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HOW TYPE HISTORY DISAPPEARED MODERNISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND HISTORICISM IN THE 20TH

BY NICK SHINN

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There's this story about Alexandre Wollner visiting Herb Lubalin in his three-floor office in New York. The main room was as big as Alexandre Wollner's house with tables covered with sweets and chocolates. Wollner asked him what the room was for and how he managed all the luxury when he (Wollner) back in Sao Paulo couldn't even dream of having such an adequate room. He replied: "I'm going to tell you a secret: on the first floor there's a room full of people working, but they only do retail down there, which I don't show to anyone and which doesn't appear in any book. We make a lot of money there. On the 2nd floor we produce publications of a slightly higher level: some adverts, but mostly magazine page spreads, medical pamphlets, and these make reasonable money. I don't publish this stuff anywhere either. Then there is this room here where I do the things you see; the Avant Garde alphabet, Eros magazine etc. These don't bring in a dime, they just cost money. It's the first floor that sustains the other two."

--ANDRE STOLARSKI.[1] The incident occurred in the 1970s.

1. STOLARSKI, ANDRE, *Alexandre Wollner and the Formation of Design in Brazil,* Sao Paulo, Brazil: Cosac & Naify, 2005
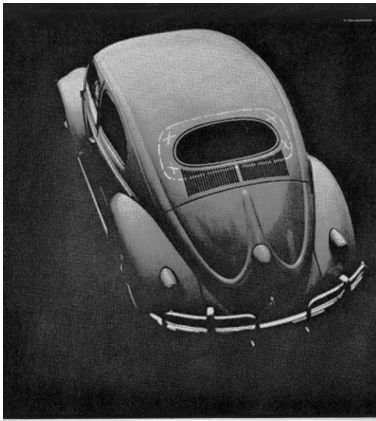
Design history owes much to the third-floor oeuvre of famous men like Lubalin, its source material monographs and trade periodicals laced with their award-winning work, award annuals from art directors' clubs and other competition-organizing bodies, and celebrity presentations at design conferences. These, along with business-to-business marketing, design books, professional organizations and online communities, comprise the metaculture of the people who create commercial culture, a refined environment for those whose job it is to be above and ahead of the crowd.

While some work admired in this subculture does play a part in the commercial mainstream, it is usually in a minority, adversarial role, in tune with the creative personalities of those who win and subsequently judge awards competitions. For example, the canonical[2] "big idea" advertisements that Helmut Krone art directed for Volkswagen at New York advertising agency Doyle Dane Bernbach in the 1960s did indeed run in large-circulation magazines—but for every high concept, single page, black and white VW ad in *Life*, hip, understated and intellectual, there were several prosaic, full-colour car porn spreads from General Motors, Ford, American Motors and Chrysler, for the brands that majorly shaped the culture—from Detroit not Wolfsburg. Those ads are not in the history books (Figs. 1–3).

2. e.g. in BLACKWELL, LEWIS, *20th century type (remix),* Gingko Press, Corte Madera, CA, 1998, p. 107

The predilection of the design world for a history based on what it finds worthwhile and interesting, rather than on what is or was prevalent, has created a fictional universe in which a

if this one doesn't make you want to travel
you already live where all the fun is

1. VW ad, *Sports Illustrated*, May 23, 1960.
Type: Futura (1927)
Helmut Krone's modest, modernist design for VW appeared in the same magazine as these lavish Detroit spreads.

2. Chevrolet ad, *Sports Illustrated*, May 23, 1960.
Type: Century Expanded (1900)

Lincoln Continental
in a world apart, automatically

3. Lincoln ad, *Sports Illustrated*, May 23, 1960.
Type: Custom lettering (headlines), and Bodoni (text).

NEW PARIS
IMPORTS GIVE
THE FIRST HINT
OF CLOTHES
FOR AUTUMN

4. Headline, *Harper's Bazar*, July, 1929.
Kabel's capitals take their proportions from Ancient Rome

sideshow, Modernism, takes centre stage.

When Steven Heller wrote, in 1999, "The thesis and organizing structure is that twentieth century modernism serves as the touchstone around which the past century of type design can be measured and compared,"* he was stating the axiomatic precept of the history of type and graphic design, and it is this strange relationship which my essay here explores.

* STEVEN HELLER, LOUISE FILI, *Typology,* 1999

Graphic design is as old as the alphabet. It is an implicit quality of letter form, and of the way words are arranged in text. The term itself is far younger, coined by the astute W.A. Dwiggins in the 1920s. Its historiography is younger still: the first comprehensive work being Phillip B. Meggs' *A History of Graphic Design* in 1985. Whether he set the tone or reflected conventional wisdom, Meggs' gave pre-eminence to the modernist viewpoint, as indicated by his section and chapter headings, e.g.—

> Part IV—The Twentieth Century: The growth and development of modern graphic design; Chapter 15— The influence of modern art. Chapter 16—Pictorial modernism. Chapter 17—A new language of form. Chapter 18—The Bauhaus and the new typography.

