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Creative correspondence: Leveraging design artefacts to generate shared plausible futures

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Abstract

Design anthropologists Gatt and Ingold's concept of *correspondence* describes a designed artefact's ability to appropriately represent a given community's perspectives. For design-researchers operating in co-design contexts, correspondence is helpful for ensuring that final outcomes are 'tuned' to the current and aspirational experiences of user-communities. However, while design-researchers working in practice-led contexts share many concepts and techniques with their design anthropology colleagues, this paper argues that for Design approaches concerned with plausible, anticipatory perspectives, correspondence is a limited concept that can hamper the role of design imagination. In response to this claim, this paper contributes the following outcomes. First, it presents a short theoretical review of the literature that compares design anthropology's critical objective with projective research. Second, the paper outlines key characteristics of correspondence, suggesting its conceptual value and limitations for projective research. This outline is followed by an introductory discussion of Bakhtin's notion of *creative understanding*. The concluding outcome of this comparison is the theorisation of *creative correspondence*, a novel design concept that integrates crucial concepts from correspondence and creative understanding to leverage the unique abilities of design artefacts to generate and ultimately contribute a shared perspective on plausible, preferential futures. Accordingly, the third outcome of the paper is a contextualisation of the relevance of creative correspondence, taking the form of a brief discussion of a community-orientated co-design project involving the author and members of the Westbury community.

Keywords: anticipatory design research, co-design, correspondence, creative understanding.

Introduction

In recent times, numerous design-led research (DLR) methods that evoke futures to inquire into real needs capable of guiding design action have come to the fore. However, one area where there is scarce literature is the integration of participatory and co-design practices into these methods (Lindley et al. 2014, p. 243; Morrison 2018, p. 131). This is a missed opportunity as the design and subsequent implementation of the increasing artificial world must consider the social perspective of the communities that will live with and within them. As Nelson and Stolterman (2012, pp. 21-39) note, design ultimately involves integrating knowledge pertaining to the *true*, the *real* and the *ideal* in an emergent, synergistic, and integrative approach to knowledge generation that extends beyond the sum of its individual approaches. Consequently, these futures-orientated, design-led methods tend to

prioritise the true knowledge of science and/or design imagination but tend to negate the reality of the social world.

Comparatively, a range of non-design fields have begun to include futures-orientated DLR methods in their research practices. While these fields have different disciplinary concerns to the domain of Design, their DLR practices are enriched by sophisticated theoretical concepts that inform participatory engagements. Many of these concepts have the potential to contribute insight into related practices in Design. Importantly, due to epistemological differences, including these 'external' theories requires careful consideration and, if necessary, reconceptualisation to ensure they are fit for design purpose.

This paper introduces the novel concept of *creative correspondence* as a bridging theory connecting design anthropologists Gatt and Ingold's notion of *correspondence* with design theorists McCarthy and Wright's pragmatic framing of *creative understanding*. As will be expanded upon, correspondence originates in the discipline of design anthropology and describes a researcher's ability to successfully reflect the experiences or positionality of a community through design processes and in artefacts. Creative understanding, in turn, originates in the work of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, and, through the work of McCarthy and Wright, has become an established theory in the discipline of interaction design.

Initially, the discussion will contextualise futures orientated DLR by briefly reviewing formative and contemporary practices across Design and Design Anthropology. This review is followed by a framing of the fundamental aspects of correspondence and creative understanding, which concludes by outlining the qualities of creative understanding. Lastly, the paper describes the embodiment and implications of creative understanding in a *projective research* provotype,¹ co-designed with community members from Westbury, a neighbourhood on the western outskirts of the Johannesburg city centre.

Literature review

In this paper, I use the term 'design-led research' to refer to research carried out through the medium of design in a manner that closely aligns with research through design (Frayling 1993). DLR encompasses *practice-led* and *practice-based research* (Candy 2006 p. 1), research-focused *discursive design* (Tharp & Tharp 2018), *constructive design research* (Zimmerman et al. 2007; Koskinen et al. 2011), *projective research*, and *design science research* (Hevner et al. 2004).

