EXPERIMENTAL TYPOGRAPHY: REVIEWING THE MODERNIST AND THE CURRENT APPROACHES

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
GRAPHIC DESIGN
AND THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

BY
ERAY MAKAL
JUNE 1993

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REVIEWING
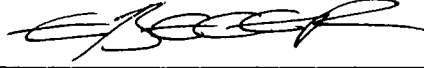
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I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality as a thesis for degree of Master of Fine Arts.
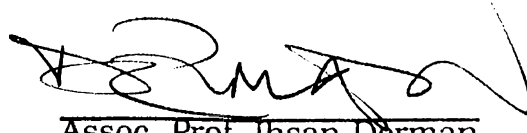
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Prof. Dr. Bülent Özgüç, Director of the Institute of Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

EXPERIMENTAL TYPOGRAPHY:

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REVIEWING

THE MODERNIST AND CURRENT APPROACHES

Eray Makal

M.F.A. in Graphic Design

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Emre Becer

June, 1993

The intention of this study is to evaluate the experimental typography within the history of graphic design by taking in consideration of two epochs, The Modernist and The Current.

ÖZET

DENEYSEL TİPOGRAFİ:
MODERNİST VE YAKIN ZAMANDAKİ YAKLAŞIMLAR

Eray Makal

Grafik Tasarım Bölümü

Yüksek Lisans

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Emre Becer

Haziran, 1993

Bu çalışmanın amacı Modernist ve Günümüz zaman dilimlerini ele alarak grafik tasarım tarihi içerisinde deneysel tipografinin kapsamlı bir dökümünü yapmaktır.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is one of the latest examples, signifying a change in the mode of production. Since the electronic circuits and micro computers emerged, the mode of production drifted away from mechanical means to electronic means. This shift modifies not only the economical structures of the "society" but also the tools of visual communications. Typography, considered as one of these tools, had already its place in this change and is still playing its role to (re)define the basics of the era.

Printing process, after the Industrial Revolution, accelerated its mutation and today it is simply changing its format whereas one can reach the process by using a desk top publishing system and can have total control over it comparing to the traditional process where one had mostly one chance to manipulate his/her design.

Typography, is a tool for visual communication, not only affected by printing process but also by values, understandings, conformities and orders that societies consist of. One may observe this phenomenon by studying Early Modernist works and may understand how they tried to build new meanings by overcoming the traditional structures of the period.

After 80s, not only production modes but also social and political structures changed deliberately. Due to this change, new meanings of capturing, analyzing and understanding the visual language emerged just like it happened before, back in 1900s.

The thesis reviews the practice of typography as a tool of communication between the two periods where almost a hundred year gap exists. The thesis, within a chronological perspective, overviews the justifications of Modernists as how they had

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overthrown the status quo and some recent works -which easily can be called as "experimental" since they don't join the mainstream- that are standing against the conventional means and trying to seek new forms to overcome the traditional approaches. The thesis also emphasizes the important points of the relationship between these two periods within a visual frame.

Within these criteria, only some schools, individuals and manifests considered as milestones are chosen to be reviewed. Actually, there are quite a number of contemporary designers that are experimenting on typography today, but contrary to the Modernists, which they were used to form a group or a journal together, individual works are now being to explode in an incredible amount. In the thesis, only those taking the lead or initiatives are mentioned. The reason for that has two main elements to be considered: first one is that there is a lack of discourse on these experimental works, and the second one is that the circulation of these works still remain as 'underground', not available widely and of course this makes it hard to reach these printed materials.

Inevitably, the terminology of professional typography is used but this does not dominate the overall context of the thesis. Moreover, the emphasis is given to the works of designers/artists and this requires a bit of general knowledge within a historical frame of art.

> Typography must be clear and good in order to communicate -but that's as far as it goes. The reason why am I am interested in typography is because it helps people to communicate with the clarity which an idea deserves. And the reason why I have lost all interest in avant-garde typography is because I find it too introspective, too preoccupied with making a picture on the page, instead of being concerned with bringing the idea through the clearly polished window of typography into the mind of the reader. (Warde, 1970, cited in McLean, 1980)

The words above, belonging to the typographic designer, Beatrice Warde, are forming the basic argument of the thesis, and at some point an agreement can be reached with what she says. But also a need, a demand to look over to those who try to settle down a new visual language, a new means of legibility, a new means of clarity against the 'conventional' has to be reconsidered. Now, communication with type becomes not only reading the composed words but also giving the same intention to the type, color, juxtaposed images or even punctuation marks to organize a new substance. May these practises succeed after a certain period of time, one may ask and the reply will be that to make such a prediction is still too early but one may get a clue by reviewing especially the Early Modernists.

The standpoint of typography in the end of the nineteenth century is reviewed in the second chapter of the thesis. Such an intention is required to understand the state of typography at the beginning of Modernism so that one can realize how the modernist approach was constructed. Also viewing the innovations in printing process reinforces this idea above, therefore one can compare the capabilities of designers of different eras. The third chapter examines the early modernist typography and International Typographic Style within a historical frame of graphic design. The chosen persons to be reviewed in the fourth chapter as the pioneers of the current experimental typography are the most influential ones, having advantages like joining the mainstream, not in advertising, but in graphic design. Their intuitive approach to the typographic scene and the relation between them and their ancestors 'the modernists' are studied in the fifth chapter.

II. THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

2.1. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ERA

Industrial Revolution that first occurred in England was actually a radical process of social and economic change rather than a historical period of time. A major impact for this conversion from an agricultural society into an industrial one was energy. Until James Watt perfected the steam engine which was deployed rapidly starting in the 1780s, animal and man power were primary sources of energy. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, electricity and gasoline-fueled engines expanded productivity. A factory system with machine manufacturing and divisions of labor was developed. New materials, particularly iron and steel, became available. Masses of people left a substance existence living land, immigrated to cities and sought for employment in factories. Cities grew rapidly and there was a wider distribution of wealth. Political power shifted away from the aristocracy and towards capitalist manufacturers, merchants, and even the working class. The growing scientific knowledge was applied to manufacturing processes and materials and man's sense of domination over nature and faith in the ability to exploit the earth sources to satisfy material wants and needs created a heady confidence. The capitalist replaced the landowner as the most powerful force in the western countries and capital investment in machines for mass manufacture became the basis for change in industry after industry. Demand for rapidly growing urban population with increased buying power stimulated technological improvements. In turn, this enabled mass production increased availability and lowered costs. The cheaper, more abundant merchandise available stimulated a mass market and even greater demand. Graphics played an important role in marketing factory output. This cycle of industrial supply and demand became the force behind the relentless progress of industrial development.

Overproduction, depression, economic panics, business and bank failures and the loss of jobs to newer technological improvements at the earlier period of Industrial Revolution became the social costs of the change. Long working hours, unsanitary tenements, cheap labor caused a new layer which is called as working class. On measure however, the overall standard of living of people, especially bourgeoise class, in Europe and America improved dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century. Critics of the new industrial age cried that civilization was shifting from an interest in humanistic values toward a preoccupation with material goods and that people were losing their communion with nature, aesthetics and spiritual values.

The greater degree of equality that sprang from the French and American Revolutions led to increased public education and literacy. The audience for reading matter expanded and as with other commodities, technology lowered unit costs and increased the production of printed material. In turn, greater availability created a huge demand and the era of mass communication emerged. Handcraft almost completely vanished.

The unity of design and production, (for example a printer was involved in all aspects of his craft from the design of typefaces and layout of the printed page to the actual printing of books), ended. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the specialization of the factory system fractured graphic communications into separate design and production components. The nature of visual information was profoundly changed. The range of typographic sizes and styles of letterforms exploded. The invention of photography expanded the visual documentation and pictorial information. This dynamic and often chaotic century witnessed an uneven parade of new technologies, imaginative forms and expanded applications of graphic design.

2.1.1. The impact of the Era on Typography

Until the invention of typecasting machines in the late nineteenth century, all types were cast by hand, letter by letter. The letter was obtained by cutting its shape, in relief and in reverse, on the end of a bar, called a punch, which was then struck into a softer bar of copper, thus creating the matrix into which the molten lead type metal would be poured. Although the shapes of letters were originally evolved and determined by the instruments with which they were written, the fact that to turn them into types meant cutting the shapes on steel punches brought another influence into their shaping: an influence that very subtly affected the curves and the way that the curves joined the straight lines. Another factor is the design of metal types. Type metal, in the process of printing, gets worn and thickens; the old type cutters therefore anticipated this and allowed it in their types.

Setting type by hand, then redistributing it into the job case remained a slow and costly process. By the middle of the nineteenth century, presses could produce twenty five thousand copies per hour, but each letter in every word in every book, newspaper and magazines had to be set by hand.

An American printer Darius Wells began to experiment with handcarved wooden types in 1827 and he invented a lateral router that enabled the economic mass manufacture of types for display printing. Durable, lighter, and costing less than half as much as large metal types, wood type rapidly overcame printers' initial objections and had a significant impact on poster and broadsheet design. Beginning in 1829, when Wells launched the wood type industry with his first specimen sheets, American wood type manufacturers imported type design ideas from Europe and exported wood type.

Soon however, European countries began to develop their own wood type manufacturing and American firms began to create innovative decorative alphabets by mid-century. In 1834, William Leavenworth combined the pantograph with the router.

The progress of industrial revolution radically altered printing. Inventors sought to apply mechanical theory and metal parts to hand press to create its efficiency and the size of its impression. Friedrich Koenig obtained a patent for a steam powered printing press in 1810. By the time Ottmar Mergenthaler, a German immigrant to Britain, perfected his Linotype machine in 1886. Before Linotype was invented, the high cost of composition limited the largest newspapers in eight pages and books remained fairly precious. Linotype involved the use of small brass matrices with female impressions of the letterforms, numbers and symbols. The rapid deployment of the linotype replaced thousands of highly skilled hand typesetters, violence and strikes threatened many installations. But the new technology caused an unprecedented explosion of graphic material, creating thousands of new jobs. Book publishing expanded rapidly. The linotype led to a revolution in periodicals and illustrated weeklies that reached audiences of millions by the turn of the century. The advantage of monotype composing to linotype is that it is typographically preferable, but it required two separate machines and therefore two operators, and slower. This usually made it more expensive though not for complicated setting (e.g. mathematics, or foreign languages) which was likely to need a lot of correction.

