# A Feminist View on the Power of Typography: Making the Invisible Visible

Alyssa L. Duprey

# Abstract

Words; they are everything. Words are the symbols we use to create meaning for our actions, ideas, and thoughts. Words reside in two all encompassing worlds: oral and written. This project will focus on the mechanical written word also known as type (specifically American English in Western civilization through mediums like print and screen) and how our gendered perspectives will forever influence those words.

Throughout the history of typography (the art of arranging type) the ability to choose the characteristics of type remained in the realm of the esoteric few, mainly white males. Women type designers make an appearance in the history of typography after the middle eighteenth century. Only type will be analyzed due to the need to narrow the large scope of this topic. Those anointed with this design task experienced a level of control over their choices of how the written word looked that neither script writer nor calligrapher could ever reach. Control was key.

Contemporary times displayed a typographical shift from the elite realm toward the majority. This once mysterious process of manipulating the look of type can be enjoyed by anyone who has access to a computer. The computer is already filled with a library of pre loaded fonts (various styles and sizes of type) that allow the word to manifest meaning beyond the word itself (the internal content) and be dressed in external attire that can range from matching its meaning all the way to contradicting the word's intent. This is the power of the mechanical written word, of type, and this is intertwined with our power to produce gender.

# Preface: Making the Invisible Visible

Throughout this thesis I shine a light on invisible topics that deserve as much attention and acknowledgment as the visible by-products produced by their existence. The three invisible topics we will be concerned with are the author, gender, and typography. Without authors there are no stories. Without gender there is one less characteristic for the self (your identity) to adopt. Without typography the mechanical written word would be far less advanced. The author, gender, and typography, are ubiquitous in Western civilization, yet they are under referenced as each item's default occupation involves supporting other works.

As the author I want to spell out as much as possible in all aspects of this thesis, including my position. To create a clear structure in which the reader can follow my train of thought I will be using the word "I" to make myself, the writer, visible. Also, the reader is urged to be an active maker of their own ideas in relation to this thesis, and not a passive consumer of other persons' thoughts. Some academic writings are composed in an objective way, where the reader has no sense of where the author is coming from or what motivates them. Authors are not always visible or known to readers unless that reader is a historian or biographer on that individual. In most instances, the author's background and context is under-speculated in relation to their words. For clarification I identify as a young, white, and university educated female. I know my analytical limitations are due to these categorical constructs that I live in, but you would not know these limitations if I never addressed them. As the author of this thesis I am motivated by a desire to create an awareness of how we express our messages. In other words, how we dress up certain forms of communication in varying visual attire is directly influenced by social constructs, gender in particular.

Gender is a giant social concept. Gender is social, and usually intertwined with sex. A distinction should be made that the term 'sex' is the biological determiner of reproductive attributes whereas 'gender' is the social determiner and is not a binary like the origins of 'sex' hints at. Gender encompasses labels of male, female, and all LGBT community categories. It is important to keep notions of 'sex' and 'gender' in mind as distinct yet socially intertwined when discussing anything gender related. Since gender coats our culture it is invisibly prevalent. Everything produced by gendered beings will reestablish gender constructs, which affect other areas of study, including typographical constructs.

Typography produced for reading (which I refer to in this thesis as "normal text") exists for the reader to extract the meaning of the word, sentence, paragraph, etc. in an efficient and effortless manner (as long as the reader has learned their basic grammar and English skills). The words you are reading right now are clothed in a typeface that has a history and is connected to an individual who designed the forms emulating the characters of the English alphabet. A successful normal text typeface will not make the reader stop to analyze the design of the mechanical letterforms, hence its invisibility (see Section 2).

As we analyze typography through a feminist lens one must always be aware of the prevalence of stories, gender, and typography especially in our daily lives, well beyond the academic realm. These three topics are all effectively invisible until you think about them and ask where they came from, their motives, and how they perform.

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

Without a language there are no words and without words there is no communication and without communication who are we? Can we even question without a language? It is a difficult question to pose in a written document utilizing a language. These questions are abstract, philosophical, and may be deemed unnecessary when talking about **typography** and gender. But they do matter. Not asking questions and always assuming how things work allows people to avoid researching topics for themselves and produces a lack of awareness.

Audiences are told what to think rather than searching for what to think are further susceptible to assumptions created by generic demographics produced by statistics, and other seemingly "objective" fields. As long as fields like the arts and sciences are established and recreated by humans they are subjective. Humans are subjective. You are subjective, as am I. And that is perfectly fine. The danger lies when one assumes an objective force is all knowing (see wealthy white European males). Universals are dangerous. There can be commonalities but only after studying said concepts on a smaller, local scale.

Awareness in your power to reproduce or challenge certain constructs is key to understanding the power of typography. Without a desire to shape your message, your words, none of the concepts discussed within this thesis will matter.

Well, they will matter, to the receiver of your messages. Both the sender and receiver of messages are responsible for effective communication.

The way written communication looks is typography. Typography has a long history that has cultivated a lengthy list of terminology and processes that will be briefly mentioned in Section 1: A Brief History of Typography and Section 2: Typography 101. Section 3: Performative Typography reflects on how through the repetition of acts of typography, and by extension, gender, there is the creation of a false sense of permanency, which makes them invisible. Section 4: *Leaves of Grass* and Gender spans two centuries of typographical changes that were directly related to larger social and cultural changes. Section 5: How 'Sexy' Looks in Magazines is a look at a singular word, 'sexy,' and implores more abstract concepts about language that are mentioned above.

All of these sections come together to produce a thesis that postulates questions like, "Where did typography come from?" "How were women involved?" "What are the terms?" "How are words dressed?" "Where is typography today?" "Why does typography matter?" This thesis is not exhaustive and touches upon numerous areas of study while maintaining typography and feminism at its core.

# A Brief Typography Timeline

## Adobe & Microsoft

**OpenType** is a cross-platform font file format developed by Adobe and Microsoft. The two main benefits of the OpenType format are its compatibility between Macintosh and Windows computers, and its ability to support large character sets that can include other languages.
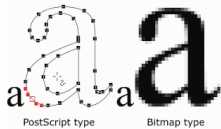
## Adobe

Adobe invented **PostScript** in 1985, a computer language that uses mathematical calculations to describe typefaces instead of relying on pixel by pixel definitions of fonts. To this day Adobe leads the way in font development for personal computers.

PostScript type     Bitmap type

## Max Miedinger

Helvetica

Swiss type designer Max Miedinger created '**Helvetica**,' the most popular typeface of our time. It is so beloved it has its own documentary titled *Helvetica* (2007).

## William Caslon IV

Sans Serif

William Caslon IV, the great, great grandson of *the* William Caslon, designed the first **sans serif** font. Many claim that the design for this sans is based on the Greek lapidary letters of the fifth century.

## William Caslon

Caslon

William Caslon's strength as a type designer was not in his ability to create flawless letters, but to create a font that when set in a block of text copy appeared perfect in spite of the individuality of each letterform.

## Claude Garamond

Claude Garamond (1500-1567) was an extremely distinguished type designer of his time, perhaps of the entire Renaissance period. He was instrumental in the adoption of Roman typeface designs in France as a replacement for the commonly used Gothic, or blackletter typefaces. This was a bold and innovative decision that resulted in a typeface named after him, '**Garamond.**'

Garamond

Think different.

## Romans

In the first century BCE Roman Square capitals, also know as **Roman monumental capitals** became the foundation for Western type design, as well as the ancestor for all serif typefaces.

## Carol Twombly

Carol Twombly worked for Adobe Systems from 1988-99, producing many well-known typefaces including '**Myriad**', '**Trajan**' and '**Adobe Caslon**'.

Myriad     Adobe Caslon
TRAJAN

## Howard Kettler

Howard Kettler designed '**Courier**'in 1955 for IBM's typewriters. 'Courier' became the most popular typeface used on typewriters for 30 years.

Courier

## Frederic Goudy

Frederic Goudy developed several wonderful designs. Together with his wife, Bertha Goudy (1869-1935) he designed many popular typefaces, including '**Goudy Old Style.**'

Goudy Old Style

## John Baskerville

Today the typeface named after him is one of the most popular and most frequently used serif typestyles. It is represented in essentially every type library, and can be reproduced on practically every kind of imaging device. That ubiquity and visibility is important to note, especially in contrast to the type designer's who are not so visible.

Baskerville

## Robert Granjon

The work of Robert Granjon (1513-1589) is closely associated with the creation of the italics for the typeface 'Garamond'. His work provided the models for 'Plantin' and 'Times New Roman'.

*Garamond Italic*

## Guttenberg

Johannes Gutenberg (1394-1468) is credited as the man who created the art of typography in the fifteenth century. Gutenberg was not a typographer, but influential to the production of type as the creator of mechanical text in Western civilization. He integrated all existing mechanisms into an economical product, the Gutenberg Printing Press.
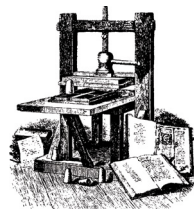
## Greeks

Around the fifth century BCE **Greek lapidary letters** (letters carved into hard surfaces) were one of the first formal uses of Western letterforms. The Greeks are credited as creating the foundation for Western writing.

# Section 1: A Brief History of Typography

*If no one asks: "What are the origins of this statement about this object?" then the traditional version of history is simply repeated.*

-Editor Julia Meer

The world of **typography** is as expansive as you make it. There are so many avenues one can venture down and explore as a hobbyist or learn to the level of a master. Due to the breadth and depth of typography some constraints must be set in place.

## Context Clarification

First and foremost the focal point of this thesis is Western civilization, with an emphasis on the United States of America and its relationship to typography. Secondly, the language of focus is English (although typography is just as prevalent in Greek, Arabic and other Non-Latin languages, this thesis can only cover so much). Thirdly, this thesis has a limited scope in what it will analyze with regards to **type**. Only mechanical type will be addressed, with handwriting and calligraphy only referenced on a case by case basis since they stray away from the nucleus of this thesis: awareness of your power as a user of typography. Finally, all typographical discussions after the history component will be grounded in the early twenty-first century as this thesis emphasizes the need for today's users of computers to harness their processor's power, bringing their words to a new level beyond the default settings. Before we discuss today, one must inspect typography's history.

How can one fully grasp anything without knowing its origins, its background, its history? They cannot. At that point the best anyone can do is hypothetical guesswork. Any discussion on the topic of typography must be grounded within its recorded history (even if a majority of said history is purportedly biased and penned by white males, it is a starting point nonetheless). From there one can create intelligent thoughts about the field.

Before we dive into this work there is a need for further clarification. There is a difference between type and typography. Publisher and author Frank Romano states, "[t]ypography is the use of type to advocate, communicate, celebrate, educate, elaborate, illuminate, and disseminate" (ix). Typography is the visual enforcer and sometimes an intentional visual contradiction to type's message.

Type and typography are intertwined to produce materials such as books, magazines, catalogs, newspapers, online blogs, and all other forms of the written word one can think of. The entire history of linear text and its transition from paper to screen is multi-faceted and can only be studied in moderate amounts. Tiny morsels.

Although this thesis has a limited scope it acts as a springboard for the reader if they wish to enhance their understanding in any one field mentioned in this thesis. Now to answer the question: "Where did type and typography come from?"

No **typeface** was created in a vacuum, uninfluenced by the layers of history preceding its creation. The roots of typography are entwined with the contemporary culture which includes the arts and literature of its respective time. History allows the reader to gain perspective on any given field, and typography is no different.

The history of type is long and convoluted due to many factors. One factor in particular is the abundance of languages and their numerous differences, especially how languages are written. Categories of Latin, Greek, Cyrillic, and Arabic, to name a few, have special requirements for how their **characters** look. The starting point of Western typography as we know it today comes from the Greeks.

Figure 1. Greek Lapidary Letters



Figure 2: Roman Square Capitals, also Known as Roman Monumental Capitals

# 5ᵗʰ Century BCE

Around the fifth century BCE Greek lapidary letters (letters carved into hard surfaces) were one of the first formal uses of Western **letterforms** (figure 1). The Greeks are credited as creating the foundation for Western writing.

# 2ⁿᵈ Century BCE

Jump to the second century BCE and one will find Roman lapidary letterforms as the bridge between ancient Greek to the more modern Roman shapes and proportions we use today. Then in the first century BCE Roman monumental capitals (figure 2) became the foundation for Western type design, as well as the ancestor for all **serif** typefaces.

Due to the numerous paths one can take when analyzing letters this will be the only time I mention handcrafted letters. One could argue the centuries mentioned above mark the beginning of systematic, mechanical type due to the use of a tool (a chisel) but the same could be said about calligraphy and the pen. Therefore I am addressing that the creation of letters by hand (including calligraphy) will not be a part of this project beyond the historical moments and stylistic comparison of handwriting to mechanical type.

