National College of Art and Design
Faculty of Design
Visual Communication

The Magazine – a Cultural Redefinition

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Introduction

Magazines have historically been by the people, for the people. They are an inherent part of society, used as a platform for expression or experimentation, or as a communication between people with similar beliefs or interests. There is an affinity between the reader and the magazine; they both speak with the same 'voice' and share the same language, style and codes.

The changes in media, media hierarchies and technology over the last twenty years has led me to assess the magazine in a new context; I wish to analyse the magazine in the age of television and also in a postmodern context. This assessment will hopefully yield interesting insights into the designs and texts of magazines. This research has the aim of showing how the new aesthetic of fragmentation, multiple layering and diffused imagery may reflect postmodern society and its values. Punk and postmodernism were subversions of prevailing aesthetic values and ways of thinking leading to an uncertainty, a quest to find a new path or a new way of expression and their fractured look reflected this. This thesis will consider the influence of this style on magazine design.

The ascendancy of television to the most powerful medium and most popular form of entertainment has led to an increasingly visually aware audience, creating a new visual language. This study will examine ways in which magazines have become ever more image based, perhaps reflecting its re-active nature. It is pertinent to this cultural redefinition of the magazine to look at the magazine/television relationship; how they are aligned in their visual base and postmodernity, and how they reference each other's texts and designs.

I also intend to look at designer involvement in the creation of a magazine and its meanings. A magazine is ephemeral in nature; it is perpetually superseded by a more current issue and therefore is a perfect platform for experimentation by the designer. Most prominent graphic designers have been involved in designing a publication. I will look at successful magazine designers such as David Carson, Neville Brody and Terry Jones, the methods they use, the quality of their work and how their style may reflect cultural values or be a code that speaks to their audience. I will also assess the effect technology has had on their design methodology and production.

Finally, I wish to examine the designer's relationship with the author, taking into account issues of illegibility and illiteracy.

Neil Postman has written "...the clearest way to see through a culture is to attend to its tools for conversation" (Postman, 1986, p.10). By analysing the magazine in a new context, I hope to also provide and interesting and alternative look at contemporary culture and its individuals.

chapter one
The Magazine as a Cultural Object

The Magazine in a Postmodern Context

"The magazine is a commercial precedent for the postmodern text: literary critics have heralded such features as fragmentation, equivocality, spurious visual effects, and the free mixture of high and low cultural references as hallmarks of a new voice ...The magazine genre has always incorporated the principle of mixed speech." (Lupton, 1996, p.127)

This section of my thesis discusses the magazine in a postmodern context; its design, texts and cultural values. Placing it in this context provides an insight into magazines, their design and designers, and popular culture. It is difficult to define postmodernism; it is often easier to say what it is not or what it subverts or defies. Some critics argue that with postmodernity nothing is unique, it is impossible to do or say something that has not been done before. To aid this discussion I have identified some postmodern qualities and nuances, some of which are mentioned in Ellen Lupton's quote above: fragmentation, mixing of different cultural references, equivocality. Some other facets of postmodernism are multi-layering, the vernacular, deconstruction, self-referencing. Postmodernism was a stance against modernism and structuralism, giving a precedence to popular culture and therefore a stronger voice to the masses. Andreas Huyssen, an early postmodernist theorist wrote in 1984:

"Pop in the broadest sense was the context in which a notion of the postmodern first took shape...and the most significant trends within postmodernism have challenged modernism's relentless hostility to mass culture." (McRobbie, 1994, p.14)

Magazines, whether they are low-distribution fanzines or mass-produced publications are for consumption by the public. Their variety, multi-layering, destructuring both visually and hierarchically can satisfy the "fragmented subjectivity" (McRobbie, 1994, p.15) of the postmodern individual and society.

Angela McRobbie, a prominent cultural theorist, believes that postmodernism is more than taste, and more than seizing upon a radical concept for commercial purposes. It captures "...a multitude of experiences, particularly what Baudrillard has called the 'instantaneity of communication' (McRobbie, 1994, p.15). Terry Jones throughout the 1980s and 1990s encapsulated the postmodernist values of instant communication and providing a multitude of experiences. Jones was at the forefront of the Punk movement, and while he worked for Vogue at the time (which would not usually be considered a harbinger of punk) still incorporated this ethos of instant design. Punk and postmodernism were both reactions to a defined style or way of thinking. Punk was a backlash against concepts of beauty and public complacency towards manipulation by the establishment and their organisations. Punk protagonists subverted aesthetic values, embracing ugliness. Postmodernism destructured hierarchies and aesthetics to find a new path after the strict rules of modernism. Punk and postmodernism freely mixed paraphanelia from everyday life creating a new direction for its

individuals. This subversion and rebellion created an uncertainty and the fractured look of these two movements reflect this. The graphic designers involved in this movement incorporated and perpetuated this form of expression. As Teal Triggs wrote in his article on Punk nostalgia:

> "It was through the practice of graphic design that a visual manifesto for Punk revealed itself...through the adoption of the visual and verbal rhetoric espoused by the mass media, music industry and the state."
> (Triggs, 1998, p.73)

Terry Jones' punk and postmodernist ideals were more fully realised with his establishment of i-D in 1980 where he continued his notion of 'capturing the moment' (also the title of a recent book) using photocopies, photomontage, hand-drawn type and distressed images mirroring punk publications alternative press style. He was one of the first art-directors to use polaroids in his work. Polaroid is the lowest level on the photographic scale; it is completely at odds with traditional fashion photography where a photographer spends time setting up each shot and then processing the photographs. It is a method of photography that any member of the public could use. This mixing of a 'low' form with 'high', more traditional approaches, could be seen as a lack of respect for photography as an art form and is quite postmodern. Jones describes it as a 'healthy irreverence'. (Jones, 1997, p.120)

Jones often uses a form of self-referencing in his designs where his design methods and tools are visible. He uses crop and registration marks, tape, staples, glue, cut-out pieces of paper and type (**fig.1.01** and **fig.1.02**). Jones also frequently uses the vernacular in his magazine designs; images taken from their original context or 'extra' images from other sources. An example of this can be seen in i-D no. 3 (**fig.1.03**) an article on rollerskating in Brighton, where he mixes an older photograph from the beach at Brighton with a more contemporary image of people rollerskating; he also uses
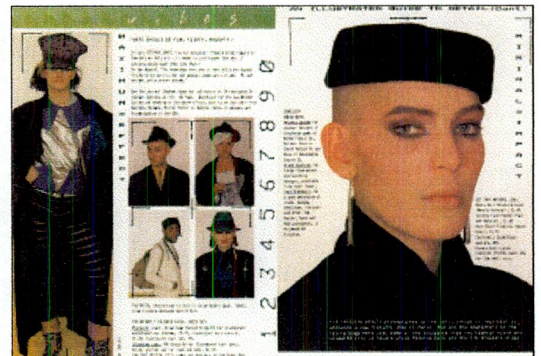

fig.1.01
Terry Jones, i-D,

fig.1.02
Terry Jones, i-D, 1984

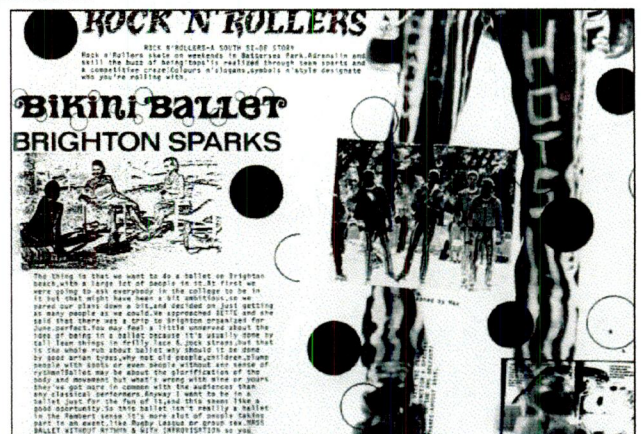fig.1.03
Terry Jones, i-D,
issue no. 3

hand lettering. Both the lettering and the older image could be considered vernacular.

Postmodernism gave a voice to those who were previously unheard or "historically drowned out by the (modernist) meta-narratives of mastery" (McRobbie, 1994, p.15). Terry Jones brought a decidedly human element to his magazine, his fashion stories featured 'real' models, giving their name, background, likes and dislikes. This approach is also an antithesis to other fashion magazines at the time who portrayed their models in a slightly removed way, elevating them above the public and magazine consumers pushing them towards the iconic. Jones' motto for i-D was to infiltrate "the fashion industry's commercial image." (Jones, 1997, p.120)

Another magazine, frequently cited in discussions of postmodernism is The Face, designed by Neville Brody. It was established as a music magazine and after it gained stability Nick Logan, the editor, pushed more towards portraying contemporary culture, incorporating material from many sources - dance, fashion, film, art. It is this seamless mixing of high and low culture, the mixture between fun and serious news, its appetite for pastiche, parody and, most of all, its humour that gives The Face its postmodern quality. But it has been criticised for pushing boundaries and distinctions so far that it becomes impossible to see what is real. Dick Hebdige says: 'the slick jokey tone of postmodernism, especially that found on the pages of The Face, represents a disengagement with the real, and an evasion of social responsibility.' (McRobbie, 1994, p.15). The Face may step away from reality, but it can do so as it is entertainment. It provides a platform for expression of a particular section of culture and its audience look to it specifically to enjoy its humour and cultural and social commentary.