2.1.2. Innovations in Typography

The Industrial Revolution required new types of signs to project visual forms of the coming decades. Most of the typefaces that

existed before the Industrial Revolution were book faces, delicate in nature and with a maximum size of about 72 points. The new advertising industry required something new, stronger, larger, in other words, eye catching. Type designers proceeded to produce the widest choice of faces. Condensed, expanded, simple, ornated and highly complex - never before such variety of styles were available. **(Fig.1)**

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, letterpress printers were under increasing competitive pressure from lithographic printers where skilled craftsman rendered plates directly from an artist's sketch and produced images and letterforms limited only by the artists's imagination. The letterpress printers turned the type founders to expand their design possibilities. The idea of larger and fatter letters was embraced by founders in the last decade of the eighteenth century and types grew steadily bolder by the decade.

The rapid tilt in typographic design taste toward modern style, romans, and new styles after the turn of eighteenth century affected Vincent Figgins, a British founder owner. His 1815 printing specimen showed a full range of modern styles, antiques (Egyptians). A roman letter without serifs, caps only, appeared as a typeface in 1816 in a specimen book issued by William Caslon IV. Sans serif which became so important to twentieth century graphic design had a hesitated beginning. It was known then as English Egyptian and was intended as a display face for occasional use in advertising. The inelegant early sans serifs were primarily used for subtitles and descriptive materials under bold faces and Egyptians.

In the early 1830s, type founders introduced new sans serif styles and each foundry invented a name for its character such as doric, grotesques, sans surryphs. At the end of the century, Berthold, a German firm, began designing a family of ten sans serifs styles

which were variations upon one original design. The first one of these, called Akzidenz Grotesque, issued in 1898 and its' harmony and clarity became the basis for sans serif types of the post World War II era.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, in the United States, typography was taking on a specific meaning; the discriminating choice of paper, type, decoration and the harmonious assembling of them into an effective whole, not to be done by a member of printing house but to be done by a specialist, a typographer. William Bradley was one of the practitioners of Art Nouveau in the United States and used innovative graphic techniques and a visual unity of type and image that moved beyond imitation. According to Meggs (1982), Bradley was free spirited in his approach to typographic design and flouted all the prevailing rules and conventions. **(Fig.2)**

In 1895, Theodore Low De Vinne, owner of a printing company in the States, was dissatisfied with the thin modern faces used in his publication called Century, so he commissioned type designer L. B. Benton to cut a blacker, more readable face that is slightly extended with thicker and thin strokes and short slab serifs which is called Century, same as the magazine's name. This legible style is still in use today.

As a result of the interest in typographic history inspired by the Arts & Crafts Movement, the first decade of the twentieth century saw many revivals of traditional typeface designs, such as Garamond, Plantin, Caslon, Baskerville, and Bodoni. Design approach towards printed material was pragmatic. The floral decorative elements that emerged and reached its peak in Arts & Crafts Movement and Art Nouveau surrounded whole design of the typographic elements for a while. Basic setting was that the long words had condensed type and short words had extended types. The impact of the message was given by using the largest available type sizes. There was an

[Fig. 1]

[Fig. 2]

extensive mix of types on a single sheet of poster or handbill due to limited number of characters. As a consultant to the client, the composer selected and composed the types, rules, ornaments, and stock illustrations. The whole philosophy was to use all that was in the drawer. Basic organizing principle became to lock all the elements tightly on the press enforced a horizontal and vertical stress onto the design. By the invention of chromolithography, artists drew fancy letters, allowed them to run in angles and arcs or flow right over images.

III. TYPOGRAPHY IN MODERN MOVEMENTS

3.1. EARLY MODERNIST TYPOGRAPHY

The beginning of twentieth century became a fertile period for all aspects of humanity. The social, political, cultural and economic character of life were radically altered by those conditions. In Europe, monarchy was replaced by democracy, socialism and communism. Technology and scientific advances transformed commerce and industry such as automobile, airplane, motion picture and radio transmission and these techo-marches agitated the era of human communications. The destructive weapons of technology used in the World War I, in some cases fascinated the youngsters while some stood against them. The semi-global war tread down Europe and shook the traditions and institutions of the West to their foundations.

Against this turbulence, it is not surprising that the visual arts experienced a series of creative revolutions that questioned their values, system of organization and the social role.

> The traditional objective view of the world shattered. Representation of external appearances did not fulfill the needs and vision of the Europe Avant-Garde that emerged.(Meggs,1982)

As the expectation for a new visual language became inevitable, the new vocabulary of typography and graphic design formed itself. The evolution of twentieth century typographic design closely relates to modern painting, poetry, and architecture. Photography, technical changes in printing, new reproduction techniques, social changes and new attitudes have also helped to erase the borderlines of the graphic arts, literature and typography. They have encouraged typography to become more visual, less linguistic and less purely

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linear. Modern typography emerged in response to new demands and new opportunities brought up by the nineteenth century.

> The violence with which modern typography burst upon the early twentieth century scene reflected the violence with which new concepts in art and design in every field were sweeping away exhausted conventions and challenging those attitudes which had no relevance to a highly industrialized society (Spencer, 1982)

The revolution in typography had very little impact on the traditions of the printing industry. The change was carried through by painters, poets, architects and others who utilized printing from outside the industry.

> These men (artists) were busting with ideas and exhilarated by a new concept of art and society who were determined to make voices heard effectively. They seized upon printing with fervor because they clearly recognized it for what it properly is-a potent means of conveying ideas and information, and not for what much of it had then become -a kind of decorative art remote from the realities of contemporary society. (Spencer, 1982)

During the nineteenth century the printing industry had failed to recognize the fundamental changes which were taking place in society and consequently in the nature of what was printed. The rapid growth of industrialization and of mass production had created demands for new kinds of printing, first to control efficiently the processes of production and distribution, later as production and competition increased, to create and to stimulate demand through advertising.

By the end of the century, most printers were imprisoned in a web

of sterile convention or in technical tricks. It was as a reaction to this situation that the Futurists adopted their aggressive new techniques for putting their notions into print.

> We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness. Courage, audacity and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry...We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty; the beauty of speed... A roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace...Except in struggle, there is no more beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece. (Marinetti, 1909 cited in Spencer, 1982)

When these words of the Futurist Manifesto were published in Paris' La Figaro on 20 February 1909, Italian poet Filippo Marinetti established Futurism as a revolutionary movement for all the arts to test their ideas and forms against the new realities of scientific and industrial society. Marinetti and his followers produced an explosive and emotionally changed poetry that defied correct syntax and grammar.(**Fig. 3**) They demanded that the form should intensify the content. Typographic design has started its challenge when the journal Lacerba published in 1913. The medium became a zone for expressing the ideas that Marinetti stressed in his manifesto as written below,
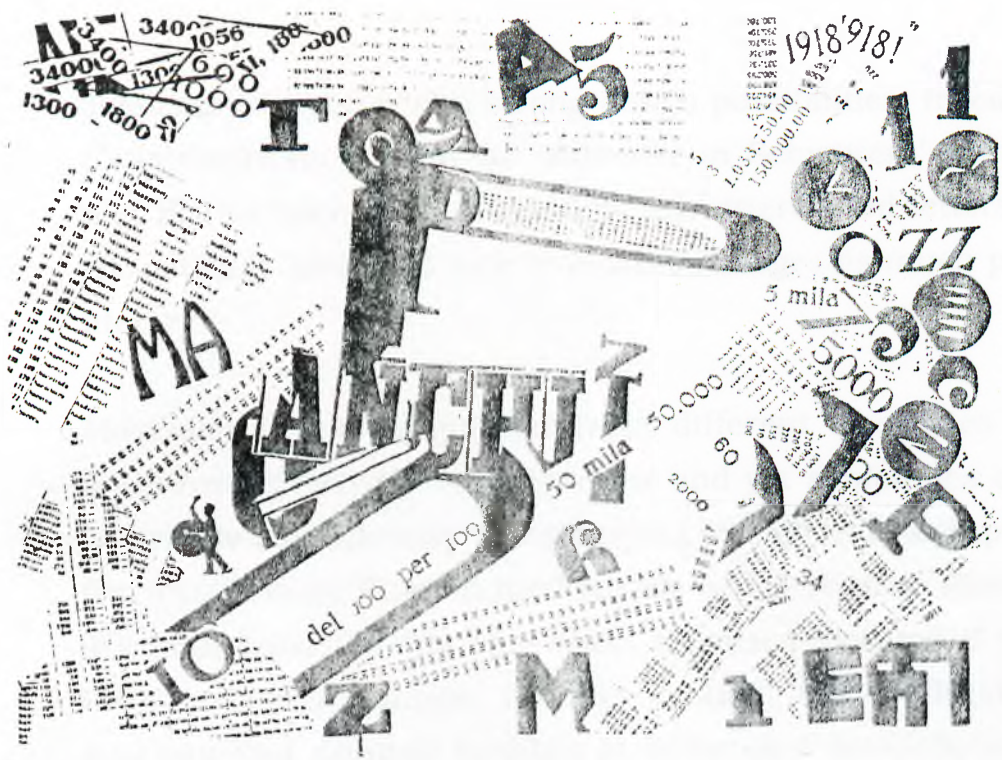
> I am making a typographical revolution which is directed, most of all, against the idiotic, sickening notion of the poetry book with its hand made paper, its 16th century style, decorated with galleys, Minervas, Apollos, tall initials, florid ornaments and roman numerals Marinetti, 1913 cited in Gottschall, 1989) .

> The book will be the futurist expression of our futurist

consciousness. I am against what is known as the harmony of setting. When necessary, we shall use three or four columns to a page and twenty different types. We shall represent hasty perceptions in italic and express a scream in blood type... a new, painterly, typographic representation will born on the printed page ... (Marinetti Cited in Spencer, 1982)

Since Gutenberg most of the typographic designs were set in the structure of horizontal and vertical. The Futurists' free, dynamic, non-symmetrical powers to visualize their own poetry was born on the printed page. Freed from tradition, non-linear compositional elements fulfilled the Futurists' vision to visualize their new and brave ideas. On one page, three or four ink colors and quite a numbers of typefaces such as italics for quick expressions, bold faces for violent noises captured the spirit of Futurism. A new and painterly typographic design called as free typography or words in freedom was announced. Their violent technique of propaganda imitated through Europe by Dadaists in France, Switzerland, and Germany, by Constructivist movement in Russia and by De Stijl in Holland.

The Futurists regarded violence as being good in itself and believed war to have values as a healthy extermination. In contrast to this, in1916, a new movement called Dadaism was born out of disillusionment with war and disgusted by the slaugther of millions on the battlefields of Europe.The Dadaists, in revolt against the obsolescence, the stupidity and the rot which had led to the first World War upheld the supremacy of man and the value of art. In making their ironical comments on the follies of this world, they utilized the Cubist technique of collage, such as Kurt Schwitters did in his Merz pictures. **(Fig. 4)** From 1923 to 1932, Schwitters published twenty four issues of the periodical Merz, the word being derived from German word 'Kommerz'. His work combined

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[Fig. 3]

[Fig. 4]

elements of chance with strong design possibilities. In early 1920s, Constructivism became an influence in Schwitters' work after he met El Lissitzky. Most of the time Schwitters used letters or words phonetically and used type to create messages as much pictorial as literary.