Futures-orientated design research

While all design is by nature speculative and understood as a form of conjecture that focuses on "how things ought to be" (Simon 1982, p. 4), 'futures-orientated' DLR employs the notion of *futures* – highly complex fictional spaces that are the site for imaginative, yet possible scenarios, which speak of alternative ways of being in the world. In associated design literature, futures cones diagrams are frequently applied to represent how futures can be conceptualised. While representations vary, Dunne and Raby's model (Figure 1) illustrates the fundamental concept of futures cones, demonstrating that the design imagination can occupy a variety of speculative bands arranged in accordance with their conceptual distance from a present state of knowing.

¹ A provotype or research exemplar is an design artefact that communicates a conceptual position rather than the normative design utility of a traditional prototype.

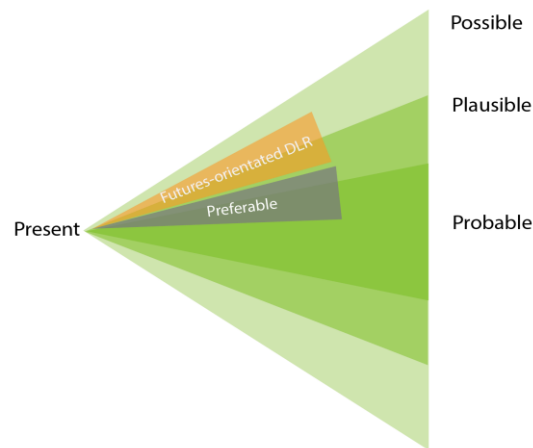


Figure 1: A Futures Cones Model, adapted from Dunne & Raby (2013, p. 3)

The *probable* band of futures cones describes what is likely to occur, barring any significant disruption of norms (Dunne & Raby 2013, p. 3). The *plausible* band (Dunne & Raby 2013, p. 4) is the space of what could happen and is concerned less with predicting the future but rather with exploring alternative visions of the future. The *preferable* band overlaps the probable and plausible spectrums and is typically where 'routine' design operates. The spectrum of *possible* futures (Dunne & Raby 2013, p. 4) describes a type of speculation that sits on the boundaries of what could realistically occur. Typically, possible futures suggest visions of the future that appear dissimilar to our expected continuum but cannot be ruled out as impossible.

In reference to Figure 1, futures-orientated DLR operates across the plausible and possible future spectrums.

While earlier precedents of futures-orientated design exist,² the contemporary 'turn' too speculative futures is seminal associated with the practices of *speculative design* and *design fiction* with its roots in the work produced by staff and students at the Royal College of Arts (UK) in the early 1990s. These practices, collectively referred to as discursive design, focus on using design creativity to communicate ideas and views to generate debate and ultimately change people's views on an issue (Tharp & Tharp 2018, p. 7). Here, speculation is not an attempt to predict an actual future but rather to use design to "open up all sorts of possibilities that can be discussed, debated, and used to collectively define a preferable future" (Tharp & Tharp 2013, p. 69). In particular, speculative design is concerned with presenting compelling accounts of "alternatives to existing social structures and institutions of power and privilege" to disrupt the limitations of the future as currently presented to us (Dunne & Raby 2013, p. 161).

Design fiction overlaps with many aspects of speculative design (Dunne & Raby 2013, p. 100; Tharp & Tharp 2018, p. 87). The primary difference is that while in speculative design practice, produced artefacts typically act as 'imagination' portals into inferred or partially revealed worlds, in design fiction 'story-worlds' become the primary narrative device. In this manner, design fiction can be described as designing "with stories, or within the world of a story" to create "believable and relatable" fictions, which "first represent and then explore the nuances and 'mundanity' of future circumstances" (Lindley et al. 2014, p. 241).

² Such as the Archigram movement in architecture (Koskinen et al. 2011, p. 90),

In terms of research, speculative design and design fiction practices most often operate in the mode of social engagement (Tharp & Tharp 2018, p. 124), aiming to communicate typically highly subjective, practitioner-driven discourse to broader society, disseminating work through exhibitions, public performances, and the internet. Due to inherently subjective positionings, as evident across Tharp and Tharp (2018, p. 126-131), discursive design DLR practices are currently immature regarding theory, method, and rigour.