As we continue to explore the history of typography it is easy to see the direct correlation of people and the evolutions in the typeface production technologies. Creation is a human quality. Everyone creates. Therefore, when people can be directly identified through their work, the observer not only can study their work but who they were as influential people of their time.

Until the late nineteenth century there will be rare citings of female authorities due to the current history of typography having limited writings that acknowledge their influences, or even existence within the field. And even when female influences are first mentioned they are mainly references of a woman occupying the role of a **type designer**'s wife. I am not belittling that role, but I am commenting on the way women were non-existent during these early periods of Western typography beyond the private sphere. Since the private sphere went undocumented (at least not documented with the same diligence as other male historical accounts) the work of women in typography was invisible.

Due to the lack of evidence either which way one can interject their own opinion, even though that is dangerous as opinions are saturated with the weight of subjectivity, but everyone is subjective. I am an optimist and believe that although we have little (if any) documentation of women's participation in typographical achievements prior to the nineteenth century they were not absent, just disregarded as noteworthy. Thankfully that mindset has shifted.

The people throughout typography's existence are necessary to address due to their closeness with the end results, whether a new typeface was created, or a new form of printing and viewing the written words was established. The list of people to follow is representative rather than exhaustive, picking out key figures that became known as shapers of typography during and after their lifetimes.
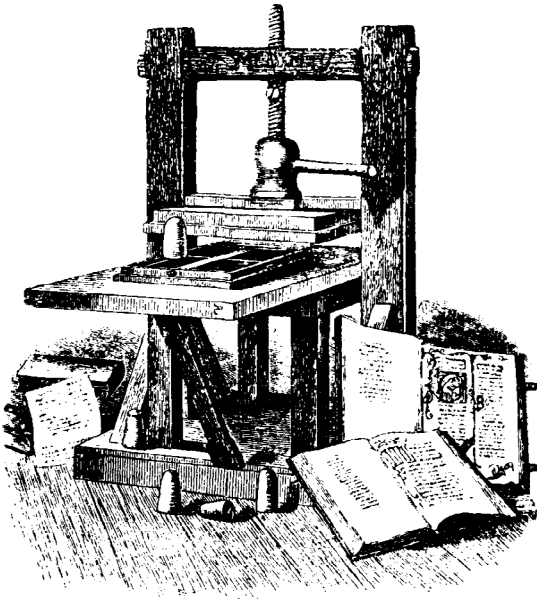
Figure 3. Illustration of Gutenberg Printing Press



Figure 4. Letterblocks

## 15<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Johannes Gutenberg (1394-1468) is credited as the man who created the art of typography in the fifteenth century. Gutenberg was not a typographer, but influential to the production of type as the creator of mechanical type in Western civilization. He integrated all existing mechanisms into an economical and practical product, the Gutenberg Printing Press (figure 3). Co-authors of *Typography Referenced: A Comprehensive Visual Guide to the Language, History, and Practice of Typography*, Alan Haley and Katlyn Henderson mention how one of his innovations, the adjustable mold, enabled one letterform model produced by a designer to be replicated thousands of times (9). Never before was this possible.

This system of typesetting was later automated and eventually computerized – making metal printing blocks obsolete altogether. Author and veteran in the publishing industry James Felici noted, "the concepts of letter blocks and spacing blocks persist in digital typesetting as they are the keystones of the entire system" (4) and are directly linked to Gutenberg's creations (figure 4).

In 1450, the Gutenberg Bible was printed (Haley and Henderson 9). This was the first important book printed in movable type. A couple decades later, the great Italian printer and type founder Aldus Manutius (1450-1515) commissioned type designer Francesco Griffo (unknown-1518) to create several typefaces, the most important of which is now revived under the name 'Bembo' (figure 5). 'Bembo' became a model followed by Claude Garamond, as well as the ancestor of many seventeenth century European types.
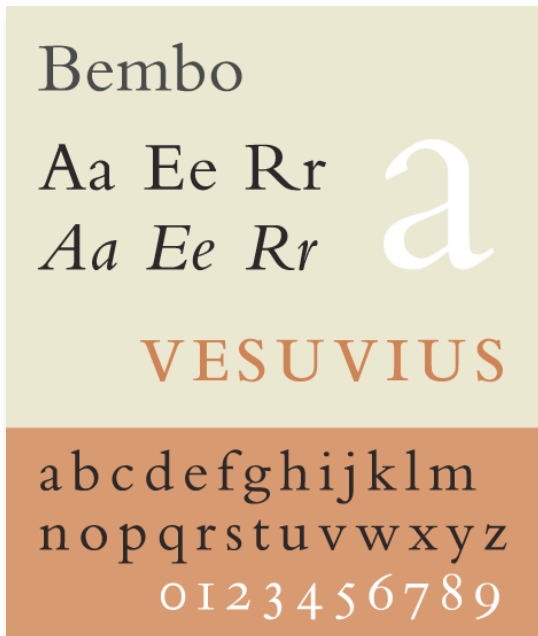


Figure 5. 'Bembo'

## 16th Century CE

Claude Garamond (1500-1567) was an extremely distinguished type designer of his time, perhaps of the entire Renaissance period. He was instrumental in the adoption of Roman typeface designs in France as a replacement for the commonly used **Gothic**, or **blackletter** typefaces. This was a bold and innovative decision that resulted in a typeface bearing his name (figure 6a). Also he was one of the first type designers to create **oblique** capitals to complement their upright counterparts.

Though Garamond's designs were beloved for a long period, they experienced interrupted popularity. After a time, new French designs and styles created by English, Dutch, and Italian **type foundries** began to replace Garamond's type as the design choice among printers.

The work of Robert Granjon (1513-1589) is associated with Garamond. Active from 1545 to 1589, Granjon is credited with introducing the **italic** type form as a complement to the Roman faces popular at the time (Haley and Henderson 10). His work provided the models for 'Plantin' and 'Times New Roman.' However, the typeface that bears his name was based on a design by Garamond.

Type designer Jean Jannon (1580 1658) created the typeface on which most modern 'Garamond' revivals are based. Jannon worked more than 80 years after Garamond, and was the first to release revivals of the earlier Frenchman's work. Revivals of typefaces stitch them into the fabric of typography and keep them alive.

One variation of 'Garamond' created by the tech company Apple brought it into the digital age and applied it to their advertisements (figure 6b). 'Garamond' conveys a sense of permanency since the typeface is still in use after its creation over 500 years ago. Examples of these variations show how the typeface transitioned from its original purpose into new **mediums** that pay homage to its original purpose. When people far removed from your time period explore a desire to replicate and emulate your designs, there is something to be said about such influence.
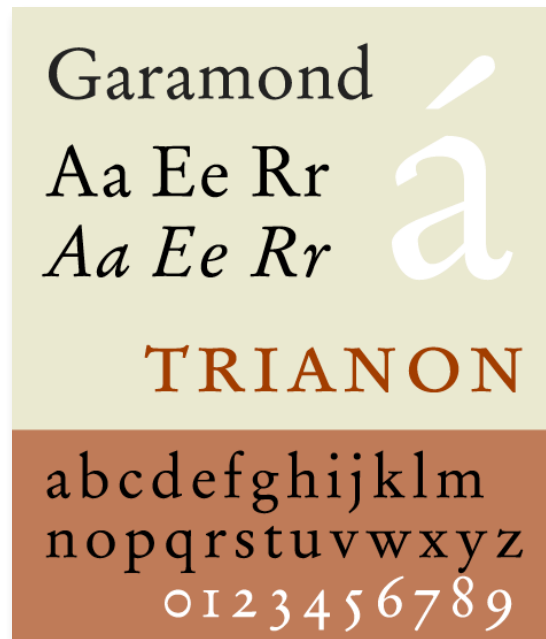


Figure 6a. 'Garamond'



Figure 6b. 'Apple Garamond' in an Apple Advertisement

Figure 7. 'ITC Calson'



Figure 8. 'Bodoni'

## 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English gunsmith-turned type designer William Caslon I (1692-1766) founded Caslon Type Foundry (Haley and Henderson 10). He was one of the few wealthy type designers. His work, based on earlier Dutch designs, does not possess perfection like that of Bodoni, or Baskerville. Caslon's strength as a type designer was not in his ability to create flawless letters, but to create a font that when set in a block of text copy appeared perfect in spite of the vagaries and individuality of each letterform.

The first modern revivals of Caslon's work came out in America under the name 'Old Style'. When American Type Founders (ATF) was formed in 1892, this design later became 'Caslon 471'. After that came many succeeding ATF Caslons all based on Caslon's work: 'Monotype Caslon,' 'Adobe Caslon,' and even 'ITC Caslon' (figure 7a). 'Adobe Caslon' was created by female type designer Carol Twombly in the late twentieth century. She will be mentioned in more detail later on.

Giambattista Bodoni's (1740-1813) type was the result of an evolutionary process (figure 8). The first **fonts** he used were Old Style designs purchased from type designer Pierre Simon Fournier (1712-1768), and his first own fonts relied heavily on the Fournier type. Over many years, however, Bodoni's design style changed to the Modern classification with which a typography aficionado is familiar (figure 8).

When John Baskerville (1706-1775) first created fonts of type, he found that printing technology of the day did not allow him to print as he wished. As a result, he studied, altered, and enriched virtually all aspects of the printing process. He made his own printing press, a more sophisticated and precise version over others of the period; he developed his own ink, which even today is difficult to match for darkness and richness; and he invented the hot pressing process to create smooth paper stock, even having a small mill built on his property to produce paper that met his standards (Haley and Henderson 10).

These innovations came at a monetary cost. Even today it would be rather expensive to purchase a printing press (never mind redesign one), formulate your own ink, and purchase a mill for paper production. Only a few of the early type designers described here were rather wealthy, but that wealth may have aided in their preservation within typographical history, alongside their innovative tasks.
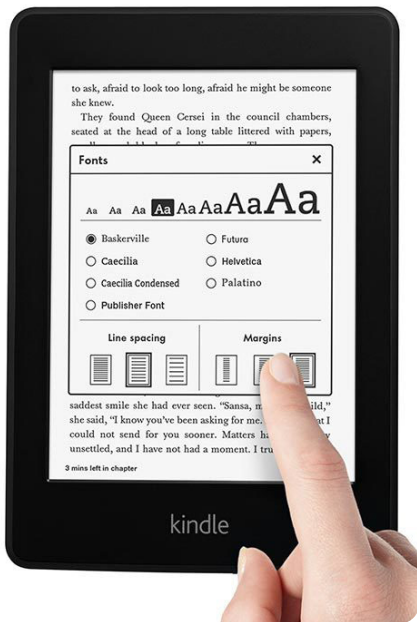
Figure 9a. 'Baskerville'


Figure 9b. 'Baskerville' as a Typeface for the Amazon Kindle™

Today the typeface named after him is one of the most popular and most frequently used serif typestyles (figure 9a). It is represented in essentially every type library, and can be reproduced on practically every kind of imaging device, including the Amazon Kindle™ (figure 9b). That ubiquity and visibility is important to note, especially in contrast to the type designer's who are not so visible.

## Late 18ᵗʰ and Early 19ᵗʰ Centuries CE

Early in the nineteenth century, Lord Stanhope invented the first printing press made of all cast-iron parts, requiring one-tenth the manual labor and doubling the possible paper size. A few years later, in 1816, William Caslon IV, the great, great grandson of the William Caslon, designed the first **sans serif** font, creating the English serifed design (Haley and Henderson 12). Many claim that the design for this sans is based on the Greek lapidary letters of the fifth century.

Up until this point we have peered into the history of typography and the people who influenced it. Unfortunately one group has been absent from typography's history: women.

Fashion and design historian Cheryl Buckley brought feminist theory and feminist history to design history in her essay *Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design*. Buckley mentioned how women have filled a variety of roles in design (practitioner, theorist, consumer, historian, object of representation), but asserts that each of these is circumscribed by patriarchy.

Buckley discusses patriarchy within the capitalist economic system of industrialized societies. Her working definition of patriarchy comes from visual theorist and cultural analyst Griselda Pollock: "patriarchy does not refer to the static, oppressive domination of one sex over another, but a web of psycho social relationships which institute a socially significant difference on the axis of sex, which is so deeply located in our very sense of lived, sexual identity that it appears to us as natural and unalterable" (Scotford 341). Although patriarchy has only recently been defined in this manner, one can see how the multi-faceted layers of patriarchy affect anyone who was raised in such a society.