And so on. That's a rather oblique perspective, more icing than cake, in fact no cake at all when a section in the book is titled The New Advertising and the old advertising is nowhere to be found. There is another way to view history, by asking, "What was common then?" Enough mass-circulation magazines survive to provide a ready answer. A market exists for this ephemera, and a 1920s *Saturday Evening Post,* a '30s *Chatelaine,* a '50s *Sports Illustrated* or a '60s *Playboy* can each be had for under $10. magazines such as these were published monthly in multi-million runs; they were the dominant graphic medium and the primary vehicle of cultural meaning. In their pages, there is a musée sans murs, an astounding wealth of advertising and editorial design and typography—and almost none of it is Modernist (Fig. 14). For every ad which was set in a new sans serif typeface, there are scores of others set in revivals of types that are hundreds of years old, in layouts devoid of asymmetrically deployed white space (Figs. 5–6, 15). This is what the public, publishers and advertisers wanted, and what graphic designers and art directors were happy to provide, toiling away on their first and second floors.

While 20th century commercial design was in the main historicist, and far from the ruthless modernism demonstrated by Jan Tschicold in *The New Typography,* (1928) it was nonetheless progressive, yoked to the leading edge of rapidly changing technology and the succession of new effects which came into being. The important distinction here is between *modern,* which is just a way of saying up-to-date, and *Modernism,* which was a 20th century cultural movement. The narrative that contrasts Modernist design with conservative mass media is a simplistic polarization of something far more complex. For example, consider the relationship between sans serif and serifed type design in the 1920s. The geometrically minimal 1928 sans serif Futura, "a typeface of our time" as tagged by its designer Paul Renner, and Rudolf Koch's 1929 sans serif Kabel are generally considered as paragons of modernism, while Harry Lawrence's Poliphilus, the 1923 revival of a 1495 humanist type by Francesco Griffo, would appear to be the opposite, the epitome

JAFFEE
The Rational Meal-time Drink for All Ages

A DELICIOUS, appetizing drink, which parents **can** safely serve their children, because it is absolutely *non-stimulating*. A drink which appeals strongly to **all** those who **cannot** drink coffee, as well as to those who **are** looking for something to alternate with tea and coffee.

5. JAFFEE AD, *The Pictorial Review*, 1918
The 'teens saw magazines transformed by the arrival of huge colored ads on coated stock. The typography is historicist, derived from that of the Private Press movement. Typeface: Cloister, Morris Benton's faithful Jenson interpretation.

LOCOMOBILE
1917

THE new models are now on exhibition at our Show-rooms. They invite the attention of those interested in expensive cars.

2314 Market Street

6. LOCOMOBILE AD
Life, 1917
Designed by TM Cleland.
Type: Morris Benton's Bodoni (1907-11).
Cleland's historical allusion is quite proper, employing neoclassical motifs from the era of Bodoni, a hundred years earlier.

of historicism.

But it's not that straightforward. The modernist German faces have a complex involvement with tradition—their capitals take their proportions from Ancient Rome (Fig. 4), and Kabel shares its letter shapes with Koch's Antiqua, a serifed, pen-informed face with an extreme contrast of x-height and capital size. Which of Koch's 1920s twins had the greater contemporary resonance—the shiny art deco Kabel, or the Antiqua, redolent of German Expressionism? Neither, for together they comprise a schizoid modernism, an ambivalent reaction to the state of modernity; it is the same duality that exists between the inventor Rotwang's impossibly mediæval house and the Art Deco underground power plant in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1926).

The Modernist sans serif faces were designed, drafted and crafted in the standard engineering method that originated with L.B. Benton's pantograph of 1885. The ostensibly venerable Poliphilus on the other hand, was created with an entirely new concept of technique, using faithfully reproduced photographic images of printed characters sampled from the Aldine *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* to produce a machine-set metal type which could, in turn, make a perfect facsimile of the output of printing technology long since vanished from the face of the Earth.[3] A dinosaur-from-DNA trick. William Morris had worked with photo blow-ups of Nicolas Jenson's Renaissance type in the 1890s, but his tracings were just to get the hang of the thing, he would never have dreamed of making a verbatim transcription: too pedantic, too mechanical, no craft. In Poliphilus a relatively new medium, photography, mechanically appropriated the genius of a type founder working in a far older technology. A postmodern, curation-as-art methodology, with the reproduced artefact becoming a hollow simulacrum of its original self. Type revival as recontextualization.

Despite, or perhaps partly because of the popularity of Poliphilus, the Monotype foundry took another crack at Griffo, this time with deftly rendered virtuosity. The result was Bembo, a 1929 redrawing of the *De Aetna* font. Bembo has a sleek magnificence, born of high-precision technology at the service of accomplished production skills, which honours the spirit of the original, and an exotic grace of line which humbles most new designs made more ostensibly for the new technology.

