COME CLOSER

Eli Marco Hall

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Lindenwood University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Communication

2006

ABSTRACT

This Culminating Project describes the design process from many different perspectives. It includes the designing of a book of poetry enabling me to apply design concepts.

Working as a graphic designer in the early twenty first century has provided opportunities to witness the effect that technology has had on the industry. Through the ongoing research, the change in roles of the modern graphic designer is established. Also during this time, print and digital media aggressively work toward a merger. When choosing to do a book for the Culminating Project, it was taken into consideration what the digital and print world would have on this experience.

After acquiring twenty poems, written by Lerner Kolb in the year 2000, there was much knowledge needs to be acquired before the actual design process began. It was necessary to develop a basic knowledge of poetry in order to successfully design the book.

There are five aspects of the book building process that are explained in this written component of the project. They cover budget, knowledge of intended market, cover design, typography, and interior design.

A history of books as well as a history of typography is overviewed. The Gutenberg Bible is commonly known as the first mass-produced book. This is one of the events in history that forever changed human communication. Parallel to the growth of the printing industry, the typography industry grew at similar rates due to the symbiotic relationship of the two. Though the end result may be the same, the book publishing industry has dramatically changed in the last century.

Creating a book requires many decisions, all which have to be approved by the client. One of the main goals of this project was to produce a poetry book that the client felt was designed specifically for her writings. From concept to completion, the client was kept in the loop of the progress. The end result being a uniquely designed poetry book titled, Come Closer.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Change In The Industry

When given the opportunity to create something original for the Culminating Project, I chose an avenue that would demonstrate skills I have acquired throughout my graphic design and educational experience. As I present the project, let me briefly explain some of my design ideas and ideals. For myself, graphic design has become a lifestyle rather than a means to an end. It has turned out to be a risky commitment because I have discovered that being a graphic designer is often viewed as an expendable trade. Being an ambassador for the industry is an important role in my life. To educate the layman about the importance of graphic design proves meaningful to not only myself but also to all who intend on living by the potential financial profit to be earned.

My passion towards design is greatly due in part to the education I received from the newly named Missouri State University. Earning a Bachelor of Fine

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Arts in graphic design and illustration was a hard five years of being challenged by a team of educators from Eastern Europe. They had it in their blood that we all should die for our purpose which was to become great designers. We were taught that one test of design was its ability to withstand the test of time. If a mark, formerly known as a logo, passes from one generation to another and retains its meaning and importance, then it was well designed. It is my responsibility to design well for clients and get their mark into the over-stimulated world.

With the advent of desktop publishing, the line between quality graphic design and visual refuse has been dramatically blurred. It has become commonplace for individuals to design their own product. Most applications that come already loaded on a new computer have design capabilities. This fact is what has spawned the visual pollution that we see today. The digital age has forced true graphic designers to become fighters for the cause of design literacy. Our jobs have become increasingly jeopardized by the loss of creative respect and outsourcing. The constant desire to stand up for my trade has prepared me to

produce a piece of work which will visually represent me as a designer.

It was speculated in the nineties that books and other printed materials such as newspapers and magazines were going by the wayside due to the homogenizing of the Internet. With unpredictable results, the printing society would not let its world disappear so easily. There are multiple reasons why print is here to stay. Realistically printed or digital information will ultimately coexist with one another. The new paradigm will be the expectation of having both when purchasing items (Heller 7).

First of all, it is easier to read print than it is to read from a monitor. People read print because of the principal of reflective light. Light bounces off of the printed piece and into the viewer's eyes. It is more comfortable on the human eye than the alternative, the monitor. Reading from a monitor is like looking directly into thousands of flashlights. It becomes tiresome and strenuous.

Secondly, digital text is usually not spaced for optimum reading. The letters tend to be to close together or in sentences that are an uncomfortable length. Most books are designed so that a reader can

enjoy or learn from the material. The words of a well-designed book should fall off of the page. I believe ultimately that a mixture of digital text and print will be the norm. Both mediums have strong aspects.

Finally, the proof of my point lies in the retail chains like Barnes & Noble or Borders, popping up in every sizeable suburban neighborhood throughout the United States. People still want that physical contact with the information. There is a unique quality to actually holding a book in your hands. As cell phones, the Internet, and general technology takes us further away from having in-person inter-actions, a book still connects us with the thought, ideas and experiences of real people. This is why I have decided to design a book of poems for my Culminating Project.

About The Author

The author of the poems is Lerner Kolb, born September 10, 1981, in Carthage, Missouri and grew up in the small town of Miami, Oklahoma. She has spent the better part of her life negotiating her sense of right or wrong. She found some of her answers along a

dirt road in Ottawa County, Oklahoma. After a winding road of summer camps and boarding schools, she moved out on her own, got a job and an apartment, and started pretending to be an adult at the young age of 15. Armed with her experiments in right and wrong, this collection from 2000 marked the beginning of Ms. Kolb's journey to determine what is and what is not important in her life. She currently resides in Springfield, Missouri and is under-taking the massive responsibility of being a single parent, an experience that is sure to produce more raw feelings worth the time to put into book form. She is a well-traveled individual who went through a series of experiences in the year 2000 and decided to record them in the form of poems. These experiences cover topics such as desperation, sexual confusion, anger, love, and self-actualization. There are twenty poems that range in verse and length. Now, nearly six years later, she decided to release her writings to me. After much discussion as to the best way to present them, she agreed to let me design them into a book that someday her son will read and thereby get to know his mother on a higher level.