More recently, a range of practices, including projective research (Geldof & Janssens 2014; Figueiredo 2020), *anticipatory design research* (Morrison 2018), and *metrofitting* (Fry 2019) have emerged that collectively employ research practices that utilise design fictions to rigorously inquire into "putative and contingent" future states to "reach for tomorrow's worlds today" (Morrison 2018, p. 125).^{3,4} The central tenet of projective research is the notion of anticipation, which relates to concepts of "preparation, expectation and valuing something probable" (De Smet & Janssens 2016, p. 2762). Further, projective research is typically applied in the context of systemic changes (economic, environmental, social) in order not only to "learn from the future" but also to recognise "important points of attention" and reflect on "directions for change" (Geldof & Janssens 2014, p. 8).

In this manner, the futures-orientated speculations of projective research are presented in long-term artefactual scenarios termed provotypes that project a situation and the events that led to the situation occurring. Importantly, unlike typical discursive design practices, in projective research, the development of provotypes is informed by 'facts and data' (De Smet & Janssens 2016, p. 2763). Communicated scenarios, thus, are informed by rigorous research practices while operationalising the imaginative impact of design fictions to identify and explore the implications of plausible futures and, in doing so, "allowing designers and their designs to match the velocity of the future before critical impacts occur" (Lindley et al. 2015, p. 58).

Problematically, literature related to projective research is limited, presumably because it is an emergent area of practice. Consequently, as with speculative design and design fiction, projective research is theoretically and methodologically vague (Lindley et al. 2014, p. 243).

Design anthropology

In comparison, the discipline of design anthropology presents a range of theories that inform how communities can contribute meaningfully to the design of provotypes. Design anthropology integrates elements from both Anthropology and Design but is best understood as a unique transdisciplinary knowledge domain with its own research practices (Anastassakis & Szaniecki 2016, pp. 121, 124). Rather than applying the traditional objective observer stance of conventional ethnographic research, practitioners of design anthropology intervene in the world, utilising acts of design to "follow dynamic situations and social relations" to explore how people "perceive, create, and transform their environments through their everyday activities" (Gunn et al. 2020).

In design anthropology, the interpretation of practices that lead to the creation of the artefact or the artefacts themselves are the primary knowledge constructs of the field. In this manner, provotypes are containers of anthropological knowledge theories akin to any other phenomenological construct of meaning, such as, for example, the notion of 'Gifting' or 'Trust' or 'Race'. These provotypes-as-constructs-of-meaning are considered anthropological devices to be further described, interpreted,

3 Design fictions refers to any use of design artefacts for fictional purposes. Design fiction denotes the discursive design approach.

4 In the remainder of this paper, I use projective research to collectively refer to all these practices.

debated and theorised. Consequently, design anthropology utilises DLR to generate knowledge relevant to anthropology and rarely directly contributes knowledge to inform Design (DiSalvo 2016, p. 151). Therefore, design anthropology is a highly theoretical practice that is not only highly informed by anthropological theory but also has the intention to generate it as its primary goal.

Theoretical background

Correspondence

Correspondence (Gatt & Ingold 2013, pp. 142-144) is a central conceptual consideration of design anthropology that has value for design research and practice. Correspondence refers to the notion of "being in accordance with the flow of events, to moving forward with people in the pursuit of their dreams and aspirations rather than dwelling on their past" (Otto & Smith 2020, p. 17). As represented in Figure 2, in design anthropology, correspondence denotes the quality of a provotype (as a researcher's construct of meaning) to result from an accordance between the design researcher and participants in which both sets of actors listen and respond to each other. In a literal sense, this refers to the ability of provotype to infer the experiences of a community regarding a particular situation, event, activity, or engagement.

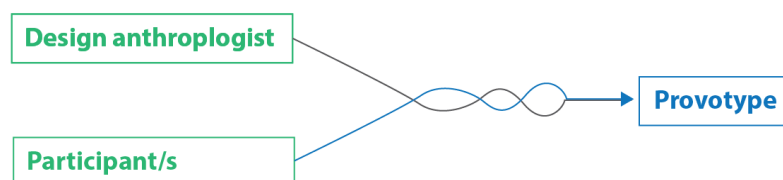


Figure 2: A representation of the relationships involved in correspondence

Creative understanding

McCarthy and Wright (2004, p. 18) suggest that for Bakhtin, meaning emerges through a dialogic engagement between the embodied self and the exterior world. This dialogical engagement, which Bakhtin refers to as *creative understanding*, explains people's experience of the world as emerging through a tension between the self and an 'other'. Be that other, another person, living creature, or entity.