Frederic Goudy had a different approach. Rather than either clone or redraw specific designs from the past, he created new, synthetic typefaces, such as Kennerley (Fig. 7) and Italian Old Style, to emulate the effects of the old masters in a highly personal manner.[4]

These different methods of repurposing old type styles indicate the paradox at the heart of mass market design: being contemporary is de rigueur, and yet the past is always engaged—Retrieval is McLuhan's Third Law of Media. The complexities are myriad. Even so fundamental a reform as stripping the serifs off type cannot escape history, but comes with its own cultural baggage, alluding to the primitive quality of ancient civilisations, expressed in the architectural inscriptions designed by Greek Revival architect John Soane in the late 18th century, or in the name given to the first sans serif typeface in 1821, "Egyptian". By the time the Caslon Foundry published the typeface, the sans serif letterform was familiar to Londoners from a decade's use by sign painters.

3. Morison, Stanley, *A Tally of Types.* Cambridge: University Press, 1973, p. 54.

4. Goudy, Frederic W., *Goudy's Type Designs.* New York: The Myriade Press, 1978.

To the tip of your toes you will be thrilled by Phoenix economy. The fine feeling which comes from the wearing of comfortable silk hosiery, and the sense of security and elegance which it brings, are really incidentals. Phoenix is the best selling line of hosiery in all the world, because of its remarkable *wearing qualities,* because of the long mileage it insures at low cost.

PHOENIX
HOSIERY

It had also been used in Ordnance survey maps to denote ancient monuments.[5] Pushed to the extreme of newness, age sets in. McLuhan's Second law, Reversal. Rationalizing away the cultural baggage reveals primitive bones, if you will pardon the mixed metaphor.

The backward-looking typography of the early 20th century has been termed "New Traditionalism",[6] but this is incorrect. Traditional form is evolutionary, doing things the way they have always been done, with slight changes, and that is how type style evolved from the 15th to the 19th century. William Morris broke tradition with a flashback, a process just as radical in its own way—anachronism, stepping outside the temporal flow—as that of DeStijl artist Theo van Doesburg starting from scratch in 1917, constructing an alphabet soley from vertical and horizontal lines. The crucial role of Morris in fomenting modernism was first recognized by Pevsner in the 1930s, not so much for style, but for his holistic sense of the ideological responsibility of art. Ironic indeed for someone who so detested the modern world that his will stipulated a funeral procession on a horse-drawn hay cart, to be a founding father of modernism.

Progress is a tradition in the West, so modernity, but not Modernism, may be considered traditional. Rather than traditionalism, new or old, what occurred with Morris and his followers was historicism. No doubt the impetus for this was antimodernism,[7] however, that term is not very useful when discussing 19th and early 20th century graphic design, for the initial reason that it's confusing, as the movement known in art and design circles as modernism had yet to happen. It is also difficult to align historicism in the graphic arts with antimodernism, considering the extent to which it embraced cutting edge technology—Linotype was the Microsoft of the early 20th century, in terms of media domination, or the Adobe, being a high tech company which nobly reconstituted ancient typographic glories. Further, from the theoretical standpoint, McLuhan's Laws state that all new media retrieve previously obscelesced ground and bring it back as an essential component of the new form; and finally, from a postmodern perspective, modernism is seen as an awareness and a reaction to the condition of being modern—an awareness that includes the past as a separate country to that of modernity, enabling the adoption of historical form as a suitable expression of modernity.[8]

Historicism, then, was not the staid, unimaginative, conservative foil of Modernism, but a radical, creative movement which dealt with rapid cultural change on its own terms.

Within historicism there was a progressive shading, which can be seen in the succession of Jenson revivals (Figs. 8–10). The first, Morris' 1892 Golden Type was a novice type designer's caricature, albeit spectacular. The private press Jensons that followed, such as Bertram Goodhue's Merrymount (1895), were smoother but still pointedly quaint. Morris Benton's Cloister (1914) was dry and faithful engineering (Fig. 5). Bruce Rogers' Centaur (1914) exquisitely polished artistry. Goudy's massively popular Kennerley (Fig. 7) was not a revival per se, but a Renaissance-style type that sampled many Jenson features, such as the Venetian angle of the e's crossbar and the tiny off-centre tittle of i. It was speculative fiction of a romantic alternate past comparable to the contemporary literature of William Morris and Lord Dunsany, and Maxfield Parish's illustrations.