According to the written records of typography and their lack of women references, there was no impact in its creation or perpetuation of the field by women, or, due

to the mindset of the times, if there were women who participated in producing typography they were not seen as important enough to cite. I lean towards the latter observation. They were invisible, until the nineteenth century. For instance, "[i]n 1853, *The New York Times* ran a brief article applauding the establishment of *The Ladies Paper*, a publication that employed women to create the 'typography' of its pages" (Lupton 67). Although this publication emphasized the idea of ladies running that edition of the paper through the title *The Ladies Paper*, men wrote the content within the paper. The only part of the article's production that was influenced by women was the mechanical component. Physically placing metal letterforms into place is known as typesetting. In essence it is the application of the type designs into the final phase of production, applying the letterforms to paper in the most physical sense. For more on women's capabilities as designers from the nineteenth century until now, read Martha Scotford's essay *Messy History vs. Neat History: Toward an expanded view of women in graphic design*.

From this point on there will be a more prominent weaving of men and women in Western typographical history as one, loose time-line of notable persons in the field.
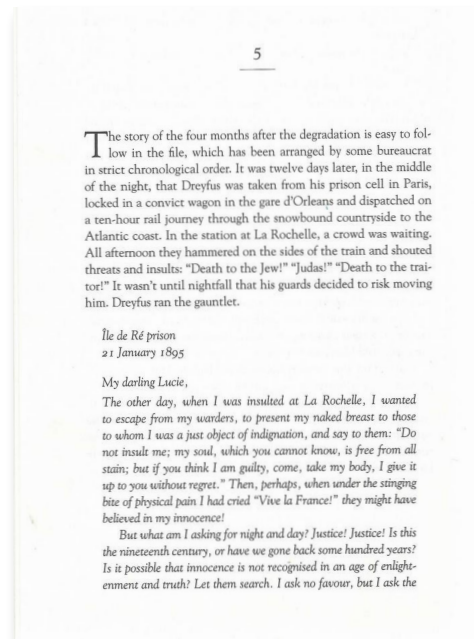
1853

Figure 10a. 'Goudy Old Style'



Figure 10b. 'Goudy Old Style' Example

## Late 19th Century CE

Frederic Goudy (1865-1947) was one of America's most creative and well-known type designers, displaying originality and technical skill (Haley and Henderson 12). He created more diverse typefaces than any designer before him. As a designer and printer, Goudy developed a distinctive personal style. Early on he learned that even the most beautiful typefaces were doomed to failure unless they had a good marketing program.

As a result, Goudy used his typefaces in specimen books and promotional materials that were both exceptional graphic designs and compelling marketing vehicles (figure 10b). Together with his wife, Bertha Goudy (1869-1935), he designed many popular typefaces, including 'Goudy Old Style' (figure 10a).

During this time a majority of type designers were male, but designing a type is only one part of the process. The type must be placed, or set within the machine to be pressed and produce prints. A majority of time women were **typesetters**, and these roles of graphic design were documented by Design Historians Gerda Breuer and Julia Meer. The role of typesetter belonged to the above-mentioned Bertha Goudy as well as Ireland's Elizabeth Corbet Yeats (1868-1940). Yeats worked at Dun Emer Press where their goals included "aesthetic quality and craftsmanship and . . . to give women an occupation with which they could earn a living or seek vocational training" (Breuer and Meer 590). The typical careers for women in

**graphic design** in European countries during this time included printing as well as embroidery and weaving. These roles were pivotal but poorly documented in history compared to the biographies of male type designers.

There were numerous movements that directly affected the works of typographers in the late nineteenth century. According to Professor of Typography and Graphic Design Rob Carter, Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Modernism were all impactful in the transition of seeing "typography not only as something to be read, but also as something to be seen – as a carrier of visual messages" (12). In other words, type's very appearance could affect the meaning of a message. The performativity of typography will be addressed later on in this paper within a case study. One should note that the next one hundred years of typographical work would not remain linear, but would stretch the boundaries of art and design. How type visually appeared would never be the same.
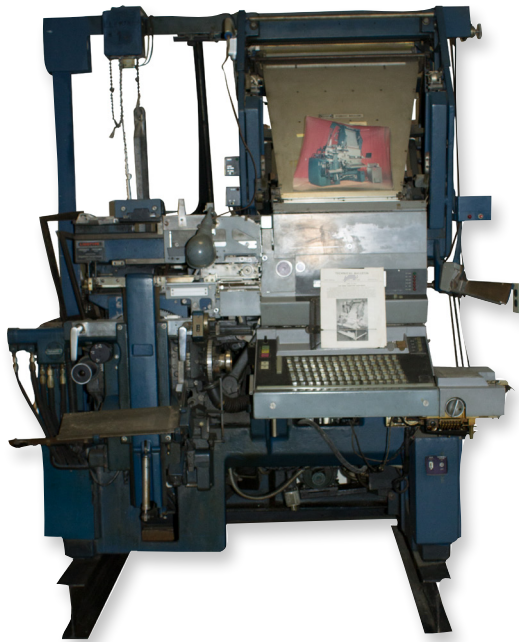
Figure 11. Monotype Machine



Figure 12. Linotype Machine

# Transitional Technology

As the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries struggled with the changes brought onto the world by the reverberations of the Industrial Revolution, the First World War (1914-1917) commenced. With the war came mechanical innovations for type.

The Monotype machine (figure 11) was an automated type foundry, which from a cauldron of hot metal cast individual letter blocks one at a time (at surprising speed) and spit them out into composed lines, just as if they had been set by hand (Felici 9). It could compose whole pages by stacking one line upon another, bottom up, eliminating huge amounts of handiwork. When the job was done, the type was melted down and recycled.

A principal Monotype innovation was to allow someone working on a keyboard to record keystrokes and formatting commands on punched paper tape. The tape was then used to drive the typecasting machine, the way a punched paper scroll drives a player piano. The information recorded on the paper tape was essentially the same as that recorded by today's computer programs as you type into a word processor or page layout platform.

The Linotype machine that soon followed the Monotype's shadow used a similar counting system but took a different tactic. "Instead of casting letters one by one, it assembled the molds for a line's worth of characters and cast them all at once in one piece – a line o' type" (Felici 10). This resulted in the keystrokes translating directly into the machine rather than being recorded in advance for output later, streamlining the process (figure 12).

Alongside the printing technologies meant for mass production came the typewriter, a machine that composed single copies that are produced immediately once the keys are pressed (figure 14). The power switch from two fingers pinching strips of metal and placing them in a line to ten nimble fingers in control of the same lines began with the typewriter and carried onward into contemporary times. The creation of the typewriter's "QWERTY" keyboard is a significant milestone in a person's ability to imprint their ideas and (ultimately) words onto a piece of paper at arguably faster and more efficient speeds than handwriting alone could ever accomplish. The computer keyboard is a direct descendant of the "QWERTY" keyboard and carries over the weight of communication significance seen in the original typewriter

Typewriters are known for the distinct look of the type they produce, most of which is cloaked in the typeface

'Courier.' Designed by Howard Kettler in 1955, 'Courier' is a monospaced slab serif typeface, which means every letterform takes up the same amount of space width-wise and it possesses block-like serifs (figure 13). This uniformity was necessary for typewriters who did not have the processing technology to create tighter kerning (or space in between letters). Today 'Courier' is the default typeface for screenplays and program coding because both industries adapted the typeface early on in their existence and both rely on an ease of readability that 'Courier' possess.
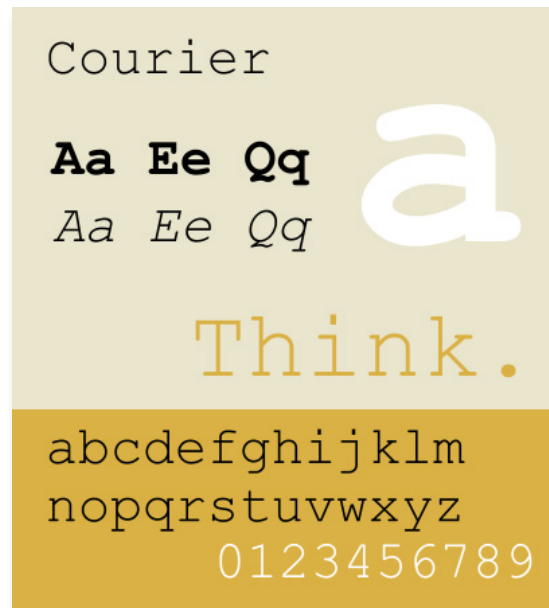


Figure 13. 'Courier'



Figure 14. Underwood Standard Portable Typewriter

# 20<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Beatrice Warde (1900-1969) is known as the "First Lady of Typography" due to her rare success as a woman in the field before the computer age (Haley and Henderson 17). Warde had an expansive knowledge of the history of type design and wrote articles about her findings with the pseudonym Paul Beaujon, which she justified to not confuse her writings with her typeface designer husband, Frederic Warde, and his writings on the same topics. Also her mother already took her maiden name in the field of literature. And on top of that, no one at the time would have been able to acknowledge that a woman could know anything about printing, typography, etc.

When her alter ego, Beaujon, was offered a post as editor at the Monotype Recorder in 1927 on the basis of such writings, Beatrice Warde accepted the job – to the great astonishment of executives and staff, who had been anticipating a man (Breuer and Meer 581). But by 1929, she had already earned a promotion to the role of publicity manager – a position she held until her retirement in 1960.

Each individual decade in the twentieth century could have an entire paper dedicated to the typographic movements and changes that reflected the times. Here are some one-sentence summaries from the 1920s until the 1950s.

In the 1920s women gained the right to vote in America, and type design was still seen as a man's profession. The 1930s brought about the Great Depression in America and 'Times Roman' first appeared on the scene ('Times New Roman' is the ubiquitous computer counterpart). The 1940s ushered in World War II as well as IBMs Electromatic Model 04 electric typewriter that is a predecessor of the technological landscape we recognize today.

The 1950s brought us two iconic typefaces: 'Helvetica' and 'Courier.' Swiss type designer Max Miedinger designed 'Helvetica' as a sans serif typeface that was an updated version of 'Haas Grotesk', based on the type designer Berthold's 'Akzidenz Grotesk'. It is the world's most widely used typeface and is so beloved it has its own documentary titled *Helvetica* (2007). Type designer Howard Kettler designed 'Courier' in 1955 for IBM's typewriters. It also enjoyed popularity, being the top typeface for typewriters for 30 years (Haley and Henderson 22). These decades are filled with progressive change, but change took on another meaning in America in the 1960s.

The 1960s must be addressed not only for the new wave of thinking that came with the decade with regards to type but with the monumental Civil Rights Movements

in America that occurred for women. Women's rights were finally a part of a larger conversation and addressed. Equal pay for equal work, an end to domestic violence, a broader range of jobs for women to pursue, and sharing a responsibility for housework or child rearing were all topics of discussion during this time. Change was key.

This change carried on into the 1970s with the advent of postmodernism in American graphic design. The post-industrial society began to broaden their visual vocabulary by breaking established rules and by exploring various periods, styles, and cultures. In 1970 the International Typeface Corporation (ITC) released its first typeface, 'ITC Avant Garde Gothic' (figure 15a). Note how close the lapidary letters also look to the caps found in 'ITC Avant Garde Gothic' and one will see a clear example of how type designers re-purpose older typographical styles and reinvent them. This typeface is seen in various mediums, including logos like Adidas® (figure 15b). The digital boom began.

In the 1980s the Internet was invented. The digital realm of typography was in its infancy. In 1982 Adobe Systems was founded. One year later Adobe **PostScript** was announced and it streamlined digital typesetting and fashioned what is now called the "Desktop Publishing Revolution" (Haley and Henderson 26). This is also when female type designer Carol Twombly was at her peak. She created typefaces like 'Trajan', 'Myriad', and 'Adobe Caslon' to name a few. Design historian Julia Meer (577) noted, "[Twombly's] 'Adobe Caslon' is based on Caslon's 'Baroque Antiqua'." She retired in 1999 from type design but her typefaces live on and are modified. For instance, the body text of this thesis is written in 'Adobe Caslon Pro,' which Twombly created as a part of the 'Adobe Caslon' family.

The reverberations of the revolution of desktop publishing were in full effect in the late twentieth century. Efficient, user-friendly software democratized typography at every stage. You can design or just apply typefaces as a novice or expert of typographical software. That control would only bloom into the dawn of the twenty-first century.

This creative flowering came with some thorns. The democratic component of typography allowed designers to produce ill-conceived and badly drawn type designs. Although the end result for design was not always ideal, the ability to create typefaces alone at an inexpensive price and high speeds was unimaginable a few hundred years ago.