Neville Brody came to The Face in the wake of Punk and incorporated many of its qualities into his designs. He used the vernacular, but in a different way to his contemporary Terry Jones. Jones used montages of everyday objects and images during this period; Brody used symbols and infrastructural objects taking them out of their context and subverting their meaning. He says:

> "Punk was about using your self expression against a culture that you couldn't afford. I wanted to continue this in a different way. I took the manipulative language of advertising, street signs, and other information language and used them in a context where normality does not neutralise our awareness of them, isolating elements which tell you what to do and how to think."
> (Wozencroft, 1988, p.102)

Comparing the early 1980s magazine designs of Neville Brody and Terry Jones illustrates the lack of definition in postmodernism. I feel Terry Jones captures more of the emotion and rebellion of Punk and postmodernism, whereas Brody subverts in a more considered, rational manner. His layouts still retain modernist notions of structure (fig.1.04) but it is in his typography that Brody rebels. Brody's magazine layouts are often slightly detached in feeling, but when his typographic experiments are examined more closely they show themselves to be unconventional for their time, vibrant and intriguing (fig.1.05); they carry a meaning of their own. Brody also challenges public complacency towards government and business manipulation through his displacement of advertising images and directional devices. He wants the public to be aware of how they may be being coerced. As Brody developed his design for The Face it became more rational. As William Owen in his book Magazine Design said:

> "As the design evolved, the spontaneity generated by Brody's naive typography and colourful composition diminished; all that remained of the unifying texture were highly abstracted graphic symbols"
> (Owen, 1991, p.116)

Through analysing The Face in a postmodern context I feel that perhaps the reason it is frequently cited in discussions on postmodernism is not because of its design but because of its tone and humour, its mixing of high and low culture and its direct appeal to mass culture.

Also, it is interesting to note that while Terry Jones' i-D designs have retained their postmodernist, punk essence over time, Neville Brody moved on from The Face to Arena in 1986 where he incorporated a decidedly modernist, information based design (fig.1.06) and went on to produce magazines such as Per Lui (fig.1.07) where structure and form were of utmost importance.

In contrast to Neville Brody's rational approach is David Carson's intuitive designs. David Carson is not usually heralded as a postmodernist, and whereas The Face has a postmodern text, Carson's work is postmodern in mood through his multi-layering, fragmentation and self-referencing that is anti-structuralist and anti-modernist. Like Terry Jones discussed earlier, Carson's work often references the tools he uses: computer errors and paraphanelia such as cursors or arrows are often incorporated, and while he uses his own or other artists paintings and illustrations, he mixes them freely with type, colour and other images to create new meaning and a multitude of experience. Like i-D and The Face, Carson's magazine work has been for publications giving voice and precedence to those previously ignored by modernist hierarchies. Carson has designed subculture publications such as Transworld Skateboarding, Beach Culture and Ray Gun. Discussing David Carson's work in a postmodern context is intriguing: as I stated earlier, postmodernism by its nature almost defies definition and as Carson's work is intuitive, I feel analysis of it is secondary to encountering it on an emotional, visual level. Modernist theorists stated that form follows function, but Carson's preference for artistic expression, and beauty for beauty's sake, overtly denies this. Andrew Blauvelt wrote:
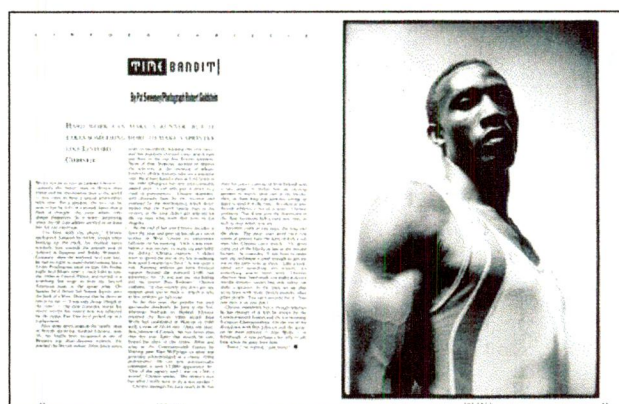

fig.1.04
Neville Brody, The Face, 1986

fig.1.05
Neville Brody, Typographic details from The Face, 1986 and 1985
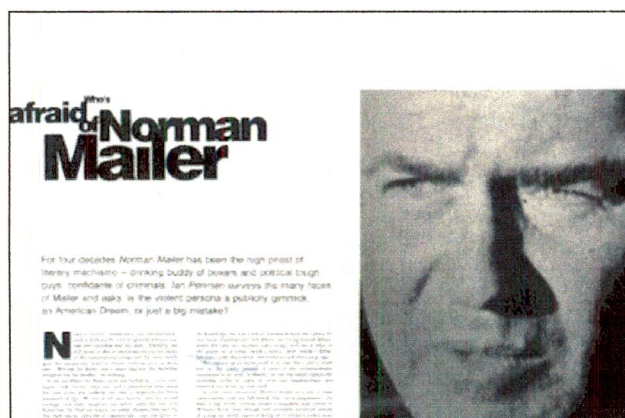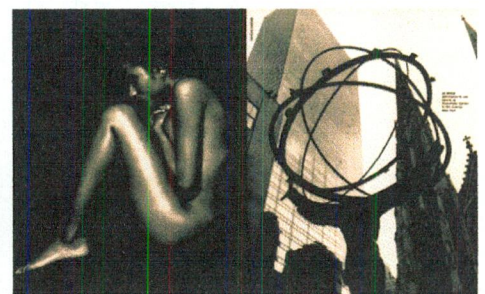

fig.1.07
Neville Brody, Per Lui, 1990

fig.1.06
Neville Brody, Arena, 1989

"The Modernist equation denies both the subjectivity of aesthetic judgement and the subjectivity of the designer's expression." (Blauvelt, 1995, p.65)

Carson's magazine designs often merely hint at their content (or as discussed in chapter three, can replace content). His images are often cropped or distorted so dramatically that the original image is no longer apparent. This lack of definition allows the reader make their own explorations and conclusions.

In chapter three I discuss the computer as a postmodern tool and how it has allowed designers such as Rudy Vanderlans break away from the strict rules of modernism.

Stylistic Coding and Reflections of Cultural Values in Magazines

"Dismissals of style ignore the complex ways in which style operates in society: how styles circulate as communicative codes that distinguish cultural groups and social classes." (Blauvelt, 1995, p.64)

Stylistic coding is of particular importance in magazine design. In today's information saturated society, and with the proliferation of magazine titles, it is imperative that a magazine is visually recognisable and identified by its specific audience. When a new title is launched it must contain the correct stylistic and visual 'codes' that will speak to its category of audience.

Massimo Vignelli writes about the graphic designer creating a "voice" for the magazine, a voice that is distinctive among others and calls to the reader. The voice creates the identity (Pedersen, 1992, p.36). By identifying and communicating successfully to its category of reader the magazine establishes a personal relationship with them. It is important to maintain this affinity, and to do so a magazine must constantly move forward and always be just ahead of the needs of the reader and current trends. The ephemeral quality of the magazine is what sets its apart, culturally, from other forms. Vignelli writes:

"As contrasted with the book, with its aspirations of permanence, the magazine is ephemeral and thus rather naturally reflects the inspiration of the moment." (Pedersen, 1992, p.35)

The design of a poster, a flyer or a book must speak to its required audience, as must a magazine. They are all reflective of current society but a magazine must reflect and be ahead of contemporary culture, and as with some street-style and fashion magazines, it defines or initiates a trend. Magazines often tell their readers what is fashionable or unfashionable and predict future trends, and because they speak with the reader's "voice", it is accepted.

Terry Jones' magazine i-D has established and maintained a loyal readership from its inception in 1980. It is successful for many reasons and always mindful of its audience. Jones says:

"Today the design of i-D is minimal. After years of wearing street style, fans of fashion began to crave traditional glamour. i-D anticipated the change, moving on from the grungy mashed-up look to simple minimalism and then to a modern, classic design." (Jones, 1997, p.128)

Looking at issues of i-D over the years all the dynamism, humour and vitality that can be seen in the early punk-era issues is not lost over time.

The magazine designer's reflection of and reaction to culture and specific target audiences is very evident when looking retrospectively at Neville Brody's designs. Brody's work has its own language and distinctive style. The diversity of his talent can be seen in the different approaches taken to cater for the audience and mood of each magazine. After reaching fame through his design of The Face and then Arena in the 1980s, Brody was frequently approached by publishing houses wanting to revitalise a tired design or re-launch a failed periodical. Brody's development of his 'graphic language' can easily be traced. Starting with a 1982 edition of The Face (fig.1.08); there are strong constructivist influences, the beginnings of his use of directional devices which lead the reader through the pages, and notable characteristics such as colour coding and use of geometric shapes. Brody began designing Arena in 1986 which was established by Nick Logan, the editor of The Face to cater for a more mature audience. Brody developed an "informational base" to this design with a noticeable separation of text and image (fig.1.09). The emphasis in Arena was on good quality photographs which occupied a significant proportion of the page lending an iconic quality to the people portrayed in the photograph. Next in this series are Per Lui and Lei, two Italian magazines re-designed by Brody in 1989. The former is a magazine for men (fig.1.10) with an emphasis on form and shape and a strong typographic treatment. The latter (fig.1.11) is for women, and although a sans-serif typeface is also used, its treatment and that of the images is softer and lighter in manner to reflect the tone of the magazine and its female audience.