5. MOSELY, JAMES, *The Nymph and the Grot.* London: Friends of the St. Brides Printing Library, 1999.

6. KINROSS, ROBIN, *Modern Typography.* London: Hyphen Press, 1992, 2004, pp. 64–81.

7. LEARS, JACKSON, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.

8. BURGER, PETER, *Theory of the Avant-Garde.* Minneapolis, University Press, 1984.

ocrate.Xenotin
o.Pythea. Tin

To prove ho
onal cleaner y

onal Meal-tin
for All Ages

VON SCHREIBKUNST UND DRUCKSCHRIFT
An der Spitze der europäischen Schriften ſtehen
die römischen Versalien, aufgebaut aus Dreieck,

FUTURA
demibold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z ff fi fl ft & £
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 . , - : ; ! ? ')

8 Point 26 A 52 a

**Pistons of the same size may look alike, yet they may
require entirely different pressures, applied at different
points, to restore them to their original efficiency. It is
absolutely impossible for any one type expander to work
THE PERFECT CIRCLE COMPANY IN HAGERSTOWN**

Historically, type design has changed gradually, with the exception of occasional paradigm shifts at the rate of perhaps one or two a century. Incremental evolution in the body politic rarely involves the radical avant garde, because the type designer is constrained to work with traditional forms, namely the quite intransigent shapes of the alphabet. Early in the 16th century, G.G. Trissino proposed three improvements to the roman alphabet; the addition of the Greek omega for the long 'o' sound, and the addition of v and j to disambiguate u and i, respectively. The first reform failed, and the latter two were not universally adopted until the 17th century: after protracted negotiations in the marketplace, the collective made its decision.[9] The most recent reform of the roman alphabet occurred around 1800, with the replacement of the long s by the terminal form. When the Bauer foundry first published Futura in 1925, it included alternate versions of several lower case letters: a ball-and-stick "r", a three-sides-of-a-square "n", and a most peculiar "g", but by the second specimen of 1928 these had been dropped (Figs. 11 & 12), Bauer's cold feet due perhaps to negative press reaction.[10]

Given the inertia of the market to such minor matters as changing a few character shapes in a radical typeface, wholesale reform of the roman alphabet, whether Shavian or Bauhaus unicase, is futile. The readers will have the last word.[11] It's not that all the stakeholders are, individually, bourgeois conservatives, but the reading public, the educational establishment, the special needs community, the mass market for type, the professional market and OEM users are, in the sum of their diverse requirements, resistant to the kind of radical gestures that gallery artists and third-floor designers are able to create in their elite niches. It's design by the whole of society as committee, tending conservatively to the mean.

In the mass market, the avant garde is an infectious agent which only occasionally precipitates changes in general taste or behaviour. The idea of forward momentum is dubious, as any movement is more likely to be retro. The genuinely new aesthetic revolution is the exception rather than the rule, and is as much the child of engineering innovation as art. The avant garde is predicated more on an idealistic rejection of mass culture than on any desire or ability to actually and consistently effect change. In constantly reacting to the establishment, the avant garde creates its own parallel story, which has become the creation myth and narrative history of design as conceived by the design community's metaculture, at odds with the reality of most graphic designers' work. Today's typographic reality, constructed on freshly upgraded software with a prevalence of sans serif faces, has the smack of the new, but this is illusory. In recent years, Helvetica, that mid-century modern Victorian revival, has been challenged in popularity by Proxima Nova and Gotham, their style equally steeped in history. In the postmodern era, irony dictates that modernism be retro.

This is not necessarily the embrace of a bygone irrelevancy, but offers a sense of continuity and perspective. By emulating the design forms and processes of the past with the latest technology, the mainstream of designers, necessarily traditional, reveal the way we have changed, and how our means of expression relate to the tools at our disposal. There is also a sheer delight

9. JOHNSON, A.F., *One Hundred Title Pages.* London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1928, Pl. 20.

10. BURKE, CHRISTOPHER, *Paul Renner.* New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998, pp. 102-3

11. JUNGKIND, WALTER, 'Quo Vadis Type?' in *Graphic Design Journal,* Issue 6, 2006. p.41.
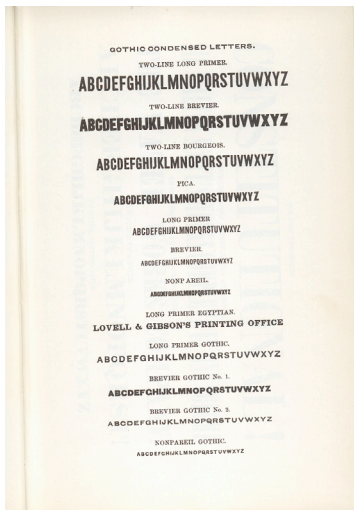
13. Lovell & Gibson type specimen,
Montreal, 1846
The emergent sans genre is without lower
case or italic, but with variants in Regular,
Bold and Extra Bold weights, and Regular,
Condensed and Extended horizontal scaling.