Being A Graphic Designer

The idea of doing a poetry book appealed to me more than designing a traditional book because of the potential to represent each individual poem with design. A traditional book is designed for primarily reading but a book of poems is for not only reading but to transport the reader into another frame of thought. Each page should leave some sort of visual imprint on the reader. If only one of the twenty poems grabs the reader and forces the words into their memory, I will have done my job.

As a graphic designer, I have had to become disciplined in a variety of trades and not just print design. If I refused to evolve, I would be jobless. This brings me back to the reason why I chose to design a poetry book; I feel that it represents the ability to relate to the industry through the understanding of not only fundamental design but also all of the modern facets used to produce a book.

To have the product ready for press, a designer must not only be able to successfully design a book, but they must be able to deliver correct digital files to the printer. Inability to do so could result in a

financial disaster for the designer. There is an overwhelming amount of pressure on graphic designers to keep up with their rapidly changing field. They are expected to virtually know everything. Though this is not a feasible concept, it seems to be the attitude of the industry. Designers are the catch all from the editors, authors, and art directors.

The St. Louis area, like most other metro-plexes, is a challenging place for a designer because there are many other out of work graphic designers waiting in the wings for your job. The publishers all benefit from this climate because they are able to expect the most out of their employees. I will be approaching the book with the attitude that I must produce on a level that would be expected of me within the workplace.

Five Aspects

There are five aspects to building this book that I will be focusing on: budget, knowledge of intended market, cover design, typography, and interior design. Beginning with budget, I have offered to do this book pro bono. The experience and the end product will pay for the time involved. I will, however, discuss the

potential costs of having the book published to the author so that she will be informed if she chooses to go forth with having her poems published in a larger edition. To support the coexistence of print and digital, I will locate and inform the client of her publishing options. With the number of independent publishers on the Internet increasing daily, it will not be difficult to acquire this information online. This grass roots approach would suit the poetry's style of free verse best as well.

The author's style of poetry tends to reach a broad audience due to the diverse group of writers who produce free verse. My initial impulse was to design the cover to stand-alone in a sea of images and type. The working title is Come Closer. I think that the author chose an appropriate title. It is short and to the point, and leans toward the concept of less is more. It is a good title to design with. Its short aspect allows me to use the cover space more efficiently. The less someone has to read the more a designer can push the creative envelope.

The cover design will be created to give the potential reader a reason to stop and open the book. A successful cover grabs the attention of the browser.

The same principle applies in most advertising ventures. Whether it is the web or a book cover, the goal is to grab the customer's attention. The secondary goal is to then carry the feel of the poem to the cover. The cover will help unify the project with the poems inside.

The type treatment from the title will be directly related to the type treatment of the interior. The norm of today is that a graphic designer doubles as a typographer. A typographer is to text as the theatrical director is to a script or the musician to a score. The typographer's one essential task is to interpret and communicate the text. Its tone, tempo, logical structure, and physical size, all determine the possibilities of its typographic form. As the typographer, I initially individualized the text to each poem. I decided not to use more than two or three fonts for this project. I intended on using this treatment as a bridge to the feeling of the poetry (Bringhurst 17).

The interior design is crucial for the book to feel like one complete body of work. Since these poems were written in the span of one year, I tried to incorporate this chronological factor within my

concept. An example would be the page numbers. In such a short book, page numbers would become less relevant. Therefore I thought it would be interesting to number the pages according to the number of the day during the year 2000 that she wrote a certain poem on. For instance, if she wrote a poem on the 53rd day of the year, the page in the book would be 53.

Goals

My goals for this project are to satisfy the author, to exercise creative and conceptual freedom, and of course to fulfill my Culminating Project requirements. First of all, the author is extremely protective of her words and passionate about their representation. It is not too often when the client gives total creative freedom to the graphic designer, as is the case here. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly. In fact, it feels like a huge monster tearing away at my insides because, with no limitations to speak of, I find myself over-thinking concepts. The training that was given to me guides me to make decisions. One way that I dealt with having multiple concepts was to simply present the concepts to my client. This is a common practice of the

industry. Even though Ms. Kolb initially just wanted to see the end results, she was pleased to hear about the varying concepts throughout the design process.

Beyond what I will learn, I hope to teach readers through my design more about the author and her poetry. The words written in a book that the author writes are not the only way to tell the reader what the book is about. Every choice made by a designer has some effect on the reader. The effect may be radical or subtle, but it is usually outside the reader's ability to describe. They do not understand fully why they feel the way they do when they read the book, but the designer does. I hope that the feelings born when reading <u>Come Closer</u> will leave a lasting impression on the reader because of both the words and the design.