This series of Neville Brody's work shows how he has developed his style and design methodology over the years but is always mindful of the problem in hand and the specific needs of the magazine and its audience. The success of each of the periodicals reflects his sensitivity to contemporary cultural needs and values. In a later chapter I discuss Neville Brody's work in the 'age of television' looking at his designs for Actuel, a magazine established to challenge television, and also at how he has diversed into other media forms.

fig.1.08
Neville Brody, The Face, 1982

fig.1.09
Neville Brody, Arena, 1988

fig.1.10
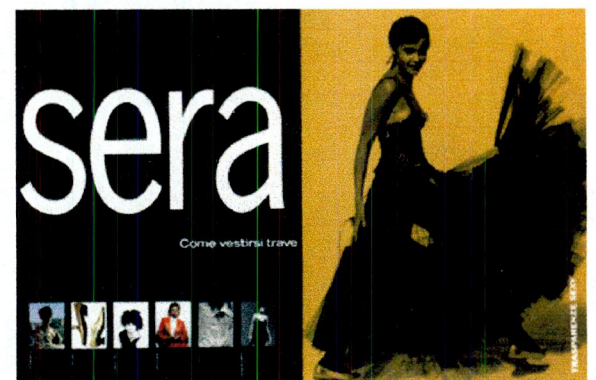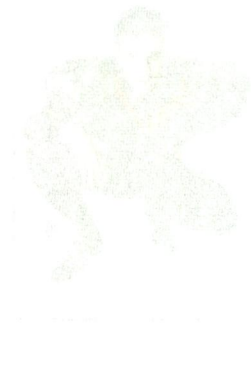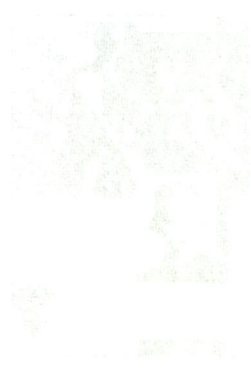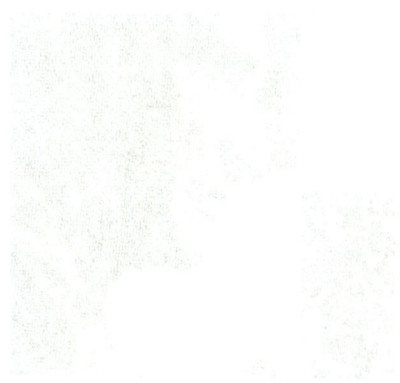Neville Brody, Per Lui, 1990

fig.1.11
Neville Brody, Lei, 1989

Another designer notable for his reflection of contemporary culture is David Carson. Carson is now infamous in design circles and art schools for his radical, emotive and expressive designs and typography. His magazine career began in relative obscurity designing subculture periodicals such as Transworld Skateboarding and Beach Culture. The need to appeal to their subculture audience gave Carson a creative freedom of expression that would not be possible working for a mainstream publishing house. The fans and purchasers of Transworld Skateboarding provided much of the material for the magazine with Carson acting as art-director. He employed every possible method to give the effect of speed movement. William Owen perfectly sums up what David Carson gives to his audience:

> "Pictures have primacy over words, type is cut up, set small in an acre of white space, placed at oblique angles or dropped into the vertical: there is no regular form to the page...Disobeying the rules, doing what you want , is part of skateboard culture and if this were not reflected in the magazine it would be failing its readership." (Owen, 1991, p.146)

The success of Brody, Carson and Jones at communicating to and capturing the imaginations of their contemporaries was noticed by corporations wishing to use the designer's skills to speak to their own target audiences. All three have been involved in advertising, most noticeably Brody's work for Nike and Carson's work for Microsoft.

Andrew Blauvelt in his article Under the Surface of Style states that 'the idea that style is meaningless and empty goes back to Modern functionalism.' In contemporary society, style does carry meaning; it is a visual language, a code that people understand and react to. It is true that some designers communicate only through the style they use, rather than conveying content or ideas, but this no longer means that their designs are meaningless. Also, style is important to the reader and postmodernism gives a precedence to the audience that was often neglected in Modernism. Blauvelt goes on to write:

> "The Modernist notion of deceptive forms (style) on the surface and essential contents (substance) at the core is outmoded for contemporary graphic design, which must respond to the increasing fragmentation of society and audiences." (Blauvelt, 1995, p.64)

chapter two
Magazines and Technology

The Computer as a Tool

Digital technology has had a major part in reshaping the structure and design of magazines. Desktop publishing applications have enabled art directors and designers to design and produce work up to pre-print stage. Changes can be made quickly and easily and designers can now see their complete designs on screen, allowing greater creative control. There was more division of labour in magazine design before the advent of digital technology; a designer/art director designing structure and layout, a typographer setting the type, an imagesetter processing the images - the complete design could not be seen until after it was printed. Designers now need to worry less about the technical processes, allowing them to concentrate on the creative aspect and providing a more holistic design methodology. Of course technology does not make someone a better designer and prominent magazine designers such as Terry Jones of i-D and Neville Brody of The Face still prefer conventional paste-up methods. However, this new technology has been optimised by other designers such as David Carson and Zuzana Licko and Rudy Vanderlans of Emigre.

David Carson uses a variety of media in his work including prints, paintings, found-objects, illustrations, photographs and computer-generated images. Digital technology enables him to combine these with typography and other elements in a fluid and evocative way. In 2nd Sight, his book with Lewis Blackwell, Carson describes his design method as an "immediate impression of truth" and believes that in the design process "all is intuition". Carson's work has quite a painterly quality, the computer allowing him a more immediate way of expressing himself in a less rational, more intuitive manner by decreasing the technological, mechanical aspect. Familiarity with computer applications gives the designer tools similar to the painter with his paints and canvas. In fact, many computer application interfaces are designed using this painting analogy. But the element of chance and the unexpected is still there, as it was before digital technology, in the gap between what is visible on computer screen and what is printed on paper. What will happen in this design/print gap cannot be guaranteed.

In my first chapter I suggested that discussing Carson's work in a postmodern context was intriguing as both the concept of postmodernism and Carson's work almost defy definition or explanation. I also feel that his designs document the intangible relationship created by the computer interface between the designer and his work (fig.2.01). Carson's designs are often suggestive rather than definitive, reflecting this diffused relationship. Carson treats the computer as an extra tool with its own properties that can be combined with other tools - the photocopier, printer, camera or pen. He lets computer characteristics come through in his designs, not using the computer to merely emulate other processes, or enhance an image. Carson allows computer errors to remain in his designs, rather than trying to fix or amend a computer deviation; it is an inherent part of the design. This has given the computer a role in the design process, having become a second party to the designer with its own contributions. Take for example this spread from Surfer (fig.2.02), an article

on surfer Jeff Booth. The right page in Carson's design featured an oval shape containing a picture of the surfer. When it was printed out on a colour printer an error produced a different version featuring only Booth's nose and mouth. Carson replaced his original design with this new version feeling it was appropriate to Jeff Booth's personality (Blackwell, 1995).

Rudy Vanderlans and Zuzana Licko of Emigre were one of the first prominent designers to embrace the Macintosh computer and its applications, establishing their own publishing house and producing their magazine also called Emigre. Rudy Vanderlans said:

> "Digital technology is a great big unknown, and after all, a mystery is the most stimulating force in unleashing the imagination." (Owen, 1991, p.224)

Rather than trying to hide the low-resolution of early digital technology, Emigre embraced the new technology and worked with it, making it a feature of the work, creating designs that would only be possible through using computers. Licko created typefaces that actually showed and magnified the bitmap used in computer imaging creating fonts such as EmigreFifTeen and EmperorNineTeen (fig. 2.03). She and Vanderlans do not use the computer simply for ease or speed of production but as a new form with its own properties.
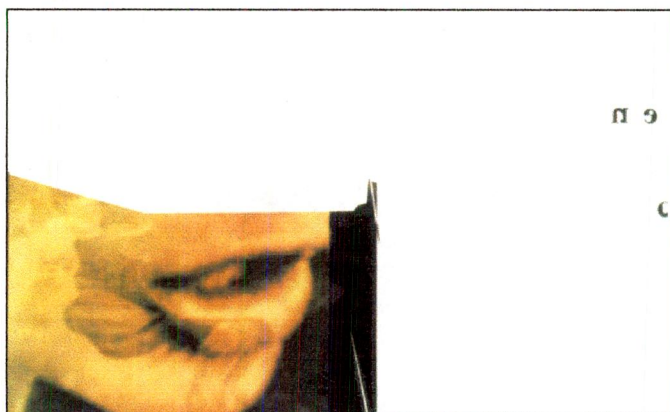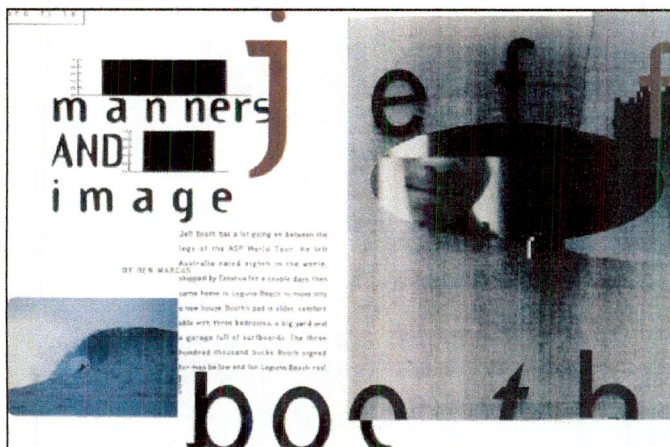