For Bakhtin, experience, which in this context equates to sensemaking coloured by emotion, reflection, space, and time, always involves a person perceiving an object, a text, or a person as something actively fashioned into a whole (McCarthy & Wright 2004, p. 73). This 'wholeness' of the meaning of the other is never inherent nor final and is only completed by the individual's perception of it. In this manner, the experiencer provides the final allocation of meaning to the other. This 'authorship' of meaning is unique to and reliant on the individual's sense of the other.

Thus, meaning is fluid, always in the process of construction and emergence, and generated in relationships occurring in contexts of place and time.

What is essential about creative understanding is that it positions understanding as evolving from the engaged 'discussion' of two parties that individually bring subjective, unpredictable views and responses. The consequence of discussing and trading views is a general progression towards understanding. Creative understanding is thus a synthetic act; it requires a coming together of the self

and the other to achieve a shared new perspective. Furthermore, McCarthy and Wright (2004, pp. 18, 68) suggest that creative understanding is key to overcoming current states by either imagining new ways of acting or through the reframing of descriptions of situations rather than in accordance with any explicit high-level goal orientation.

Creative correspondence

For projective research work intending to build projections based on ethnographic qualitative data, correspondence offers a theoretically rich approach for answering to a community's sense of a situation. However, from a Design perspective, a focus on the experience of others has its creative limits. In this sense, and returning to Nelson and Stolterman, correspondence emphasises the *real*, negating its full design synthesis with the *true* and the *ideal*. In anthropology, this is an irrelevant concern as the entire point is to remain bound to the 'real' of the other. However, this does not go far enough for DLR methods that have the mandate to evoke futures to guide inquiry about the nature and repercussions of potential design strategies.

In contrast, creative understanding recognises that new understanding capable of overcoming current states is always emergent in the coming together of differing perspectives. In this manner, creative understanding articulates a role for *design proposition* and *interpretation*. Here, design proposition is equated with the designer's practised and informed abilities to imaginatively synthesise the true, real, and ideal in a manner that extends beyond correspondence to offer glimpses of what could be. Design interpretation refers to the ability of a literate design audience to 'reverse design' a proposed design solution, revealing an approximate framing of the causal problem, of which there may be other equally compelling solutions.

Drawing on these notions and as illustrated in Figure 2, creative correspondence builds on the ethnographic 'accordance' qualities of correspondence to articulate two orders of integrated creative acts that have a particular 'designerly' nature. The first order extends a community's sense of a situation with the specialist abilities of design-researchers to bring new understanding, expert knowledge, and training to transform a situation. In this sense, the design-researchers 'complete' their understanding of the participants' experiences through their design synthesis based on their expertise and prior experiences. Comparatively, the second order of creative correspondence pertains to the interpretation and 'authoring of meaning' of the design-researcher's first order of creative correspondence by a design audience. This act occurs through the design audience recognition of the design researchers' provotype as a fictional proposition that while communicating valid research findings, is purposefully open to critical reframing.

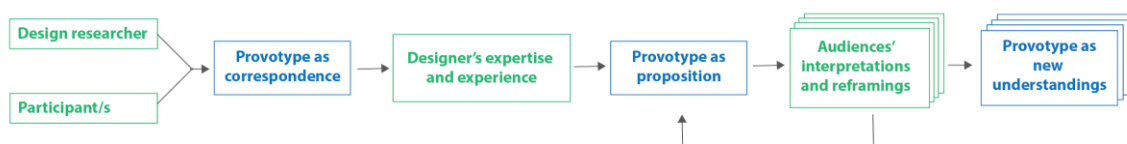


Figure 3: A representation of the relationships involved in creative correspondence

Method

In the remainder of this paper, the focus shifts to discuss how creative correspondence is exemplified in a projective research provotype generated by the author in response to insights from a series of co-design workshops. These four workshops involved 26 participants from the Westbury community and took place between April and June 2022. The encompassing project comprising the workshops and

the provotype design formed the 'relevance' phase of my more extensive *Design Ethnography* doctoral study. This conceptualisation of creative correspondence emerged from reflections on the design of the provotype and related evaluative feedback sessions involving community participants and design experts.