Movements that originated from different countries and had objectives different from each other and yet sometimes conflicting, contributed significantly to the shaping of modern typography. Among the many young Russian intellectuals who arrived in Berlin around 20s was Lissitzky. By that time, Germany became a center for intellectuals in Europe. Lisstzky realized the availability of the sophisticated printing facilities in Berlin and devoted much of his time to typography rather than painting that he had done before coming to Germany. He interpreted the October revolution as a new beginning for mankind. As he called himself constructor/ designer/artist that would shape a unity between art and technology by constructing a new world of objects to provide mankind a richer society and environment.

In 1921, Lissitzky was sent to Berlin to make contacts with Western artists and designers. The first year, collaborating with Ilya Ehrenburg, he produced trilingual periodical called Vershch/Gegenstand/Object, devoted to 'new objectivity'. This publication, with highly praised printing facilities, enabled him to implement and develop his typographical ideas. In 1922, he was commissioned to design a Constructivist room in the Russian Art Exhibition in Berlin. These opportunities gave him the chance to meet with Schwitters, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Theo van Doesburg. He collaborated with Kurt Schwitters on the Dadaist journal Merz and contributed to the Dutch review De Stijl. His new conceptions in graphic design were adopted by publishers and advertisers and within a few months in Berlin he became a leading figure in the development of modern typography. Around that time, in 1923,

Lissitzky designed and illustrated Mayakovsky's book 'For Reading Out Loud' which became a landmark in the history of twentieth century typography. **(Fig.5)** Their collaboration brought together the major creative forces of avant garde culture. Both held the same ideas about Constructivism: Art should descend from ivory tower to play pivotal role in the reconstructing of society; it should become a meaningful pace of everyday life in the new social state. Lissitzky used lots of elements that could be found in a letterpress printer's typecase. Wood and metal types; rules, bars, and bullets; a few dingbats; and one old engraved image of an imperial eagle. Layouts were developed as a guide for a German typesetter who could not read or write a single word of Russian. According to Meggs (1982) the printing firm's staff became fascinated by 'For the Voice' and its unique format and asked Lissitzky to translate parts into German so that they could understand it.

> As with most graphic forms, the shapes and images Lissitzky used in For the Voice have a duel life: They are perceived optical phenomena as well as communicative signs functioning with other signs to form a message. Western designers unable to read Russian have viewed 'For the Voices' as a masterly arrangement of forms, apparently unaware that Lissitzky was translating the pure forms from his mentor Kasimir Malevich's Suprematist paintings into communicative signs. The broad influence of this book has been based solely on the impact of its visual aspect; Lissitzky's symbolic interpretations of the titles and texts of Mayakovsky's poems have not been comprehended by reading public. (Meggs, 1982)
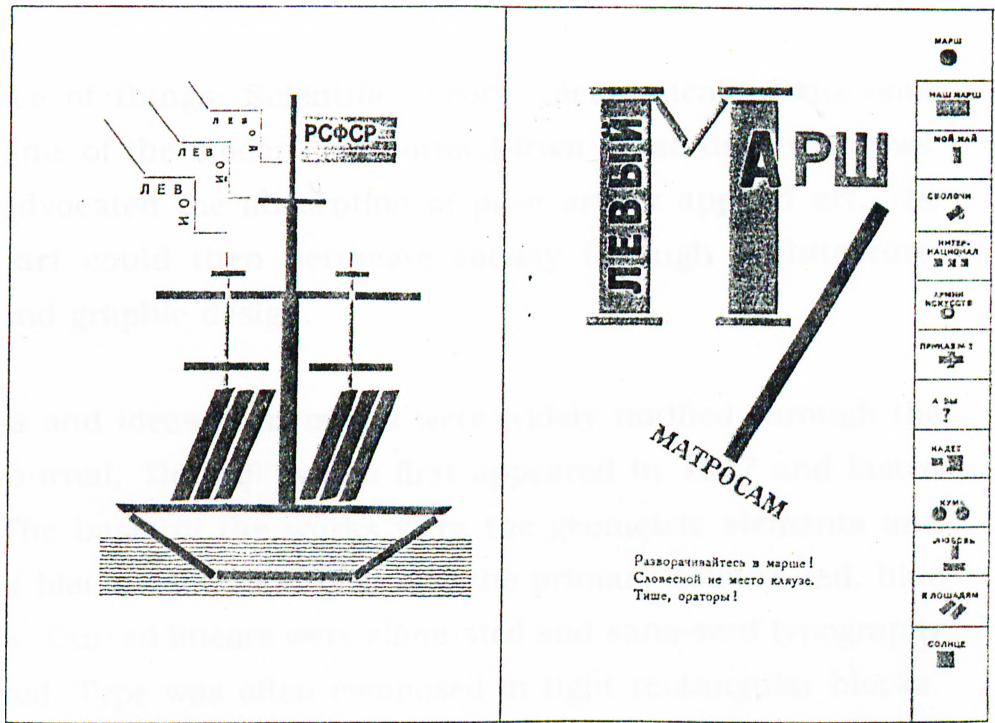
Lissitzy realized that the white space on a page is not left over space but something to be manipulated. For him, white space was an important design element, equal in importance to the pictures or types. He knew that masses of people were hungry for information

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so that the books had to be attractive, exciting, yet readable. Book design went beyond ornament and became an integral part of the reading experience as Lissitzky output the model by producing Mayokovsky's book.

Another book he produced is 'The Isms of Art 1914-1924' which he edited with a Dadaist Hans Arp. The format that Lissitzky developed for this book was an important step toward the creation of visual program, for organizing information. The three-column vertical grid structure used for the text, the three-column horizontal grid structure used for the title page, and the two-column structure of the contents page became an architectural framework for organizing the illustrated pages. Also the way sans-serif typography and bars were handled is an early expression of the modern style. **(Fig.6)**

AlexanderRodchenko pulled himself away from what Malevich and Kandinsky stated as art-for-art's sake position to an utilitarian art for society. He applied geometrically constructed designs to his posters and typographic designs. He, too used sans serif types and along with El Lissitzky, was an early user of photomontage. In 1923, he took over the layout and typography of the Constructivist magazine 'Lef', collaborating with Mayakovsky. During the late 1920's Rodchenko designed more than a dozen Mayakovsky anthologies.

In 1917, a few months after the launching of Dadaism, the De Stijl as a group was founded by Theo Van Doesburg in Holland. Piet Mondrian and Van Doesburg were the group's principal theorists, and they proclaimed that harmony in painting, architecture and design could be achieved only by adopting a style that was geometrically pure and impersonal. They sought an expression of the mathematical structure of the universe and the universal harmony of nature. They were deeply concerned with the spiritual and intellectual climate of their time. The idea was to seek the universal laws which govern visible reality but were hidden by the outward

[Fig. 5]

[Fig. 6]

appearance of things. Scientific theory, mechanical productions and rhythms of the modern city formed from these universal laws. De Stijl advocated the absorption of pure art by applied art. The spirit of art could then permeate society through architecture, product and graphic design.

The works and ideas of members were widely notified through the groups journal, 'De Stijl' which first appeared in 1917 and lasted in1932. The basis of the works were the geometric elements and the use of black, white and grey and the primary colours red, blue and yellow. Curved linears were eliminated and sans-serif typography was favored. Type was often composed in tight rectangular blocks. Asymmetrically balanced layouts were composed on an open implied grid. Red was favored as a second color in printing because of its graphic power to compete with black.

A book is read from left to right and from top to bottom, one line after the other. But at the same time it is seen one entire page at a glance. This simultaneous process (acoustical-optical) has given the modern book a new 'plastic' dimension. The old setting was passive and frontal, while the new setting is active and spatial-temporal. The modern book is no longer just a cinematographic running of different processes. 'Intensity' has replaced 'direction' and because of this intensity we demand a typographic support of the text which, however, does not mean an ornamental effect or the kind of typographic illustrations which is so popular with the Russians today, but a complete new command of the means of typography. These are: white space, text, color and lastly, the photographic picture... In the design of both a book and architecture we encounter a double problem: both the book and the house should not only be useful but beautiful and nice to look at...(Doesburg, 1928)

Although formerly not a member of De Stijl, Piet Zwart's influence on modern typography is irresistible. He agreed with the basic philosophy but he found De Stijl to be dogmatic and restrictive. Zwart received his first typographic commissions and he rejected both traditional symmetrical layout and focused on simple letter forms. **(Fig.7)**

> The more uninteresting a letter, the more useful it is to the typographer. (Zwart cited in Gottschall, 1989)

He vitalized the printed page with power and tension by applying the contrast in photographs, size and color of types, the juxtaposing of straight lines with curved and circular forms. Realizing that twentieth century mass printing made typographic design an important and influential culture force, Zwart had a strong sense of social responsibility and was concerned about the reader. He directed his designs on the idea of legible content by using large letters in bold type and diagonal lines.

Another Dutch as an influential typographic designer is Paul Schutima trained as painter and turned out to be Graphic designer in 1920s. Schuitema, just like Zwart, devised both the message and the technique used to convey that message. Both of them utilized the types they found in printer's case.

In 1919, a new kind of school opened its doors in Weimar, Germany, with an interdisciplinary approach to fine arts and applied arts but quite pragmatic and idealistic one. The Bauhaus became a central point for European artists and designers to exchange ideas, views and there they became teachers or students. Typographic design transformed itself under the philosophy of the school. Although Bauhaus was not a graphic design school, it soon played important role by adding its program a course on typography. Director of the

school, Walter Gropius, sought a new unity of art and technology to solve problems of visual design brought about industrialism.

In1923, the Hungarian Constructivist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy was appointed as the head of preliminary design course. Moholy-Nagy's passion for typography and photography inspired a Bauhaus interest in visual communications and led to important experiments in the unification of typography and photography. Moholy-Nagy saw graphic design, particularly the poster, as evolving toward the 'typophoto'. He called this objective integration of word and image to communicate a message with immediacy, 'the visual literature'. In typography, he advocated emphatic contrasts and bold use of color. Absolute clarity of communication without preconceived aesthetic notions was stressed. **(Fig. 8)** He also edited Bauhaus publications and in of the magazines, whose cover was designed by Herbert Bayer, a student then, stated his views on typography.

Moholy-Nagy used modular, simple letters rather than pre-existing styles. His strong preference was for sans serif typefaces. A dynamic symmetry with elements positioned for their relative importance replaced the conventional center-axis, formal design of pre-Bauhaus graphics. He was equally concerned with visual vigor that would attract and hold readers and viewers and communication clarity. Moholy-Nagy goes on to advocate and experiment with what he calls the typophoto in which, in some cases, pictures in the text replace words.