Figure 15a. 'ITC Avant Garde Gothic'



Figure 15b. 'ITC Avant Garde Gothic'
is the Typeface for the Adidas® Logo

## Early 21ˢᵗ Century CE

There have been some landmark moments in the new millennium. In a decade and a half the seeds planted by Adobe's PostScript and Apple's OpenType web fonts populated the Internet at speeds never seen in typographic history – roughly 200,000 when the book *Typography Referenced* was written in 2012 (Saltz 4). This abundance of fonts was made possible due to a perfect storm of technological advancements, including (but not limited to) the ubiquity of computers, the availability of sophisticated software, and Internet connectivity. These areas severely impact the average American's daily activities today, and since the Internet is made up of words, it is the perfect foundation for typography to flourish.

Once an arcane craft, typography is now widely accessible and highly visible (even when it tries to be invisible). In one way or another most of us have interacted with printed materials our entire lives and have a subconscious need to pay attention to how words look if only to decode them for their language. If you care about how you look, you should care about how your words look and what they say visually because they are an extension of yourself. Not sure how? Go on to the next section.

# Section 2: Typography 101

*You are already a typographer. You may be a reluctant typographer. You may be an unskilled typographer. But every time you put words on a printed page, you've made typographer happen. So you are a typographer.*

-Typographer Matthew Butterick

As Butterick points out in his quote, you are a typographer. Therefore you have an audience, readers to perform for. Learning the basics of typography is rewarding not only for the typeface producer but also for the consumer who can enjoy deliciously digestible words.

As mentioned in Section 1, technology has brought typesetting nearly up to the standards of professional typography. Using the default font and layout settings for a Word document, email, and any other text application that allows the user a choice in aesthetics is like having your parent(s) choose your clothes for you as an adult – lazy and ludicrous. (The use of clothing and fashion as a metaphor for typography will weave in and out of this section.) Why let the processing power of your computer go untouched?

The twenty-first century allows for more choice and control of how the consumer's text looks than any prior period in the history of typography. You have control (albeit with some limitations as any medium has, but control nonetheless) of how your words look when typed. Not knowing about the various options is a part of the problem. I hope to help you improve your visual voice and employ every typographical element that can emphasize what you are trying to say. From type elements like readability, x-height, leading, and size to the layout of the page or preferred medium your words are produced upon, there are many ways to take control of typography.

Anyone can benefit from a greater understanding of typography so that you are in a better position to control how you present yourself to the world.
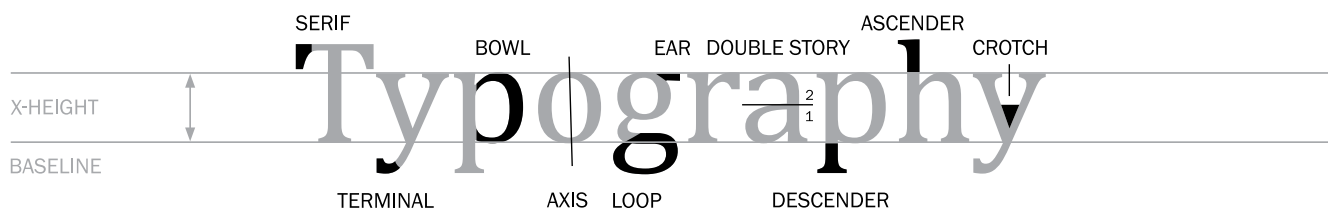


Figure 16. Anatomical Terms of Typography

## Defining Typographic Terms

As seen in the figure 16 there are a lot of terms. Even more than what is displayed in the above illustration. The level of detail one can encounter is as expansive as you make it. Only the basic elements of typography will be discussed to emphasize the accessibility of typography for all users of computers and how these simple steps are beneficial to the producer and consumer alike.

## Readability vs. Legibility

Our main focus is on type that is read in the same manner as this paper: a seem-less experience where there are no jarring interruptions in the comprehension of the written word. As with any creative discipline, once one learns the typical conventions of typography they can create artistic choices to go against the norms, but only after understanding what the norms are. There will be some mention of these typographical pieces later on. For now functional, readable type is our biggest concern.

When you read this sentence you are not focusing on the typeface or the type. You see words. Now, if you look at that last sentence (pay special attention to my word choice; look, not read) what do you see? It is difficult to un-train the eye from viewing that sentence, or any sentence, as a string of words (which it is on one level), but it is also squiggles of black ink on white paper. Differences in perception on the same sentence are achieved, and your answer to what you see is yours alone. Before you were asked to speculate on the visual look of that sentence you most likely read it rather than admired it for its graphic merit, and that is the ideal result in normal lines of type: invisible typography.

All of the tools of typography allow the producer to create an environment where readability trumps all. Reading is all about rhythm, and type is a "metronome for readers . . . and they can be helped or hindered by how it appears on the page" (Felici 106). If the written word is unreadable then it will not be read. Simple. Too much strain on the eye results in more work for the reader with regards to comprehension. It will be looked at, but not decoded, as words ought to be. Figure 17 displays the same sentence with two different treatments; one has varying sizes of type for individual letters whereas the other has no change from how the type would look when inputed using the default typeface formatting in a word processor. This illustration is focusing only on the size of type, only one of the various elements that can be manipulated to produce/detract legibility.

How does type become readable? The first step to answering this question is to make sure your typeface is legible. Legibility refers to a reader's ability to easily recognize letterforms and the word forms built from them. Without consistency and cohesion the legibility, and therefore, the reader, are lost. For example, if all of the "e's" in this sentence were larger and smaller in height compared to the rest of the letters there would be a problem with legibility as we have been trained to understand it.
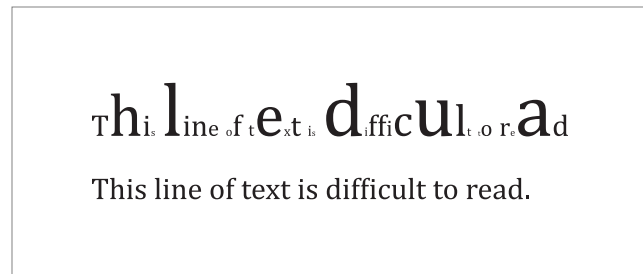


This line of text is difficult to read.

Figure 17. The Same Sentence with Different Typographical Treatment

## Font vs. Typeface

In typography 'font' and 'typeface' are commonly misused terms. A typeface is a collection of characters – letters, numbers, symbols, punctuation marks, etc. – that are designed to work together like the parts of a coordinated outfit. A typeface is an alphabet with a specific design. A font is a physical thing, the description of a typeface – in computer code, photographic film, or metal – used to image the type. Felici states, "the font is the cookie cutter, and the typeface is the cookie" (29).
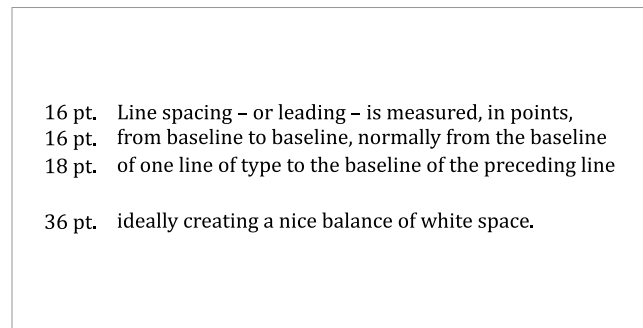


| 16 pt. | Line spacing – or leading – is measured, in points, |
| 16 pt. | from baseline to baseline, normally from the baseline |
| 18 pt. | of one line of type to the baseline of the preceding line |
| 36 pt. | ideally creating a nice balance of white space. |

Figure 18. Leading

## The Baseline

In normal lines of type all the letters sit on an invisible line called the baseline (see figure 16). The position of the baseline can vary from font to font, depending on the design of the characters. It is a fundamental reference and literal foundation for type.

Line spacing – or leading – is measured, in points, from baseline to baseline, normally from the baseline of one line of type to the baseline of the preceding line creating a nice balance of white space as see in figure 18.

## X-Height

This term refers to the distance from the baseline to the top of the lowercase "x" in a typeface. A line drawn at this height, parallel to the baseline, is called a mean line of the face since it is the typographical equivalent of hemline length. Felici noted how it is believed "that typefaces with larger x heights are easier to read, and on computer screens this is unarguably the case, as adding a pixel (or more) to the height of lowercase letters makes them much more legible" (32). Look at figure 16 for a visual reference.
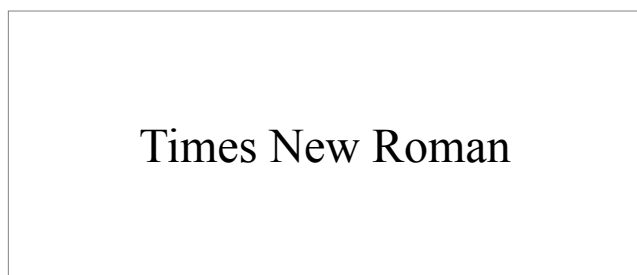
## Times New Roman

Figure 19. 'Times New Roman' is a Serif Typeface
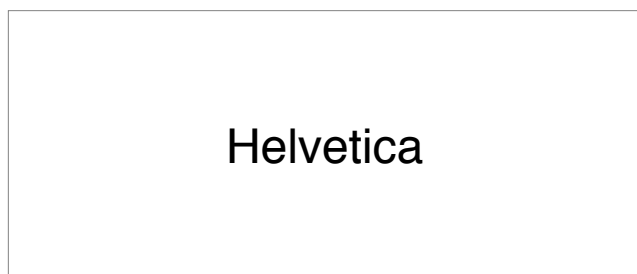
## Helvetica

Figure 20. 'Helvetica' is a Sans Serif Typeface

## Calligraphic Influences

The letterforms of text typefaces – like the ones you are reading now – have been influenced by both chiseled, incised letters and handwritten, calligraphic ones. Most of the way we talk about letterforms comes from the latter. One main component of typography derived from calligraphy is the notion of stress, or the variation of thickness in lines. Also strokes of the pen defined the basic shapes of many Latin characters where the widths of a letter's lines can be narrow or wide. Any further discussion about calligraphy must be sought out elsewhere, as the scope of this paper cannot be a complete collection of every stage of the written word's movement towards type.

## Serifs

Serifs are flourishes at the end of a character's main strokes, where the stroke appears to flare out. They can be found in stone inscriptions from at least as far back as ancient Rome. An infamous serifed typeface is 'Times New Roman' (figure 19). One of the basic ways of categorizing typefaces is to distinguish those with serifs from those without. The latter are called sans serif faces, a term applying the French 'sans' ("without") with 'serif' (figure 20).

Serifs are visual aids that help the eye to differentiate one character from another, and to "help the brain distinguish individual characters from among the forest of tiny strokes that make up passages of typeset text" (Felici 33-34). Serifed type is more legible due to its horizontal waves, or valleys contrasting high peaks, keeping the reader's eye following the horizontal flow. There are various kinds of serifs that are described in Felici's book *The Complete Manual of Typography: Second Edition* as well as many other reliable typographical sources.

## Sans Serif

Sans serif typefaces tend to be used in display roles, such as for titles and other large type, although a few sans serif faces are often used for normal lines of text. One of the design components is to strip away useless ornamentation and reduce objects to their functional minimum (figure 20).
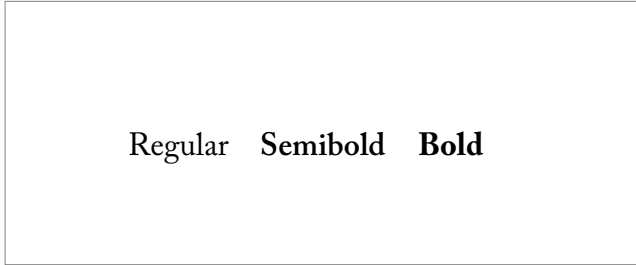
Regular  **Semibold**  **Bold**

Figure 21. The 'Adobe Caslon Pro' Font Family Typeface Weights
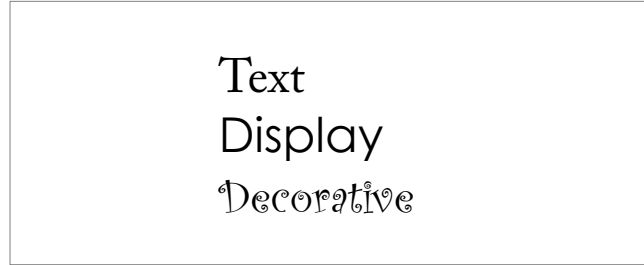
Text
Display
Decorative

Figure 22. Text, Display, and Decorative Typeface Examples

## Ascenders and Descenders

Ascenders are the strokes of lowercase letters that rise above the mean line. Descenders are the parts of letters that extend below the baseline. The heights and depths of ascenders and descenders vary widely from face to face. See figure 16 for illustrations of these terms.