The Westbury 2052 provotype

Westbury 2022

Westbury is an economically deprived suburb of predominantly Afrikaans-speaking Coloured residents. The suburb has approximately 13,500 residents occupying 1.03 km² (Klug 2016, p. 14), 7 km northwest of the central business district of Johannesburg. While Westbury contains multiple parks, sports fields, a library, a large community hall, and a youth recreational centre, residential housing comprises densely populated, structurally neglected blocks of flats and small bungalow houses, while much of the open land is characterised by urban degradation and uncollected rubbish. Several problematic social factors characterise Westbury. Foremost is its long history of criminal and gang-related activities (Klug 2016, p. 58). Like many communities in South Africa, Westbury is also affected by high unemployment, particularly amongst its youth, and there is a strong distrust of government initiatives (Klug 2016, p. v).

The Westbury 2072 project

Westbury 2072 describes a series of co-design activities and outcomes that took place during workshops with groups of neighbourhood residents, forming a representative sample of the broader community of Westbury. The intention of the activities was to generate correspondence with these participants in terms of their shared heritage, the current experiences of their neighbourhood environment, and critically, their preferred future experiences for their neighbourhood spaces in the contexts of the value that they perceived digital technologies blended into the urban infrastructure (or smart urban places) could bring to the Westbury community.

The inquiry into the past took the form of a visual narrative, informed by secondary research, presented to participants. Participants were given the opportunity to add to or amend the presented timeline.

Inquiry into the present state of the neighbourhood environment involved each participant generating a collage from provided magazines that represented their experience. Each participant presented their collage to the group and described their intended meaning.

Inquiry into the future state involved, first, a presentation of a future timeline indicating a series of fictional occurrences taking place between 2022 and 2062. Necessary to this future scenario was the inclusion of aspects that articulated the technological nature of smart urban places. While much of the rest of the scenario was purposely fictional, bordering on the possible, the technological aspects occupied a more probable timing. Once the future scenario had been presented, participants were tasked, in groups, with responding to it by imagining that the date was 2062 and that they had to design a smart urban place, implemented on a specific land site, that would benefit the community most. Group designs took the form of cardboard models augmented by collaged and drawn elements. Once each group had completed their models, they verbally described the model elements and implications.

The oral descriptions from the collage and the future models were recorded, transcribed, and qualitatively analysed. Six key insights emerged regarding the community's aspirations for their future smart urban places. These are summarised in the design schemas presented in Table 1.

Table 1: An analysis of the data suggested the community aspired for

Design schema 1:	Smart urban places that are safe.
Design schema 2:	Smart urban places cultural immersion.
Design schema 3:	Smart urban places creative production.
Design schema 4:	Street as place.
Design schema 5:	Smart urban places for well-being.
Design schema 6:	Smart urban places central services.

The Westbury 2052 provotype

The second phase of the encompassing project involved the design of the *Westbury 2052* projective research provotype. Two primary criteria guided the design. The first required that the provotype corresponded with the aspirations of the community. The second required that the provotype was impactful on a design audience characteristic of practitioners and academics likely to be involved in shaping and implementing smart urban environments in the near to mid-term. To these ends, the provotype design required that I integrate the wide range of ideas put forward by participants with a more precise, theory-driven accounts of smart technologies and urban placemaking while ensuring the primary ethnographic concerns that emerged from the co-design activities are identifiable.

As depicted in (Figures 4-7), the final provotype took the form of a double-sided leporello booklet (1200mm x 220mm). On one side is a fictional streetscape that illustrates a ‘high-street’ precinct in Westbury, circa 2052. The illustrated high street emphasises the deployment of a system of smart technologies within the urban sphere, highlighting social and technologically mediated activities. On the reverse side is a textual accompaniment that adds a deeper level of explanation as to the technical logic of the smart entities and places. The research report narrative is fictitious but suggests an interpretation of the six schemas presented in Table 1. The text is formal, reminiscent of a research report and accompanied by technical diagrams.