14. Moore Type Foundry specimen,
Toronto, 1929.
A predominance of historicist and Victorian
types, with only the Art Deco Gallia and
Broadway representing any semblance of
20th century modernism.
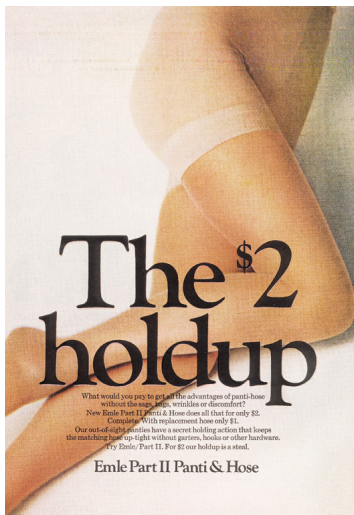
15. Emle hosiery ad,
Life magazine, 1969.
Goudy Bold with Century Schoolbook text.
The tight setting is contemporary, but the
types are historicist, from the 'teens, harking
back, respectively, to the Renaissance, and
the mid 19th century.

16. Chevrolet Camaro ad,
Life magazine, 1968.
Franklin Gothic Condensed (M. Benton, 1906)
Century Schoolbook, Benton, 1918-21.
The layout is modern (note the white space and the clever two-part headline),
but the types are, again, Benton's summary of the 19th century.

to be had in artistry, an appreciation of how skilfully a perennial style has been refined or adapted to the age; and so the 19th century grotesque[12] is manipulated to express today's sensibility, in the form of a high-resolution setting of Helvetica Ultra Light; and the marvellous skills of 20th century signwriters and lettering artists have been parlayed into OpenType "smart" fonts.

Against the carefree pleasures of traditionalism, which tend on the downside to the comfortably numb, the arc of Modernist history has proved an enthralling myth on many counts:

Firstly, it distills the mess of culture into a few heroic symbols, such as the Bauhaus. During its heyday, the 1920s, the Bauhaus was a small art school; elsewhere in Weimar and around the world, other schools were providing those destined for the graphic trades with an education that centred on historicism. Yet its reputation and influence grew, and after the Second World War its pedagogic methods were disseminated in the West, until—redemption!—eventually in the 1960s and 70s graduates trained in its principles and other true believers affected commercial culture to a significant (though small) degree. The march of modernism is a marvellous story.[13] While revivals faddishly come and go, modernism's cohesive narrative pits a succession of creative idealists against the status quo, their work politically charged, their lives famous.

Secondly, as we pursue our current obsessions, we seek precursors and find them in past avant gardes. The relationship is moot; Internet pixel fonts, for instance, owe nothing directly to Wim Crouwel's gridular typography of the 1960s, and yet their existence adds resonance to his place in history—recently enshrined by the Museum of Modern Art. (Crouwel's New Alphabet of 1967 was not published as a font until 1997 and few have ever seen it used, its importance exists solely in the intellectual sphere outside mass culture.)

Thus, thirdly, Modernism is a cornerstone of cultural theory, rich in meaning. It may now be a label for a style choice, but in its time it was a progressive, full scale social and cultural movement. Always ideological, it promoted simplicity, directness, honesty, standardization, economy, and the machine aesthetic. It was equated with functionalism, and opposed to ambiguity, ornamentation, individuality and complexity—all which later was to become Postmodern. Since the Bauhaus, modernism has been associated with the ideal of graphic designers not as artists, craft workers, or technicians, but as educated communications professionals dedicated to improving society. Why would mainstream commercial culture, dedicated to improving the bottom line, pay any heed? It didn't. In lieu of outright modernism, Art Deco and Moderne made a splash in the 1930s, and there was a brief era of high concept minimalism in the 1960s. But even then the signal was never pure, because many of the typefaces favoured were traditional and serifed.

Fourthly, it is highly expedient to model the young history of 20th century graphic design on the much older history of modern art. It adds cachet and credibility, and comes ready-made with seminal figures such as Rodchenko, Lissitsky and Heartfield whose work elides the distinction between commercial and gallery work. But in general the fit is terrible. As visual media, they have superficial commonalities, but their raison d'être and the circumstances of their production are quite different. Art is one-off, permanent, rarely has text, is shown in a gallery, and is an end in itself. Commercial design is mass-produced, ephemeral, read everywhere, and designed to sell a product or

12. The term used to describe 19th century types of sans serif genre, originating in the 18th century architectural grotto, see Moseley, ibid.

13. Well told by REGINALD ISAACS in *Gropius: An Illustrated Biography of the Creator of the Bauhaus.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1991.

service. By these criteria however, third-floor work is closest to art, and is most supportive of the modernist myth. It's art if you make it art, according to seminal modernist designer Paul Rand—and also if you say so; he was a master of celebrity and rationale.

The modernist design metaculture exists in opposition to the historicism of the mass market. In so doing, it must discount the existence of modernity in the record of popular culture. Hence the modernist historian's dismissal of the original sans serif designs, "…they failed to attain any greater importance, economically and aesthetically, for almost a hundred years. Only the spirit of our century &c., &c."[14] The facts speak otherwise. The substantial presence of sans serif types in 19th century foundry specimen books from the 1830s (Figs. 13 & 14) on attests to their economic vitality, as does their use in magazine advertisements and all kinds of printed ephemera. On 19th century buildings, machinery and street signs, the sans serif is plain to see.