Once my goals and criteria were set, the potential to take twenty moments in a young woman's life and turn them into a book that would perpetuate the use of books. The effort to apply my knowledge to this project challenged my commitment to the design trade. I plan on using this experience to learn as well as to polish the already acquired skills. To be

a successful graphic designer, you must never quit

learning.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Free Verse

Before I came up with the graphic concepts for
the book, I needed to expand my knowledge of poetry,
another example of graphic designers needing to
constantly be learning. The style of the author's
writing appealed to me but I was unsure as to what
literary style it fit under. In researching the types
of poetry, I found that there are generally thirty-two
types of poems, ranging from alliteration to verse.
After reading Ms. Kolb's poetry, I believe it falls
into the category of free verse. Free verse is poetry
that does not have a meter or rhyme scheme. This type
of poetry is used to convey the writer's emotions
without the restrictions of traditional structure
(Sebranek 157).

Her poetry was written from the raw entrails of
her moments. For that reason, I think the response to
these poems will be positive. It is apparent that in
the current post-modern climate, people feel better
about themselves when others suffer. This statement

is supported by the multitude of mass media that pumps
negative images into our lives day after day, only to
be followed by our unfettered routines. If all we
have to compare ourselves with is people in
unfortunate situations, our egos obviously will grow.

Other writers who have moved people through the
throws of free verse include Seamus Heaney, Maxine
Chernoff and Antonio Machado. They all incorporate
free verse to speak out about the state of life in its
current form. From political arenas to inward strife,
free verse can invite a reader to grow creatively in
their thinking about life, as I believe Ms. Kolb's
poetry will as well. Antonio Machado was a Spanish
poet and one of the leading figures of the Spanish
literary movement known as the Generation of '98. His
poems, though written in Spanish, have been translated
in multiple languages. Here is an excerpt from the
poem "Traveler There Are No Roads."

> Wayfarer, the road
> Is your footsteps, nothing else.
> Wayfarer, there is no road
> You open it as you walk it.
> The walking opens the road
> And when you turn your eyes back
> You see the path you'll never
> Walk again.
> Wayfarer, there is no road,
> But wakes on the sea.

I do not claim to be a literary critic, but I can feel, even in this translation, the emotional direction that Machado is presenting to the reader. This is the same effect that I had when reading Ms. Kolb's poems.

History Of Books

With a new knowledge of poetic styles, it was time to focus on the creation of the actual book. Books having an interesting history that parallels technology have been a crucial part of man's evolution. Let me first explain about the history of printing a book. Most people know that the first book was the Gutenberg Bible. It received its name due to the press on which it was printed. Johann Gutenberg was born in Mainz, Germany in 1394 and died in 1468. In the beginning, it was difficult to convince the public that books were a new art form that would change the world. At the time, most people could not read; therefore, the first books became items of status. Books became a highly commissioned object. If you had wealth, you should have books even if you could not read. You could then pay someone to read the book to you (Chappell 5).

After the news of Gutenberg's press spread and people learned what a profitable investment it was, competition was spawned. The first competitor was a man named Laurens Janszoon Coster. Gutenberg's creation, the 42 line <u>Bible</u>, had two columns per page and they each had 42 lines. This set the precedent for typographical solutions of early books. The duplicated style can be seen in Costers book, <u>Hollander of Haarlem</u> (Chappell 6).

The history of books is a timeline that is spotted and driven by technology. In the beginning, the printers of the books were also the designers and the typographers. One job that was not done in house was the illustrator, or at that time, was called an illuminator.

As the printing industry grew, it broke into several disciplines: the printer, whose sole responsibility it was to print the text on the pages; the typographer, who set the type; the binder, who physically put the book together; and other industries, such as the producers of ink and manufacturers of paper who kept this industry growing. The prevailing motivation encouraging attitude of the Renaissance period is what historians believe was the

main contributing factor to the rapid growth of the bookmaking industry. This attitude supported growth, learning, exploration, and a general revival of the arts (Meggs 469).

Present day, though the industry still shows growth, bookmaking is done in dramatically different ways. A designer may design a book for an author in Japan and have it printed in Canada. The bookmaking industry is now a borderless web of money, politics, and marketing research. The multimedia environment of the Internet has changed the way books are created in such a way that traditionally related jobs are quickly disappearing. Up until twenty years ago, a typesetter was a legitimate career. The digital fonts of a computer made their job obsolete overnight. Also, an illustrator used to be a valuable commodity. Now, with stock illustration companies offering low prices on a plethora of premeditated illustrations, there are very few illustrators that make a prosperous living. The computer phenomenon has also plagued photographers and kept many from making a living doing what they are best at.

