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# GEORGE MICHAEL BROWER

UCLA DESIGN | MEDIA ARTS  
TYPOGRAPHY SPRING 2007

## FOREWORD

Over the course of a ten-week quarter with Professor Willem Henri Lucas, each of 25 students produced over 80 designs for the front cover, spine and back cover of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* using the Helvetica typeface. We began our designs under a number of strict guidelines and boundaries, which were gradually lifted as the class progressed. For myself and most other students in the class, this was our first formal interaction with the study of type.

Our goal in designing these covers was to arrange letterforms in a way that was (usually) informative, aesthetically pleasing, and above all, firmly linked to the novel's themes, motifs or content, while avoiding illustration. Of the ten covers produced for each assignment, each student was charged with the task of selecting the five most effective designs. In addition to various other exercises in print, this book catalogues my strongest efforts to design the novel's cover within the parameters of each given assignment.

## THE CONTENT

*From Oxford World's Classics* – “The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.’ When Dorian Gray has his portrait painted, he is captivated by his own beauty. Tempted by his world-weary, decadent friend Lord Henry Wotton, he wishes to stay forever young, and pledges his very soul to keep his good looks. Set in fin-de-siecle London, the novel traces a path from the studio of painter Basil Hallward to the opium dens of the East End. As Dorian's slide into crime and cruelty progresses he stays magically youthful, while his beautiful portrait changes, revealing the hideous corruption of moral decay. Ever since its first publication in 1890 Wilde's only novel has remained the subject of critical controversy. Acclaimed by some as an instructive moral tale, it has been denounced by others for its implicit immorality. Combining elements of the supernatural, aestheticism, and the Gothic, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is an unclassifiable and uniquely unsettling work of fiction.”

## THE TYPEFACE

Developed in 1957 by Swiss designer Max Miedinger, Helvetica is among history's most widely used typefaces, sans-serif or otherwise. You can find it in corporate logos, fine art, computer systems, road signs and elsewhere. You'd be hard pressed to open your eyes on a daily basis without encountering Helvetica.

Helvetica is very much the typographic equivalent of white. It, perhaps more so than any other modern typeface, comes very close to having no personality of its own. Aside from its connotations of minimalism and modernity, a line of Helvetica says little more than the words written with it.

Graphic designers are engaged in a constant struggle to create forms that connect to their content. The form and shape of the Helvetica typeface is so neutral that its message is seldom anything other than what the text itself says. This leaves the designer free to imbue meaning through the thoughtful placement and organization of text.

## ASSIGNMENT 1

# COMPOSITION AND SPACE

At this stage, we as designers were given little freedom. Any text to be included in this first round of designs had to be drawn solely in 9pt Helvetica Roman. Among the information to be included, the author, title, publisher, series title, ISBN and a brief excerpt were confined to the front cover. The spine and back cover wouldn't be touched upon until nearly halfway through the quarter.

Our creative freedom existed solely in the position, rotation, leading, and letter spacing of our type. We learned early on that the stretching or deformation of letterforms wouldn't be accepted under any circumstance. The designs that follow explore the power within the simple composition and spacing of text.

Helvetica Neue 55 Roman, 9 pt. Strictly.



Oxford world's classics

“How sad it is!”, murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. “How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June.”

“. . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old!