fig.2.01
David Carson, Ray Gun, 1994

fig.2.03
Rudy Vanderlans typefaces

fig.2.02
David Carson, Surfer Publications, 1992
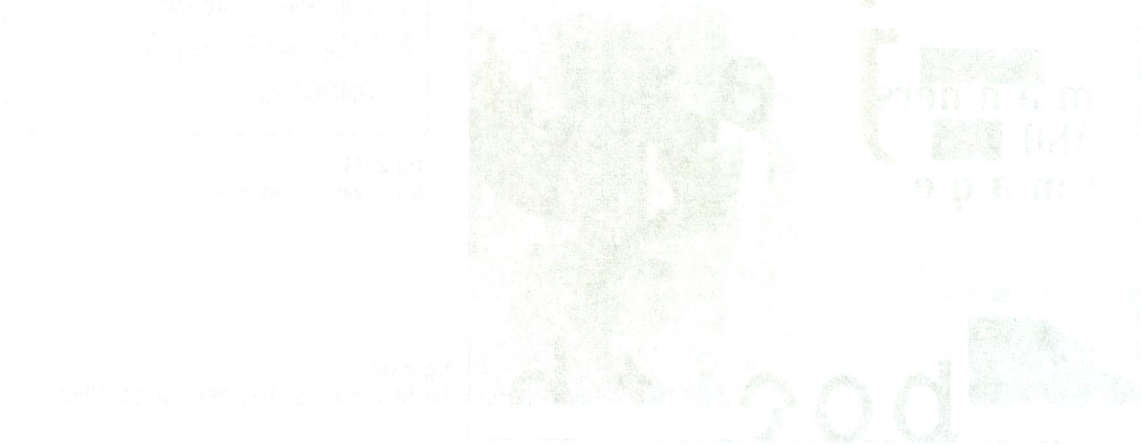
Reshaping the page

Designers such as Carson and Emigre, although optimising and testing this new technology, are still facing the same challenge as magazine designers before digitisation - to visually change the shape of the page. <u>Emigre</u> began as a large-format, tabloid sized publication; some other magazines are square, such as the designer publication Creative Review; while others keep with A4 size, or a slight variation of it. But whatever size and shape chosen, it usually remains the same over a long period of time and probably until there is a major redesign of the magazine itself. Hence, from issue to issue the designer is working with the same page dimensions. Looking at successful magazine designer's work it is seen that they regularly experiment with different layouts that will visually change the shape of the page, perhaps making it look wider, longer or more square.

Take, for example, Terry Jones' spread from <u>i-D</u> magazine (**fig.2.04**). The photograph is given a striking panoramic aspect by extending it over a double page spread and placing it in the top two-thirds of the page. It is cropped down to the figure of the girl and the landscape, leaving very little sky and no foreground, enhancing its wide view and giving the appearance that it begins and ends beyond the pages in the spread. The image bleeds off left, right and top, giving the appearance that the hills and lake are extend beyond what we can actually see. The headline, in lower case italic, occupies as much available wide-space as possible, even beginning beyond the page at the left. There are strong horizontal lines and their changing direction gives the effect of the water lapping on-shore and contrast with the only vertical line - the model in the foreground.
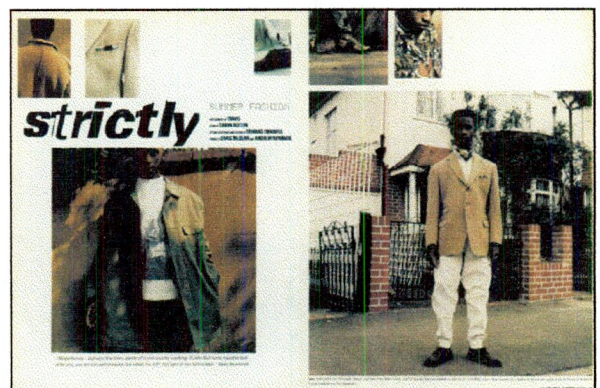

fig.2.04
Terry Jones, <u>i-D</u>, 1997

fig.2.05
Terry Jones, <u>i-D</u>, 1993

Another example, although not as dramatic, of Jones using a different layout and spatial qualities is seen in **fig.205**. The page appears longer due to the strong white band occupying over a third of the top of the page. Also, the main picture is cropped to the eyebrow of the model giving a sense of depth. The border surrounding the main picture is equal all round, which gives the effect that it is the frame and to enhance the height of the overall design the extra pictures extend from the top border and are longer rather than wider. The right page has a relatively large main picture with a small border but the two extra pictures bleed off the top of the page. This effect and the white space at the top right give more a sense of height than width. Also, the main lines in the photograph are vertical , from the upright stance of the model to the front garden wall and the walls of the house. The corner of the house, incidentally, follows on to the border of the top picture. The lines in the photographs on the left page are also all verticals, the stance of the model, the lines of his coat and the sleeve line in the top picture.

Further examples of a magazine designer visually reshaping the page through lending different spatial qualities, can be seen from three spreads from different issues of Per Lui designed by Neville Brody. Brody's philosophy that 'the theme of shape was central...behind the visual restructuring of Per Lui' (Wozencroft, 1994, p.93) is very apparent when looking at these spreads from the magazine. The magazine has an underlying grid structure, but the treatment of the images and text in each of the spreads gives a very different feeling of space. In the first layout (**fig.2.06**) the close cropping of the woman and her semi-crouched stance gives a sense of somewhat stunted growth mirrored by the 'T' shape opposite which has a shorter body height than width and also by the stunted height of the three text boxes at the bottom. The confined mood of the picture is contrasted with the ample white space on the left page. On first look, the next layout may seem somewhat similar (**fig.2.07**) but Brody has given a completely different sense of space through his treatment of type and image. Firstly the image is much lighter in mood through the upright stance of the models' and
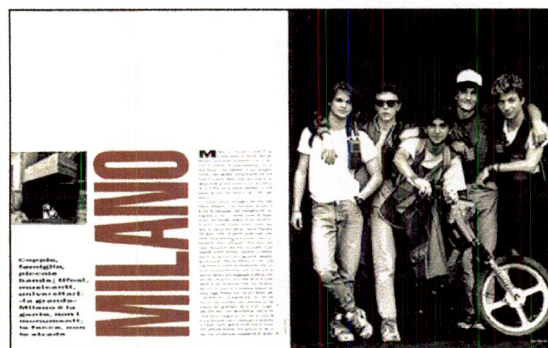

fig.2.06
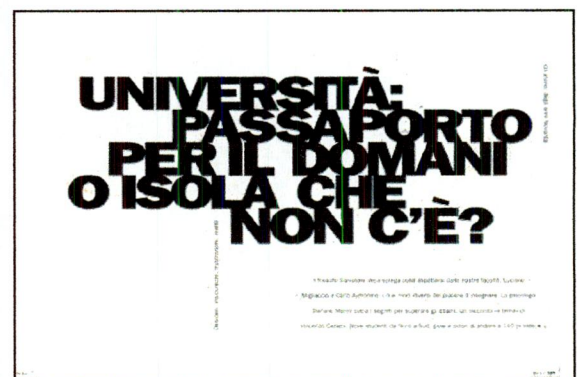Neville Brody, Per Lui, 1990

fig.2.07
Neville Brody, Per Lui, 1990

fig.2.08
Neville Brody, Per Lui, 1990

the open space above their heads. The text boxes opposite mirror their stance and are the same height as the models' bodies. The mood is more upbeat than the previous illustration. There is a completely different sense of space and movement in the last spread in this series (**fig. 2.08**). The strong horizontals and their lack of justification pulls the eye back and forth across the page. It is noticeable when seeing these layouts together that when one background colour is used over two pages the spread immediately appears wider (**fig. 2.08**) and when two contrasting colours are used on each page as in **fig.2.06** and **fig.2.07** the spread appears longer.

A more radical re-shaping of the page has been achieved by Rudy Vanderlans and Zuzana Licko with Emigre. Emigre is known, whether it is admired or not, for its structural, legibility and typographic experiments. Computers allow them to easily mix different typefaces and sizes using very flexible grid-structures or within different shapes to create very expressive and innovative layouts. It was initially a large format periodical but was redesigned as a smaller format in issue 33. Early editions of the magazine were completely redesigned for each issue, reflecting the new content. Emigre have heralded their magazine as one that ignores boundaries; this is reflected in their rejection of the grid. As Rudy Vanderlans said:

> "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." (Dooley, 1992, p.46)