In 1925, an ex-Bauhaus student Herbert Bayer was put in charge of the workshop for graphic design and printing. Bayer brought a new blend of vitality and order to Bauhaus typography. He led the workshop in dramatic innovation in typographic design along with functional and Constructivist lines. Sans serif types were used almost exclusively and Bayer designed a universal type that reduced the alphabet to clear, simple and rationally constructed forms. He introduced

typography without capitals. Extreme contrasts of type size and weights were used to establish a hierarchy of emphasis determined by an objective assessment of the relative importance of the words. Bars, rules, points and squares were used to subdivide the space to unify diverse elements and to call attention to important elements. Elementary forms and the use of black favored. Open composition on an implied grid and a system of sizes for type, rules and pictorial images brought unity to the designs. Dynamic composition with strong horizontals and verticals characterize Bayer's Bauhaus period. The essentials of his typographic works were carefully proportioned, balanced elements, internal harmony among numerous elements, precision, clarity, rhythm. Bayer observed that typography is a service art, not a fine art. Typography was more than a medium for making language visible, it had distinctive optical properties. **(Fig.9)**

Jan Tschichold, not a member of Bauhaus, was greatly stimulated by the innovators of his time, including Kurt Schwitters, Theo Van Doesburg, El Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, Piet Zwart. Born in 1902 in Germany, he was a young fellow studying at Academy of Book Design at Leipzig when he tried to make a sense out of his world by observing the works of his previous masters written above. He understood what the constructivist's sense of the 'utilitarian aspects of artistic order ' meant to typographic design and he was impressed with De Stijl's idea to create a style appropriate for every aspect of contemporary life. His major book, 'The New Typography', was published in 1928. It was a challenge to the mediocre typography in Germany. Before that, he had written about asymmetrical typography in 'Elementary Typography' in 1925. Another major work was called 'Typographische Gestaltung' was published in 1935. What Tschichold realized is ornaments dominated typography between 1900 and 1920 period. He stated that "In centered typography, pure form comes before the meaning of words; contrast is perhaps the most important element in all modern design; sans serif is the type of the present day and the new typography is not a

fashion". His designs were constructed on an underlying geometric grid. Rules, bars and boxes were often used for structure, balance, and emphasis. During the 1930s, he began to turn away from the new typography and use of Roman, Egyptian and script styles in his designs. His ideas changed later on about the strict modern typography and he advocated freedom of thought and artistic expression. **(Fig.10)**

∴

[Fig. 7]

[Fig. 8]

[Fig. 9]

[Fig. 10]

3.2. INTERNATIONAL TYPOGRAPHIC STYLE

The striving for order and organization in communication graphics that was initiated by Lissitzky and further developed by van Doesburg, Moholy-Nagy, Bayer and Tschichold, reached its peak in the 1930s in Switzerland. Typographic functionalism of the 1920s was fine-tuned to become typographic clarity in the 1930s. Around that time architect Le Corbusier presented his "Modular" system which is based on the idea of grid. In 1930s typographers such as Herbert Bayer, Max Bill, R. Paul Lohse became the ones dealing with typographic grid system. Included in the group, Ernest Keller, Theo-Ballmer and Max Huber became the major figures, leading to the movement called International Typographic Style.

The schools in Zurich and Basel were the major elements forming the International Style. Emil Ruder taught in Basel and called upon his students to strike a correct balance between form and function. He advocated that when type lost its communicative meaning it lost its purpose. For him legibility and readability should domain the page and a design should have an overall system by using grid to bring all elements as photo, illustration, charts etc. into harmony with each other. Problems of unifying type and image were addressed. Ruder and his students explored the contrasts, textures and scale possibilities of types that were commissioned.

Hoffman also joined Basel School in1947. Like Ruder, he contrasted light and dark areas, curves and straight lines, forms and counterforms, dynamic and static elements and colors. He sought for a graphic form to replace traditional pictorial ideas with a contemporary aesthetic based on the fundamental, elemental nature of visual phenomena.

Swiss design is recognized throughout the West when the journal 'New Graphic Design' was published in 1959. Trilingual periodic:

presented the philosophy of Swiss movement to an international audience. Its format and typography were a living expression of the order and refinement achieved by Swiss designers. They sought an absolute and universal graphic expression through an objective and impersonal presentation communicating to the audience without the interference of the designer's subjective feelings and devoid of propagandistic techniques of persuasion.

Swiss design, a major force for more than twenty years, started to lose its effect in the last decade, commended purity of means and legibility of communication that enables the designer to achieve a timeless perfection of form. The visual characteristic of this individual style include: a visual unity achieved by asymmetrical organization of elements of the design on a mathematically drawn grid; the use of sans serif type (Univers and Helvetica); typography set in a flush left and ragged right margins; objective photography and copy that present visual and verbal information in a clear and a factual manner. As it was developed by the early pioneers of typography, design was defined as a socially useful and important activity. Personal expression and solutions were rejected in favor of a more universal and scientific approach to design problem solving. Clarity and order became the design ideals of Swiss design. Sans serifs were believed to be the zeitgeist of typography and that mathematical grids were the most legible and harmonious means for structing information. **(Fig.11)**

> Typography has one duty and that is to convey information in writing. No argument or consideration can absolve typography from its duty. A printed work which cannot be read becomes a product without a purpose. (Emil Ruder cited in Gottschall, 1989)

During the post World War II era, there was a growing spirit of internationalism in diverse field. Increased trade resulted in multinational corporations that were active in many countries. Th·

speed of communications was turning the world into a "global village". There was a need for communicative clarity, multilingual formats to break the language barriers and elementary visual signs to enable people from around the world to understand information and Swiss design tried to fulfill these needs.
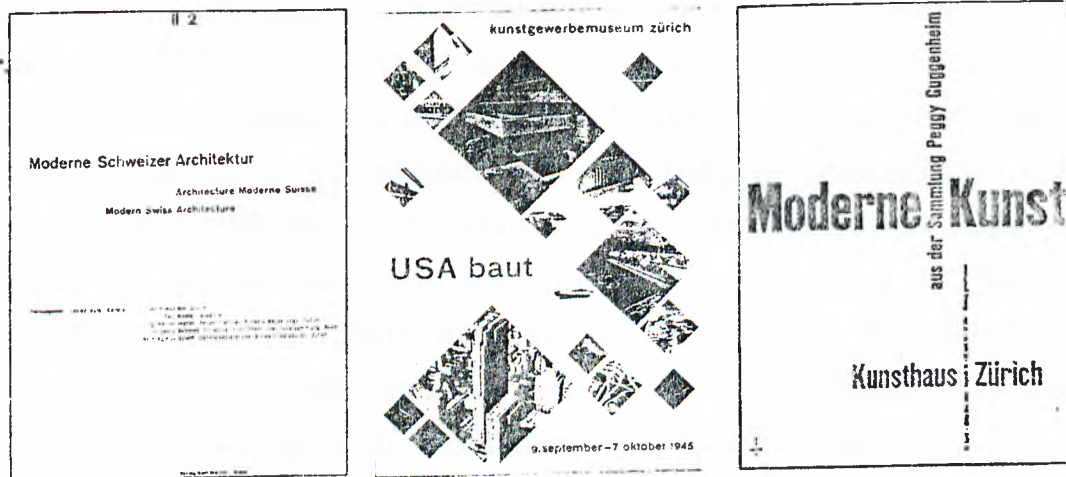
[Fig. 11]

IV. THE CURRENT EXPERIMENTAL TYPOGRAPHY

4.1. REACTION TO INTERNATIONAL TYPOGRAPHIC STYLE

As it became established, the International Typographic Style prevailed its position in a widening spectrum. The rational approach towards a "problem solving" design also found supporters on the other side of Atlantic as multinational American companies began seeking "identities" to enhance not only their economical but also ideological capabilities. The cold war theories, continual regional fights all around the world and the new philosophies on "art of survival" provoked riots against the established instutions by youngsters. McLuhan wrote his well known book, 'Medium is the Message', dealing with upcoming information society. "Pop" cultivated art to view consumer culture by questioning the relations between image and ready made/ daily used objects. Along with gender issues, problems and opinions of minorities and races were opened to discussion. Subversive subcultures such as Punk manipulated youngsters but then was devoured by commercial culture after record companies realize its massive effect. Under statistics, scientific observations, and market research, globalization efforts of companies made graphic design stable.

The main thrust of the international typographic scene was towards objective and neutral typography. The first departures from the International Typographic Style actually can be seen in the country where it all started; Switzerland. Although the first examples represented slight changes, it affected the typographic scene by the works of Weingart, Odermatt and Tissi. Weingart's works focused on graphic simplicity and obvious orderness at the beginning but Odermatt and Tissi represented a blend of typography with flare and clarity, with impact and readibility.

Odermatt opened his studio in 1950, in Zurich. A self-educated graphic designer, he did not study under the typographic designers at Swiss design schools. This becomes a reason that he was one of the first to depart from the stiff structure of Swiss design. Characteristic elements in his work are dramatic use of color, imaginative cropping of photography, and a playfullness created by typography. In 1960s, Rosemarie Tissi joined Odermatt. The partners loosened the boundaries of International Typographic Style and introduced elements of chance, the development of surprising and inventive forms and instinctual visual organization into the vocabulary of graphic design.

4.2. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT EXPERIMENTAL TYPOGRAPHY

The big shake up to Swiss design came from Wolfgang Weingart. He had been a student at the Basel School of Design where he later on started teaching to revitalize the typographic design. He replaced disciplined rationality with an expressiveness reminiscent of Lissitzky and Piet Mondrian. Weingart modulated and warped type by overexposing, scratching and defacing it until it would be hardly legible. He juxtaposed images and textures and used enlarged halftone dots. He questioned the typography of absolute order and cleanliness. In the 1970s, his attention turned towards offset printing and film systems. Weingart moved away from purely typographic design and embraced collage as a medium for visual communication. As his students from United States went back to teach and practise, Weingart's influence began to filter into American design. (**Fig. 12)**

April Greiman, an American who studied in Basel, established her studio in late 70s in Los Angeles. She studied with Wolfgang Weingart and blended some of his ideas with her own and from her Los Angeles studio, she still creates dynamic, intricate typographic designs today. Her Basel experience helped her to break out so

called International Typographic Style.

> From Hoffman, she assimilated the need to examine the communicative potential of abstract and elemental form; from Weingart, a tireless experimenter, she learned to defiantly question time-honored traditional typography and to view anything "new" as passe. (Carter, 1989)

In 1982, she became the director of the visual communications program at California Institute of the Arts. There she was acquainted with a fairly new element in design: computer. It was there she began using video cameras to input images which she digitized, re-colored, and manipulated on the computer. After leaving CalArts in 1984, Greiman's interest in technology, especially various design software programs became available, deepened her design approach into the 'total computer look'.