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Oscar Wilde

Oxford University press  
ISBN 0-19-283365-0

		<p>“How sad it is!”, murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. “How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. “. . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old!</p> <p>The Picture of Dorian Gray Oscar Wilde</p> <p>Oxford world's classics Oxford University press ISBN 0-19-283365-0</p>
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		<p data-bbox="1628 1197 1867 1221">Oxford world's classics</p> <p data-bbox="1970 1197 2498 1332">"How sad it is!", murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June."</p> <p data-bbox="1628 1399 1898 1473">The Picture of Dorian Gray Oscar Wilde</p> <p data-bbox="1970 1399 2498 1473">". . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old!</p> <p data-bbox="2256 1584 2498 1634">Oxford University press ISBN 0-19-283365-0</p>
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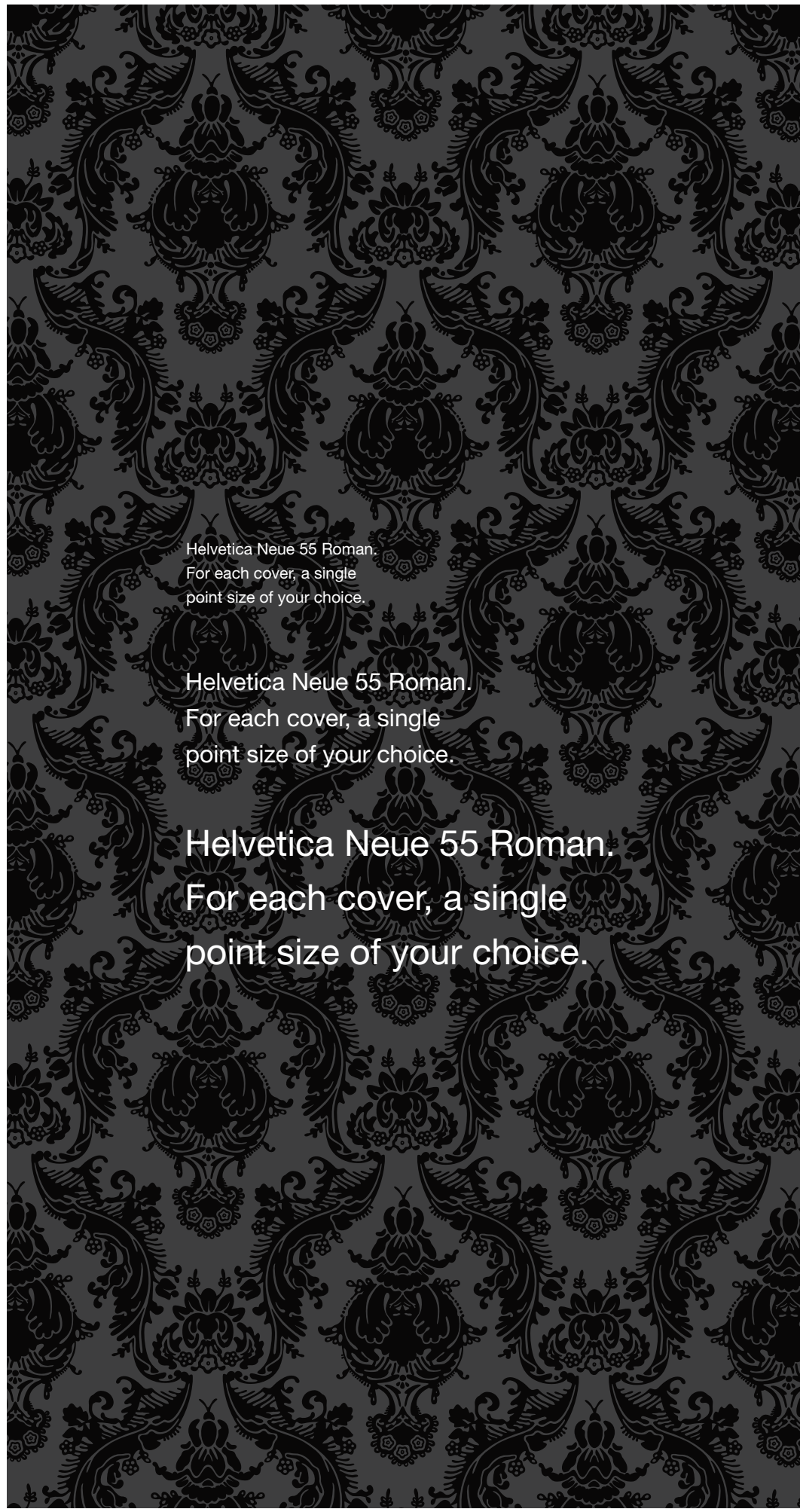
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## ASSIGNMENT 2

# COMPOSITION, SPACE AND SIZE

Still restricted to one type size per design, this week we were at least given the freedom to choose what those sizes would be. Use of white space becomes increasingly important as size increases and designers struggle to fit the necessary content within a single cover. Use of white space plays an even larger role in those designs utilizing smaller type.