Vanderlans' anti-modernist stance is realised through his destructured layouts and also his choice of tool - the computer, which could be considered an essentially postmodern device allowing boundaries and structures to be broken. Vanderlans realised that a new tool pushes boundaries, creating new methods, new designs and forms. The boundaries of the page are constantly challenged and the layout is always unconventional. Note how the boundaries of the pages
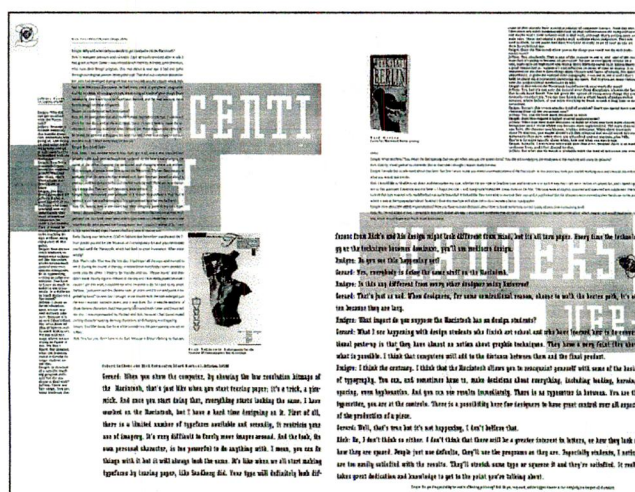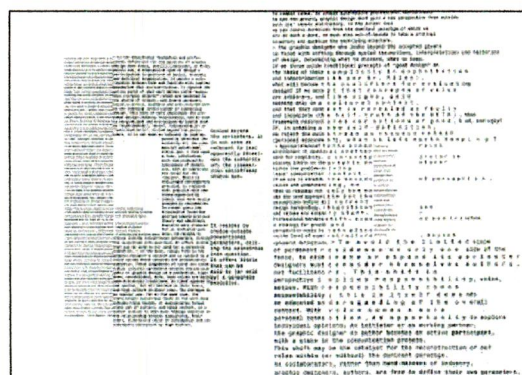

fig.2.09
Emigre

fig.2.10
Emigre

fig.2.11
Emigre

are pushed in **fig.2.09**. Vanderlans has set three different articles on th two pages, each given an identity through their typographic treatment. The contrasting width and height of the text boxes adds both texture and interest to the spread, background boxes bleed off the edges. There is a sense of structure, but the layout gives a mood of unconventionality. The different approaches to structure and shape in Emigre can also be seen in these other two spreads (**fig.2.10** and **fig.2.11**)

Emigre today is perceived as less radical than it was in its earlier years. This reflects the hold digitisation and technology has taken on our daily lives and also the new aesthetic values that digital imagery has created and how it has permeated into mainstream magazines and other media forms. Often digitisation is a style, but as I stated in chapter one, this 'style' is representative and meaningful on some level whether it denotes 'the modern' or 'cutting-edge' or 'the new' to its audience.

chapter three
Magazines, their designers and audience, in the Age of Television

Magazine Metaphors

Different media frequently construct their designs and texts with reference to another medium; early television referenced print-based media such as magazines and newspapers, more recently web-design and the internet have also referenced magazines. Magazines use metaphors such as television, film, newspapers, language, computers, architecture or city infrastructure. For example, Neville Brody in his design for The Face wanted to direct the reader through his designs and felt the design was a lot like town-planning. Emigre and Ray Gun often reference the computer technology used in the design.

In an earlier chapter I assessed how the design of a magazine has changed with the advent of new technology and desktop publishing. In my first chapter I looked at the style of magazines and how they reflect cultural values. One of the major objects that has shaped modern life is television. In this chapter I will discuss magazines with television as a metaphor and also look at the role, structure and design of magazines in the 'age of television' from the 1980s to today. This also provides an insight into modern culture; as Neil Postman said, "...the clearest way to see through a culture is to attend to its tools for conversation." (Postman, 1986, p.10)

Magazines and television have a lot in common. They are both forms of entertainment, contain multiple content, are audience based and are both frequently cited as examples of a postmodern text, being democratic, increasingly visual-based and freely mixing high and low culture. Despite having so many similarities, the magazine/television relationship is a tenuous one. Television has often been upheld as the killer of print-based media, or has been criticised for the decline of the literary qualities of the magazine. In 1989 Joseph Giovanni blamed "competition from television, the VCR, and other non-print media" for spawning "aggressively designed pages that freely mix and cut words, photographs, and graphic devices" (Lupton, 1996, p.14)

"Decline of Age of Typography and the Ascendancy of Television"

Television is a very powerful medium. It has been wholly embraced by modern culture and has become a staple in many lives. Television gives to its audience and requires very little in return - it has a 'friendly' face, speaking the language of the people. Even its payment methods are abstracted - mainstream television is not cash-up-front, pay-per-view, but mainly direct debits or bank giros which require very little physical effort and does not detract from the notion that the television is 'giving' to its audience. Television has replaced newspapers as the most powerful medium. In his time Napoleon remarked on the power of print to steer public opinion: "Three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than

a thousand bayonets" (McLuhan, 1964, p.13). Today people increasingly turn to television for the 'truth'. In mass culture something must be seen to be believed and often people turn to television to feel they are part of something bigger or at significant times in their lives. Neil Postman remarks on how television can appeal to our emotions:

> "...whatever power television might have to undermine rational discourse, its emotional power is so great that it could arouse sentiment against the Vietnam war or against more virulent forms of racism."
> (Postman, 1986, p.8)

The title of this section "the decline of the Age of Typography and the ascendancy of the Age of Television," is a quote from Neil Postman's book Amusing Ourselves to Death (Postman, 1986, p.8). He writes that this shift in popular media forms has had dramatic effects on our lives, that "this change-over has dramatically and irreversibly shifted the content and meaning of public discourse, since two media so vastly different cannot accommodate the same ideas." (Postman, 1986, p.8) He is referring in part to Marshal McLuhan's 1964 statement, "The Medium is the Message", but is updating it to "The medium is the metaphor", suggesting that people or bodies that require media to communicate must converse in different ways to suit this new visual medium - television. With a print-based medium ideas and intellectual discourse is given precedence and now, with television which converses in images, it is more important to be visually, aesthetically pleasing. As Postman says: "the nature of the medium requires a certain kind of content." (Postman, 1986, p.27)

> "Hot media are...low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience." (McLuhan, 1964, p.23)

In Marshall McLuhan's terms a cool medium requires more audience participation; readers must read further into the information provided to complete the story or picture. On the other hand, he describes a hot medium as "explosive" and "filled with data" (McLuhan, 1964, p.23). In 1964 television was a relatively new invention; since then society has become increasingly more adept at 'reading' television's language and imagery. This increased understanding implies less need for individual's participation as now television and its audience speak the same language. Therefore, I feel that in 1999 television could be described as a "hot" medium. This understanding between audience and medium means that television is now filled with data and that entertainment for many has become an inactive past-time, both physically and mentally. as Jessica Helfand wrote:

> "Today, we crave maximum choice with minimum effort, growing more accustomed to receiving than transmitting, better at consuming that creating." (Helfand, 1998, p.8)

Conversely, in 1964 McLuhan described typography as a "hot" medium, stating it involved the reader "much less than did manuscript." (McLuhan, 1964, p.161). The ascendancy of television to probably the most powerful medium makes a comparison between it and print-based media more apt in 1999, and by McLuhan's standards typography or print-based media could be described as "cool" since in cultural terms it requires more involvement than television.

Magazines which always consider their audience and their audience's language have increasingly looked to the imagery and visual-base of television to make themselves more a "hot" medium. They have done this by creating more visually expressive layouts which speak to the reader aside from content and from which they can get a feeling for the article without actually reading the text. McLuhan describes a "hot" medium as one that "extends one single sense in 'high definition'" (McLuhan, 1964, p.22). Both television and magazines extend the visual, optical sense on their pages and screens using it to increase emotion and intuition.

Readers and Viewers

Television has become probably the most popular form of entertainment and because of its predominantly visual base, this has associated entertainment with viewing. As I stated previously, magazines have become ever more visual and increasingly use visually expressive layouts. Magazines now have readers and viewers. An individual can approach the magazine in different ways depending on their needs; the high photograph and image content, and visually expressive layouts appeal to the voyeuristic individual, providing a sensory experience, hence, viewing an article can be equally satisfying as reading it. Magazine structure and form are perfect for visually expressive layouts as, although each individual article is sequential over pages, the overall structure is essentially non-linear; to make sense it does not have to be encountered from the beginning following through to the end. When the design of each article in a magazine visually expresses its content, it visually represents to the reader that there are many individual sections within the structure of the magazine. Visually expressive layouts optimise and enhance the non-linearity of the magazine.

This maximising of non-linearity also neutralises another essential difference between magazines and television - television by its nature defies closure. Many of its programmes are serialistic; their storylines do not have beginnings and ends but are viewed over time, mirroring real-life time. Magazines' beginning and end are the front and back covers; their content is contained within a defined number of pages. However, its non-linearity means the reader does not have to start at the beginning and finish at the end, but can encounter sections at a time. Visually expressive layouts can fulfil different needs - the need to read and the need to look, to inform and entertain. Katherine McCoy of the Cranbrook School speaks of these different levels of experience through rejecting

> "... the traditional distinction between reading and seeing, arguing that designers should actively mix these categories of experience: a picture can be read, while words can be objects of vision." (Lupton, 1996, p.51)

Digitisation, television, videogames and music have made entertainment more of a sensory experience. Videogames especially are subliminally cognitive and address human capacity for simultaneous perception, encouraging split-second reaction to its graphics. Visuals are more than pictures, require more than an optical reaction - they carry meaning. Marshal McLuhan in his book <u>Understanding Media</u> writes extensively on how phonetically literate culture has deviated from its visual roots (such as cave painting, hieroglyphs, calligraphy) and how it is responsible for the "lineal structuring of rational life" (McLuhan, 1964, p.85), stationing rationality (linearity) and intellect above consciousness, feeling and emotion, which are non-linear. McLuhan remarks on human consciousness:

> "...consciousness is regarded as the mark of a rational being, yet there is nothing linear or sequential about the total field of awareness that exists in any moment of consciousness." (McLuhan, 1964, p.85)

Visually expressive layouts reflect modern society's fast pace and its individuals' different social, family and work roles through their multi-layering, fusion of different images, vernacular, distressed typography. But expressive layouts can also be patronising to the reader, denying them the freedom to absorb or create their own meanings from the text. Or, as Kevin Fenton said:

> "In its quickness to interpret and its occasional expressionistic frenzies, the new typography denies readers the opportunity to experience the text for themselves. It feels like someone is standing over your shoulder while you read, underlining some passages, italicising others, muttering through yet others."
> (Fenton, 1995, p.5)

An example of this can be seen in this Emigre spread (**fig.3.01**). Although the typographic treatment is relevant as it is an interview, the designer Rudy Vanderlans has highlighted some parts of the text, making some words and sentences bigger and bolder or italic. It is successful as a visually expressive layout and typographic experiment which gives a sense of the dialogue, the different sizes and weights of font adding interesting texture. Kevin Fenton, however, is not commenting on the aesthetics of the piece, but rather making the point that the designer has imposed his interpretations onto the text and, in turn, the reader is denied encountering it on his own.