> The computer is very simply a revolution. It is stupid to use it to replicate airbrushing, animation, or illustration. What the computer offers instead is the power to create new visual languages, hybrids of design. You spend a lot less time doing-making stats. laying down type, sizing images- and a lot more time looking. that were literally impossible before the computer. Despite people's fear about the loss of 'human imagination', it actually stretches our potential and allows us to encounter chance. You hit the wrong button and all of a sudden you've got dots all over your logo. (Greiman cited in Hanna, 1989)

Greiman uses computer technology in two more or less separate ways: as a tool simply to give rapid but professional results and in a consciously mannered fashion. She uses the computer imagery by exploiting ironically its dots, bytes, and its ugliness. **(Fig.13)**

[Fig. 12]

Himmelblau
Blau
Beige

hingestreuter
hingetupfter
weisser Punkt
weisse Kapelle

Kaktus
Steinödendistel
Steinöde

langsames Drehen
Windmühlensegel
Windmühlenkegel
weisse Treppe
sanfter Anstieg

in Grün
roter Hibiskus
schwarze Gestalt
winklige Gassen
blauer Schatten
weisses Licht

Schatten
Licht
trunken von Weiss
Kubenhäuser
Kuben
Steinplattenplatz

Mykonos
Oktober 1961

wartendes Boot
Millionenkörner
beiger Sand

atmendes Meer

[Fig. 13]

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There are times when I'm really pushing for that computer look. On the one hand it's very sophisticated; on the other it's very primitive. These combinations bring out a very interesting emotional response. (Greiman, cited in Aldersey-Williams, 1988)

Launching her studio in California changed her color palette. Using warm, rich colors as an influence of Californian atmosphere also considered one of the elements of "New Wave" design that sprout around the late 70s. Typographic design has been the most two dimensional of all the visual disciplines; Greiman introduced a sense of depth to the typographic page. Gestured strokes that move back in space, overlap or move behind geometric elements, and floating forms that cast shadows are means used to make forms move forward and backwards from the surface of the printed page thus creating implied perspective. Strong tactile qualities are found in Greiman's work, as textures including enlarged halftone screens and repetitive patterns of dots or ruled lines contrast with broad flat shapes of color or tone. The intuitive dispersal of numerous elements collapse into disorder, but a "point-counterpoint" organizational system maintains order by pulling the eye into the page through dominant elements which quickly give way to other elements as the viewer moves through the richness of form on the page. Vivid colors blended with textures surprises the viewer with an ambiguous reality.

Rudy VanderLans and Zuzana Licko are now known as the ones who triggered the bullet to the typographic scene of the 1980s when they launched their own publication, Emigre. Probably the name of the magazine generated from its owners' heritage. The husband and wife team came to this work from different geographies. Licko was born in Czechoslovakia, grew up in United States, and graduated from University of California. Soon after graduating, Licko began a free-lance career that was strongly influenced by th

emergence of Apple's Macintosh computer as a graphic design tool. Licko became attracted to the design of typefaces for the computer.

> I had never really studied calligraphy, so I was able to play around with typefaces without any preconceptions. (Licko, cited in Aldersey-Williams, 1988)

While at Berkeley, Licko met Rudy VanderLans, a Dutch designer enrolled in the photography department. VanderLans had received his training at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, which he describes as "a very classical oriented school".

> I was intrigued by American work-the expressive use of type, for example- and in 1981, the Dutch graphic scene was still sturdy and dry. (VanderLans, cited Aldersey-Williams, 1988)

VanderLans finally found a greater freedom of expression by launching his magazine, called naturally Emigre in 1984. Emigre, subtitled as "the magazine that ignores the boundaries" is known with its non-commercial approach to graphic design and articles primarily concentrated on the issues of design itself. Macintosh as a tool reflected in the magazine by means of typography and layout. Actually the Mac was bought as an illustration tool but soon the couple realized its possibilities and expanded its use throughout the magazine. VanderLans and Licko set out to prove that cheap Macintosh does not mean nasty typefaces. They rejected the proprietary Apple computer faces which they found to be poor imitations of classic faces. They rejected the notion held by some typeface specialists that designing type with computer is a limiting work. Instead, Licko designed her own type faces to be used in the magazine. **(Fig.14)**

> Designing our own fonts and doing our own typesetting

on the Macintosh has given us endless possibilities that with traditional production methods would be impossible to execute or finance. We believe that as personal computer publishing gains momentum, it should not continue to result in the degradation of graphic standards. (Licko, cited in Aldersey-Williams ,1988)

Zuzana Licko's typefaces, designed for Emigre, have come in for their own share of criticism for their contribution to the supposed non-legibility of the magazine which will be discussed in the next chapter. Licko exploited and confronted the technology as her faces became one of the heritages of early Macintosh typography. VanderLans also points that there are many ways to approach reading and that type and text can have a purpose other than to be read. Emigre still uses, expands, and exploits the Mac technology and continues to be an impact as an example in discussions on the function and use of typography. **(Fig.15)**

The most imitated, copied designer which also means the most influential designer of the 80s is Neville Brody, a British designer. His record cover designs have been highly regarded but most of all, his work on magazines, notably The Face (others are Arena, New Socialist, City Limits and Vive) has transformed the way in which designers and readers approach the medium. Magazines have become of even greater importance to advertising in the last decade as carriers of consumer information. Inevitably, their stylistic developments had a direct effect upon the visual communications.

The way Brody approached the layout and typography in magazine design became a direct assault to the boundaries of already existing peculiarities in magazine trend. Mostly he designed his own typefaces to be used as captions, headlines, and signposts with an encouraged usage of photography. One particular thing to Brody's work is the use of primitive symbols that can be traced to American Indians.

TOTALLY GLYPHIC
totally gothic

Citizen Light
Citizen Bold

Emigre fonts are original typefaces designed to maximize the use of digital technology.

[Fig. 14]

[Fig. 15]

BARRY DECK:

Barry Sans Serif
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Industry Sans Serif
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

...am really interested in type that isn't perfect. Type that reflects more truly the imperfect language of an imperfect world inhabited by imperfect beings...

Often his designs have their own crude power, a reaction against the impersonalized symbols of mainstream design.

Brody, born in 1957, studied first painting at Hornsey College of Art, then converted himself into graphic design at London Collage of Printing as he found out the art work would only remain in a specific gallery. He wanted to expose his feelings over to the printed pages rather than a canvas.

> I was feeling that within mass communication, the human had been lost completely. I wanted to understand the everyday images that were around me at that time, and the process of manipulation particularly within commercial art. By understanding the mechanism at ground level, I hoped to produce the opposite effect by turning them on their head. (Brody cited in Wozencroft, 1988)

As he started working in the Face magazine, Brody confronted with typography. Because he had not study typography in full manner, it became easy to apply his emotions toward the editorial pages. His creativity was flexible enough to carry the imagery with a certain content to the extreme. One example is the iconic sign he designed for the content page which changed its form in steps in every month **(Fig. 16)**. Although a basic grid for the layout remained, the total look by playing with type and image, is changed in every issue so that every text would express its own impulse to the reader with the help of design.

> The text itself wasn't presented emotively. What was surrounding the writing would affect and color your appreciation, but if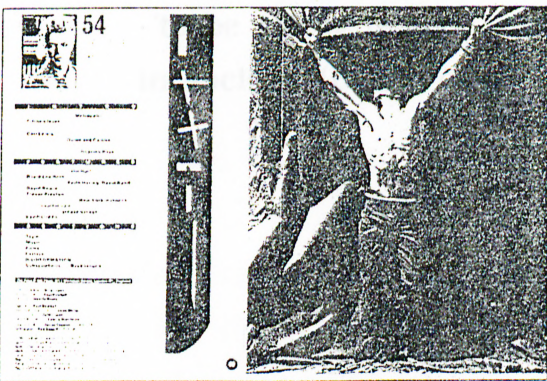 you isolated writing itself, you should be able to judge it purely on what it was saying. The Face had two narratives, the writing and design. (Brody cited in Wozencroft, 1988)
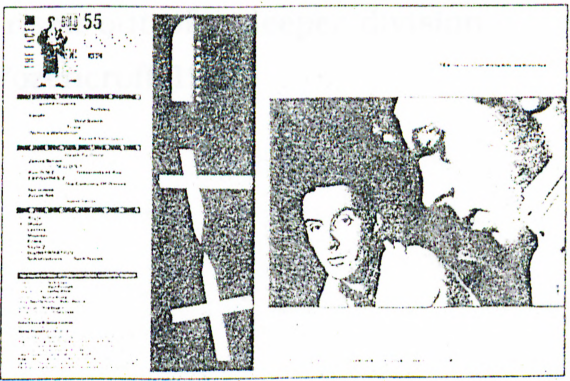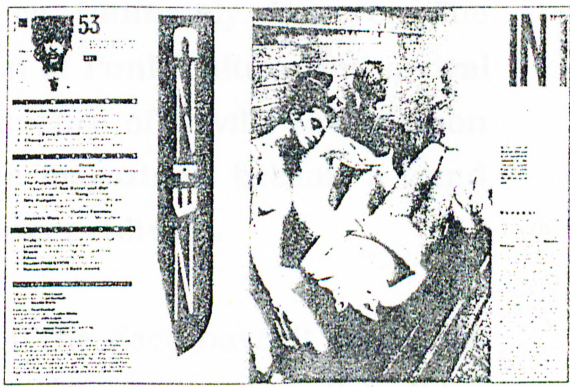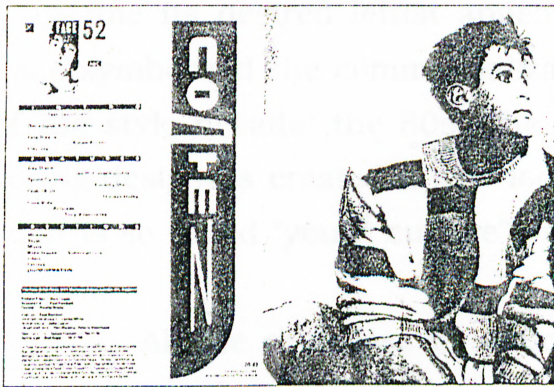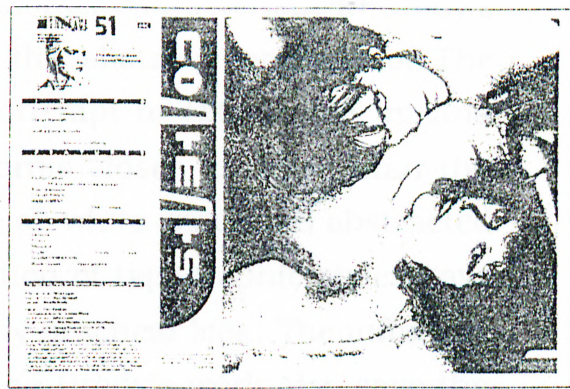
[Fig. 16]

Brody designed The Face very much like town planning, guiding the reader around a particular issue. Another characteristic in Brody's work which can be traced back to the abstract symbols of The Face, is free form typography as an attempt to extract the "means from the message", employing letterforms closer to runes than the modern alphabet. Brody's intuitive use of white space and abstracted graphic symbols and brave manipulation of typographic styles gave the magazine a distinctive and infinitely practical look. The influence of Russian graphics of the revolution on Brody's work also gave the magazine its desired leftist appearance. Ultimately, however, The Face symbolized the commercialization of Punk culture and arrival of the style decade: the 80s. The influence of Neville Brody upon young designers created a new look in magazines, became a trend what is so called "youth culture" or "street culture".