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For each cover, a single  
point size of your choice.

Helvetica Neue 55 Roman.  
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"How sad it is!", murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June."

"...If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!"

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"...If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be ~~always young~~ and the picture that was to grow old! For that-for that-I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my ~~soul~~ ~~for that!~~"

Oxford world's classics

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Oxford world's classics  
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

“How sad it is!” murmured Dorian Gray, looking at the picture fixed upon his own portrait. How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful, and that picture will remain as young and fresh as ever. It will never be older than this particular day of June.”

“If it were only the picture that was to grow old, and the picture that was to grow old! For that-for that-I would give every thing that I possess. It is nothing in the world that I would not give!”

I would give my soul for that!  
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## ASSIGNMENT 3

# LIGHT, BOLD AND ITALIC

So many new dimensions in type are added through the use of varied weight or italicized text. The Helvetica family contains number of different variations in weight or stroke thickness. These range from 25 Ultra Light to 95 Black, though we were restricted to a smaller subset.

Italic text also presents new possibilities not only as a tool for formal typography, but in the way it evokes motion. This week's parameters forced us to consider a third dimension of depth to be instilled through varied weight in type, and the momentum to be instilled through use of italics.



Helvetica Neue 45 Light  
*Helvetica Neue 46 Light Italic*

Helvetica Neue 55 Roman  
*Helvetica Neue 56 Italic*

**Helvetica Neue 75 Bold**  
***Helvetica Neue 76 Bold Italic***

Still a single point size per cover.

"How sad it is!", murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! ***I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful.*** But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June."

"If it were only the other way! ***If it were I who was to be always young,*** and the picture that was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything! ***Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!***"

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Oscar Wilde  
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*Oxford world's classics*

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"...If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be ~~always young~~ and the picture that was to grow old! For that-for that-I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my ~~soul~~ for that!"