History Of Type

Once I was told a story that a good type designer will create a prototype then put it away for a year. Then, after a re-examination in a year, it goes away for two more. If at the end of two years the font is seen as successful, it will be retooled and then put into use. Having created my own font, I know that it is all too easy to not let the adequate time pass to see if the font is going to work. The digital tools we use allow us to expedite the process, sometimes to our disadvantage. Type, like good design, is truly good if it can stand the test of time.

The most prominent example of a typeface that has stood the test is the font Garamond. Claude Garamond created his font for books being published in the 1530's. His typeface has come back through the reworking by current designers century after century. Garamond's are characterized by large counters in the "*a*" and the "*e*", which has a horizontal crossbar. Ascenders and descenders are long, and the f has a strong hook. Most top serifs slope downward toward the left and the influence of calligraphy is evident. However, because this font is used so often, I wanted

to find a font with the strong qualities of Garamond but with some subtle beauty. Luckily a colleague of mine suggested a font named Mrs. Eves, a typeface that has exquisite design (Meggs 208).

Zuzana Licko of Émigré, the electronic type founders in Sacramento California, designed the Mrs. Eves type font. It is based on the original font created by John Baskerville, a former schoolmaster in the 18th Century. Zuzana dedicated her design to Sarah Eaves, who was Baskerville's long-term housekeeper. After Sarah's husband died, Baskerville married Sarah. When John Baskerville, died Mrs. Eaves completed the unfinished volumes of Baskerville. This font has an interesting feel that still retains the integrity of a classical font (Meggs 30).

Interview

Book cover design is a niche within the graphic design community that is respected because of its unique position. A designer must assume he has one second to capture someone's interest. A book cover must represent the content, as well as get the passerby's attention. I had the privilege of interviewing a young yet successful book designer,

Andrea Lutes. The interview provides supporting testimony about the current trends in the design industry. She currently is employed at Elsevier and has been for two years.

Elsevier is a world leading, multiple-media publisher of scientific, technical and health information products and services, with 7,000 employees in 73 locations around the globe. They are a Publisher of more than 20,000 products and services, including journals, books, electronic products, databases and portals serving the global scientific, technical and medical communities.

To begin the interview, I asked Ms. Lutes if she would define her job. The response drove home the fact that graphic designers must be versatile. The response:

- To be responsible for designing Health Sciences publishing projects and, when appropriate for workload management, commissioning and managing freelance designers.

- Advise on the design needs of projects and how best they can be met in relation to appropriateness for product, market, quality level, cost and publishing schedule.

- Ensure assigned design briefs are comprehensive and meet design guidelines, the presentation of new designs and validation of files to be print ready design.

- Efficiently manage own workload through discussion with Strategic Business Unit colleagues and the Design & Illustration Manager.

- Monitor the progress of own projects so that publishing schedules are met.

- Decide when and what projects should be freelanced for efficient workload management.

- Contribute to maintaining the Design Unit register of freelance designers with the skill range necessary for our business needs.

- Provide design images (cover, text, graphics etc.) in a form suitable for the marketing department use in promoting products.

- Maintain and update own project list in the Design Project Report database, supply accurate project related statistics for company reports Management of freelance/external suppliers.

- Select and brief freelance designers with the appropriate skills for individual projects, art direct freelanced projects.

- Set appropriate quality standards for design
  competence and technical preparation of
  electronic files, select and purchase images from
  photo-libraries and commission freelance
  illustrators when appropriate as part of a cover
  design.

The response is lengthy but show how the
responsibilities of a designer are crucial to the
success to the overall production process. In the
interview, there is further testimony of the important
role a designer possesses (Lutes, interview).

The interview:

As a book designer, what do you find influential to
your creative process?

> "Everything. It changes all the time. I find
> influence from design magazines, co-workers
> designs, Internet, TV, advertisements. My current
> favorite is visiting Amazon.com and scanning book
> covers to get ideas and new styles."

Some designers have a creative regimen that is
repeated per job while others prefer to have a variety
of approaches. Which do you favor and would you
describe the process?

> "I would say that I have a variety of approaches,
> and not necessarily by choice. I deal with Editors
> and Marketing Managers in a 'pre-design' meeting to
> discuss our options for a new title. Every project
> is different. Sometimes they want to follow the
> previous edition, sometimes the author has a
> favorite color or photo they would like to see, and
> sometimes marketing really pushes us in a certain

direction. I enjoy the variety. It's nice to have an image to start with sometimes and other times it's awesome to have the freedom to choose whatever I see fit."

What are your goals as a book designer and do those goals parallel your current positions opportunities?

"My goals as a book designer... Well, there are very many avenues of graphic design. I enjoy designing book covers and interiors but I would also like to move on to other types of design in the future. I would like to learn what I could from this aspect and then I will probably move on to another type of design, maybe advertising or web. I love to learn new things and design is always changing."

What are your responsibilities at Elsevier and how did your education at MSU prepare you for them?