## Various Typeface Weights

The weight of a typeface is the thickness of the principle strokes and letters. Depending on the thickness of these strokes, the weight of a typeface is generally rated on a scale ranging from light to bold (figure 21). In this thesis bolded words indicate terms in the glossary.

The weights of typefaces are described in many terms that are not standardized. Even the term 'bold' is subjective and bends at the will of the typeface it belongs to. When choosing a typeface try to be conscious of this issue.

## Romans and Italics

Some typefaces are labeled "Roman" due to the innovation of movable type in Rome. Their forms quickly evolved into the letterforms we use for text today. Roman typefaces have an upright structure, or stance, with the main strokes of letter such as "T" and "I" being perpendicular to the baseline. The typeface you are reading now – 'Adobe Caslon Pro' – is a Roman face.

Italics stemmed from the desire to reduce the price of printing by fitting more type onto a page in sixteenth century Italy. The use of italics as text types waned, but their role as accompaniment and stylistic counterpart to Roman types remained. Eventually it became commonplace for Roman types to have italic compliments designed specifically for them.

## Roles of Typefaces

Typefaces are usually divided into three groups: text, display, and decorative (figure 22). According to Felici, "text faces are the button downs of type" (44) since their job is to be conservative and readable. Also text faces are designed for use in long running passages of text, like those found in books, magazines, even this thesis. Since we are using the term "text" so frequently in this thesis I refer to the use of text faces as "normal text." Text face design is about readability, and a good normal text typeface lets you read at higher speeds and for longer periods without tiring.

Display faces are designed for larger sizes, for headings, titles, and headlines. They are meant to be eye-catching yet legible. Display faces have to integrate with other typefaces well so they are not competing stylistically for attention. One common place to find display faces is on the cover of a magazine. Turn to the Section 5: How 'Sexy' Looks in Magazines for a more in-depth look at display faces.

Decorative faces are character actors on the typographic stage. They are generally used for advertising. Their role is to grab attention at all cost, including, often, legibility. Decorative typefaces are novelties, and few of them are versatile. They go in and out of style. These decorative faces are usually paired with party invitations and stationary. Typically women are in charge of managing parties and are susceptible to the attention grabbing nature of decorative typefaces. Also a majority of these typefaces are considered feminine, but what is feminine? The stereotypical view of a female in America is kind, caring, soft, delicate. With this view the role of a female is unsubstantial, and rather frivolous, typically hosting parties and other events deemed non-essential. Decorative faces are superfluous. They pair well with party favors and the like items that are stereotypically feminine.

How do stereotypes come into existence? There are many factors, but none would matter without the initial acts of repetition and performativity.

ypogra
enda

# Section 3: Performative Typography

The theory I am going to follow is performativity by Gender Theorist Judith Butler. Performativity of gender is a *"stylized repetition of acts"* in which common conventions are created (Butler 356). The concept of performativity carries over into typography. Typography is performative in relation to itself through the use of certain stylistic elements to convey certain meanings, and through those same stylistic elements is a part of the performative actions that make up the performativity of gender. Without machinery typography would not be created or viewed in the same fashion it is today. Due to its connection to typography, machines and their screens are also subject to performativity. Armed with these concepts you can be aware of how your actions mold those topics and why you repeat actions like typography. Your actions support the power of performativity.

The performance of typography creates typography. We perform typography. From typing a paper to texting a friend, typography is performed daily, hourly, maybe even at more frequent speeds than that. In most instances this performance is seen as invisible, almost innate. This invisibility exists due to the repetition of the act. For example, when a car is moving at a high enough speed and you look at one of the wheels, the wheel appears still, motionless. In the case of the car the wheel is rotating repeatedly but there is an optical illusion that convinces the observer to think otherwise. That is the visual version of the performativity: a seemingly permanent phenomenon produced by the repetition of performance.

The repetition of typographical actions creates a false sense of stability, concreteness. Take the words within this thesis as an example. They are seemingly concrete typographically, but that is an illusion due to the structural elements applied (see Section 2). These words, written in 'Adobe Caslon Pro,' are no different than the same words in 'Comic Sans,' but the two typefaces are characterized differently on an anatomical level and through the repetition of their use in certain contexts: 'Adobe Caslon Pro' in the field of literature, 'Comic Sans' as a typeface designed to look like comic book lettering (according to writer Emily Steel). This typographical concreteness is one facet that produces the repetition of gender. Therefore, typography is a part of the performativity of gender. Butler claims, "social action requires a performance which is repeated. This repetition is at once a reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (362). Once again those papers and text messages you type all participate in performativity of typography, and by extension, gender.

Gender is continuously repeated by anyone within a society ruled by a culture. After establishing that construct, one could go deeper and look at the specific ways gender is repeated (for a case study see Section 5). For now, one should know that performativity of gender makes it as invisible as typography. Both topics are covered with an invisibility cloak, waiting for someone to remove the cloak and recognize them for what they are. Ironically, topics affected by the invisibility of performativity are considered successful when they remain invisible, or stitched so tightly into the fabric of society to seem natural, when nothing about society is natural, including one's sex. Butler mentions how "gender reality is created through sustained social performances [which] means that the very notions of an essential sex, a true or abiding masculinity or femininity, are also constituted as part of the strategy by which the performative aspect of gender is concealed" (364). Sex cannot be described without gender, since gender is a social construct, and to describe a concept means to be social, to use our linguistic abilities that are drenched with subjectivity and stereotypes that are placed onto our personal definition(s) of gender. Therefore gender performativity is affected by the idea of an essential sex (which, in turn, sex is a performative concept that is seemingly permanent and unchanging but in reality is just as affected by repetition and invisibility as gender since they are both, to some degree, social concepts). This link of gender and sex is one example of a repeated act that occurs when observing the performativity of gender.

Another subject influenced by performativity is the machine you use to create typography. We find ourselves utilizing typography in ways that mirror and deflect certain elements of type design established as far back as the Greek lapidary letters, yet the Internet and applications on computing devices (which encompasses computers, smartphones, Kindle, Nook, and other technologies that use a screen for viewing) are a whole new medium that needs the ability to give words special care and treatment. To illustrate one tiny example, think about in what format you most likely found this thesis: a Portable Document Format (PDF).

Although PDFs exist due to coding and computer technologies, they try their best to replicate the look of a piece of printing paper: in the U.S. standard Letter size is 8.5" x 11", white, with the content fitting into these guidelines. The technology seems to be more efficient if

# Header Level 1

## Header Level 2

### Header Level 3

Figure 23. Headers Provide Hierarchies for the Reader to Follow

it reproduced long-established standards (like the size of paper) but it is another enforcer of said standards that accept repetition and conformity over change. It is easier to conform to the standard paper size rather than change the status quo when using other technologies such as printers, scanners, and the like that depend on having an enforced standard size. What are these standards based upon? What forces are influencing this decision? Is repetition of reproducing the U.S. standard Letter size paper powerful enough to produce its own momentum to continue existing? These questions will drive the common user of paper mad if thought about every day, but are imperative because of how invisible performativiy and repetition are always right in front of you. Your performances impact the world, especially the World Wide Web.

A majority of websites, applications and other software use page layouts and design from book printing as a foundation for successful typography. Hierarchies are necessary to produce clarity for the reader. For instance, the headers of this thesis contrast the look of the body text to establish levels for the reader to interpret. A visual representation of some potential levels is seen in figure 23. If the levels of variety are not far away enough, the hierarchy is unsuccessful in comparison to the starker differences expressed by the change in size and thickness of the typeface.

Some elements of tangible book/printing typography do not carry over as easily as others into the technological world. Think of a website. A successful one will have a navigation bar near the top of the screen (due to the repetition of this design throughout the Internet being expected by the end user). This bar allows for the user to experience the content in a non-linear way, jumping from one page to another. On the other hand, people rarely jump around pages when reading a book (with the exception of manuals and academic texts). Book-printers are able to assume the user will experience the content in a linear way, so they do not have to prepare for as many possibilities of interactions as a web designer would.

There are more ways one could differentiate between print and screen experiences, but we only need to be aware of the possibilities to further enhance our understanding of how they are directly influenced by the same typographical principles, with minor adjustments made with layout design and color choices from print to screen and vice versa (see Section 4 for a thorough analysis of older works presented on the screen). Print and screen design have overlapping assumptions of what determines a "good" design even with their varying results.

The specific differences in print and screen design matter little when developing an abstract analysis of them. Even only armed with the brief comments on typography above one can discern the medium's power when digesting a message. The medium for book printing is paper (and paper is another subject that calls for a lengthy dissertation, but I digress). In 2015, the computer screen is prevalent and almost unavoidable in Western civilization (especially when including the smartphone under the description of computer). People plaster their phones and computing devices to their faces for hours on end, feeling the glow against their skin, always looking into the rectangular frame. What are they looking at?

Typography. As you start your computer you have a welcome screen. That is an example of typography. When looking at your icon bar you see the names of said icons written underneath. That is an example of typography. Typing a string of words into Google's search engine gives you no control of how the words look (font: Arial, Regular, 10pt) only what they say. That is an example of typography. All of these examples only exist on the screen, unless you print them out.

Of course the styling of your type is not always yours to control. Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms have their unique typefaces that act as an umbrella for your words. Even when you do have a say (with Tumblr or Wordpress blogs) the selection is limited. The web is growing at an alarming rate, but at this point

in time the landscape of web fonts (specifically fonts that are used on websites) are under certain constraints that word processing software has surpassed (slightly). Regardless of the platform you are using it is important to question if there are options. Your actions perpetuate or diffuse the norms created on the Internet, or, for that matter, anywhere, even when some of your actions are not completely yours to control.

Control of your words directly correlates to where those words are placed: on a piece of paper, your Twitter feed, or a myriad of other locations. A majority of our words are directly linked to our personal computers/smartphones. Even the piece of paper, if a printed document (not handwritten) is tied to the device it was digitally produced on. Our discussion of control directly correlates to the concept of privatization. Specifically, the public and private spheres are theories used to describe where things are situated; generally at home, behind closed doors, or out in the open for any bystander to see. More often than not the unfortunate long standing (yet shifting) stereotype that Sociology expert Ashley Crossman notices is how women belong to the private sphere (doing housework, chores, cooking, etc.) and men to the public sphere (working, creating an external appearance for the family). Of course boiling down two areas of existing (public/private) alongside only two genders (which we can dispute as insufficient) makes these theories rather poor, but humor them as they are still prevalent conceptually even if they do not hold up with real world applications.

This theoretical dichotomy of people and possessions prompts us to ask where does the computer/Internet lie? Which sphere? At first one may think the private sphere since it is your personal possession and you may be the only one to interact with that specific device. On the other hand the Internet is not yours alone. The Internet is a public domain that is accessible to all. Even when you delete a file on your computer, or a post on Facebook, the data is never truly erased unless you physically destroy the computer or computers that hold the data (i.e. Cloud service data holding systems in their own computers). Once you write your words and save them to your computer or send them out into the Internet they are out of your complete control (with regards to erasing them). Beyond producing your thoughts did you ever have any control? Many people claim that privacy is dead (Feldman, Glanville, Preston, Seltzer). In actuality any type of privacy never existed.

Nothing has even truly been private, because as long as you are sharing your words, your stories with people, it is out in the world (maybe not as far reaching pre-Internet, but still not private). You do not create your gender identity alone, isolated, away from outside influences. Let me explain with another excerpt from Butler's essay. She "suggests that this self is not only irretrievably 'outside,' constituted in social discourse, but that the ascription of interiority is itself a publicly regulated and sanctioned form of essence fabrication" (Butler 364). The Internet feels like a one to one interaction. You and your gender also feel one to one. But as we have discussed earlier there is more to it than that already. There are countless ways other people influenced your existence, but let us put our focus back onto the computer/Internet. First, someone had to create the mechanical components of the machine to understand the commands you enact from typing to using the mouse/touchpad (your body had to be created). Second, teams of individuals created the software used on a computer all seeking to create a product for a certain purpose (society imputed certain expectations for certain gender identities). Third, the Internet is a large and all encompassing entity (as is culture). Both the Internet and culture are contemporary leviathans and we are the tiny fish resting in their digestive systems, believing at times we are uninfluenced by our surroundings, but without the exterior there is no concept of interiority (which Butler claims is publicly regulated anyways). The exterior is the mirror for the interior; they are one and the same, just different perceptions of what you are looking at.

