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Towards a new aesthetic politics in design: unstructuring visions of the dialectic center-periphery in our material culture

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Abstract:

Since objects are one of the most common referents during our lives (Sudjic, 2009: 24), and design a clear manifestation of the nature and development of our culture (Fischer, 1961 y Prown, 1980), few approaches are more truthful to design than that envisaging it as part of our material culture. Nevertheless, since design historically originated as a discipline in the Northern countries, the way in which it is understood is in many respects unfamiliar to the actual needs of the Southern hemisphere or periphery. The propensity of Design to treat with universal uniformity the changing and multifaceted field of aesthetics, has indeed encouraged many Latin-American aestheticians and design theorists to develop ways of turning down the mono-aestheticism conceptually and practically forged at the North hemisphere or Center (Cfr. Bonsiepe, 1985; Waisman, 1995; Colombres, 2005; and Acha, 2013). Curiously, this is a movement which has also found support from design agents at the centre, thanks to the development of critical and historical design studies with an anthropological emphasis (Cfr. Thompson, 1979; Prown, 1980; Maquet, 1999; Atfield, 2000 y Walker, 2006) whose aim is to revalue what the centre traditionally characterise as residual and anti-design. In this sense, the present paper will attempt to outline the foundations of this aesthetic movement.

Key words: Center-Periphery, Aesthetics, Design, Material Culture.