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For this essay I will be looking at three key words, typography, story, and faith. These words reflect areas of personal interest where I had a desire to learn more. Within the scope of these words I will be examining Paul Elliman, Matt Madden, Abram Games and Corrie Ten Boom as key thinkers within each sphere. These primary personalities will inform my research and develop my knowledge in each area to inform my final decision for a topic for the third-year independent project.

Typography:

Type is physical and something we can all see. It is a mark, made by ink on a piece of paper. It can be printed in different sizes, weights, styles, and colours. The creation of type can be dated back to 1567 where moulds were made of different metals but ensuring they were the same size. These different options have developed and led into the study of typography (Carter 2002).

Typography gives voice to the written word. It allows words to shout and jump off a page to draw attention, with either a beauty or vulgarity as the case demands. It also allows words to whisper with a subtlety that does not draw attention and allows other text to stand out. The infinite possibilities available to style typography results in an infinite number of voices available to apply to typography (Williams 2012).

The choice of type is an important one for a designer to make. As mentioned previously each will have its own voice and history. Even successful and influential fonts have their place, for example, Futura. It is one of the most enduring types of its time and has been used far and wide within design. There is a risk that overuse of the typeface can give the impression that it is tired and generic, when it is universal and in the right context can have a large impact (Thomas and Lupton 2017).

However important the choice may be, the fear of mistakes should not hold a designer back. Design does not always need to be perfect and there will always be an element of unpredictability within it. Eliminating this fear also allows for further exploration into alternative or unexpected methods of creating, which is likely to result in interesting and unique designs (Gerber 2004).

One artist who embraces this idea of finding unexpected beauty is Paul Elliman. He will search for language, typography, and letters everywhere, using this process for his project, 'Found Fount'. Elliman would look through rubbish or debris to find shapes that could be used to create letters and numbers (Kabat 2013).

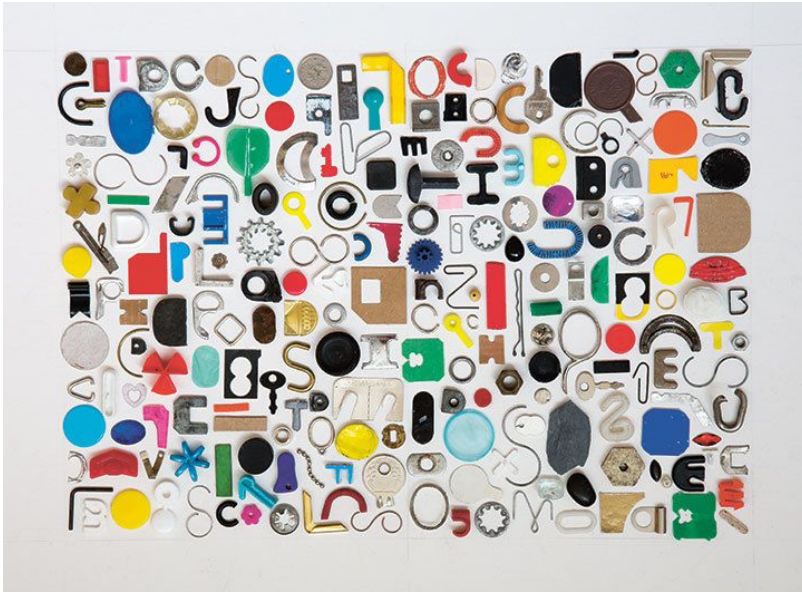


Fig 1 – Collected objects and rubbish



Fig 2 – Letters created from fig 1

In figure 1 we can see the rubbish that was collected to turn into the letterforms in figure 2. These objects were found discarded in streets, bins or waste from other work that he had completed. These objects were not modified but were photographed, scanned, and flattened to give the appearance of letters. All these objects already existed as something else in the world and Elliman used this project as a chance to “describe the world using the world itself” (McNeil 2017).

The written word originated from pictures and symbols, now universally understood and accepted as the letters and numbers we use today. The origin of these symbols may not be known and there might room for subtle differences and interpretations in the symbols inspire imagination which is a fundamental aspect to good typography (Friedl et al 1998).