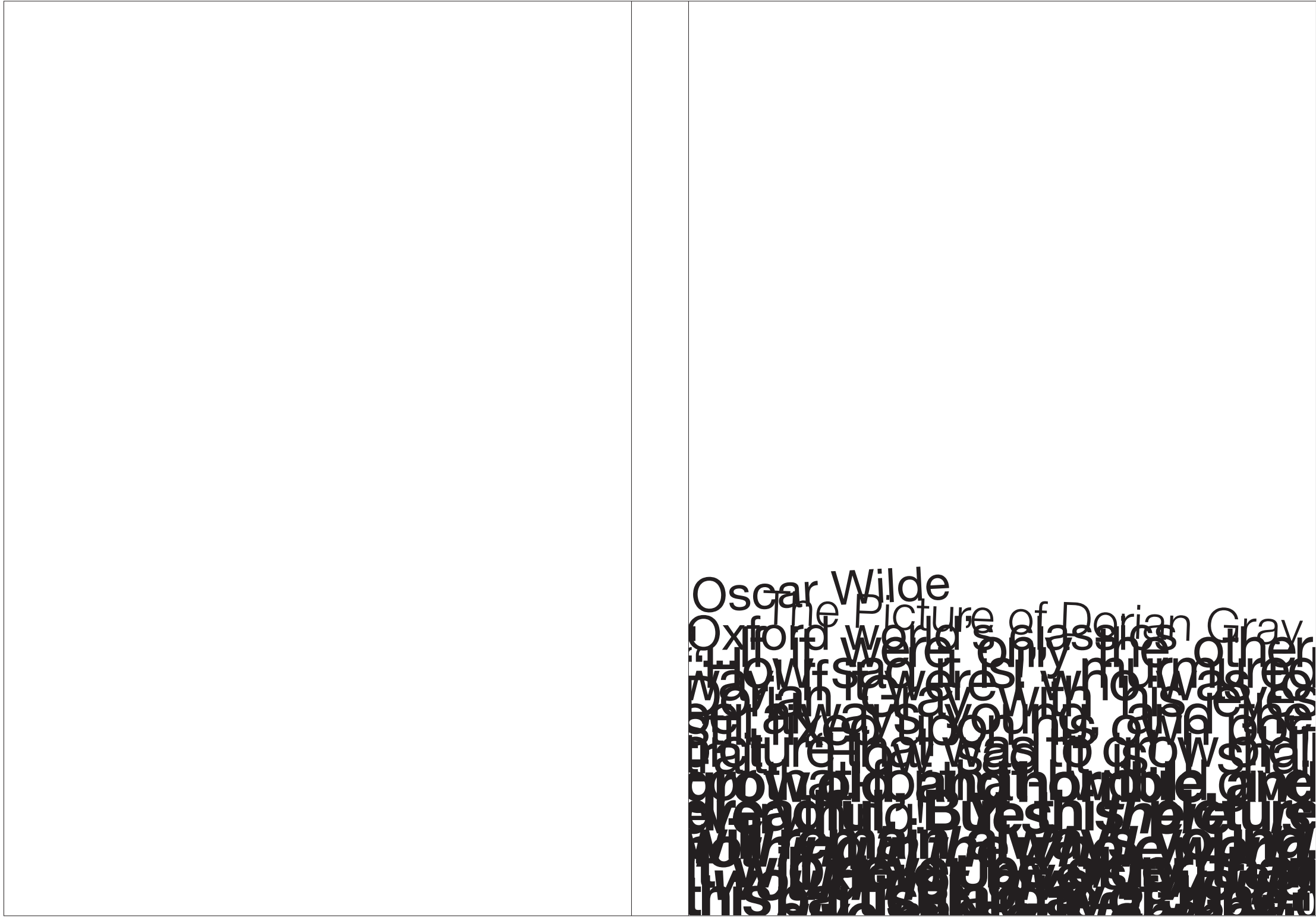
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*this  
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June*

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## ASSIGNMENT 4

# COMBINATIONS IN TYPE SIZE

Assignment 4 presented us with a number of new design elements. Type size could now vary within the context of a single design, from as small as legibly possible, to as big as our heart's desire. For me personally, this really opened the floodgates of expressive possibility.

Furthermore, our designs expanded to contain the spine and back matter of the novel. While the importance of a strong front cover was emphasized, these expanded parameters effectively supplied us with two new canvasses for expression. Each of these elements could be used to embellish or emphasize other gestures in type, making covers from here on in far more rich and sophisticated.



**OSCAR WILDE** THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

*Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Isobel Murray*

**“If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be  
always young, and the picture that was to grow old!  
For that—for that—I would give everything!”**

Spellbound before his own portrait, Dorian Gray utters a fateful wish. In exchange for eternal youth he gives his soul, to be corrupted by the malign influence of his mentor, the aesthete and hedonist Lord Henry Wotton. The novel was met with moral outrage by contemporary critics who, dazzled perhaps by Wilde’s brilliant style, may have confused the author with his creation, Lord Henry, to whom even Dorian protests, ‘You cut life to pieces with your epigrams.’

Encouraged by Lord Henry to substitute pleasure for goodness and art for reality, Dorian tries to watch impassively as he brings misery and death to those who love him. but the picture is watching him, and, made hideous by the marks of sin, it confronts Dorian with the reflection of his fall from grace, the silent bearer of what is in effect a devastating moral judgement.