"I am responsible for the design of science and nursing books. I design the cover and internal design. Specifications are then written for the internal design and sent to a compositor to layout the pages. I had a very good design education at SMSU and it has prepared me well. There are always parts of a certain job you cannot be prepared for but as far as my design skills are concerned I was very much prepared."

In your time at Elsevier, have you ever had a favorite book design and if so what makes it stand-alone?

"My favorite book cover is one that I designed very early on. Maybe since I was still "in training" and didn't have the workload I now do, I had more time to work on it. It was very open, no restrictions to color or type. It was my chance to show my co-workers that I was a good designer and I was able to prove that. The book was very successful and we received very good feedback on the cover from the market."

What do you see the future role of graphic designers in book production?

> "More and more things are moving away from printed materials and onto the Internet. Books are also moving in that direction. Currently we are printing books but also posted complete text of the books online. I believe that the role of book designers will be moving to web design and away from print."

How much control do you have over your designs and do you feel that your skills are valued?

> "Yes, I believe my skills are valued. We hear almost everyday "well it's up to you, you are the designer!" And yes we have most control over our designs. Of course there are instances where the author or editor will put in more input than they should, and they are the customer so we can only try our best to talk them out of a horrible idea but in the end it's got to please the client."

How is Elsevier integrating books with the digital medium and how will the change influence your job?

> "Right now a lot of our books are coming out in a printed version and also available for viewing online. When we design an interior, every element is assigned a code i.e. a one head (1 hd). With the use of XML these codes are then transformed into XML codes, which are used to upload to the web."

For me, the interview added substance to the importance of graphic design. Ms. Lutes works on books from the entire design aspect. There are designers that are sought after specifically to design a cover. With market share so intensely tight, the large sum of money paid out to designers to produce a one of a kind cover is justified. The best

contemporary book cover design reflects this sort of broader engagement in which the designers consider their viewers to be participants in the construction of meaning. An example of a cover at work is the 2002 release of Chuck Palahniuka's, <u>Lullaby</u>. Rodrigo Corral, working for Anchor Books, created a cover that had a deceased bird on the cover. That is it; no title, no author, nothing but this image. The cover was praised in the design world and the book flew off the shelf. Rodrigo's courage in design opened up new avenues for the book cover industry (Drew 171).

By expanding my knowledge of poetry, the printing of books, and cover design, I believe I am prepared for the design of Ms. Kolb's poems. I want to represent them in the best light possible because they are her life's experiences and dreams.

Chapter III

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Objectives

The book I designed was a vessel to satisfy
multiple objectives. From my first-hand knowledge of
the graphic design industry, I know that a book is a
powerful piece to have in a working portfolio.

The first objective when designing this book was
to create a tangible piece that will reflect my
growth. The stronger I can make my portfolio, the
more opportunities that will be revealed.

The second objective I had when designing a book
was to satisfy the requirements for a Culminating
Project. The Culminating Project is a good way for a
student to apply their trade to an endeavor while
gaining credit for a grade. I do feel, however, as
the curriculum grows at Lindenwood, more value could
be given to the visual side of the Culminating
Projects.

Finally, the last objective I had was that the
process of creating the book would allow me yet
another valuable interaction with a client. Working

in the graphic design field requires a designer to create quality, working relationships with clients. This is a skill that can only be mastered through real life situations.

The Process

The process of designing the book began as soon as I was presented the idea of a Culminating Project. I wanted to sink my teeth into a project that would keep me interested since the rest of my responsibilities in life keep pulling me in different directions. I had read a couple of Lerner's poems back in 2001 and they left an impression on me. When it came time to choose a project, the choice was rather obvious. Lerner has been a critic of my work for approximately seven years. With the type of work that I have previously produced, she was supportive of my ideas. I was given full creative rights to designing her poems into book form.

The first decision that I made was to determine a budget to operate within. With both parties involved, it was obvious that the funds were not going to be available to get this book published by the end of December of 2005. The financial shortfall turned out

to be a blessing in disguise. If there had been a budget, I would have been forced to create a book that would have to be more along industry standards. Without a budget, I was now free to create and was not confined to what would be able to be printed by the lowest bidder. I did, however, create the book with the intention of having it printed in the future.

Knowing that I could easily design a book that would be too expensive to publish, I approached the project with a real world budget in mind. Whether funded by donation or self-published, the book could potentially be printed; it is just going to take some considerable time to organize all the parties to complete the task. Once I had an avenue to proceed down, the next step was to read the material to get a feeling of how to visually represent it well.

As previously stated, I had read a few of the poems back in 2001. To successfully design this arrangement, however, I felt it necessary to read the complete series. The journey that Lerner takes you on is a disturbing and emotional trip, one that is not too far off from what many other kids currently growing up in this country experience. There is sexual confusion spawned by an over-stimulated sexual

marketing atmosphere. There is love with the words arranged in such a way that I could literally taste it. There is the question of God and the controversy of the commercialism of the Lord. And there is the challenge Lerner faces as she takes on the world and becomes a woman. As a male reading these poems, I found that the collection puts a lot of personal past experiences into question. I realized during the reading of these poems that we all have had to deal with life's dramas, but Lerner has the beautiful talent of being able to express them in words on paper. I tried to compliment those words by creating a book designed to best communicate those emotions. Now armed with the taste of the poems at the tip of my tongue, I was ready to stir up some concepts.