Elliman says his work is defined by the principle of chance, which can easily lead to differing interpretations. Looking at Figure 1 it is clear how some shapes are used as letters, but others are not as obvious. Elliman using a shape as a specific letter does not mean that is the only way it can be interpreted (Gerber 2004). I wonder what the outcomes would be if these objects were given to 50 different people and how many would choose the same objects for the same letter.

It can be argued if there is too much room for interpretation the does the work carry out its intended purpose. Ryder would argue that the creation of typefaces that are difficult to read, being used in books and advertisements, results in people not looking at them enough for the desired message to conveyed. There is room for design that is intriguing, fascinating, and controversial with the interpretation, but designers need to decide when this is appropriate and when the message needs to be clear. (Ryder 1979).

Despite this Elliman's work highlights the importance of typography and the theory that underpins it. It also highlights that even if there were no words in the world, the structures, objects, and natural environment would be enough to create and tell stories. (McNeil 2017).

Story:

A story is a way to explain an event, that is fictional or factual. A simple story gives an account, but there is so much more behind telling a good story. You need to transfer information and share your experience and point of view with the correct attitude. In short to tell a story well you need to remember that there will always be a listener on the other side (Travis 2011).

Storytelling is not just for entertainment but is also an inherent part of being human. We have a deep need to share our stories, whether it is to gain understanding or to develop deeper emotional knowledge of others, stories help build a human connection (Hennebury 2020).

From the day we are born stories become part of our lives, whether it is a parent singing a lullaby to their new-born or reading them a bed-time story, both support the development of the child. Conversations parents have with their children daily are an important part of storytelling, from listening to what that child did in school to sharing the child a funny story from work. These stories are a fundamental part of a child's life and are as beneficial as reading to a child. They help develop language, cognitive and social skills. The benefit of conversations is that there are no limitations, it is a free method of that can be done at any time (Rees 2013).

Gottschal argued that humans are addicted to stories, and they surround us. Our body is fixed in one realm, but stories allow us to be transported to lands of imagination, and it regularly does. There is a magic to these stories allowing us to escape reality and in essence create our own. Our unique personal experiences mean that one story can affect each of us in differently and the world created when reading is one that cannot be replicated (Gottschal 2012).

Madden would agree with this theory that there are many ways a story can be told and challenged this by retelling the same a story in 99 different styles to see if this edited the way the story was perceived. Each style told the same story and recounted the same events but took a different approach to each one (Madden 2007).



Fig 3. Original Comic

Fig 4. 3 versions of fig 3

In figure 3 we can see the original comic Madden created then in figure 4 we see a selection of the different styles he chose to complete the comic. From left to right the styles

are, from the perspective of the fridge, as if the man was telling the story and from the perspective of the woman. From these we can see the story was the same in each one and followed the same narrative, but details will slightly change due to the different perspectives (Madden 2007).

One designer that did not want to leave room for this interpretation was Abram Games. Posters he created during the second world war had to be clear as they were sending a message and drive a specific response. If these posters were not clear the desired response would not be reached. When creating his work, he followed the adage 'maximum meaning, minimum means' to get his message across (Games et al 2003).

In figure 5 we see an example of his work from World War 2. In this poster Games combined two different images to tell one story and communicate one message. The dual imagery used in this poster was a new concept and something people were not used to. The public were used to a more literal and direct imagery so Games used a high level of design intelligence to convey the message and tell a story that would convince the public to act as required so they could help serve and save their country (Inglis 2015).



Fig 5. Grow your own food

There is an art to a story that can help a person to escape their own reality and experience a whole new world (Gottschal 2012). Sometimes a story has a purpose and an aim to evoke a response, and if that response is not reached there are consequences that will be faced (Inglis 2015). But there is a place for both and designers need to decide what is the purpose of their work when deciding how to tell their story.

Faith:

The definition of faith is "great trust or confidence in something or someone" or "a particular religion or belief in God" (Cambridge Dictionary 2019).

It is a word that is commonly used but can have a different meaning for all who use it. For Christians, faith is one of the fundamental aspects of their beliefs, as it is through their faith they can have a relationship with God. Through this faith a Christian will then live their life trusting in God and the promises he has made. A person may believe in what the bible says, however faith comes into play when they live their life with these promises in mind (Harmon 2022).