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Oxford Classics

OXFORD OSCAR WILDE THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

OSCAR  
WILDE

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# DORIAN GRAY THE PICTURE OF

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OXFORD  
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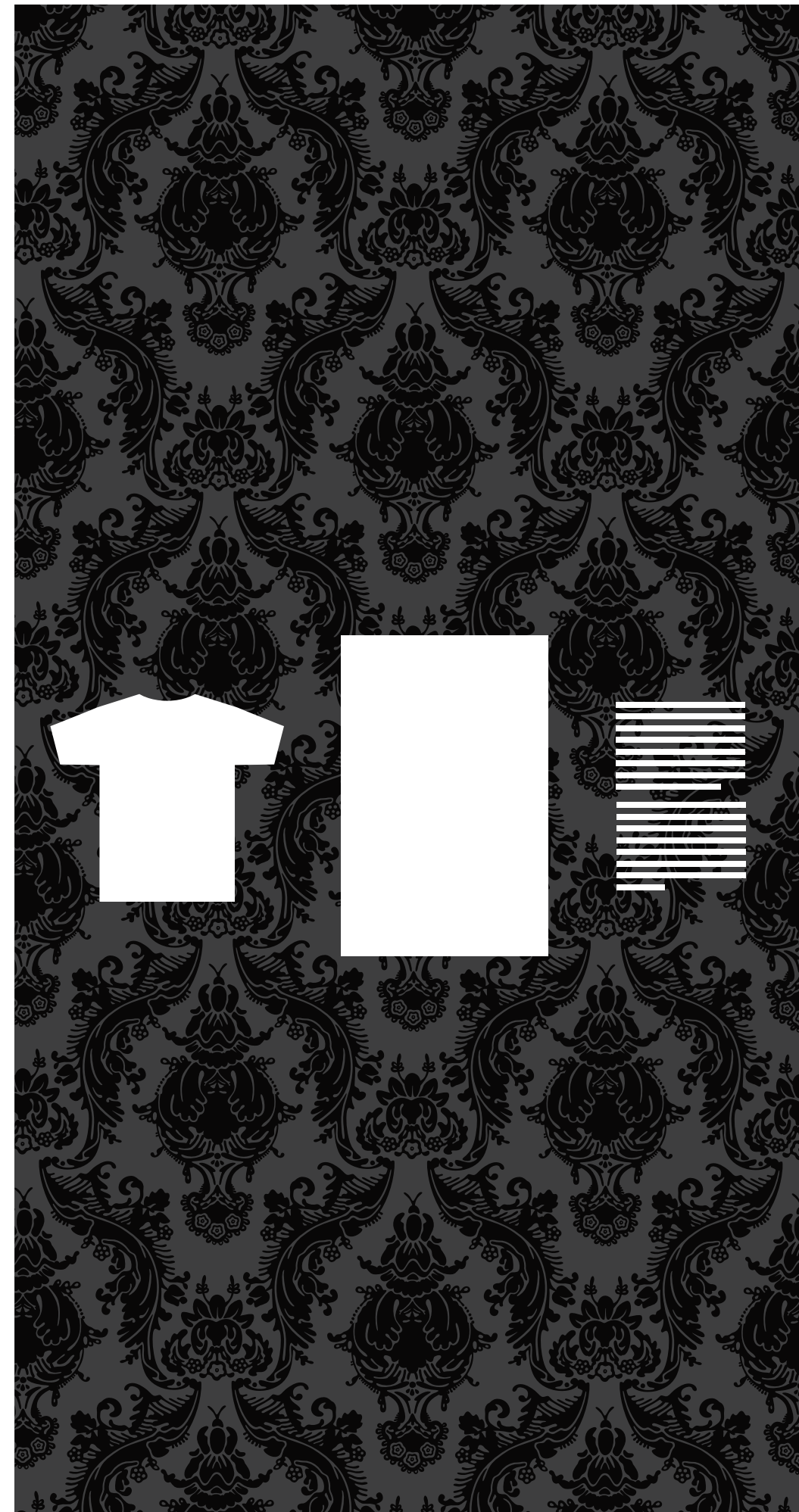
# DORIAN GRAY

oscar wilde  
"How sad it is!"  
murmured Dorian Gray  
upon his own portrait.  
"How sad it is! I shall  
grow old, and horrible,  
and dreadful. But this  
picture will remain  
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"...If it were only the  
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in the whole world I  
would not give! I would  
give my soul for that!"  
the  
picture of