Why then was something so prevalent and apparent ignored by cultural commentators?[15]

In the first place, they were unprepared to recognize it, because the conceptual label "modernist" did not yet exist. They weren't looking at commercial culture, which was *infra dig*, and they weren't expecting the answer to the ills of the modern world to be more modernism, a state of cultural shock.

For smart society, advertising has the taint of commerce—perceived perhaps in a state of denial that one is subject to its powers of persuasion. The rudeness of mass market advertising is distasteful to the fashionable elite. If it is advertising which makes things popular, its commonness offends the intellectual, to the extent that popular culture existed in an academic lacuna prior to the late 1960s. In fact, "popular culture" was an oxymoron until then.[16]

As the antithesis of fine art, commercial art was stigmatized. In the days before arts grants, the myth emerged of the successful artist rising from poverty—he had to support himself, but the sell-out to commerce dare not be mentioned, that work is not considered part of the artist's œuvre. The commercial work of J.E.H. MacDonald, leader of Canada's Group of Seven, is in limbo, unknown to the art world, yet he was the pre-eminent Canadian graphic designer of the early 20th century.*

There are much earlier histories of typography than of graphic design. Initially, their subject was not type's design, but its technology. T.C. Hansard, in his monumental *Typographia* (1826) devoted but a handful of paragraphs to the aesthetics of type design, mainly to roundly slag the latest "Monstrosities!!! … the book printing of the present day is disgraced by a mixture of fat, lean and heterogenous types, which to the eye of taste is truly disgusting," with a sneer at the burgeoning market for job [commercial] printing, "…for which purpose it appears so appropriate…" Hansard attributed the trend entirely to the capriciousness of type founders; we recognize a cultural ecology in the marketplace, where all are both shapers and shaped.

Talbot Baines Reed terminated his *History of the Old English Letter Foundries* (1887) in 1830, with a similar indictment to that of Hansard, "the typographical taste of the first quarter of the nineteenth century suffered a distinct vulgarization in the unsightly heavy-faced roman letters…" Heaven knows, the sans serif was not even worth mentioning to dismiss. When a new edition was

14. FRIEDL, FRIEDRICH, *The Univers by Adrian Frutiger*, Frankfurt: Verlag form, 1998, p. 4.

15. Two exceptions: NICOLETTE GREY, *19th Century Ornamented Type*, Faber & Faber, 1976; despite the title, a brilliantly comprehensive type chronology of the Victorian era, detailing the subtle characteristices of each decade's style, and relating it to contemporary movements and trends in art and architecture. J. BEN LIEBERMAN, *Type and Typefaces*, Myriade Press 1978. A realistic chronology by a practising letterpress printer, promoter, and organizer.

16. The term was used occasionally during the late 19th and early twentieth century to refer to the entertainment of the lower classes, a slightly different meaning than that of mass culture as it emerged in the late 1960s.

* ROBERT STACEY & HUNTER BISHOP *J.E.H. MacDonald, Designer: An Anthology of Graphic Design, Illustration and Lettering* Carleton University Press

Mr. Beecher had just to pour out the observations which crowded upon him in connection with an art of which he is so great a master. Full of egotism the book is, but Mr. Beecher could not speak of his own art without egotism. To make the pulpit lively and full of force is evidently his aim. Whatever he deems good in the old theology he would throw into modern moulds. Mr. Beecher is a man of splendid instincts, but not of patient thought and careful study. If his book be read with a due regard to his idiosyncrasies, it may contribute much towards making the pulpit efficient, lively, and impressive.

The Man with the Book, by John Matthias Weylland, is an interesting sample of the work done in the poorest districts of London by Christian agents who go into them full of the love of God. The picture of the localities and their inhabitants is evidently from the life. Though the writer has not all the graphic power, and certainly not the finished style which can present such scenes and such people in the most interesting form, he brings their condition before us with great truth, and gives most wonderful instances of the power of the Bible accompanied by God's Spirit to transform and elevate them. Those to whom our own "River-side Visitor" conveys such living pictures of London poverty and ignorance, who may desire to have their impressions corroborated, will meet in "The Man with the Book," with the same kind of people, and the same kind of work. Surely some great good will come ultimately out of all the earnest labours, of which, thank God, we are constantly reading, in connection with these fallen populations.

Thoughts on Recent Scientific Conclusions, and their Relation to Religion, is a series of plain Essays on the Antiquity of Man, Darwinism, the Deluge, and other topics recently stirred in the scientific world. The aim of the writer is to show that there is no real warrant for the conclusions that have been come to so hastily by some in reference to these matters. They can only be regarded as speculations, certainly not ascertained conclusions. The work is written sensibly and clearly, and cannot fail to interest those who read it—only a larger measure of force in the style and grip in the reasoning would have added greatly to its efficiency, and enabled the writer to do more justice to himself.