Concepts

The first concept that came about was to produce a Ray Gun style of book to get across the feeling. Ray Gun was a magazine put out in the early 1990's that had a designer by the name of David Carson at its helm. He took typography to the edge of legibility. It challenged the conventional grid that educators of type have been promoting for centuries. The beginning

of the nineties is when desktop publishing exploded
and changed the face of not only type design, but also
all design, as we knew it. A designer could easily
experiment with foreign layouts and self-expression in
fast and repeatable ways. With these tools, David
Carson went against the grain and his results were a
style named after the magazine at which he worked. I
thought that the chaotic feeling that Ray Gun produces
would represent the emotions within Lerner's poems
best (Ashworth 10).

The second concept I came up with was to create a
contemporary feel with black and white photography and
a san serif typeface like Helvetica or Universe. The
best example in my opinion is a magazine from
Australia, Black + White. It uses popular
photographers' images that are printed on quality
satin pages. The type is best described as ordered
chaos. This is a contemporary approach that uses more
structure than Ray Gun but still leans towards the
expressive.

The third concept I came up with, and ultimately
picked, was the concept that lends its hand to
deception. The approach was to use a more classical
type layout that would allow the potential reader to

dive directly into the thoughts that Lerner recorded. By allowing such clean legibility, the readers will find themselves enveloped in these uncomfortable writings. Lerner liked the idea of the reader not being able to predict the feeling of the poems by the design. Like life, it's unpredictable.

Design Decisions

With the concept agreed upon by both the client and myself, the next step was to create the actual layout of the book. The options available to me were infinite. There are twenty poems, some long and some existing of only a few lines. They all need to have equal importance within the book.

One decision made early on is how I proposed to present the order. Since the poems was written over a year's time, I came up with the idea to make page numbers representing the day of the year that it was written. For example if the poem were written on January 2nd, then the page number would be 002/365. In page design, every aspect of the page is vulnerable to design. Because of the fact that I am designing a book of twenty poems, I felt that the alternative numbering would be easily understood, especially if

the reader takes the time to read the introduction. It explains that the poems were written over the span of the year.

The page numbers are an example of using conceptual design that can be understood by the consumer. Conceptual design only works if the intended market gets it. If the designer understands the concept but others do not easily understand it, then it simply does not work. The designer's inability to accept that their concept is missing the mark, can ultimately be their Achilles heel.

With the type being set in a classical format, I had to next decide on a font that would play the role. Different designers have taught me that there are only a handful of truly great fonts. Most serve little purpose and were not designed by individuals that understood all of the aspects that go into designing a workable font.

I went with the Mrs. Eaves font because I thought not only would it serve the purpose of being extremely legible, but also it has a great set of petit caps. Petit caps are half the size of regular capitols. It is possible to resize any capitols to appear to be smaller but a letter is supposed to be used in its

original form. If you manipulate it, the integrity is jeopardized. If, as a designer, you want to use lower case then use a font that has one designed for it. Even to the laymen, something does not feel right about a font that has been artificially altered. Mrs. Eaves allowed me to create beautiful titles that when combined with the individual paintings took on a unique feeling for every page. I put a lot of energy into finding the typeface that would suit the purpose of the book. If all areas of the project are not held to the same level of quality, however, then it will fall short of success (Heller 174).

With the typeface selected, it was useless until I have a page to put it on. I cannot put it on a page until I have planned out the structure of the total book. There is a lot of math involved in making a book. From page size, spine width, or even paper thickness, they all need to be decided before the layout is to begin.

There is an economical solution to these problems. The printing industry up until recently was limited to standards set by the manufactures who produced the machines to produce the printed material. Of course, with enough money, anything is possible.

The problem then lies in the designers lap: do you create within the conventional confines of the industry or do you spend all your clients' money applying costly special effects? Usually the first choice is the better of the two. Lately, however, new technologies have allowed individuals, like myself, the freedom to explore the bounds of our creativity.

The printing industry has had to begin to cater to small run print jobs to stay alive. Self-publishers who pay for their own runs used to go online to printing houses outside the United States. When domestic printing houses began to disappear, they knew they had to change their paradigm. Now even a normal guy with a thousand bucks can get a book published. Granted, for that price there will be no special sizes, inks, or unique papers, but nonetheless it could be done.

I have chosen to go with an anti-traditional structure. When people think of a book they think of rectangle pages with text applied to a grid sitting on a library self. The cover is hard or soft but generally has a spine which onlookers can browse the title.

The cover that I have chosen to use is of my own creation. The cover is a denim-like material and it is sewn into a pocket-like structure. For strength it has a chipboard insert. Chipboard is the common material used in hardback book covers. It is an inexpensive material and is easy to work with if you have the proper tools.

