar sut mae tŷ wedi cael ei haddurno. Mae modd gweld hyn wrth edrych eto ar y blancedi a chwiltiau Cymraeg. Gan oedd y blancedi a’r cwiltiau yn rhywbeth ymarferol i gael yn y cartref yn ystod y 18fed ar 19eg ganrif, ond erbyn heddiw mae ei steil a’i batrwm wedi cael ei throsglwyddo ar addurnau mwy moethusac yn cael ei anelu at y dosbarth canol, mae hyn yn cael ei gefnogi gan ffigur 6.



Ffigur 6. O'dherty, S. (n.d) *Lookbook image*

Mae ffigwr 6 yn llun o wefan Sian O'dherty, dylunydd tecstilau sy'n cael ysbrydoliaeth o dreftadaeth Cymru (O'dherty, S. n.d). Mae tebygrwydd sylweddol rhwng patrwm yr hen flanced Cymreig (ffigwr 7) a'r addurniadau mewnol hyn. Mae modd dadlau fod dylunwyr yn cadw'r patrwm traddodiadol ond yn anelu ar y dosbarthau canol ac uwch yn hytrach na gweithiol. Yn trafod am ddosbarthiadau, mae Cymru a'r Cymry bob amser wedi nodi eu hun fel gwlad dosbarth, ond wedi'r rhyfel mae Cymru wedi gweld cynnydd yn y dosbarth canol, gan gynnwys pobl dosbarth canol Saesneg a 'The Taffia', sef dosbarth canol sy'n siarad Cymraeg (*Open Learn*, n.d). Mae hyn yn profi bod marchnad ar gyfer y cynhyrchion fel y gwelir yn ffigur 6 yng Nghymru, yn enwedig ar gyfer y 'The Taffia'. Llyfr arall ddefnyddiol am dosbarthiadau ym Mhrydain ydy *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Rose, 2001)



Ffigwr 7. Jones, Lewis D. (1926). *Carthen*

Enghreifftiau eraill o ddylunwyr a busnesau sydd wedi trosglwyddo'r patrwm Cymraeg traddodiadol ydy *Melin Tregwynt* sef cwmni sydd yn dal yn denfyddio dulliau traddodiadol i wneud addurn mewn a dillad (*Melin Tregwynt*, n.d).

Anna Pritchard sy'n ddylunydd tecstilau o Ogledd Cymru, yn gnwued eitemau a gorffeniad cyfoes trwy ddefnyddio dulliau traddodiadol Cymreig, mae modd gweld hyn ar ei wefan 'The idea of continuing the ancient traditions of the Welsh woollen mills, weaving and knitting is important to me' (Anna Pritchard, 2020). Ac hefyd y *Welsh Otter*, yn debyg i Melin Tregwynt, yn creu darnau addurniadol a ysbrydolodd y patrwm traddodiadol (Welsh Otter, n.d). Mae Hefin Jones yn ddylunydd sy'n gweithio gyda sefydliadau fel cyhoeddus a diwylliannol fel rhan o brosiectau dylunio ac ymchwil cydweithredol (Hefin Jones, 2020). Yn un o'i prosiectau mae yn archwilio traddodiadau gorffennol Cymru i greu siwt gofodwr yn ei brosiect 'ymgyrch ofod Cymru' (Regine, 2013). Dyma enghraifft arall eto sy'n uno dulliau traddodiadol â'r byd modern.

Mae Alexander McQueen wedi cael ei ysbrydoli gan patrymau diwylliannol Cymru McQueen, fel gwelir yn ffigwr 8. Yn ôl Vogue (2020), roedd gan y dylunydd ddiddordeb yn bennaf mewn dadebru hanes Cymru a dathlu'r rhain oedd yn gwau'r blancedi a chwiltiau, ac ail greu patrymau mewn ffordd fodern a syml. Mae hyn eto yn enghraifft o sut mae dyluniwr wedi cymryd patrwm o ddiwylliant gwahanol a'i rhoi mewn cysyniad gwahanol.