After looking at performativity, invisibility, and interiority of typography, gender, and the machinery used to produce typography you can see how the repetition of performativity directly affects us all. My theoretical take of the performativity of typography and gender is based off of Butler's take on performativity but I hope it engages the reader to think of the repeated acts they do in their daily lives and notice how their typographical choices (whether producing or consuming) are important because they reproduce contemporary concepts of typography and gender. A piece of paper is never just a piece of paper.
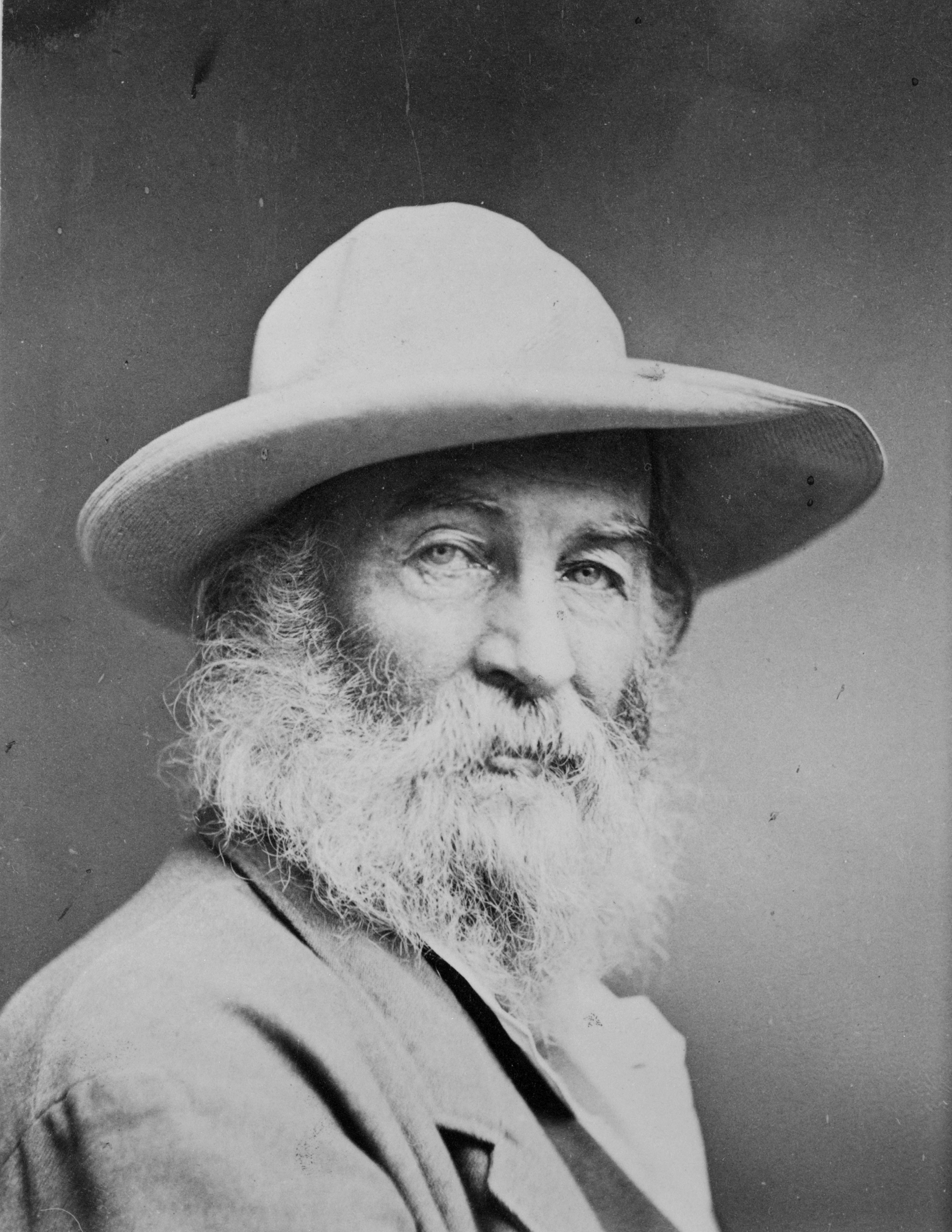
# Section 4: *Leaves of Grass* and Gender

This section focuses on analyzing three versions of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* for their typographical choices. These versions were each created roughly 70 years apart from one another chronologically (1860, 1930, and 2015, respectively) The first two print versions of *Leaves of Grass* were also evaluated by Historian Megan L. Benton within her essay *Typography and Gender: Remasculating the Modern Book*. Benton describes the shift in nineteenth century machine-made books from pre- to post-industrialism (see Section 1: A Brief History of Typography), which also comments on the shift from gothic to modern styles of typography that paralleled the transformation of printing technologies and their ability to produce at faster speeds with less ink usage. No ink or paper is used in the most recent version of Leaves of Grass because it is available in a digital format known as an E-book (short for "electronic book"). The typographical choices for a printed object versus a screen based object vary greatly, yet this E-book was created in honor of the 1850 version of *Leaves of Grass* and replicates the look of that version as best it can on the new medium that did not exist while Whitman was alive. By looking at these three specific examples we will see how the transformation in typographical history and trends directly influenced the text's stylistic appearance that was judged by critics to be gendered.

Abstract concepts are (ironically) best paired with tangible, physical examples. Typography and gender are two concepts that are given attention in their own disciplines, yet they are rarely cross referenced beyond the example of a typeface being described as "masculine" or "feminine." What are masculine and feminine but the most subjective descriptors of all, directly connected to the historical and cultural context that attempt to define them? Utilizing the terms "masculine" and "feminine" reduces their meaning to one intention by the user when the user has no control over how the consumer, the viewer, the reader will interpret "masculine" and /or "feminine." These terms exist ambiguously and without direction until matched up with the object, and the moment they are being applied to.

Gendered terms were applied to the nineteenth century typefaces such as "fussy, pale, and 'feminine,' calling for a return to darker, heavier, more 'robust' letterforms, which [typographers] argued would restore vigor and 'virility' to the printed page" (Benton 71). This resistance to change was also fueled by the rise of women authors and readers who threatened men's world of literature. The material forms of typography, its shapes and styles (for example described above as fussy, dark, etc.) import as much meaning as, for example, an actor's voice and gestures convey different moods through tone, tempo, pitch, and other sound communicators that are only applied here as a reference for the reader to grasp these concepts. These codes, as we will call them act as a mirror between the material forms (the text) to the social, commercial, and ideological frameworks in which, for this thesis books are produced, which in turn inform how they are read and even by whom.

Within Benton's essay she analyzed Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and how its power and meaning were presumably constrained by the modern feminine forms in which they were usually produced. Whitman's text is mainly poetry, so the words already convey a certain meaning. How is their meaning influenced by typography? Also the words are bound to a specific time and place, which allows the analyzer to get rather specific about the influences of the time with regards to production.

The 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* is decorative and light with "calligraphic letterforms sprouting wispy tendrils and light, decorative flourishes" (Benton 75). De Vinne's 1892 manifesto went against the prevailing typographic tastes of the day with regards to the efficient yet defined effeminate new modes of printing through mechanical printing. "Typography that others praised as preeminently artistic and cultured he deplored as weak, feeble, and fussy – feminine" (Benton 75). De Vinne's application of gender values to these two contrasting styles of type and typography was commonplace. There had been an established status quo with defining decorative and finely detailed forms with feminine taste and to align darker, simpler forms with masculine taste.

Before I continue we must address the power of the word "define." A definition conveys a false sense of permanency when you use the word "define" instead of the word "describe"; two completely different words that control how the reader perceives the following phrases. For instance, if I say, "masculinity was defined by darker, simple forms within typography" versus "masculinity was described as darker, simple forms within typography" one sentence over the other carries a feeling of change, an ability to be remolded, yet both are apt to change, as a definition is just a descriptor and not immune to the changing winds of words and their meanings. Definitions change. For our purposes, the definitions De Vinne and others of the nineteenth century describe typography and its shift from a perspective
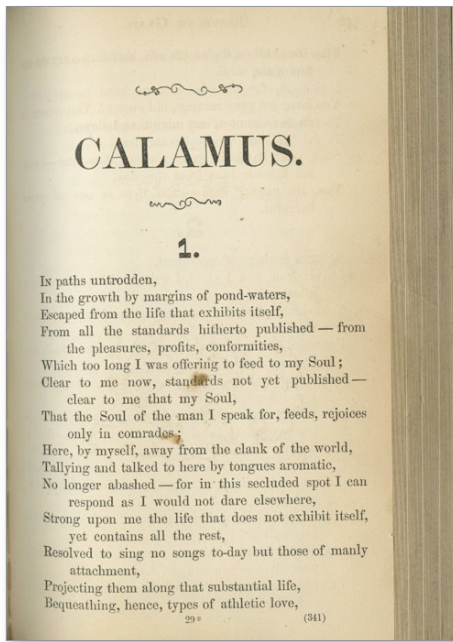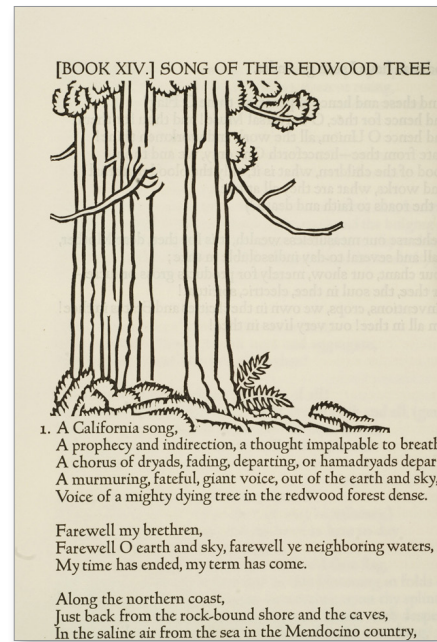
Figure 24. 1860 Edition



Figure 25. 1930 Edition with 'Goudy Newstyle'

that allow us to peek into a world we are far removed from yet never been closer, because describing something as "weak" still seems synonymous with "feminine" in the twenty-first century.

What can be described sufficiently with gender attributes? Here we see the physical characteristics of a typeface alongside the page elements (decorative curls, for example) can technically be described with gender qualities, but even then the use of "masculine" and "feminine" is rather vague (figure 24). Once Benton gives us other descriptors like "bold" and "thin" we can start to visualize a form. What do you picture when I say "masculine"? The only answer I can say is my own because masculinity and femininity are subjective concepts. Gender is subjective. What is it subject to? The individual and therefore to society, or whatever system deems a term carries certain qualities that the community agrees upon. Unfortunately (or fortunately if you like the inclusion of differences) the usage of gendered terms is not as easy as one may trick themselves into thinking. Gendered terms are influenced by the individual's context, point of view, and ultimately their opinion. These opinions have always existed, but were not as readily available in the public sphere until the rise of social media. Alongside this rise of expression comes the corporate bodies who harvest this information and reproduce statistical norms in many ways, including gender. The publishing industry has certain agendas, just like any other company.

The 1930 fine edition of *Leaves of Grass* published by

Random House is a polar opposite to the 1860 edition with regards to typographical choices. One of the printers proclaims "he saw 'something the machine had discarded [with regards to contemporary typography]; he saw strength, he saw the strong, vigorous lines of Whitman . . . . He saw strong, vigorous, simple printing – printing like mountains, rocks and trees, but not like pansies, lilacs and valentines" (Benton 87). These views are a direct reaction to the typographic choices made in the 1930s. Although the thinner and newer typefaces were popular with consumers some of the experts, like the Random House printers, longed to go back to the past and create books that were produced with pre-industrial techniques that 70 years prior critics like De Vinne praised. The 1930 edition uses the typeface 'Goudy Newstyle' to evoke a sense of strength due to the thickness of the letterforms relating to a pre-industrial time of printing (figure 25).

Both of the above *Leaves of Grass* editions are print based, but what if you wanted to purchase it today? Well there are two main categories to choose from: print or digital (being audiobooks or E-books). I will analyze the typographical choices for the 2015 E-book edition of *Leaves of Grass* for the Amazon Kindle (figure 26). This electronic edition is written in the 'Times New Roman' typeface, which is a standard normal text typeface choice due to its position as the default typeface for the PC version of Microsoft Word. Within Amazon's listing for the E-book they mention how it is based on the 1855 version of *Leaves of Grass* and strives to be as close as possible to reproducing the original text.

BOOK XIV

······································································································

Song of the Redwood-Tree
    1
A California song,
A prophecy and indirection, a thought impalpable to breathe as air,
A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or hamadryads departing,
A murmuring, fateful, giant voice, out of the earth and sky,
Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest dense.