For many people religion can be a difficult subject and can cause controversy, therefore creatives who have faith may hide it or keep it in the background. However, if it such an important part of a person's identity then shouldn't it be at the forefront of their process? Many creatives believe that religion can enhance and inspire their creativity. Faith can bring

comfort and relief to people in times of stress and can even be a source of inspiration for their work (Fulleylove 2020).

Within the Christian religion there has been controversy when it comes to the arts. This stemmed from the protestant reformation in Europe, where many believed that objects and images were being worshipped more than the God of the bible. Ryken would say that there was not a disdain for the art itself but simply how it was abused. They would also argue that Christians who are sceptical of the arts are usually those who would use it most without realising, as it is unescapable. Artistic decisions are made within Christianity all the time, whether it is the layout of a church, the bible verses chosen to display, even down to the font and colours used for the bibles that are read and treasured (Ryken 2006).

From this we can argue that art and graphic design can be fundamental to a Christian and their faith. One who would agree with was the watchmaker and writer and speaker, Corrie Ten Boom. During World War 2 Corrie and her family opened their home to Jews who were being targeted by Nazi soldiers. She also became part of a resistance movement to help transfer them to safer locations to avoid being captured and taken to concentration camps. They did this by creating a hiding place in Corrie's room, with a fake wall and hidden by a cabinet, so if authorities turned up Jews could hide in this space. The resistance also created counterfeit ration books which would help those who were escaping travel

between countries. Unfortunately, her and her family were captured and sent to concentration camps (US Holocaust Memorial Museum 2019).

From this it is easy to think that she was a brave woman, which she undoubtedly was, but Corrie would not agree with this statement. During any account she has written about her time, it is clear to see that her faith got her through those times as she believes her strength came from God, and without him she would not have made it through (John 2020).

In figure 6 we can see a photo of the hiding place from the Corrie Ten Boom Museum in Netherlands, from a trip I took last year. We can see that the visual aspects of creating this was crucial to the success of the hiding place. If those who created it didn't bother to add the wallpaper or the skirting, then it might not have been as difficult for them to be found, resulting in the loss of lives.



Fig 6. Corrie Ten Boom House Museum

Throughout Corrie's autobiographical tale "The Hiding Place" she repeatedly discusses the importance of the bible to her and her family. From the daily readings her father would

carry out every day, to a small bible she was able to smuggle into the concentration camp to bring hope and comfort to many during their suffering. The physical presence of this book meant everything to Corrie and was a link to the God she believed in during the good and the difficult times she faced (Boom et al 2015). In figure 7 you can see the bible of the Ten Boom family in their home, taking pride of place, as it would have before the events of "The Hiding Place".



Fig 7. Corrie Ten Boom House Museum

Again, design was crucial in this time, as someone needed to design the small bible, decide on a typeface that was readable and thin enough paper that this small book was not too thick. Without these details being taken into consideration the bible would not have been readable for Corrie or would have been too large to hide.

From this we can see art and design play a crucial role in Christianity, and without it Christians would not have access to the resources and objects of faith that help them learn, grow and be inspired about the God they follow and love (Ryken 2006).

In conclusion the main connection between these topics is that there will always be a personal interpretation within design. What is also apparent is these three topics are unescapable. Elliman makes a point of this by using unconventional materials to turn into type therefore providing evidence that the world around us can be used to tell a story (McNeil 2017). Rees argues that from the day we are born we are naturally inclined to desire stories, and this need is fulfilled by those around us before we can even comprehend the world around us (Rees 2013). Then there is faith, which can be a controversial topic, creating or enforcing thoughts and emotions depending on your personal experiences and opinions. (Fulleylove 2020).

This has led me to ask the question *"How fundamental is story telling within graphic design?"* With sub questions such as *"how many words do you need to tell a story?"* and *"how many ways can a story be told/interpreted?"* and *"how important is it that stories are told?"*. I feel that answering these for my independent project will expand my knowledge, not only in these three areas but of graphic design in general and will help to inform my decision making while carrying out practical work.

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