Magazine Designers and the Age of Television

Computers, with digitisation permeating into more fields, now create or manipulate images for television, film, multimedia, magazines and other designed objects. Previously considered separate art-forms, digitisation now relates these, allowing designers to fuse television or video stills with typography or other imagery. This has of course transferred some of the qualities of television and video into print-based media.

> "The proliferation of video imagery has also affected expectations of aspects of image quality, including cropping, editing and texture of pictures and the relationship between camera angle and scene. As if striving for the fast pacing of television and the graininess of the television monitor's low resolution, print design began to incorporate video imagery and texture." (Staples, 1995, p.7)

Whereas television initially emulated magazines as a source of form and content, the situation is now reversed with
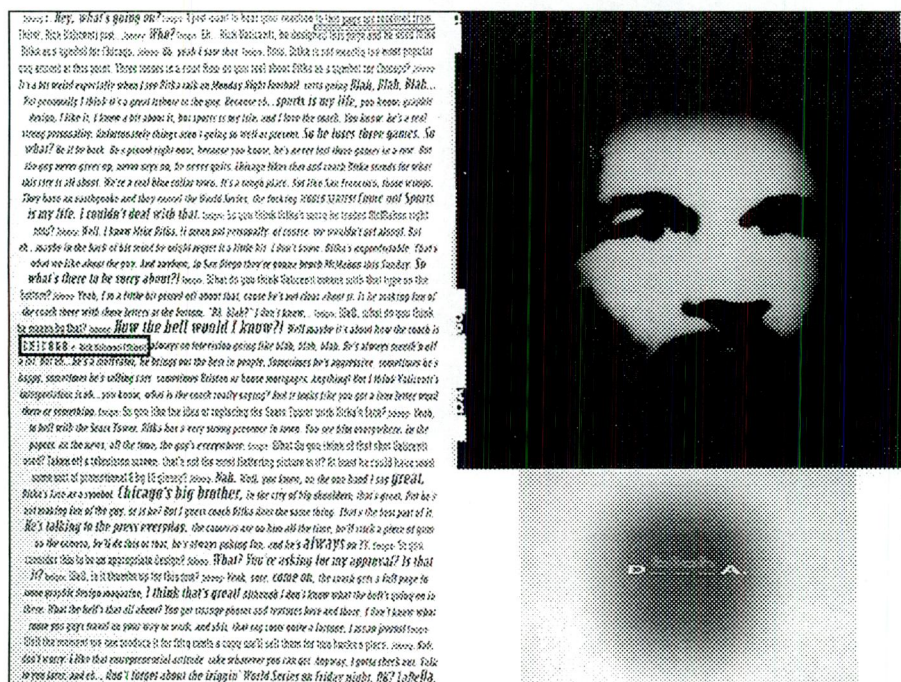
fig.3.01
Rudy Vanderlans,
Emigre, 1988

magazines increasingly incorporating television aesthetics and sentiment into their designs. In the next part of this chapter I will show how closely television and magazines are aligned by looking at the work of magazine designers who have fused the aesthetics of the two platforms and have also designed for television, film or video. It is also interesting to note that the magazine designers I have chosen to analyse were designing before the advent of digital technology and preferred conventional paste-up methods until relatively recently. The nature of the graphic designer, from Maholy-Nagy in the 1920s, has always been to explore new technology as a new means to create meaning.

David Carson

This section of the chapter discusses David Carson as a magazine designer and an artist and also how he has diversified into other media forms. It is difficult to define the difference between an artist and a designer. To some, a designer is a communicator, a mediator between an idea or concept and the reader. An artist usually authors their own content and is not reliant, as a designer usually is, on others' material. I have chosen David Carson to discuss the magazine designer as artist and also to look at his design contribution in 'the age of television'.

Magazines are ephemeral in nature to their designers - they are regularly superseded by a more current issue and because of this are perfect for experimentation. Most of the notable designers of our time have, at some time, designed a periodical. This freedom to experiment and the importance placed on the visual aspect of a magazine allows the designer artistic expression and they can often create their own content by using their own typefaces, images and photographs.
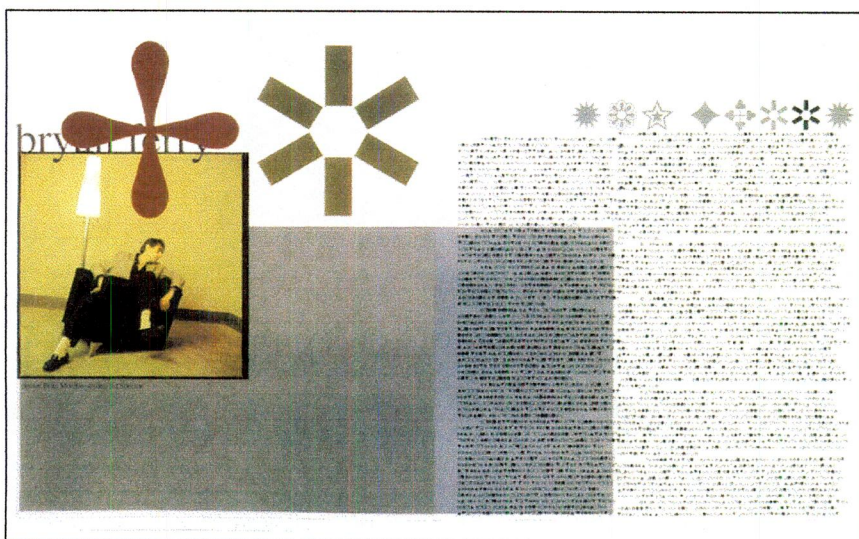
fig.3.02
David Carson, Ray Gun, 1994

BRYaN FERRY:

BRYAN FERRY:

fig.3.03
David Carson, Ray Gun, 1994
Zapf Dingbat translation

David Carson has been cited as an artist here both for the painterly quality of his work and as an author of his own content. His designs sometimes replace the text or, as Ellen Lupton said, "Carson's typography serves not just to present and interpret editorial content, but often takes the place of content..." (Lupton, 1996, p.133). The most extreme example of this is Carson's 1994 Bryan Ferry spread for Ray Gun, where all the body text is set in a Zapf Dingbats (fig.3.02), a font comprised of geometric shapes, stars, circles, boxes, flowers. This replacing of letters with shapes shows a blatant disregard for the author's material. Their inclusion adds beautiful texture and shading to the overall design and they are at the same time tantalising as each shape in fact refers to an actual letter in the alphabet and could be deciphered to see if there is a story behind. The computer could act as a translator or decoder of the message. The two Zapf Dingbat 'letters' on the left page are 'b' and 'r', these and the larger 'letters' on the right page are translated into 'Bryan Ferry' the subject of the article. David Carson has made another design decision where the 'a' in 'Bryan' is set in lower case where the rest is in upper case (fig.3.03). The lowercase Zapf Dingbat 'a' is a more interesting shape in this instance than the upper case. Of course someone is unlikely to actually translate the entire text, and Carson's disregard for it cannot be denied. It is an artistic expression; Carson's design is the most important element and this is how the spread communicates. Carson believes "you cannot not communicate". Whereas the layout does not communicate the author's meaning, its form still communicates as the reader will probably question its motives; is it a deliberate insult to Bryan Ferry, an ironic comment on the superficiality of the music industry, is it a mistake? Even if the reader does not question the designer's motives, it can be appreciated aesthetically, or be intriguing as a mystery.

Carson, too, describes himself as a designer and an artist. He believes in an intuitive approach to his designs, not letting formalisms or 'rules' dictate to him, believing that his personal expression is an essential part of the end design. He agrees with critics who say his work is self-indulgent but does not view this as a negative point (Blackwell, 1995). This
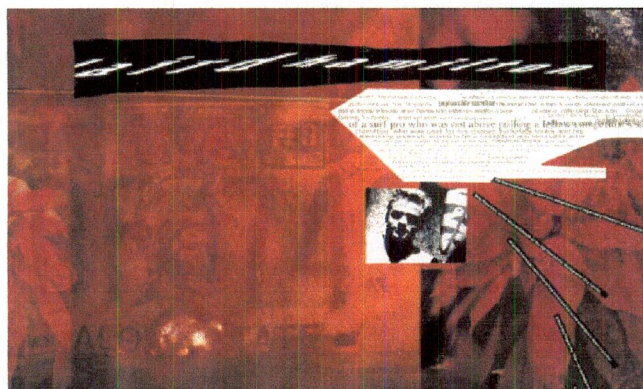
fig.3.04
David Carson, Beach Culture, 1990
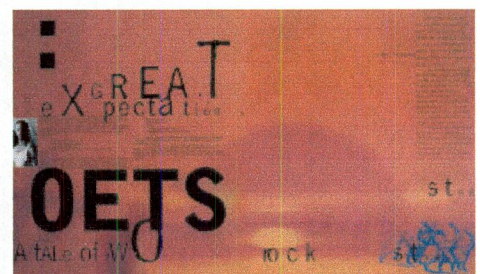
fig.3.05
David Carson, Ray Gun, 1993

fig.3.06
David Carson, Ray Gun, 1994

denial of the rational and embracing of the intuitive, emotional, sensuous approach gives Carson's work more of an artistic aspect than some of his contemporaries. His use of colour and texture, abstract shapes and symbols, his treatment of letterforms as illustrations and shapes add extra layers of meaning .