Farewell my brethren,
Farewell O earth and sky, farewell ye neighboring waters,
My time has ended, my term has come.

Figure 26. Excerpt from the 2015 Kindle E-book Edition of *Leaves of Grass*

With regards to style there is little to comment on due to the minimal approach. In terms of layout the piece is full of white space and lets the poetry breathe on the page. Due to the lack of intrinsic boarders or other flourishes besides one singular line after the title the reader puts all of their attention towards the styling of the poetry. The lines of poetry are indented from other lines and bundled together in what one calls stanzas. The formatting choices within this version of *Leaves of Gras*s leave no questions about the content being poetry. In relation to the previous two versions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries this version leans towards the perceived "feminine" side due to its use of 'Times New Roman' and straying away from the gothic typefaces favored by the old fashioned publishers.

This version can be read on a screen provided by a computer, smartphone, tablet or any other device where you have the option to download the Kindle application. Xist Publishing, who produced this e-book, states how they create "books for the touchscreen generation, and [are] dedicated to helping everyone develop a lifetime love of reading, no matter what form it takes." The medium the words are written within affect not only the typographic styling but all other factors like the economic (convenience, availability), social (who can purchase and read this book) and cultural (who else has read this book) elements that are changing at a faster pace than ever before with the advent of screen-based living.

Although this case study is inevitably linked with the specific time and place *Leaves of Grass* was published,

(1860, 1930 and 2015 for these three editions,) and within her essay, Benton is forever speaking from the start of the millennium, these instances of gender are not stuck in those times along with those words. Gender is a fluid concept that transgresses context, but that does not mean it is universal. Gender is a difficult subject to comment on without falling off the conformity tightrope but I believe that metaphorical tightrope is passé and needs to be replaced with a larger, more inclusive apparatus that allows for questioning conformity, especially within typography.

# Section 5:  How 'Sexy' Looks in Magazines

As mentioned in Section 3, typography is irrevocably intertwined with gender as an apparatus that constitutes perfomativity. I chose to find the word 'sexy' within magazines because as an adjective it is directly linked with gender and sex, yet is typically applied as a descriptor to only one gender: women. This occurrence should be observed and questioned due to its prevalence in any gendered person's life. Where did the word 'sexy' come from? Where is it today? By analyzing the use of the word 'sexy' within one medium, the magazine, I look to find any links between the magazine's intended audience and the visuals associated with the word. In three specific sources (an advertisement within a magazine, a cover, and an article) I will further explain how the repetition of certain typographical styles and gendered images reinforce the performative nature of these topics, which, in turn, reinforce your power to be aware of this performativity or let it stay invisible. This study avoids any advertisements that subjectively evoke the word 'sexy' without physically showing the word and focuses on finding contemporary typographical examples that exist on the Internet or in print.

Remember, this analysis of sexy can be applied to any and all words and sentences due to the morphology of words being intertwined to cultural and social environments. Without culture, words would have no weight: no mass. With culture, their weight is calculated differently depending on the point of view and other factors. Let us continue on with our singular word study and keep these larger concepts in the back of our minds.

## 'Sexy': Its Origins

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) the word 'sex' as a noun is first defined as "(chiefly with reference to people) sexual activity, including specifically sexual intercourse" and secondly defined as "either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions." The second definition of 'sex' is close to the initial starting point of the word's origins. 'Sex' came into existence as a word in medieval times from the Latin sexus, and first referred to the two genders. A distinction should be made that the term 'sex' is the biological determiner of reproductive attributes whereas 'gender' is the social determiner and is not a binary as the origins of 'sex' hints at. Rather, gender encompasses identities of male, female, and all LGBT community categories. It is important to keep those two distinct notions of 'sex' and 'gender' in mind when discussing anything gender related.

Inevitably sex and gender are intertwined and are themselves large and broad topics, which is beneficial when arguing how expansive words are but difficult when trying to define and comprehend them. For the purpose of this thesis, sex is important to note as the noun that the suffix '-y' attaches to and forms an adjective with the qualities mentioned above.

People or things have been referred to as 'sexy' in the literal sense since the 1920s. In an article titled "Love, romance, and 'wild women' in the 1920s," Professor of Corpus Linguistics Mark Davies mentions, "[s]exy . . . appears first in 1925 . . . and then has increased steadily since then." The Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) is a collection of American written texts spanning from 1810 – 2009. The first recorded use of the word 'sexy' was in the New Yorker under an article titled "Talk of the Town," which is a generic title used by writers of the New Yorker to this day to describe everyday activities. The fragment "Alec WooIlona rotoundly advising some fair young thing to be less sexy" is used within this short excerpt seen in COHA. Davies guesses that the creation of the word 'sexy' may be due to starlets in movies or the flappers of that era. On his site he only applies the term to women as a descriptor, not to men of the time. Davies' article title alone supports this observation. The writing discusses 'wild women' in the 1920s, not 'wild men' or any other 'wild person' of the time. If 'sex' applies to all humans, then why is the term only applied to women at its origins? This question is meant to be thought provoking rather than fully answered. All people and things can be described as 'sexy,' but what comes to mind when that word is spoken or written? That is for you to decide.

## 'Sexy': Where is it now?

Thanks to COHA we have data that tells us when the term 'sexy' was used and how frequently in fiction/non-fiction literature, magazines, and newspapers. From 2000 – 2009 the word 'sexy' is used 742 times compared to the two times it was used in the 1920s when it was coined (COHA). That number would increase exponentially if it were to include words on the Internet through channels like social media, online blogs and other websites who constantly produce written content. Although the last six years are undocumented it is unlikely the word 'sexy' has stopped being used in all of those different mediums.

One medium that is prevalent both in the print and online world is the magazine. A magazine is a publication that is printed or published electronically and can carry a variety of content. Magazines are financed numerous ways, one of which is advertising. In Section 3, I mentioned the influence marketing and advertising has on the consumer to sway them (for the short term) to purchase something, but for the long term align their thinking with the messages conveyed by the advertisements. Within a magazine there are numerous messages that are trying to jump out at you from the page (or screen) and hold your attention so that you will act on them. Visuals are key to grabbing the consumer's attention and reaffirm popular notions of a word, sentence, and any symbol that carries metaphorical weight. Clearly 'sexy' has its historical weight that comes through even today with its use in magazine ads. In most instances advertisements do not go against the grain of the accepted lexicon and typographical styling. So what is the accepted use of 'sexy'? Thankfully there is no one answer to this question, but rather a unique, individual estimation for every application of the word.

## Example 1: An Advertisement

In the April Edition of *People*, an American magazine of celebrity and human interest stories, there was an advertisement for a smartphone called the "LG G Flex2" (figure 27). To understand the impact of the word 'sexy' within this advertisement I will explain the context of where 'sexy' exists in relation to other objects within the layout. This one page spread has a minimal color palette of whites, blacks and reds that mirrors the limited amount of items to look at on the page. For example, the only text on the top-half of the page consists of the LG logo and tagline. The top third of the page is dedicated to a straight-on photo of a figure from the neck up that appears to be a woman due to her large necklace and hairstyle. The figure's black hair covers their eyes and goes down to the bridge of their nose in a peculiar way, making it glaringly clear that we are observing the magazine, and they are not looking back at us. There is no disillusionment that we are looking at a living person unlike the reverse side of the spread that holds an image of a person also looking directly at us, but with no hair in her face to obstruct the gaze.

After moving past the centered floating image of the figure we see a red and black product on its side with a slight upward curve that weakly mimics the curve of the figure's hairstyle. Centered underneath the visual line break produced by the product we read the phrase "SAME IS NOT SEXY" styled in the same red as the phone with a sans serif, thin typeface. When a phrase is written in all capitals is usually stands in for verbal yelling, but the typeface choice is thin enough to weaken the impact of the capitals. The specific font is 'LG Smart Light,' one font out of the entire font family created for LG. Ironically the phrase creates a sense of sameness since all of the letters are capitalized and have the same height as well as the same styling throughout. The message for this product is to be different, to be unique (most likely as a retaliation against the ubiquitous iPhone and their sameness). This message is conveyed further within the copy of the advertisement.

Within the small, gray, thin paragraph of text centered underneath, the phrase mentioned above it states "the smartphone for those who have their own way of looking at the world, and vary the definition of sexy." This advertisement is peculiar for focusing on the definition of a word it harnesses to the point of blatantly defining it for the consumer. What is even more curious is that LG's definition rests on the word 'vary' which means to undergo change or change something, to give variety. Through LG's statement they acknowledge how ambiguity exists,

Figure 27. Spread in *People* Magazine April 2015

but through making a statement about ambiguity the definition of 'sexy' is less ambiguous. Because 'sexy' has now been used in a statement where it has context. There are no assumptions as to what LG means by its use of 'sexy' unlike many other accounts of the word. For instance take COHA's list of where 'sexy' was used and it will rarely be cited as redefining itself for that book, magazine, etc. In most cases the reader defines 'sexy' for themselves and they apply their preconceived notions or knowledge of the word in the form of an assumption, which is perfectly acceptable. If we were to constantly scrutinize every single word there would be no sleep. Rather, the knowledge that words can be scrutinized and questioned is knowledge enough to continue on throughout your day more in control of how you view the world.

As much as there is to say that is positive about this advertisement in regards to viewing 'sexy' as a fluid, changeable term, it is still an advertisement. The end goal is to sell product. Near the very bottom of the page there is a call-out for people to use the call to action in the 'LG Smart Semibold' font that states "#VARYSEXY" as an indicator to use on Twitter. Twitter is a social media platform that has the ability to tag people, words, sayings and other items in your messages, or "tweets" to create a conversation that reaches out to more people. Therefore LG is trying to produce marketing buzz about the product not only through their paid advertisement, but also through the

unpaid consumer mentioning that call to action in their tweets. The more people who know about this product equates to a higher probability of people purchasing it. The word 'sexy' is applied to this product to help it sell, even if it is not being stereotypically overt with its use of what popular culture deems sexy images. However, LG is being stereotypical with its one figure image. It is most likely a woman, who a majority of the time is directly associated with the word 'sexy' as seen as far back as the coining of the term in the 1920s. If LG really wanted to "vary the definition of sexy" they should have placed a man as the headpiece, but instead LG objectified yet another woman figure as the image to parallel with the product. Repeating the notion that "women = sexy." They are both objects, especially when the figure has no eyes, or no body for that matter. Why is their head floating above the product? It could be used as juxtaposition, but all signs point to another observation. Everything else on the page is harmonized with its color layout and semi symmetrical positioning; the two items are paired and deemed equal. Therefore the word 'sexy' is reaffirming the visual idea of attractiveness and asking the consumer, the view, and above all, the person, to purchase the object.

## Example 2: A Cover

Another example of the application of 'sexy' is on the cover of the February 2015 edition of *Cosmopolitan*, a fashion magazine catered to women (figure 28). In the middle third of the layout there is a figure with her name, "Kylie Jenner" appearing on the left side of her head in a black and bold sans serif typeface. She looks like a woman due to the long hair, round face, exposure of skin in the neck and collarbone area, and painted nails. A man could have any of these features but more often than not these are directly correlated to women's physical appearance.

Because this is the cover of a magazine it is quite busy with lots of different text in varying sizes, weights and colors acting like parenthesis around the figure. Besides the large black and bold title "COSMOPOLITAN" covered by the figure's head there is only one other overly large display text that says "LOOK SEXY NOW" with the same thin sans serif font but with varying colors. This is the second example to enforce the all capital style, yelling at the viewer to look literally with the use of the word 'look' and visually through the use of a style that is related to screaming (yet softened by the thin typeface). Thin is "in" for magazine typefaces. "LOOK" is in a pastel yellow, "SEXY" is covered in pastel pink, and "NOW" is paper white. These words do not appear on one line but stacked one on top of the other. The stacked look is not perfectly right aligned but staggered, with "LOOK" and "NOW" closer to the edge of the cover compared to "SEXY" which is completely engulfed in the figure's coat and sits on a baseline created by the figure's chest. The word "SEXY" has been stamped onto the figure. This cover applies the concept of the reader defining 'sexy' for themselves and applying their prior knowledge of the word and the associated aesthetic choices as assumptions.

Why pink? It contrasts well with the blue jacket, but so does yellow and white. Therefore the choice has more weight to it than pure aesthetics. Color theory is an entire discipline in itself that can only briefly be mentioned to note that, in America, the color pink is associated with the birth of baby girls. Women and pink have been culturally fused since the twentieth century. Once again 'sexy' and a female are paired together to portray a symbiotic relationship between the two concepts, which is further emphasized by the color pink, a repeated combination reflecting performativity.



