

Adaptations of traditional furniture in  
the contemporary home: 1959-1969.

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# Adaptations of traditional furniture in the contemporary home : 1959-1969

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## Descriptions

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Creator	<a href="#">Kwallek, Nancy Panak</a>
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<b>Abstract or Summary</b>	
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the revival trends in furniture design during the period 1959-1969, and to understand the relationship of these adaptations to contemporary cultural objectives. An understanding of the design characteristics from the originals to the modern derivatives is useful for those who wish to select good design within their income range. There is virtually no information readily available to the consumer relative to the appropriate selection of adapted furniture designs for contemporary interiors. The problem is dealt with in five specific aspects: (1) to ascertain the influences that caused the adaptations of historical styles; (2) to analyze the dominant furniture designs and to determine whether they have been modified relative to authentic pieces, and if so, in what way; (3) to recognize the contemporary style; (4) to gain a perspective of the use of adaptations in contemporary interiors; and (5) to help establish a criterion on behalf of the consumer for better furniture selection. The information was obtained through the observation of general trends, not through a statistical method. A number of sources including newspaper and magazine articles, books, personal correspondence and furniture catalogs from individual manufacturing companies were studied. As a basis for analysis, a written description and photographic evidence were used documenting the characteristics of the adaptations to their originals and to a contemporary composition. One of the influences on the revival was the refurbishing of the White House during the early 1960's. Another is the need of manufacturers to produce two furniture collections each year for affluence in America has also given manufacturers and designers an enormous consumer market. The desire for traditional styles may also be reflected in the need to escape from the pressures of twentieth century living by seeking that security which many believe was associated with the time of their grandparents. In addition, due to a lack of understanding of contemporary design, the popularity of traditional adaptations may show a psychological reaction against contemporary furniture. An analysis of the data revealed that the market offers furniture adaptations with influences dating back to Greek styling. Other general trends revert to the Renaissance period in Europe as well as the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth

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centuries in Europe and America. In these adaptations the furniture designs tend to reflect characteristics, not the originals, of previous periods. The section in this thesis which deals with the use of the adaptations in contemporary interiors showed that some adaptations can accent contemporary interiors by introducing a totally unorthodox element and thus achieve variety. Stylized patterns and bright colors for upholstery fabrics add to that variety. If furniture is scaled down in size, or the details or motifs on the furniture are understated, the adaptations become more compatible with the simplicity of contemporary interiors. When viewed objectively, however, these adaptations have liabilities. The inference is that the designers who adapt furniture from previous periods do not appear to be fulfilling twentieth century needs of function and the objectives of honesty in design and materials. If these adaptations have to go into a contemporary format and a person believes that the furniture for an era should reflect that age, then the adaptations are not fulfilling contemporary cultural objectives. Historically each style of furniture was developed for a particular architectural structure and for the current needs of the people. In the same way, contemporary needs have altered the shape and purpose of rooms, and the furniture has to follow suit. However, the home furnishings market does not appear to reflect contemporary needs and designs. It is, instead, over-designed with traditional styles which are ill-adapted for twentieth century living.

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Title: ADAPTATIONS OF TRADITIONAL FURNITURE IN THE  
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the revival trends in furniture design during the period 1959-1969, and to understand the relationship of these adoptions to contemporary cultural objectives. An understanding of the design characteristics from the originals to the modern derivatives is useful for those who wish to select good design within their income range. There is virtually no information readily available to the consumer relative to the appropriate selection of adapted furniture designs for contemporary interiors.

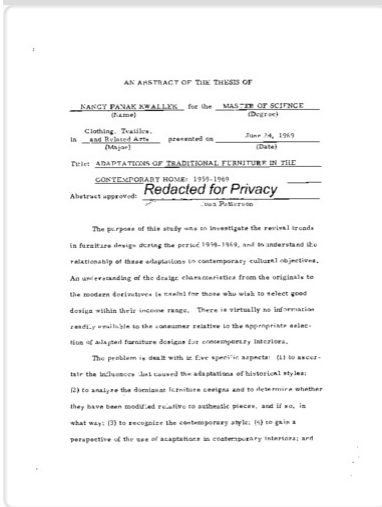
The problem is dealt with in five specific aspects: (1) to ascertain the influences that caused the adaptations of historical styles; (2) to analyze the dominant furniture designs and to determine whether they have been modified relative to authentic pieces, and if so, in what way; (3) to recognize the contemporary style; (4) to gain a perspective of the use of adaptations in contemporary interiors; and

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