Figure 4: Westbury 2052 streetscape, left-to-centre section



Figure 5: Westbury 2052 streetscape, centre-to-right section

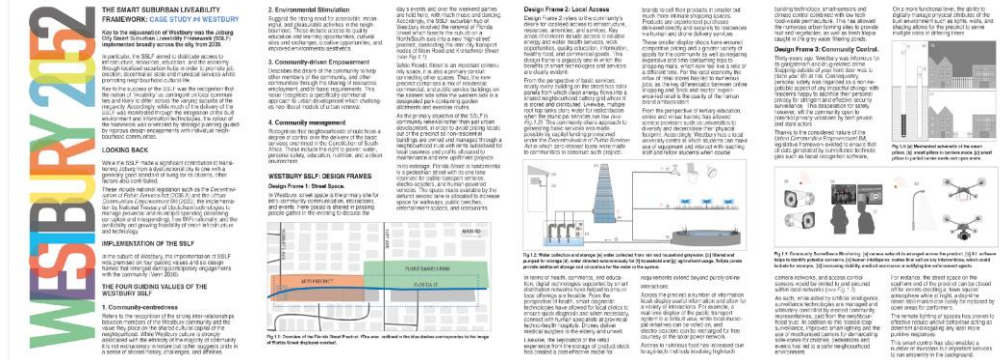


Figure 6: Westbury 2052 'research report', left-to-centre section

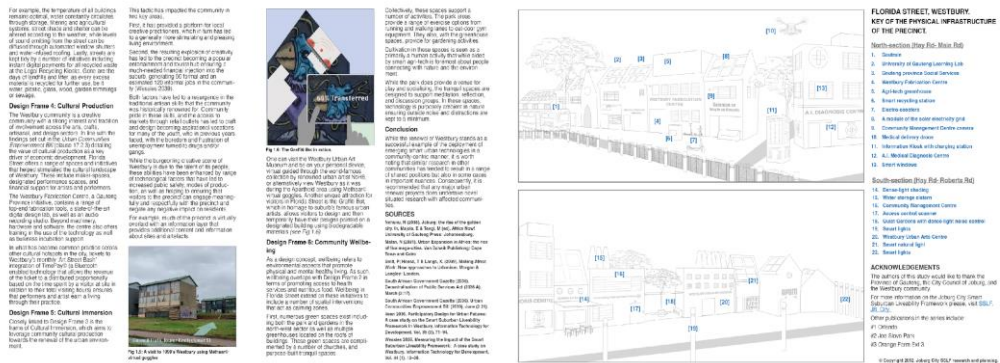


Figure 7: Westbury 2052 'research report', centre-to right section

Upon completion, the prototype was presented to a representative sample of community members that had participated in the workshops and then to six design 'experts' for evaluation. The array of design experts included academics and practitioners involved in smart urban design, urban design or digital ecosystems design.

Discussion

Detailing the correspondence of the provotype

In the Westbury 2052 project, correspondence between the provotype and the neighbourhood community was equated with 'answering' to a community's sense and significance of their preferred smart urban environments. This occurrence was established in feedback session during which participants first critiqued and verified each design schema, and then followed the same process regarding a printed prototype of the leporello provotype. While there were some minor alterations suggested, overall, the Westbury 2052 provotype was received positively by the group, as exemplified below:

And when I looked at this picture, this was Westbury in our days. In my days, it brings back some really beautiful memories, because we had all this before the chaos started before you know, the storm started. We could walk anytime in the street. We had the parks [...] we had all these things [...] There used to be all these things in my days [...] If I look at Westbury now, and Westbury then. This is what I want to see (Bernadine Naude).⁵

In summary, participants' feedback and amendment suggestions ensured significant correspondence across both sets of relationships.

Detailing the creative correspondence of the provotype

As noted in Section 3, creative correspondence operates across two orders detailing the design synthesis employed by the design-research and the interpretive reframing of the design-researchers proposition, as embodied in the provotype, by the design audience.

In terms of first-order creative correspondence, correspondence in the design anthropology sense forms a necessary foundation, which is then extended through the designer's imaginative synthesis of the true, real, and ideal to propose a sense and implication of transformative states. At the broadest level of detail, in the Westbury 2052 provotype this creative synthesis involved the following principal elements. The *real* related to the current and historical experiences of the community participants. The *true* reflected disciplinary knowledge regarding smart technology and urban design. Lastly, the *ideal* was contrived from ideas generated from community participants, concepts found in secondary sources, and various ideas that I have had, or encountered in student projects while teaching 'smart' themed design courses over the last decade.

While these elements suggest the conceptual heritage of the provotype, it is my (as the design-researcher) subjective synthesis of the elements in the placemaking of the Westbury 2052 provotype that is critical. In this sense, the design proposition I present describes a future, ideal state and how it came to be, and brings a value that is significantly different to routine correspondence. In this manner, as evident in Figures 4-7, the Westbury 2052 provotype sets up two key aspects of creative correspondence in futures-orientated DLR. These aspects are, in turn, a future scenario that, while potentially plausible, is fundamentally fictional and a considered effort to systemically 'design' the future scenario into being in an ideal, yet plausible state.