Lectures on the Re-union of the Churches, by J. J. I. von Döllinger, D.D., D.C.L., appears with a preface by Henry Nutcombe Oxenham, M.A., which we cannot praise. It is written in the highest tone of ritualism, and along with the use which in his dedication he makes of the name of his personal friend Canon Liddon, it will be pronounced, we believe, by all impartial judges to be in singularly bad taste. We have already, in these columns, given some account of the Lectures—their remarkable frankness in many points, their approach to Protestant ground; but their want of that doctrine of salvation which gave to the Lutheran Reformation its great power and glory. Relatively, the Lectures are most interesting; absolutely, they leave the question of reunion pretty much where they found it.
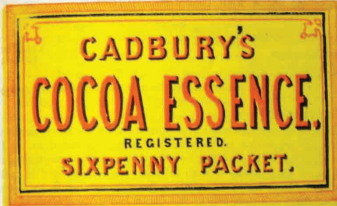
VI.—IN MEMORIAM.

J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE, D.D.

By the death of Dr. Merle d'Aubigné, French-speaking Protestants have lost their foremost representative, and the Evangelical Church catholic one whose name is familiar in all mouths as a household word. He had reached a green old age; and, passing away during the night between the Sabbath and Monday, his death was probably without a struggle, and like that of Chalmers, whom in massiveness and force of character he somewhat resembled, it was more like a translation than a death. The "History of the Reformation," in connection with which he obtained his first fame, like Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," owed its origin to a circumstance that might be said to indicate a providential plan. Gibbon, it is said, conceived his work while looking on a procession of monks in Rome; Merle d'Aubigné conceived his when present at the tercentenary of the celebration of the Reformation, at the Wartburg, in 1817. The son of a Geneva merchant, he was on his way from his native city to Leipsic to attend the university there, when he was drawn into the stream of travellers to the Wartburg, to which place he turned aside to witness the commemoration of the memorable day, when Luther nailed his theses to the church door of Wittemberg. Dissatisfied at the spirit of the celebration, he resolved then and there to write the "Life of Luther." Previously to this time, he had come under the influence of Mr. Robert Haldane, at Geneva, and a pointed question put to him by that gentleman was the means of a new life springing up in his soul. His first charge was in 1823 as minister of the French Church at Hamburg. Thereafter he was appointed preacher to the King of Holland, and in 1830 he returned to his native city, where he became one of the founders of the Church of the Oratoire, and Professor in the New School of Theology. Of the services which he rendered to the cause of Evangelical Christianity, it is impossible to speak too highly. He was not only an interesting and successful writer, he was a great man. His very appearance carried weight. He may be said to have been equally honoured for the soundness of his judgment, the consistency and godliness of his character, his research and learning as an author, his fervour and eloquence as a speaker. The place left vacant at Geneva is one for which it is not likely that the French Protestant community will be able to find another such occupant.

LORD KINLOCH.

A devout judge on the bench of Scotland, with a catholic heart, and considerable facilities in sacred literature, has also passed from among us. As a writer, he was enabled to make some very useful contributions to our devotional reading. "Time's Treasure," the first of his works, is in verse, and is written in a vein of evangelical fervour and simplicity that meets the taste of the many. His other works were of similar quality, and have been much appreciated by the Christian Community.

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17. *The Sunday Magazine,* Dec., 1872
Cadbury's packaging features sans serifs, as does the tipped-in ad's headline.
On the inside back cover are more advertisements set in sans serif types.

published in 1952 under the auspices of Stanley Morison, revised and enlarged by A.F. Johnston, the coverage was extended to 1890, but again without sans.

Daniel Berkeley Updike's *Printing Types—Their History, Forms and Use,* (1923) was and is the definitive history of type design, at least for its first 450 years. Updike was a printer and bibliophile who derived inspiration from the fine book printing of the past. This was many years before Warhol and cultural studies, and Updike, striving to put type design on the map as a worthy topic, and to elevate the handiwork and artistic status of printers, focused on book typography and avoided mention of job printing, i.e. commercial typography for the marketing-driven world of magazines, advertisements, posters, packaging and brochures. Consequently, his history does not include a single example of sans serif type, despite their having been in constant use for the previous hundred years (Fig. 13). At the end of *Printing Types,* Updike offers some advice to printers, "And what are the types we ought not to want—which have no place in any artistically respectable composing room? They are (in my opinion) ... all condensed or expanded types, all "sans serif" ... all fat-face blackletter and fat-faced roman, all hairline types ..." and so on. Updike's history is staunchly elitist, skipping over the bulk of the 19th century with Morrisonian contempt. Robin Kinross in *Modern Typography* (1992, 2004) also makes light work of the Victorian era, and suffers from the same good taste as Updike—of the twenty-five publications illustrated, none is of a magazine or advertisement; a look at Dwiggins' how-to book *Layout in Advertising* is as close as it gets. Warren Chappell's classic *A Short History of the Printed Word* (1952, 70) is another work in which neither the sans serif genre nor advertising typography appear to have existed.