The pocket is used to keep the pages together. Unlike a traditional book, the pages of the book are left unbound. This approach would not work well with a book with many more pages than what I am dealing with currently, but twenty pages are easily kept in order via page numbers.

The page size is 5.375" x 8.25". This is roughly half of an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper, which is relevant only if you are going to print it off at home. Printing houses use large rolls or large sheets of paper for their runs. The book is printed in what is called a 4/4 (four over four) process. This simply means that the printer will use CMYK on both sides of the paper. CMYK stands for cyan, magenta, yellow and black. If you have a color printer at home, this is probably the ink combination that it uses to produce the images that are sent to print. The same process

is used to produce all sizes of runs in the print houses, but on a much larger scale. This is an industry standard. There are many more ink options but they would throw the cost up much higher.

One technique that is popular is to print with a varnish. This effect will create a glossy finish where the varnish is printed and leave the rest of the page with the finish of the paper itself. Another color choice is to use pantone colors. This is an international agreed upon color palette. Every color has a specific number, which is assigned by the designer. The printers can use the pantone number assigned by the designer to produce the exact color assigned.

An example would be the company John Deere. They have a specific color that has become an important part of their identity. That particular color has a number assigned to it. If they need a flyer printed in Japan for a conference and business cards printed in California for a new employee, it would not be cost effective to have everything printed at the same place. So, to keep constancy, they will assign the specific Pantone color to both projects. If they were both viewed side by side you would see that they are

the exact color. This is assuming that both printers are using quality dyes.

I chose to use CMYK so that the author could easily take the book to a printer of her choice and not run into an unexpected cost of special inks. If the situation arises that she wants to add a little flare, I will add a varnish layer that would overlay the watercolor marks. This would really make them pop off the page, but for now we will keep it simple in order to make the possibility of it getting printed more likely.

Another aspect to the design layout is the use of watercolor. After Mrs. Eaves was chosen, I needed to accentuate the titles to set up the text that was to follow. Watercolor is a technique that I am familiar with so I used it to create some depth to the pages. I did not use a creative license to put expressive marks throughout the book. I literally read the poems and painted as I responded to the text. I felt that for the watercolor to feel cohesive with the text, it had to have a true connection to the text. It is abstract in that it is through my interpretation, but it is not a clip art process. The poems are original and so should be the illustrations.

The corners of the pages are die cut with a .375 radius outside corner. A die cut is a technique that is used to add to pieces' uniqueness. In some situations a die cut is not only an aesthetic decision but also a functional one. An example would be in the packaging industry. They create a myriad of packages to hold product. A die cut makes it all possible. It is a machine that can be set up with multiple cutters to produce large quantities of product at once or it can simply use one knife to trim the corners off pages. I used the latter. I chose to use a die cut because the pages were having difficulty sliding into the material sleeve. To eliminate this fault, I had the corners cut. It was a simple solution to an annoying problem.

During the process of creating the prototype of this book, I had people take the pages in and out and I viewed the ease or lack of. I was instantly satisfied with the pocket but I wanted the pages to fit tight. I had to adjust the paper thickness to achieve the results desired. The paper that I chose to present the rough draft on to the client is a 44lb double-sided extra white paper. It is a weight that

is commonly found in the industry and should help keep costs down.

Now with the physical solutions all in order, it was time to design the layout. I had the paper size, the illustrations, and the type chosen. I had all the ingredients to create a fine poetry book that would have an original aspect in both aesthetics and content.

I started off by laying out a grid that would incorporate the different lengths of poems. One challenge I had was that one particular poem had a line length surpassing all the others by at least fifteen characters. This caused the original grid to work on all but one.

Though I do have full creative freedom with this project, I do not have the right to change the poems themselves. That is crossing a line of ethics. From the beginning, I wanted to keep the integrity of the poems to support the feeling that I am creating visually. I solved this problem by rebuilding the grid and type size.

It was important to me to keep the cohesion of the book intact, especially since the book is not bound. If the pages are out of sync, it will not cause any

confusion because each page is able to stand-alone. This definitely is an advantage to the reader. Unlike many other books of poems, if a reader has a favorite, they can separate it from the book and display it in a place of choice. I found through testing the poems on people that different poems stood out to different people. That was an obvious conclusion but it reinforced the idea to keep the pages separate.

In keeping true to the earlier decision to lay out the type in a classical format, I created the title page with type centered above the edge of the pocket. Centered type is something that I personally do not use in design except in rare instances. It is too expected and too comfortable. In the case of this book, however it seemed like the appropriate time to use centered type. Here, I wanted that formally inviting appeal in order to help convince the reader into reading a set of poems that in turn might disturb or violate a person's comfort zone.

Critiques

Once I had a rough draft that I felt was close to what I was trying to achieve, I was ready subject it to three critiques. The three critics are Darrin

Collier, Phil Chaeney, and Brian Crain. All three are graphic designers who, I hoped would provide some corrective criticism to push my book to an expected level.