As I have already discussed; digitisation has created a new aesthetic and along with television a new design dynamic. The tools we use to create design are increasingly complex, allowing designers to create more levels of information. Lewis Blackwell describes the extra dimension digitisation added to graphic design as

> "The representation within a single image of several perspectives, of time and movement, plus a break
> from the conventions of colour and form to a new representation of form and motion..."
> (Blackwell, 1996, p.122)

I feel this could be a specific description of David Carson's work. His magazine designs have many layers - from his vibrant typography to his intriguing, mysterious images and painterly use of colour (**fig.3.04** and **fig.3.05**). In chapter two I suggested that the diffused quality of Carson's work could be considered an analogy of the intangible relationship between the designer and his work created by the computer interface. I feel this style could also represent the unreal, intangible, surreal world of television (**fig.3.06**).

David Carson has produced work for film and television, some of it commercial, some his personal work. His style transfers easily to these other media, retaining the same dynamic, humour and destructured, layered approach (**fig.3.07** and **fig.3.08**). Carson appears to encounter all new media in an uninhibited manner; a new technology is another exploration. Another instance where he actively aligns two platforms is with his art direction for Speak magazine. For
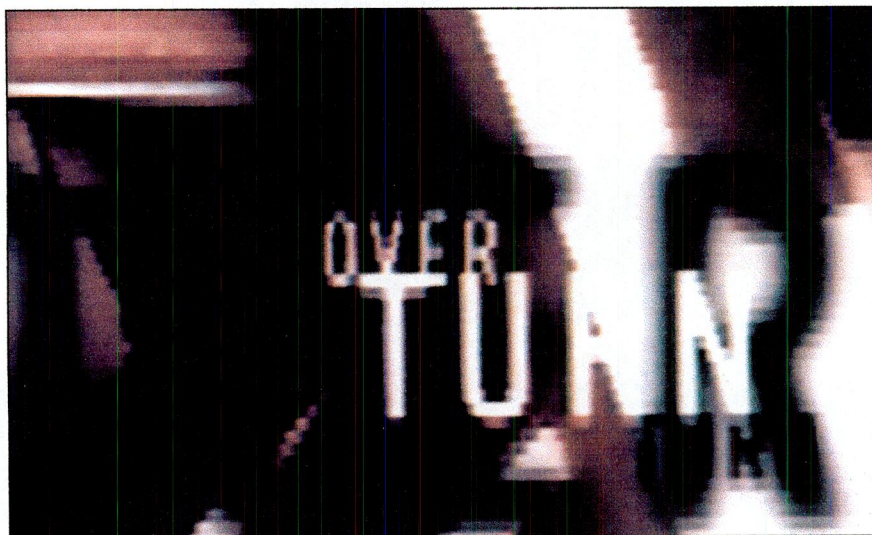

fig.3.07
David Carson,
TV Commercial,1994

fig.3.08
David Carson,
Glendale Federal Bank Commercial,
1995

his second issue he recommended most of the content and articles that 'jumped to , and continued, on the internet, as well as stories that jumped to the magazine from the net." (Blackwell, 1995)

In my final chapter, 'Illiteracy and Illegibility', I look at David Carson's work from the author's and reader's perspective, at how designers like him can negate the author's creative input and at how a reader may be frustrated when encountering overly expressive layouts.

Neville Brody

David Carson communicates through his artistic expression and whereas his work is intuitive, Neville Brody's is more rational and considered. His designs for Arena, for example, are information-based and communicate in this manner (this point is discussed in chapter one). The photographs are the strongest visual element and the design and typography do not impede upon them. Arena is targeted at a more mature audience than Brody's previous design encounter, The Face, and the design itself reflects this. The design methodology for Arena was 'to develop a visual language that was defined by form and structure' (Wozencroft, 1994, p.110).

Actuel is another magazine designed by Neville Brody and which is relevant to the discussion of magazines in the 'age of television'. It was established in 1969 in Paris with a strong political bias. It closed for a short time but re-emerged in the late 1970s as a platform for young journalists and as a reaction to what they saw as unsatisfactory television programming. In later years the editor Jean-Francois Bizot felt that television was imitating the investigative techniques

fig.3.09
Neville Brody, Actuel, 1991

fig.3.10
Neville Brody,
Actuel, 1991

fig.3.11
Neville Brody,
Actuel, 1990

of the magazine and in 1985 Actuel set itself a new ethos: "to investigate the role of magazines themselves in the TV era". It further went on to realign itself and to challenge "the lure of TV" (Wozencroft, 1994, p.105). Bizot, who had admired the work of The Face, approached Neville Brody to redesign the magazine. Brody designed four issues in 1990 and 1991 and his work is markedly different to his other magazine designs. Brody's strong typography is still evident, but not as considered as in his other work, its resonance distilled through increased use of full-bleed images mixed with strong background colours, and lack of his usual abundance of white space. Design styles from previous magazines are apparent, from his early punk era of The Face (fig.3.09) and Per Lui (fig.3.10), where form was of utmost importance.

Actuel has in some ways emulated television style and sentiment; its dynamic use of colour and layered elements (fig.3.11); the grainy texture of some of the images which are often not cropped in straight lines, but bleed into the coloured backgrounds giving a screen dissolve or video-still effect (fig.3.12). The magazine speaks to the reader in graphic terms with its use of large headlines in inverted commas (fig.3.13). Their organic quality suggests they have been enlarged on a photocopier from a newspaper and are combined with hand-written text to suggest the personal sentiment of the content. This reflects the editorial approach of Actuel where interviewees spoke in direct terms to the reader (Wozencroft, 1994, p.104).

Although graphically Actuel could be emulating television, I feel its challenge to the 'lure of TV' is through enticement with its form but retaining a strong content which counteracts what its editors saw as the lack of content in television, to give its readers something worthwhile. "Editor Jean-Francois Bizot felt that, spiritually, many of Actuel's readership were part of a lost generation who lacked belief in their world and were searching for something more tangible to invest their faith in." (Wozencroft, 1994, p.104)
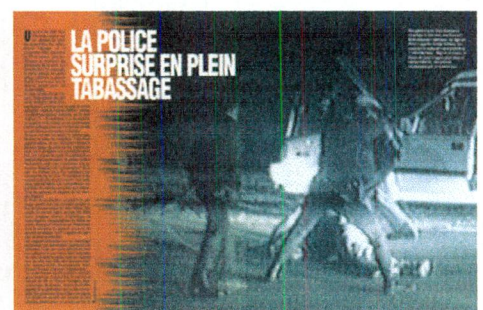

fig.3.12
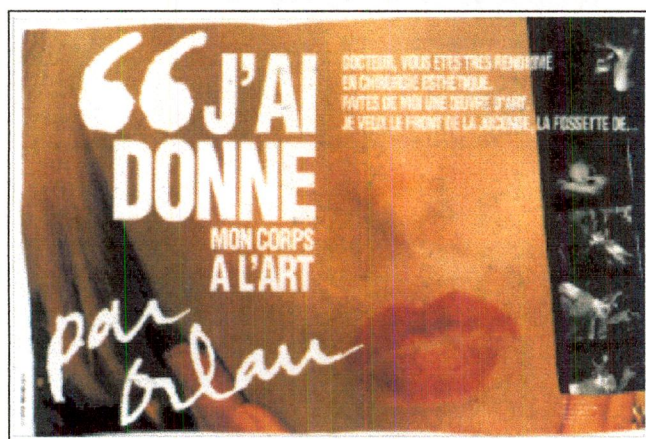Neville Brody, Actuel, 1991

fig.3.13
Neville Brody,
Actuel, 1991

Looking at Neville Brody's work for Actuel, I feel it is not the best in his magazine career although it has a freer, less considered approach than usual. Bizot and Brody were opposed in their ideas of how the magazine should look - Bizot wanted the magazine to look like "grunge before grunge" and Brody was interested in testing "to what extent design could be minimal behind the content of a magazine." (Wozencroft, 1994, p.105). Analysis of Actuel is useful to show Brody as a communicator of ideas and sentiment and also to give an insight into the television/magazine relationship and magazine design in the 'age of television'.