Figure 28. *Cosmopolitan* Magazine Cover February 2015

Figure 29a. Top-half of *Men's Health* Magazine Article Section March 2013



Figure 29b. Bottom-half of *Men's Health* Magazine Article Section March 2013

# Example 3: An Article

The last example of the word 'sexy' in the medium of magazines comes in the form of an article written by Clint Carter titled "Outsmart Sin City." This article discusses how to enjoy Las Vegas, Nevada with his intended audience being male (since this magazine is titled *Men's Health*). This is the first magazine that expresses what gender the audience should be within their title. Carter details numerous activities to enjoy in the city, including "lap dancing". To illustrate this point the article photographer Sian Kennedy created a visual that shows a literal lap (figure 29a). Now, this lap is wearing a suit and has its legs spread wide apart in a stance that makes it most likely a man's lap (at least judging by Western conventions of men spreading their legs apart and women keeping their legs shut while sitting). In the foreground of the lap is a leg from the calf down to the foot, perpendicular to the horizontal line created by the lap. This amputated leg/foot with blue toenails is wearing a stiletto platform heel that matches the white, black and nude color palette presented in the image. In general, heels are considered footwear for women, and therefore this jutting leg/foot can be considered belonging to a woman. These visuals are directly related to the article text, especially the pulled out quote.

Resting on the left knee of the lap is the quote from a dancer named Addison who states, "It's like the guys are trying to be sexy. It just doesn't work" (Carter 45). This quote appears in two locations, once within the article itself with context and the other on top of the lap and leg image. The article itself uses a sans serif black typeface in the first column (figure 29b). The word is meant to read for content alone rather than as a word that needs special attention like the Cosmopolitan cover example. The full phrase is "DON'T Blow on her neck. Apparently this happens a

lot. 'It's so gross. It's like the guys are trying to be sexy. It doesn't work'"(Carter 45). This advice can be seen as sincere, but it looses this perception when it is extrapolated and plastered beside a crotch and a shaved leg/foot.

When the quote is positioned on top of the lap and leg/foot image it treats all the words with the same physical features; it is written in a white modernist typeface like 'Chronicle' that contains serifs and thin connecting strokes. This is the only example out of the three with the word 'sexy' styled with a serifed typeface. Letterforms with serifs look like they have feet protruding from them in a similar fashion as the prominent image of the female foot. For an example look at the letter "a's" bottom serif in the word "are" to see what I am talking about. When reading the quote only on the top-half of the page one may assume that guys, or men, cannot be sexy. Period. This type of statement indirectly reinforces the notion that women, therefore, as the stereotyped opposite of men, are sexy (or should be sexy). Every example described in this case study directly links the word 'sexy' with women. This association has not changed since the origination of the word. Therefore 'sexy' and 'women' can accidentally be seen as synonymous, or theoretically synonymous. Although this *Men's Health* example does picture a man, it only pictures their lower half and is the backdrop for the independent leg. There is a disconnect from the person these body parts belong and are connected to. Also the image is paired with a quote that ultimately says guys try and fail to be sexy (which is a falsity because everyone has the potential to be sexy, or any other adjective).

These three examples all participate in the performativity of typography and gender, specifically when females are

pictured next to the typographically styled word 'sexy' within various magazines. Each treatment varies slightly but the overall repetition of 'sexy' alongside a female body (or body part) remains.

Remember, this is only one word out of the entire English dictionary, within one medium, never mind other mediums, languages, cultures, and contexts. This singular word can integrate into sentences, paragraphs, essays, and all other texts and mediums to produce a narrative that is read by you and comprehended in a blink, a snapshot. That snapshot reading of the word is thanks to the legibility produced by typography and the ability to learn a language and master reading to the point of skimming and turning on an auto pilot setting in your brain. That reading translates even when the medium is a billboard, a movie poster, a web advertisement, any written entity. Although the process of reading is repeated to the point of seeming natural and difficult to actively think about one must always reflect and be aware that any repeated practice that resists inquiring why things are a certain way is inhibiting awareness. Your actions, your choices, are made by you alone, but they are based upon outside influences, including but not limited to seemingly invisible topics that bleed into the fabric of our lives like typography and gender.

# Conclusion

You are constantly making choices about what to do and where to go. These choices are inescapably influenced by your surroundings, including culture. Awareness of your surroundings is important not only with regards to the typographical and gendered landscapes, but all areas of your life. Mindlessly accepting conventions is yet another way of repeating and reestablishing them. In the end, to not choose to be aware is still a choice. By reading this thesis you chose to be aware, to take a critical eye to your world and the areas directly impacted by the performativity of typography and gender.

Most of our choices are repeatedly chosen over and over again to the point where they are invisible and do not feel like choices any longer. As mentioned before, repeating acts are most successful when they blend into the background, pretending to be permanent components of our lives when they are only in existence if someone performs those acts. Acts of typography throughout history have participated in this perfomative practice through the creation of stylistic structures and expectations for certain mediums to look a certain way. Acts of gender performativity are seen in all areas a human can influence and engender, which includes typography. Realizing the intertwined nature of typography with gender is the backbone of producing a sense of visibility, an awareness of how your choices are the physical actions that reestablish the performativity of these topics, which are invisible by default.

After analyzing three mediums (books, E-books and magazines) for their typographical treatment of the text (which were considered gendered due to the context the medium produced) I believe we actively choose to be in control of what we see within those examples and how we see it. Authors of texts as well as designers of typography were chosen for a reason and made stylistic choices for a reason. For what reason is up to you, the viewer, since we can only speculate on the reason the author chose the word 'sexy' or the designer chose a certain typeface or alignment options (unless we interviewed them). Even with an interview, the producer of typography and gender may be unaware of their participation since performative actions are so ingrained in our psyches. They are just one more person to perform these invisible topics.

The next time you sit down to write a paper, or participate in a myriad of ways texts can be produced in contemporary times, I hope you are aware not only of the power of your words, but of the equally powerful manner of how those words look and participate in the recreation of gender.

# Works Cited

Benton, Meghan L., Chapter three in illuminating letters: Typography and Gender: Remasculating the Modern Book. Print.

Breuer, Gerda, and Julia Meer. "Short Biographies A-Z." *Women in Graphic Design 1890-2012 = Frauen Und Grafik-Design: 1890-2012*. Berlin: Jovis, 2012. Print.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. 356-66. Print.

Carter, Clint. "Outsmart Sin City." *Men's Health* March 2013: 42-45. Print.

Carter, Richard. "Privacy Is Dead, Harvard Professors Tell Davos Forum." Weblog post. *Yahoo Tech*. 22 Jan. 2015. Web.

Carter, Rob. *American Typography Today*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1989. Print.

Crossman, Ashley. "Private And Public Spheres." *About.com*. Web.

Davies, Mark. "Love and Romance in the 1920s." *Love and Romance in the 1920s*. Web.

Davies, Mark. (2010-) The Corpus of Historical American English: 400 million words, 1810-2009. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/. Web.

"Definition of Sex in English:." Sex: Definition of Sex in Oxford Dictionary (American English) (US). Web.

Feldman, Miles J. "Is Privacy Dead?" *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, . Web.

Felici, James. "Part One Typographic Basics." *The Complete Manual of Typography: A Guide to Setting Perfect Type*. Berkeley, CA: Peachpit, 2012. Print.

Glanville, Jo. "Privacy Is Dead: (Long Live Privacy!) (Index on Censorship) Paperback – June 22, 2011." Privacy Is Dead: (Long Live Privacy!) (Index on Censorship): Jo Glanville: 9781446209103: *Amazon.com*: Books. SAGE Publications Ltd. Web.

Haley, Allan, and Kathryn Henderson. "Type History and Timeline." *Typography, Referenced: A Comprehensive Visual Guide to the Language, History, and Practice of Typography*. Beverly, MA.: Rockport, 2012. Print.

Lupton, Ellen. "Women in graphic design." *Women in Graphic Design 1890-2012 = Frauen Und Grafik-Design: 1890-2012*. Breuer, Gerda, and Julia Meer. Berlin: Jovis, 2012. Print.

Preston, Alex. "The Death of Privacy." Weblog post. The Guardian. Guardian News and Media Limited, 3 Aug. 2014. Web.

Romano, Frank. "Foreward." *The Complete Manual of Typography: A Guide to Setting Perfect Type*. Berkeley, CA: Peachpit, 2012. Print.

Saltz, Ina. *Typography, Referenced: A Comprehensive Visual Guide to the Language, History, and Practice of Typography*. Beverly, MA.: Rockport, 2012. Print.

Scotford, Martha. "Messy history vs. neat history – Toward an expanded view of women in graphic design." *Women in Graphic Design 1890-2012 = Frauen Und Grafik-Design: 1890-2012*. Breuer, Gerda, and Julia Meer. Berlin: Jovis, 2012. Print.

Steel, Emily. "Typeface Inspired by Comic Books Has Become a Font of Ill Will." *WebCite Query Result*. Wall Street Journal, 17 Apr. 2009. Web.

Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass (Xist Classics)*. California: Xist Publishing, 2015. Kindle File.

# List of Figures

**Figure 13.**    Hood, Jim. Specimen of the typeface Courier. Digital image. *Wikimedia Commons*. 12 Feb. 2007. Web. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CourierWC.png>.

**Figure 14.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Underwood Standard Portable Typewriter at the Museum of Printing*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 15a.**    Inferno986return. Speciman sample for ITC Avant Garde Gothic. Digital image. *Wikimedia Commons*. 6 Aug. 2014. Web. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ITC_Avant_Garde_Gothic_Sample.svg>.

**Figure 15b.**    Admin. *ADIDAS Logo Font*. Digital image. *FontsLogo.com*. Web. <http://fontslogo.com/adidas-logo-font/>.

**Figure 16.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Typography*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 17.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Sentences*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 18.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Leading*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 19.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Times New Roman Serif*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 20.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Helvetica Sans Serif*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 21.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Bold*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 22.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Text, Display, Decorative*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 23.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Header Hierarchies*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 24.**    *WALT WHITMAN'S LEAVES OF GRASS*. Digital image. *That's So Gay*. Library Company of Philadelphia. Web. <http://www.gayatlcp.org/walt-whitmans-leaves-of-grass/>.

**Figure 25.**    *Leaves of Grass*. Digital image. *David Brass Rare Books*. Web. <http://www.davidbrassrarebooks.com/wp-content/plugins/wp-shopping-cart/single_book.php/?sbook=1443>.

**Figure 26.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Excerpt from the 2015 Kindle E-book Edition of Leaves of Grass*. 2015. Digital Image.

**Figure 27.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Spread in People magazine April 2015*. 2015. Digital Image.

**Figure 28.**    Davidson, Eric Ray. Kylie Jenner graces the February 2015 issue of Cosmopolitan clad in a blue bomber jacket, white tank, and jeans. Digital image. *Us Weekly*. Web. <http://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-beauty/news/kylie-jenner-on-plastic-surgery-cosmopolitan-february-2015-cover-photos-201561>.

**Figure 29a.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Top-half of Men's Health magazine article section March 2013*. 2015. Digital image.

**Figure 29b.**    Duprey, Alyssa. *Bottom-half of Men's Health magazine article section March 2013*. 2015. Digital image.

**Image on Page 34**    Walt Whitman, Head-and-shoulders Portrait, Facing Front, Wearing Hat. Digital image. Library of Congress. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Web. <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b29434/>.

# Glossary

| Term | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Blackletter / Gothic | an early, ornate, bold style of type with broad vertical downstrokes |
| Characters / Letter | a symbol, usually written or printed representing a speech sound and constituting a unit of the alphabet |
| Font | a set of type all of one style and sometimes one size |
| Graphic Designer | one who identifies, examines, and solves communication problems using a wide range of tools, processes, and visual / verbal language skills |
| Italic / Oblique | of the sloping kind of typeface used especially for emphasis or distinction. One could argue the differences between italic and oblique but for our purposes they are insignificant |
| Letterform | the graphic form of a letter of the alphabet, either as written or in a particular type font |
| Medium | a particular form or system of communication |
| PostScript | a computer language for creating vector graphics (including typefaces) |
| Serif | a slight projection finishing off a stroke of a letter in certain typefaces |
| Sans Serif | a style of type without serifs |
| Type | mechanical letters that are usually printed |
| Type Designer | someone who works with type, arranging it in space for effective communication |
| Type Foundry | a company that designs or distributes typefaces |
| Typeface | a set of letters, numbers, etc., that are all in the same style and are used in printing |
| Typesetter | one who has the job of arranging type for printing |
| Typography | the art of arranging type |