These two fundamental requirements of projective research allow for a particular designerly understanding of second-order creative correspondence to take place.

⁵ Pseudonyms are used in all verbatim quotes.

Consequently, the provotype's discourse is communicated to its design audience with the specific intention of provoking new ideas and ways of working. Situating the provotype in a recognisable, fictional future ensures that the communication is not intended to predict design concepts directly applicable in current practice. Instead, the recognisable aim is that expert designers would conceptually juxtapose the content of the provotype with their understanding and ideas for real-world design contexts and, ultimately, generate a third way of approaching similar design contexts, one that integrates aspects of their prior knowledge with new ways of thinking, generated through engaging with the provotype.

In responses provided by the various design experts, these qualities are evident in the Westbury 2052 provotype.

First, all five experts identified the provotype as the representation of a fictional futures. More specifically, they identified the presented fiction as plausible and, as such, potentially achievable. For example, as indicated in the quote below, the presented future was not interpreted as predictive or purely imaginative.

And my immediate thought, as I was reading through the following, the defining thing was 'possibility'. That was the word that came to my mind when I got to the end, and I started reading the text – the idea that this is a possible future that is completely available if a number of things happen (Prof Gio Rimini).

Second, experts recognised that the provotype was not attempting to communicate literal and implementable design product concepts, but rather was discursive: generating discourse, raising issues, stimulating, and guiding thinking, and challenging assumptions. For example:

I understood it, it's not an architectural [representation], it's just the conceptual idea through which we can begin to think about technology (Andrew Mayer).

It's your experience of the fiction that makes it so compelling. It's getting lost in it. That bottom level of detail is so important [...] Because getting lost in it is when is when I can start to take ownership of what I see in it (Blake Calvin).

Third, and in relation to the previous point, the conceptual openness of the provotype was noted. In this manner, it was evident that the design storytelling provided a rich exemplification of how the six design schemas that reflected a rigorous analysis of the communities' expectations could manifest. Crucially, however, it was understood that these schemas could be applied in numerous, different ways.

It's a very focused, very stimulating fresh view on, which makes people rethink their assumptions about what they do, as designers in relation to a city (Blake Calvin)

This aspect was particularly striking in how, for example, Design Schema 1: *Smart urban places that are safe* was communicated in the provotype. In the workshops, participants were adamant that the best use of smart technology in Westbury would be a neighbourhood-wide smart camera surveillance network. This concept raised concerns about privacy and control, but participants insisted they were happy to give up their civil liberties for a safer neighbourhood. Consequently, I decided to include the camera network in the provotype, as they had described it. In the following quote, one can see how this 'bad' urban design forces one of the expert reviewers to consider what a more appropriate solution would be:

I predicted. I predicted in terms of the concepts that are there, I think there was some mention about [...] community policing or something like that. And critiquing it and say, but in spatial terms, what would that be? And this one doesn't do that [provide an effective solution] really,

very well. But it raises suggestions about it, but then I would have to develop it as an architect to say what that would mean (Dr Edward Ndeboni).

Ultimately, these discursive engagements, between design-researcher and the elements of the true, real, and ideal, and between the provotype and its design audiences, require each party to bring their own understanding to the conversation with a final intention of reaching a new understanding through a sharing of diverse perspectives by individuals.

Conclusion

Creative correspondence is a helpful concept for informing and describing the fundamental goals of a set of emerging DLR practices that, in this study, have been described under the broad category of projective research. These practices have the potential to allow design-researchers to anticipate and communicate a sense of our emerging technological futures and ultimately generate awareness about the impact of these technologies and how they could best be deployed (if at all). In this study, creative correspondence is introduced and exemplified as an underpinning theory for projective research concerned with reflecting communities' desires for their futures. This is of value as few theoretical explanations characterise projective research. Providing a considered theoretical framework can contribute to the growing application of projective research in postgraduate and professional design research. Future work could potentially look at other design anthropology concepts to establish if they could offer any further relevance to projective research. Alternatively, as creative correspondence was conceptualised inductively from the Westbury 2072 and 2052 projects, it would be interesting to evaluate its effectiveness as a guiding theory for other projective research studies.

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