> All the countless imitators of The Face haven't copied us only because of its success. The mentality of youth culture -'to be young is good'- had risen out of a deeper division in society. (Brody cited in Wozencroft,1988)

IV. REEVALUATING THE MODERNIST AND CURRENT TYPOGRAPHY

4.1. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES

Sibly Moholy-Nagy writes that two of the most dynamic revolutions in 20th Century typography, Futurism and Bauhaus were fueled by the excitement of ideas generated by such seemingly unrelated developments as the automobile, airplane, and Freud's theories of the self. According to Moholy-Nagy, the inventive quality in all these ideas had to do with motion, and so typography. She discusses the relationship of the designer to culture and technology and points out that one of the most significant reasons for the success of the Bauhaus was its artists' abilities to make creative use of the inventions of the time. Bauhaus designers were able to capitalize on new construction procedures and materials, exploiting them for their production and aesthetic advantages. They did not resist change, but embraced it and engaged in meaningful discourse about it.

As it has been viewed in the second chapter, in the era of metal fonts, type was stored in typesetting machines. The metal fonts were analog -tangible letters you could see and touch, and the machines set characters in lines and columns at the direction of operators. The process over the printed material was very much under the control of the printer. Designers/artists at the beginning of the Modern movement were unable to express a change related to the printing process but what they did was to refuse the usage of the technology in traditional basis. What overcome was the relation between horizontal and vertical axis, broken to experiment typography in free form. Lissitzky was one of the first, rebelling to the limitations of the existing technology and he often used drafting instrument construction and paste up to achieve his designs. In 1925, he correctly predicted that Gutenberg's system belonged to

the past and photomechanical process would replace metal type and open new horizons for design as surely as radio has replaced the telegraph.

The approach of Modernist typographic designers/artists toward to-the scene was basically to alter the idea rather than changing its process. Practically, they used the conventional tools on their own designs but the outcome was surprisingly shocking and effective enough to pursue other artists to make them think how an idea or ideology could be conveyed to masses by typography.

Today, the technological changes taking place in typography have been brought by the personal computer. Relatively inexpensive and easy-to-use desktop publishing equipment and software have given designers the choice to take advantage of direct aesthetic control over typographic engagements which were previously depended upon expensive typesetting techniques or laborious handwork.

In 1984, the inexpensive Apple Macintosh was introduced to the market. Before the Apple, other conventional tools (foundry type, metal machine, and phototypesetting) would only remain at the printers' office and that would make the attempt to experiment with type a harder job as the designer could not hold the control over the process. The computer permits the designer to view all the material that needs to be organized at one time. It does this by allowing the designer into the machine to maneuver and view the actual copy and images. This versatility includes the particulars of the page itself, the style, size, shape, position of type, as well as all kinds of imagery. The ability of the computer to allow variations at low cost gives the designer the freedom to experiment with the relationship of these elements whereas previously "try and see" formulas were necessary in order to predict the visual outcome and avoid undue expense at the typesetter.

The computer has brought design and writing into closer proximity, offering designers a more flexible forum for working with text type than was offered by traditional typesetting. The typographic flexibility of the computer has enabled designers to pay unusual attention to text type, producing graphic commentaries on text through symbols and shifts in typeface, scale and color- all things possible before computers , yet discouraged by the professional and technological division between typesetters and designers.

Zuzana Licko, as an example for a Macintosh user, has focused on the low resolution bit-mapped imagery of the Macintosh as an aesthetic unto itself rather than using computer technology to replicate existing typographic norms. The bitmap as it appears on the screen of the Apple computer has become a design element, departing entirely from the traditional notions of type quality. The elements used in Emigre has already been a style, marked the beginning of a new 'type aesthetic' which does not rely on traditional type or historical letter models.

> Designers should take an interest in programming themselves just as calligraphers were involved in carving the first inking tools, and photographers were involved in producing the first photo emulsions, designers could participate in customizing software to fit their specific needs...(Licko & VanderLans, 1988)

Today, the computer is used effectively to refine and streamline traditional design techniques. It will doubtlessly affect the future look of design even more considerably, though the contemporary designers believe that we may just have to wait until the next generation of designers leaves art school.

> Much of the scepticism will disappear as a new generation

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of designers enters the profession... Designers exploring this technology are creating the visual forms which will serve as precedent for future design... (Licko & VanderLans,1988)....

If we examine the role of the designer today, we may find a lesser degree of differentiation than expected, compared with the Early Modernism. The Modernists believed that designer had an effective role to persuade the masses into the utilitarian world of art. For many artists, Russian Revolution marked a new beginning. The Constructivists called on the artist to stop producing useless things and turn to the poster, for "such work now belongs to the duty of the artist as a citizen of community who is clearing the field of the old rubbish in preparation for the new life." Communism and social engineering would create a new order; technology would provide society's needs and artists would forge unity between art and technology. The International Style defined the designer's role not as an artist, but as an objective conduit for spreading important information between components of society. Herbert Bayer felt that we must overcome the dreadful notion that the artist is a luxury and that his role in society is equally needed as that of the laborer.

According to Brody, designers that refuse to accept their function are damaging our cultural and commercial environment. Graphic design plays a huge, unseen, manipulative role in daily life. As he believes, there is no such a thing as anonymous design today. Brody is highly against today's designer that has got no ideological comment to make. The design work he had done for The New Socialist, Labour Party's monthly magazine, exemplifies his ideas. **(Fig. 17)** It was a challenge to make politics an interesting enough subject for people but on the other hand avoiding to become "too political". Brody's work, as he sees it, is an attempt to alert his colleagues to the understatement of their profession.

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NEW SOCIALIST

STYLE WARS
DAVID EDGAR VERSUS ROBERT ELMS

JUNE JORDAN: ISRAEL'S UNHOLY ALLIANCE
FEMINISM AND CLASS POLITICS

FALL-OUT OVER LIBYA

[Fig. 17]

Undoubtedly, one of the right wing's major successes as far as its control of television and print media is concerned, has been to force people into believing that sensationalism and materialistic values are given facts of life, and people are not encouraged to consider the means by which these reach the screen or page. (Brody cited in Wozencroft, 1988)

But considering design community at large, it is hard to see any designer dealing with politics except Brody. The idea swelling around is to become a pluralist, concerned with issues from ecology to gender problems.

The most powerful source as a medium for both early modernists and contemporary typographic designers continues to be the periodicals. Beginning with the journal of Marinetti's followers 'Lacerba', other artists traced the same road to exercise their messages into visualization. Schwitters' Merz, Lissitzky's Veshtch, Rodchenko's LeF, Doesburg's De Stijl, Moholy-Nagy's Bauhaus Journal became such an influence on other artists not only visually but also ideologically.

In today's mass media, after fashion, magazines give the most definite report on prevailing style. Culture, art, and fashion periodicals are considered as "signs of things to come and go". With desk top publishing revolution, start-up costs have been cut out so drastically that new magazines can almost come and go as they please. Emigre, which already have been written about in chapter three, marked the new Macintosh aesthetic with intuitive use of page layout and others followed it in mainstream such as Beach Culture, (art direction by David Carson), Creem, (art direction by Gary Koepke), and Interview (art direction by Fabian Baron). But the ancestor of these magazines is The Face, reviewed in chapter three which made reading a magazine just for its design is as valid as reading one for

its content. With the flourishing of these magazines, designers combine the role of an editor to establish and amplify the textual meaning which their early Modernist ancestors had done before.

In1918, De Stijl manifesto made its debut by declaring unity and rejecting the individual approach in arts which were to be further sharpened by the International Style. "There is an old and new consciousness of time. The old is connected with individual. The struggle of the individual against the universal is revealing itself in the world war as well as in the art of the present day.... The new consciousness is prepared to realize the internal life as well as the external life. Traditions, dogmas, and the domination of the individual are opposed to this realization.... Artists of today have taken part in this war against the domination of individual despotism". (Manifesto 1918, cited in Gottschall,1989)

From Van Doesburgsense to Tschichold, all were saying that typography must not be expression and typography is a servant, nothing more. Non-individualistic impact ascended on its higher level during the 1950s that personal expression and eccentric solutions are rejected in favor of a more universal and scientific approach to design more than ever.

Today, contemporary typographic designers are expressing their own experiences, social and individual references and backgrounds without any hesitation. When he started publishing Emigre in 1984, Rudy VanderLans has been singular in his devotion to the spirit of personal experimentation. But in a very short time, he made Emigre a springboard for new designers and new issues, presenting material not as objective or oppressive truth but as representative of inherent possibilities in the field of graphic design.

Ultimately, one's influences as a designer must come from within.The strongest, most emotional work springs from

utilizing your own unique background, personality and life experiences. When you combine these with observations from the world around you, your supply of influences and ideas is limitless. Who you are as a person should come through in your design work. I have been influenced over the years by events, people and work much too varied to list here. What follows are a few of my influences, some more direct than   others. I try to work intuitively and to provoke an emotional response from the viewer. (Carson, 1992)

The art director of Beach Culture magazine David Carson, had taken his premise on individuality to a radical extreme with the destruction of most headlines in what appears to be the result of a major Linotronic malfunction. Letters are overlapped, overprinted, smashed, given more white space between , and otherwise covered with black, random bands abstracted to the point of incomprehensive as Carson says, to prove an emotional response. In this case accidents become part of the process not only to signify the notion of the designer but also provoke the reader. **(Fig.18)**

Also in Brody's work, one can easily traces the self-expressionism. He mentions about the primitive symbols he is using. Accusing that the society we live in still has tribal effects and using his instincts to illustrate it. He is putting something human back into the environment and using a dynamic humanism, not an idealized representation, to get back to fundamental markings, and symbols.