Ffigwr 8. Alexander McQueen (2020) *Welsh Quilting History*

Wrth ffocysu ar ddiwylliant gwahanol, mae patrymau gwerin Mecsico hefyd yn cael ei chymhwyso i addurn cyfoes. Mae patrymau hen Mecsicanaidd fel ffigur 5 yn boblogaidd iawn yn nhueddiadau heddiw, ac unwaith eto mae'r patrymau hyn wedi'u gwneud yn wrthrychau addurn ar gyfer y dosbarth canol ac uwch. Erthygl sy'n cefnogi hyn yw *Designing Modern Mexico* gan Ana Elena Mallet (2019) am pan roedd Fecsico eisiau hunaniaeth genedlaethol newydd trwy ddylunio addurn mewnol a chelf yn ystod y 20fed ganrif. Mae'n amlwg fod patrymau apelgar wedi ysbrydoli dylunwyr cyfredol, a gallai hyn hyd yn oed arwain at drafod 'priodoldeb diwylliannol', gan gymryd elfennau o ddiwylliant arall ar gyfer dylunio ac esthetig (Long, M. 2020), llyfr defnyddiol sydd yn trafod am briodoldeb diwylliannol yw *Borrowed power : essays on cultural appropriation* (1997) gan Pratima V Rao ac Bruce H Ziff.

Enghreifftiau o ddylunwyr a chwmnïau sydd wedi defnyddio patrymau a motiffau Mecsicanaidd ar gyfer gwrthrychau addurn yw Graham and Green (ffigwr 9) Ian Snow a Justina Blakeney.



Ffigwr 9. Graham and Green (2020) *Mexicana Cushions*

Felly, mae ymchwil wedi'i chynnal ar dri gair allweddol, gwnaed cysylltiadau rhyngddynt er mwyn i ddod i hyd i gwestiwn traethawd hir. Mae trafod y gair 'Diwylliant' wedi arwain yr ymchwil tuag at Raymond Williams a Stuart Hall fel damcaniaethwyr allweddol a ymchwilir iddynt yn y traethawd.

Cyfeiriadau eraill a fyddai'n allweddol i'w cynnwys yn y traethawd ac ar gyfer ymchwil yw Jen Jones a Dorothy Osler, a'r cyfnodolyn 'Taith brethyn a diwylliant'. Mae'r cyfeiriadau hyn wedi bod yn ddefnyddiol yn ddeall y cysylltiad rhwng diwylliant a phatrwm. Gan ganolbwyntio'n bennaf ar Gymru fel enghraifft allweddol, dechreuodd yr ymchwil ganolbwyntio ar dapestriau a blancedi Cymreig. Gan fod perthynas glir rhwng diwylliant a phatrwm yma, mae ganddo botensial mawr mewn ymchwil fanwl y gellir ei ddefnyddio a'i ddadwisgo yn y traethawd hir. Mae modd ymchwilio mewn i draddodiadau eraill yng Nghymru, er enghraifft y gaudy Cymraeg ar wisg Gymraeg. Enghraifft arall o ddiwylliant cwbl gyflawn ydy Mecsico, oherwydd mae ganddyn nhw hefyd gasgliad helaeth o emrboideri a phatrymau y gellir ymchwilio.

Ymchwiliwyd i'r gair 'addurn' trwy lens fwy cyfoes, gan edrych ar sut mae'r 2 allweddair cyntaf wedi'u cymhwyso i wrthrychau addurniadau mewnol. Mae dylunwyr a chwmnïau cyfredol sydd wedi gwneud hyn wedi cael eu hesiampl yn y traethawd, fel *Graham a Green*.

O ganlyniad i'r ymchwil yma, mae'r cysyniad o gelf werin, gwrthrych tecstilau, traddodiadol, symbol a lliw wedi'i ystyried a bydd yn cael ei archwilio ymhellach yn y traethawd hir, fel geiriau allweddol eraill. Gellir ymchwilio i nifer o is gwestiynau yn y traethawd hir hwn, megis 'a oes rhywbeth symbolaidd yn y patrwm?' ac 'a yw priodoldeb diwylliannol yn digwydd gyda hyn?', ond y drafodaeth ar sut mae'r byd modern wedi mabwysiadu elfennau

traddodiadol, sydd wedi cael ei hystyried fel prif ddadl y traethawd y flwyddyn nesaf.

Felly mae hyn i gyd wedi canlyniadau'r cwestiwn; 'Beth yw arwyddocâd defnydd patrwm traddodiadol ar wrthrychau cyfoes yng Ngymru a diwylliannau eraill gyda ffocws ar Fecsico.'

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