First was the critique by Darrin Collier, the Assistant Professor of Communications and Multi-media at Lindenwood University. He patiently listened to my concept and then he physically went through the book. His first point or concern was going to be the cost. I explained the situation of having no budget and that the product would be printed in the future after more finances could be secured. He had mostly positive things to say, one in particular was that the watercolors worked well with the type. He said they supported the creative process of poetry.

The next critique came from a designer named Brian Crain a graphic designer for Cabello Associates in Indianapolis Indiana. He is notorious for being extremely critical of type layout. The first statement he made was about the centered type on the cover. I told him to read the poems and then we'll discuss the centered type. He came back with a question as to why I chose such a clean layout. I explained to him the deceit theory and he thought it

was innovative. He suggested that I take it a step further and use an old parchment to accentuate the classical type. Though an interesting idea, I disagreed and chose to stick with bright white. I feel it has a better contrast with the material cover.

Mr. Crain applauded the use of Mrs. Eaves; he said it represents my knowledge of font trends. I did not pick Mrs. Eaves to follow a trend, but it does happen to be popping up more in certain design circles.

Mr. Crain's final remark was about cost. Though I had tried to keep potential cost down, the cover pocket idea could be a costly one. I explained that the covers would be made by a seamstress in Rogersville Missouri at a cost of .25 cents each. The chipboard could be purchased by the author and inserted. The major cost would be of the printing. I had a local printer, ALOHA Printing; give me a bid for a run of five hundred. They came up with a figure around seven hundred and fifty dollars for the run. The book would be printed through offset printing, which is the most common type of printing process currently in use. Brian thought that getting 750 of them for around a thousand dollars was reasonable. He

did note that most real world clients don't want to sit around putting chipboard into homemade covers.

Finally, Phil Chaeney gave the last critique. He is as graphic designer currently working in Portland Oregon at K&L Design Group. Mr. Chaeney is known extremely strong illustration skills. He comes from the school of thought that you should always push the envelope of what is accepted. He was receptive of my concept but wanted to see more interaction with the material cover. He suggested using a stamp for the title and possibly the barcode. They could be stamped directly on the cover material. He feels that in this particular situation with this client willing to do some of the work herself to cut cost, the stamp could add to the concept. Stamping was an easy way to reproduce a word or sign back in the 1500's but even as early 300 B.C., humans were using stamps and seals as a way of communicating. A rubber stamp can be made for around twenty dollars and generally be ready within twenty-four hours. I was excited about this idea and plan on bringing it to fruition.

As an illustrator, Mr. Chaeney admired the watercolor and noted that it was a nice touch. He suggested that I pay close attention to the placement

of the paintings; he felt that some of them were over-bearing to the text. I have since made the adjustments.

Along with the critiques, I gave the client ample opportunities to offer some feedback. Lerner provided positive responses as the book developed. Not having a background in design, she gave me an insight to how the general public might view the book. She felt that the textile approach with the cover was great. The ability to pick up the book and feel the denim, a material that we are familiar with in the United States, is an appealing quality that will attract attention. Lerner also was fond of the concept of having the poems separate so that if someone finds one that speaks to them, they can separate it from the rest of the book. It was a confidence building experience watching Lerner see her poems become an interesting and unique book. It is those moments that push me to constantly propel myself further into my industry.

Conclusion

Working as a graphic designer today is dramatically different from even just ten years ago. Like any

industry, supply and demand drive technology, technology drives industry. In the graphic design industry, before computers, the creative process was divided into many manual labor traits, from the men who made the parchment out of animal skin to the typesetter.

Most of the past traditional jobs have since been abolished by technology. Today's graphic designers have to be proficient at multitasking. During the course of a project, a designer may be responsible for many aspects of the process such as scheduling deadlines with the client, setting up photo shoots with the sub-contractors, or designing the actual layout. The designer's role in current time has evolved into a job that is difficult to fully prepare for in school. It changes faster than the institutions can keep up with. I have had the opportunity to have instructors here at Lindenwood that do the best that they can do to help us to understand how the real world works.

Take book design for example, I did not do anything directly with books during my time here. The variety of classes that I took, however, helped me to complete this book. By applying the tools that I am equipped

with now, I feel that I am more marketable as a designer.

Having produced a book has brought to my attention how valuable books are still, even in this electronic age that seems to leave many traditional ways of life on the side of the road to die. As long as people read, though, I still have hope for designing more books.

To sum up this experience, I entered this project with expectations that were realistic. If I had made the task unreasonable I could not write about the successful process, which I experienced throughout. The critiques helped me work on a professional level with other designers. Being able to accept other people's criticisms is a humbling experience but totally invaluable. Producing this book in the short time allotted while handling the rest of life was definitely a test to my loyalty to graphic design. I did finish the book and I am proud of its results. I hope the readers will be, too. The title, which is what I hope the readers will do to Ms. Kolb's work through my design, is…

Come Closer.

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