Another explanation for the missing advertising: it is absent from the record, the magazines preserved in libraries having been bound into volumes with the ad pages removed. This practice initially stemmed from the "on sale or return" terms which existed between printer and sales agent; at year end, the returns being collated into "annuals". Such product extensions proved to be extremely popular, and *Punch* led the way in producing specially made spin-offs to cater to the seasonal market, with anthologies of themed material and Christmas almanacs of fresh jokes. The first *Punch Almanac* in 1842 sold 90,000 copies, compared with the regular monthly circulation of 6,000.† With stereotyping, which was commercially introduced in the 1820s, printers made plaster moulds from made-up type, from which they cast one-piece printing plates. The type was reused for the next issue, while the stereotype was put aside for future reprints such as annuals and anthologies.

Advertisements were grouped on ad-only pages at either end of magazines*, around the editorial "well", so they were easily discarded (Fig 17). Even today, this practice continues: Project Gutenburg has digitized the first year of *Punch* (1841) and posted it online, but the original covers and advertisements are missing. There are many libraries with *Punch* archives, but only one, the British Library, has a full collection with the covers intact, which it only acquired as late as 2004.

Academic studies of 19th century typography are skewed by the extant material, weighted towards foundry specimens and fine books. It is an irony of print culture that the publications with the largest print runs are ephemera that are least likely to survive.**

† M. H. Spielmann, *The History of "Punch"* 1895

* This stems from the original practice of their being pre-printed as separate sheets by the advertisers, and then bound into the publication between the cover and editorial.

** Baker, Brentano *The World on Sunday: Graphic Art in Joseph Pulitzer's Newspaper* (1898–1911)

18. The Field, advertisement, 1853
19. W & J Sangster umbrella ad, 1851

Both ads show the classic "mid century modern" combination of Gothic (Grotesque), Scotch (Modern) and Egyptian (Clarendon).

Taken together, the allure of the modernist myth combines with a snobbish disdain for commercial media, creating an institutional blindness to the modernist tendencies of graphic design in the 19th century, and historicism in the 20th.

Lewis Blackwell's *20th Century Type* (1998) makes no bones about excluding, to a degree, most of what he terms "the living tradition of design", concentrating instead on a succession of avant gardes. Nonetheless, while the vast majority of his illustrations of type in use are culled from the modernist canon—exceptional, niche market work—Blackwell also shows alphabets of the ubiquitous historicist type designs of the century, making for a thought-provoking contrast.

The most objective, least opinionated type history is Mac McGrew's comprehensive *American Metal Typefaces of the Twentieth Century* (1986), but it is a reference work that doesn't show type in use, arranging font specimens alphabetically not chronologically, and doesn't contribute to the consensus formed by other histories.

Two more works which follow the reference format, rather than that of the interpretive historical narrative, are Neil Macmillan's *A-Z of type designers* (2005), and Geoffrey Dowding's *An Introduction to the History of Printing Types* (1961, 1995), which organizes by "phenotype", that is by categories such as Italics, Decorated, and Twentieth Century (a mere four pages).

The bulk of *American Type Design & Designers* (2004) by David Consuegra is devoted to biographies of designers (more depth, but fewer than in MacMillan's international survey). It is also something of an encyclopaedia, and the first 37 pages provide a thorough and unpretentious history of type design. Unfortunately it's buried, without illustrations, in a book of rather scrappy design.

And so, when UK magazine *Computer Arts Projects* published its typography issue in the summer of 2006, the historical overview, *Type of our Times*, was Modernism 101, a quick trip through the 20th century with stops at Futurism, Dada, De Stijl, Constructivism and the Bauhaus, illustrated by eight sans typefaces and one with serifs. A somewhat misleading impression, for those working commercially with type today, of what their peers were up to in the past.

The trade's idealized perception of itself is repeated in the Wikipedia entry for *History of Graphic Design*. But at least graphic design has a Wiki entry; advertising art direction does not, for which it can perhaps be thankful.

The Modernist bias is further driven by the book market, to the extent that Modernism is popular amongst designers and educators today, with the Modernist narrative forming the core of design history as it is taught, requiring textbooks on the subject.

Modern art and modernism, and award-winning typography and design, are all dear to my heart. But the proper study of popular culture is popular culture, not just the third-floor cream of it. Conventional wisdom is topsy turvy: the most progressive force in 20th century design was not modernism, but historicism. And as far as typefaces are concerned, modern design emerged much earlier, at the birth of the modern era, hot on the heels of the revolutions Industrial, French, and American. ❋❋❋