

A Brand in Crisis: Tracing the Trajectory of “Made in Italy” from Proto-Industrialization to a Precarious Future, a Cassina Case Study

The Italian luxury sector has been systematically outsourcing manufacturing jobs to low-wage countries in Asia and Africa over the last two decades. While continuing to charge their clientele upwards of \$700 dollars for a pair of shoes and \$3000 dollars for a man’s suite, “Made in Italy” companies such as Prada and Gucci have maximized profits by moving manufacturing outside of the Italian peninsula. Ironically, two of the main reasons luxury companies have been able to justify their outrageously expensive prices is that their products were both designed and made in Italy. The unique Italian design process holds the dialogue between designer, craftsman, and manager as integral to the success of the product. Over the last half-century this process has cohered into a brand or seal-of-excellence know as “Made in Italy” and has been a marketing device ever since. The relatively recent trend of outsourcing manufacturing threatens to offset the dynamic Italian design process that enabled Italy to become a world leader in luxury goods. Through a case study on the Cassina furniture company of Meda, Italy, this paper traces and analyzes the history of “Made in Italy” from its roots in the proto-industrialization period in the Brianza region to its current precarious state of being. Using primary and secondary sources from the disciplines of Design, Social, and Economic History, the investigation labors to determine the validity of arguments, which are found in current discourse, that assert Italian design and the “Made in Italy” brand are in crisis. The paper concludes that while Italian design may continue to be noteworthy form many generations to come, the “Made in Italy” brand has reached a tipping point where it could easily descend into obscurity or continue to be an envied mark of distinction.

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Conflicting Paradigms in the Study of Emotion in Bioculture and the Humanities: A Case Study of KRAMER VS. KRAMER

The study of film has been predominantly conducted through the lens of the humanities, most recently from the viewpoint of cultural studies. Torben Grodal's new book *Embodied Visions* seeks to alter this paradigm by introducing bioculture to film studies. My research project examines the claims Grodal makes in his book and compares and contrasts them to the claims made by another scholar interested in bioculture, Daniel Gross. While both authors incorporate the theories of Charles Darwin, they support two polar views on the analysis of emotion in film and the humanities. By examining these two scholars and their varying points of view, I attempt to bring to light the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective. Drawing on studies in neuroscience, Grodal makes the claim that films should be analyzed from a biological/evolutionary point of view. He introduces his theory of the PECMA flow (Perception, Emotion, Cognition, Motor Action), which describes the film viewing process from an evolutionary perspective and thus supports his claim that film

viewing is a deeply neurobiological process. Ironically, Gross likewise makes use of Darwin's ideas to prove his claim that using the tools of the humanities is the only proper way to analyze emotion in films. He claims that Darwin "foregrounds the inherent rhetoricity of emotion," which destabilizes theories that support the "science of emotions." In comparing the work of Grodal and Gross, I conclude that film studies should incorporate aspects of biology/evolution and culture in order to accurately analyze and interpret emotion. These scholars' viewpoints complement each other, but one alone cannot fully explain our responses to film viewing. To support my conclusion that film studies must include aspects of the humanities and biology, I have screened the film *Kramer vs. Kramer*. My project closely analyses three emotional scenes to offer both a cultural and biocultural reading.