Like David Carson discussed previously, Brody has also produced work for television. It is evident when looking at the style of both designers' digital media work that they were approached by the client with the designer's characteristic style in mind. Their work in this field is reminiscent of their print-based magazine designs. Brody's television design work places more emphasis on a strong typographic approach and decisive graphic elements than on digital effects. Colour and colour coding is of significant importance (fig.3.14). Diffused type and movement is incorporated but serves as a contrast to the station ident (fig.3.15). His graphics and their useage is intelligently considered and, although slightly more removed than conventional television graphics, fully reflect the nature of television: light, movement and time (fig. 3.16).
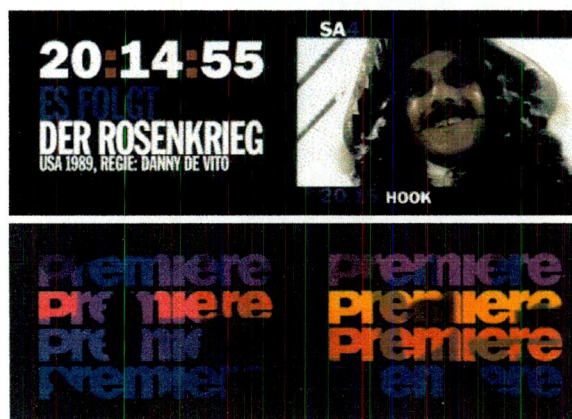

fig.3.14
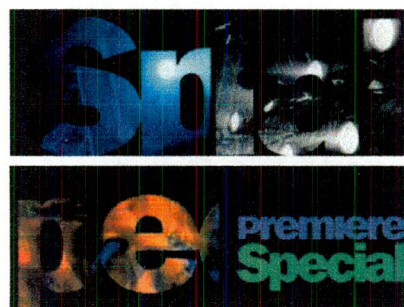Neville Brody, Television Graphics for Premiere, 1991-94

fig.3.16
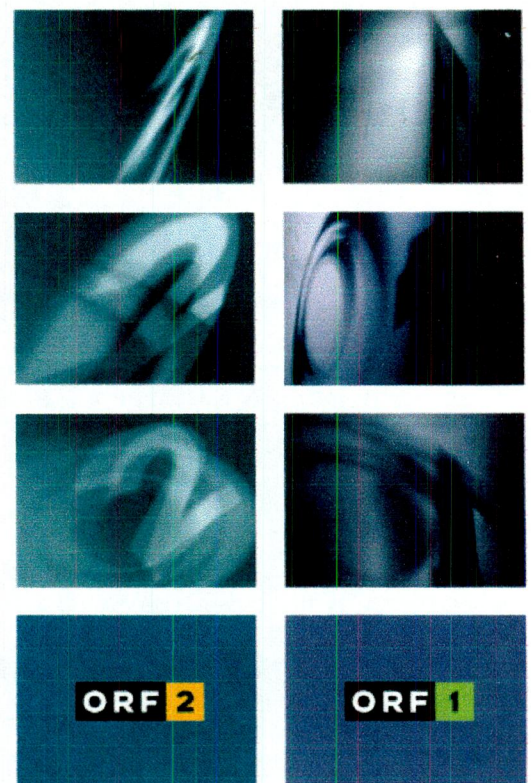Neville Brody, Television Graphics for Premiere, 1991-94

fig.3.15
Neville Brody, Signations for ORF 1 and 2, 1992

chapter four
Illiteracy and Illegibility

In my previous chapter I discussed the designer's need for artistic expression, but through expressing their own creativity they may often be negating someone else's talent; creating beautiful but illegible layouts disregarding the author.

Expressive layouts can challenge the way we read, slowing the reader down, therefore making the reading experience more participatory, requiring more reaction. Marshal McLuhan in <u>Understanding Media</u> wrote:

> "Phonetic Culture endows men with the means of repressing their feelings and emotions when engaged in action. To act without reacting, without involvement, is the peculiar advantage of Western literate man."
> (McLuhan, 1964, p. 86)

Adding a visual dimension to a piece of text provokes a reaction on an emotional, aesthetic level, but in an age where illiteracy is increasing and people are reading less than ever, can graphic designers justify creating difficult layouts to challenge the way we read, Kevin Fenton writes: "it would make more sense to challenge the way we don't read." (Fenton, 1995, p.19). In my previous chapter I assessed how in the 'age of television' print-based media are culturally less accessible, and how they may now require more reader involvement, and how magazines with their increasingly visual bias, strive to become as "hot" a medium as television. Visually expressive typography aids this, but is it in turn relegating the information and content itself more inaccessible to the audience? Through avoiding a direct approach designers are creating an ambiguity and obscuring messages, the validity of which may be questioned in a time when society, its media and technology, is increasingly complex. Fractured, layered, destructured design may reflect society's fragmentation and the uncertainty of our times, but are designers merely adding another problem?

Writer's work, too, suffers at the hands of art directors and designers, particularly in magazines where the look is often given precedence over content and where the designer is the last individual in the creative process. Today's postmodern society allows for individual expression, subversion and subjectivity, in contrast to modernism where everything had its place and separate art-forms remained separate, each with their own characteristics; typography stayed within its columns and grids, photography was treated with a reverent hand, images were seldom tampered with or their form diffused by layerings of type. Through postmodernism the reader has been promoted, the designer has been given a freedom of expression that knows almost no boundaries, leaving the author somewhat relegated. As Loretta Staples said:

> ".. the ease of manipulation of the medium threatens the message, where 'user-friendliness' overrides the authority of the author, where 'readers' are given free rein to hop, skip and jump through an intangible environment." (Staples, 1995, p.6)

Through the designers treatment the writer has lost authority over his work. To the designer blocks of text are often used as different shades on a page, it is not imperative that the words are legible, but that they complement the overall

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design and fit into their allotted space on the page. Kevin Fenton has very insightfully written: "...without legibility, I do not see how typography can exist as typography. It dissolves into illustration." (Fenton, 1995, p. 4)

It is not difficult to understand why authors and readers appeal for 'a transparent reflection of content' when looking at their work in designs such as David Carson's where he set all type in Zapf Dingbats (fig.3.02) or in fig.4.01 where the first page of the article is completely illegible. It is not apparent what route should be taken, should it be a return to the stricter rules of modernism? Visually expressive layouts have benefits to reader and designer, and the designer and typographer today are not mere technicians but also need creative expression which in turn yields interesting designs.

Co-operations between designers and writers may have their benefits, but could lead to a distilling of both talents in an effort to understand the others medium. Increasingly designers become publishers themselves, creating or commissioning their material, seeing production through from conception to end. In this respect a designer need no longer lead a "karaoke existence, always singing someone elses song, and never saying what he thinks should be said." (Novosedlik, 1993, p. 53)
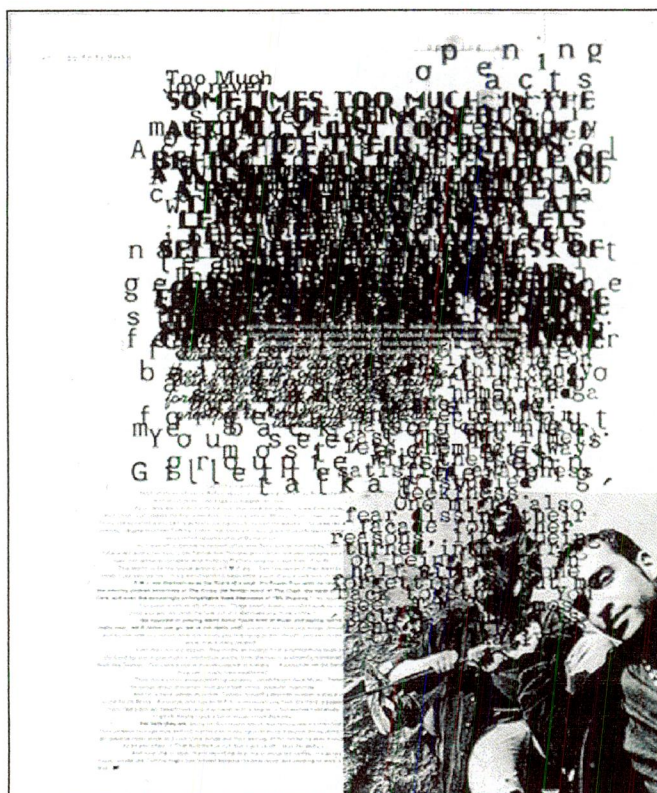

fig.4.02
David Carson, Ray Gun, 1992

Conclusion

In this cultural redefinition of the magazine I found that the form and nature of the magazine has not changed dramatically with the advent of digital technology and the ascendancy of television. They are, and have always been, flexible forms, constantly reacting to cultural needs and values and realigning themselves to cater for the changing needs of their audience. The designer's involvement has in some ways remained the same; designers have always embraced new technology and tested its limits. The magazine has been found to be a perfect platform for experimentation due to its ephemeral nature, and because of this and the designer's constant quest for 'the new', magazines have retained a 'cutting edge' design.

Whilst the form of the magazine has not dramatically changed, I found that postmodernism, punk and television have had a noticeable effect on the content. The ascendancy of television to the most powerful medium and popular form of entertainment has adjusted society's expectations and demands. Aesthetics have become more important than rational discourse as television converses in images. Again, magazines proved themselves to be flexible forms and always mindful of their audience; becoming increasingly visual-based. This proliferation of images and the use of visually expressive layouts provides multiple levels of experience, information and meaning, allowing the reader to encounter articles on an emotional or intellectual level. I suggested that magazines now have readers and viewers.

In my discussion I assessed the effect postmodernism has had on the look of magazines and how their fractured, layered, and deconstructed designs reflect the uncertainty and fragmentation of postmodern society. Postmodernism challenged traditional hierarchies, magazines too have subverted modernist notions of order; unpretentiously mixing high and low cultural forms, allowing the subjectivity of the designer, promoting the reader. I observed how the computer has enabled designers such as David Carson and Rudy Vanderlans make an anti-modernist stance, being an inherently postmodern tool which encourages boundaries to be broken.

Throughout my discussion I promoted the designer as a creative talent and upheld their right to express this talent, realising that a designer is not a mere technician. But, I admit that this self-expression may be to the detriment of the author. Through postmodernism and the increased visual-bias of magazines, authors have been somewhat relegated, their text often being treated as mere texture on a page, designers using their words to impose their own typographic styles or experiments. This aspect also dealt with the issue of illiteracy and how, in an age where people are reading less, designers are adding yet another problem or barrier to the reader.

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