4.2. VISUAL APPROACHES

Although in Dada and Futurism, one can observe disorder in what they expressed vitality and rejection of society's values where nonsense becomes the message. But in modern typography, unessential elements (ornaments, decorations) were removed to

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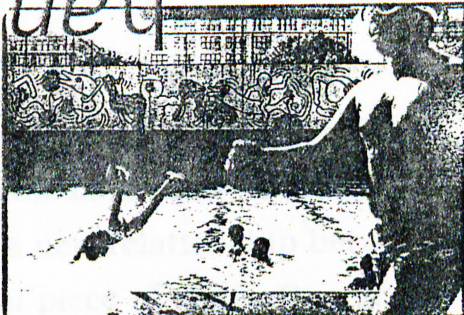
carmine st.

[Fig. 18]

give a way to functionalism. Disorder for its own sake calculated as non- communicative. Especially, in Swiss tradition clarity and order was idealized as possible it is.

Designers experimenting with type now, comment that Swiss dictum of selecting one image for the sake of clarity is just as arbitrary a process as the selection of many images for complex layered graphics. As Greiman dictates:

> The Swiss school says that you reduce, you keep taking away until you get down to the essence. I did that for a while. Then I came out here (Los Angeles) and because of the culture, which is a media culture really more than any other place in the United States, I just start saying, 'Okay I got all this stuff. Am I making a more meaningful message by reducing and simplifying it, or am I making a more meaningful message by throwing everything it all in? I prefer to assume that viewer is more sophisticated and can handle more, because that's where our culture is. Why am I the judge of what is most important part of a message as long as I have many things that are contributing ? Why should I eliminate certain things? (Greiman cited in Aldersey-Williams, 1988)

Formulaic structures which has been admired for so long by Swiss traditionalists seem to be blurring in favor of a kind of empirical context for the page that serves to create a new relationship between form and content specific to an individual piece of work. One great sample is Emigre's page layouts. Because the atmosphere of a single issue dealing with one concept, pages resembling one another, not spring from traditional structures but instead from the context. The visual coding accomplished by style, size, weight, and position of each typographic element on a page, from initial caps, text and headlines to captions begins to disintegrate, as the eye begins

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reading in a non traditional way.

The collage aesthetic -layered images, textures and type- began with Cubism, Dada and Constructivism. Later on, collage took other meanings as Piet Zwart used it. Zwart, obsessively repeated words or phrases until they become surfaces, textures or hyperboles. Initially the asymmetrical distribution of elements was markedly heterogenous in form, weight and typeface. Until Weingart's attempts, intuitive use of layering and texture was constrained from graphic design in order to secure the idealism of clarity and order.

Layering is now one of the major characteristic of the new typography, not simply a formal exercise in collage-making but a methodology, and it arises directly from an argument with content. Using different layers to create a sort of comparative visual vocabulary in order to present the evolution of a particular idea has become a fairly common practise. **(Fig.19)**

Experimental type designers argue that the theory is to break apart and expose the manipulative visual language and the different levels of meaning. Form is treated as a visual language to be read as well as seen, focusing on the content of each layer and one of each layer, through the use of language and image, is an intentional performer in a deliberately playful game wherein the viewer can discover and experience the hidden complexities of language. In this process, designer participates in the text not as a writer but possessor likewise. In layering, objective communication is enhanced by deferred meanings, hidden stories and alternative interpretations. But texts and images are to be read in detail so their meanings can be decoded by viewer. Colors, textures, grids, and different sizes and faces of type can be overlaid and interleaved almost endlessly in pursuit of the right effect by using computer. The layering is effective to extend or enhance the message, but if it is used for

stylistic purposes then it becomes a communications paradox. **(Fig.20)**

> In reaction to all my reductive, formal training, I decided layering and loosen up more elements and colors. I wanted depth and texture and surprise. It seemed to me that the human brain could filter out all that visual information and enjoy it. (Greiman cited in Hanna,1988)

> Students have been inviting ambiguity and open-endness through designs that feature a plane of content that "gets the message across", yet whose successive layers reveal the co-existence of linguistic play and autobiography-elements normally considered alien to "problem solving"...If the quick read is stable, then successive layers may be more subtle and interpretive. (McCoy,1991)

Curves were not easily handled by machines at the beginning of the century. Curves, as Van Doesburg felt, were luxurious and for the elite. This was one of elements in the manifestation of De Stijl, which Gropius articulated as "Art and Technology - A New Unity!". Elementarism -the principle of dynamic diagonal composition - and also the quest for a pure art of visual relationship maintained a better place for grid. Grid has been useful to designers as visual organizers in what a logic consists. Grid controls a part of visualizing, some amount of the material that is going to be organized. Based on this sampling, designer can predict the visual outcome of the entire body of work.

Josef Mueller-Brockmann stated that each problem calls for a grid suited specially to itself. He argued that it must enable the designer to arrange the captions, photos and drawings so that they are visually effective and yet form an ordered whole.

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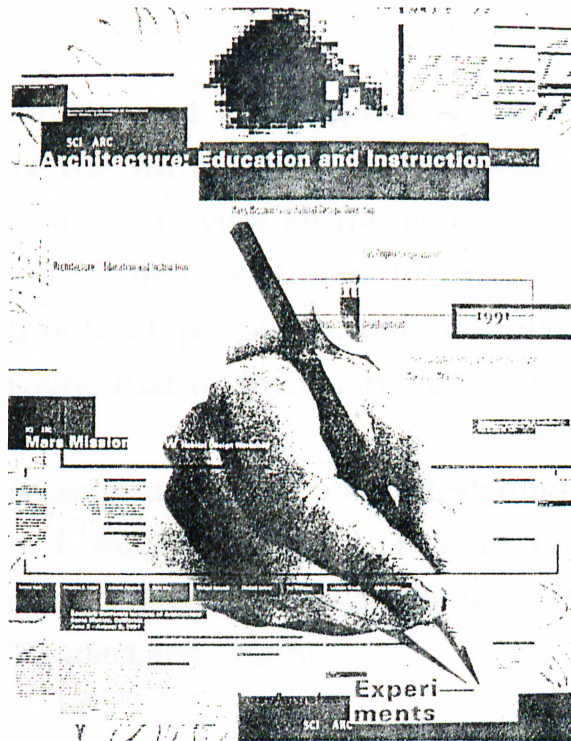
[Fig. 19]

[Fig. 20]

But the idea behind the grid -forming a whole and controlling the work- changed by the introduction of personal computer. The computer allows designer to view all the material that needs to be organized at one time. The capabilities -to be able to change size, character, position of the type- of the computer allows the designer to organize empirically, that is, to explore other visual means.

> I had been so brainwashed about designing according to a grid that I wanted to make Emigre look a lot more spontaneous. My only grid was going to be the four crop marks. (VanderLans, 1988)

Eugene Pattberg (1953) traces a history involving the nature of technology and innovation. She states that the influence of 17th-century's so called first modern typeface 'Roman Du Roi', on another designer, John Baskerville moved him toward a "geometric" character and away from calligraphic designs of Caslon, his master. His designs, in return, stimulated progress in the area of paper and ink because types' "subtle delicacies" required smoother paper and darker ink. Pattberg also states that Baskerville's types, "although unappreciated in his own time, are accepted in our own time today".

Fortunately Licko did not have to wait several hundred years for acceptance: Her typefaces are gaining quick recognition among designers. She believes that many designers who find fault with the legibility of her typefaces tend to forget that when the use of small size, unjustified, sans-serif type was introduced, a concern was raised among the designers and that now we all find them quite easy to read.

Luke Baines (1984), on the other hand, argues that legibility presents information as facts rather than as experience. He suggests that there is nothing wrong with logic and linearity but these qualities

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satisfy only the rational side of the brain. It is equally important that typography should address our capacity for intuitive insight and simultaneous perception and stimulate our senses as well as engaging our intellect.

Wim Crouwel (1991), a Dutch designer, comes to the same point by saying that everything we knew about legibility twenty years ago is now invalid because the notion of legibility has been stretched so much since that time. We are astonished with so many different texts in such varied manifestations that we have become used to everything and can read anything without difficulty.

> Legibility relied on set rules and could be measured against absolute standards that were obtained through optical research. These rules no longer apply. The standards are shifting and legibility is pushed to extremes. (Dauppe cited in Unger,1991)

The contemporary typographic designers' commitment to clear visual communication, reading and the perception of visual information, is a learned skill, a practise which can be altered.The aim becomes holding the readers attention over the course of many pages instead of accurate legibility. **(Fig.21)**

> You read best what you read most. Letters are not essentially legible but become more legible through repeated usage, and that "legibility is a dynamic process". (VanderLans cited in Unger, 1991)

Type has always been a reflection of fashion. Like the 20s' Dada, de Stijl or Bauhaus it comes as no surprise that these restless times have seen people trying out new ideas, new typography and new typefaces.

The first state of modern typography, though often labeled as functional is better described as elementary; going back to the elements was a direction that culminated in the Bauhaus. Type was an integral factor in conveying the meaning of the text. Sans serif typefaces were chosen because serifs were considered ornamental, unessential and decadent.

> "...of all available typefaces, the so-called 'Grotesque' is the only one that spiritually fits our time." (Tschichold cited in Gottschall, 1989)

Under the Bauhaus and Swiss dictum, letter was to serve the function of reading, nothing else. It had to have distinct, objective, and clear forms. Its beauty was its function, there should not be anything mysterious behind or beside it. Boldface sans serif types and rules introduced emphasis, direct the eye and mind of the reader logically and unemotionally.

> "Letters which are presumptuous, personalized, or peculiar should be avoided. They are contrary to the utilitarian nature of typography. A typeface becomes interesting when it is free of historical connotations and exemplifies the spirit of the   twentieth century. It must be defined by the physiology of seeing not by the individual preferences" (Zwart cited in Spencer, 1982)

The pre-digital typefaces that Brody drew for The Face emphasized the new perspectives on contemporary culture embodied in the magazine's editorial, functioning as a medium for his sociocultural commentary by making them deliberately authoritarian in the mood (addressing an irony to the policitical climate of 1980s and a cynical approach to the year "1984"). **(Fig.22)**
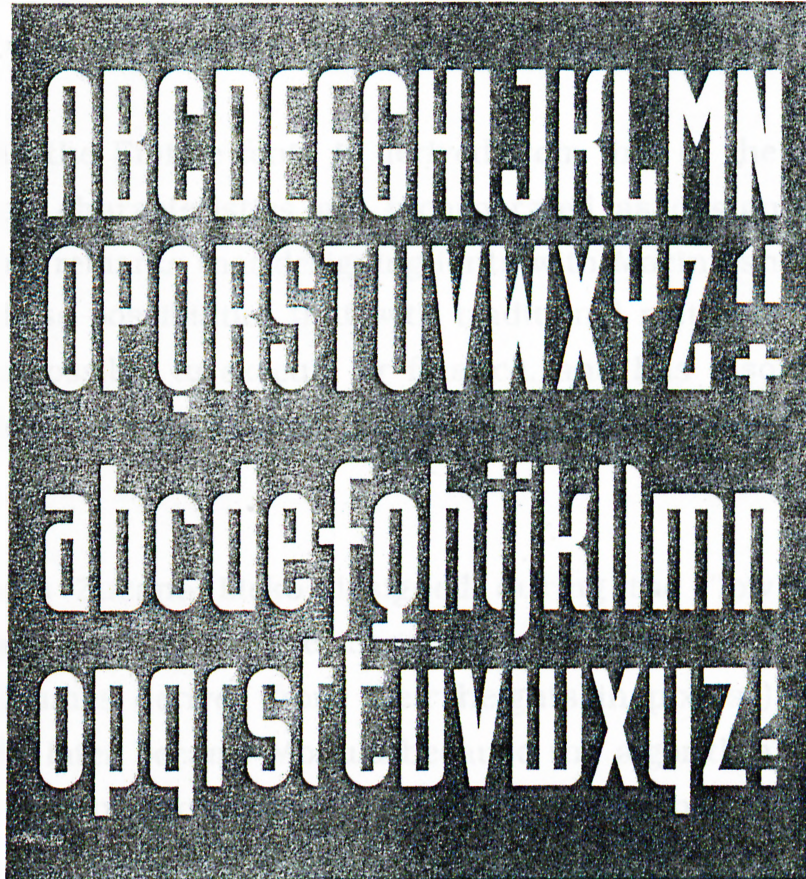
According to Brody (1988), it's because the society we live in still

No, just give me a basic system hard-core supporters and zealots Could Such information be Supplied Have You ever wondered what it would original television technology Something I've already done like this

[Fig. 21]

[Fig. 22]

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shares so much with the society that created Futura so we can still use it. There are certain typefaces, like Old English, that are completely wrong now, though at one point they were completely right. If the society of fifty years' time shares a lot with ours, then these typefaces will still be relevant.What matters is that design reflects social undercurrents. Brody also states another reason for a new type as: if you want to create specific structure, the typeface is always designed by someone else. He prefers building a structure and let it defined by the typeface.

One of the reasons that designers believe why there is a constant demand for new typefaces is the fact of getting used to the peculiarities of older typefaces, formulated in sum as "What you see too often does not work anymore"
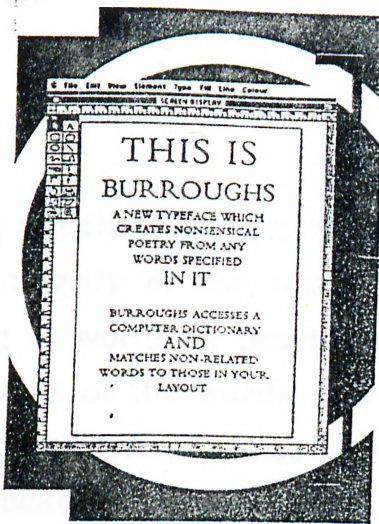
The rationale behind the Emigre fonts is derived from that of the grid and the bitmap characteristics are incorporated as design elements. VanderLans remarks that designing fonts with Macintosh has given them endless possibilities that with traditional methods would have been impossible to execute or finance, and has also served as an educational process for their understanding of electronic design.

Two of the typefaces Zuzana Licko designed during the "low resolution" period and used in Emigre magazine were Emperor 8 and Emperor 14 (names derived from their heights in pixels) **(Fig. 23)** Emperor 14 later became Modula because the algorithm changed each letter from pixel components to modular components-horizontal, vertical, and 45-degree diagonal lines, and semi-circles of a certain radius. Licko put distinctive 45 degree serifs onto letters where a sharp corner on the low resolution and typeface had been smoothed away. Another human touch was a slight resizing of the letters for optical correction of their x-height. Success of this type relies in the designer's knowing when to use the computer

and when to take over manually. The end result is that Modula is a highly mannerist typeface. Here the serifs serve no purpose as they once did in the days of pre-digital typesetting, but simply act as a historical link.

> .·. If you start putting Helvetica or Times Roman into digital typefaces, the coarser the resolution, the worse they are going to look. If you print them out, they really look bad. So I designed typefaces that would look good on a coarse resolution printer. I am not inventing faces for the sake of decoration. (Licko cited in Aldersey-Williams,1988)

Beowolf, designed by Van Blockland and Van Rossum, is a family of random fonts.**(Fig. 24)** Each letter is different each time as it appears on Macintosh. It never looks the same again. The software recreates the letters each time with varying degrees of distortion available. The font is marketed under the slogan "Fonts you can't trust". Its appeal is more in its ugliness. Designers took one of their old Antiqua designs and digitalized it in Postscript format. With Beowolf, it is not the user that defines where the starting point will be and how much the angles will vary but the software itself and Jonathan Barnbrook, **(Fig.25)** goes a step further by extending this nihilistic randomizing principle to the text itself generated by the software.

SCREEN DISPLAY

THIS IS
BURROUGHS

A NEW TYPEFACE WHICH
CREATES NONSENSICAL
POETRY FROM ANY
WORDS SPECIFIED
IN IT

BURROUGHS ACCESSES A
COMPUTER DICTIONARY
AND
MATCHES NON-RELATED
WORDS TO THOSE IN YOUR
LAYOUT

PRINTER OUTPUT

LARD GUN
CATHODE

REFER KNUCKLE IRATE
LINT ELSEWHERE
JOU BERLIN SCRAPE
FORTITUDE SMALL
CHINTZ HAM

CURVET INDICATOR HOME
OZONE LIMB
REMIND
KITSCH ELSEWHERE
INFORM IN CONTOUR FLASH
INVALID

[Fig. 25]

This is Emperor 8
This is Emperor 10
This is Emperor 14

abcdef
ghijklm
nopqrst
uvwxyz

abcdefg
hijklmn
opqrstu
vwxyz

This is Smooth Emperor 10
This is Smooth Emperor 14

13   14

abcdef
ghijklm
nopqrst
uvwxyz

abcdef
ghijklm
nopqrst
uvwxyz

Matrix
Matrix
Matrix
Matrix
Matrix

[Fig. 24]

ABCDEFGH
abcdefgh
IJKLMNOPQ
ijklmnopq
RSTUVWXYZ
rstuvwxyz
1234567890

60

[Fig. 23]

V. CONCLUSION

Herbert Spencer (1982) points out that Marinetti's revolution began with refuting the uniform integrity of the text and the visual interpretation of the meaning of words to provide emphasis and even the portrayal of the sounds of the words was of interest to both Dadaist and Futurist typographers. These accomplishments were the major forces that rocked the typographic scene of the early Modernism.

Spencer also states that, in opposition to the flourishment of free and expressive typography that occurred in the first decade of twentieth century, Tschichold's attempt to codify modern typography contradicted the spirit of modern typography, diminishing its essential vitality and flexibility.

Artists in early Modern era, were experimenting with techniques to create art and design that was something other than paint on canvas. Collages, photography, and type were among their tools. These techniques formed ideal starting points for the creation of images that typographic designers wish to make more complex, rich and ambiguous, both in response to the demands of an increasingly visual culture and to break from the approach of reductive synthesis declared by the Swiss school.

To overcome the minimalism of the Swiss school, typographic designers now seeking intiutively and spontaneously for a new language with the helping hand of technology and with an approach more than rational and analytical, believing in what Zwart said "Each age creates the conditions in which its own rebels are born".

What is known is that designers today should not isolate themselves from the sources that appear to represent significant and lasting

changes. They should instead follow the example of the early pioneers of 20th-century design: seek to understand these sources and utilize them as Brody did. Constructivist and Futurist influences are apparent in his works though not their easily imitated style or their politics. What he has drawn from them is a sense of dynamism and optimism.

As design reflects the current state of our society, which is also working through new structural models, it needs more attention to form a new language for upcoming decades not only visually but also conceptually. This is now being experimented. Some schools now are manipulating a discourse and the focus is mostly on expression of semantic content utilizing the intellectual software of visual language as well as the structural hardware and graphic grammar of Modernism.

Training in semiotics is a useful tool for graphic designers, but we should be aware of the complexity of "signs" brought from the vernacular environment, distorting communications on the printed page. It is still designers' responsibility to communicate clearly, regardless of his or her complex language.

New generation of designers will assimilate computer technology into the visual communication process as it penetrates everyday practises. This will surely increase the specialization of the profession but it will extent the creative process into previously unexplored areas. But now, the designers' need to enhance their capabilities to match with the technology must be sought within a broader frame of where the technology stands in society. If we want to see works that are related to a certain meaning, at this point, one may easily agree with what Aldersay says below.

> The microelectronic age is changing both the style and the substance of design... Shape becomes determined no longer by the interior workings to be hidden, but by a

subtler set of physiological and psychological concerns...Because technology no longer expresses itself clearly, as it did in the days of moving mechanical parts, designers have adopted a new language of technological expression. Ornament, once a crime, is now a sign. Styling is back. [in] Computer-generated graphics, dots, grids, and grilles have come to signify hidden electronic power... The designer's mission is to find deeper relationships that associate images no longer only with themselves and their technology, but with a broader frame of historical and cultural reference. (Aldersey-Williams,1988)

There is no need to open up an argument on what Greiman says about the modernists. She puts it straight and blames them as being dogmatic. "The International Style was based on a simple set of values and we are living in an age of enormous complexity. Tools we have are much more complex and allow more levels of information. That's what modernists does not see". Now the aim is to promote 'multiple' rather than fixed readings, to provoke the reader into becoming an active participant in the construction of the message.

These new printed material (such as underground periodicals) should be viewed as a part of technology's expansion of paradigms of culture as well as the parameters of readability. Emigre fulfills an important role in this ongoing revolution by enriching issues in the profession. Designer becomes typesetter, editor, art director, and chief of production. This brings the potential to freely explore and communicate ideas in all areas of design. If one believes design to be a mental discipline, this freedom is vital to the growth of design as a profession and a positive factor.

Greiman quoted from Wittgenstein and used this frase in her chaotic work that published in Design Quartely, "If you give it a sense, it will make a sense". Somehow this frase sums up the efforts of

experimental typographers to established a visual meaning. One should cover it not only in aesthetic terms but also expanding the borders of the work intellectually.

Type does give the most characteristic portrait of a period and today the eclectic and animated use of type certainly provides a glimpse of the international vital force at the close of this century.

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