INTERMISSION

# T-SHIRT, POSTER & FORMAL TYPE

After four straight weeks of designing book covers for a single novel, salvation came to our class in the form of various new design exercises for print. Further immersing ourselves in Oscar Wilde's wit, we were given the task of designing both a poster and t-shirt based on any of his famous sayings or quotes. Wilde's humor often plays on duality or irony, lending itself well to visualization through type. In addition to these projects, we learned the more practical skill of formal column setting, which seeks to improve the legibility of body text.





oscar wilde says:

**Some  
cause  
happiness  
wherever  
they go;** others

[redacted]  
[redacted]  
whenever  
they go.

Oscar  
Wilde  
says:

# Education

-----

is an admirable thing,  
but from time to time  
it is well to remember  
that worth knowing nothing can be  
taught.

I found this quote perhaps almost too appropriate within the context of a design education. I tried to generate intrigue by confronting the viewer with a seemingly absurd statement. If they're then to further analyze the design, the words "worth knowing" become evident within the phrase, "nothing can be taught." My goal was to create an immersive interaction that illustrates the quote's meaning through experience.

## INTERMISSION

# FORMAL TYPE

Formal typography strives to improve legibility. The three parameters of typesetting, column width, leading, and letter spacing, all share a special symbiotic relationship. When one changes, all the others must change in response in order to ensure the regular and readable distribution of text.

Good typesetting dictates so much about the effectiveness of the content to which it's applied. Things to avoid are: rivers (uneven gaps between words as caused by justification), ending lines with words such as "I" or "and," or ending too many consecutive lines with hyphens. My columns are roughly 3.9 inches wide, set in 8pt Helvetica with 12pt leading and 30pt letterspacing.

### CHAPTER 1

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flamelike as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid, jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion.

The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the straggling woodbine, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive. The dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.

In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward, whose sudden disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement and gave rise to so many strange conjectures.

As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skilfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake.

"It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done," said Lord Henry languidly.

"You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too vulgar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures, which

worse. The Grosvenor is really the only place.”

“I don’t think I shall send it anywhere,” he answered, tossing his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford.

“No, I won’t send it anywhere.” Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy, opium-tainted cigarette.

“Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? Have you any reason? What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion.”

“I know you will laugh at me,” he replied, “but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it.” Lord Henry stretched himself out on the divan and laughed.

“Yes, I knew you would; but it is quite true, all the same. Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, I didn’t know you were so vain; and I really can’t see any resemblance between you, with your rugged strong face and your coal-black hair, and this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves.”

“Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you-- well, of course you have an intellectual expression and all that. But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face.”

“The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they don’t think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen, and as a natural consequence he always looks absolutely delightful.”

“Your mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me, never thinks. I feel quite sure of that. He is some brainless beautiful creature who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer

when we want something to chill our intelligence. Don’t flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him.”

“You don’t understand me, Harry,” answered the artist. “Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. You shrug your shoulders? I am telling you the truth. There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one’s fellows. The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory, they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat. They live as we all should live--undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet. They neither bring ruin upon others, nor ever receive it from alien hands. Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are--my art, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray’s good looks--we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly.”

“Dorian Gray? Is that his name?” asked Lord Henry, walking across the studio towards Basil Hallward.

“Yes, that is his name. I didn’t intend to tell it to you.”

“But why not?”

“Oh, I can’t explain. When I like people immensely, I never tell their names to any one. It is like surrendering a part of them. I have grown to love secrecy. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it. When I leave town now I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I dare say, but somehow it seems to bring a great deal of romance into one’s life. I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?”

“Not at all,” answered Lord Henry, “not at all, my dear Basil. You seem to forget that I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing.

“When we meet--we do meet occasionally, when we dine out together, or go down to the Duke’s--we tell each other the most absurd stories with the most serious faces. My wife is very good at it--much better, in fact, than I am. She never gets confused over her dates, and I always do. But when she does find me out, she makes no row at all. I sometimes wish she would;





## ASSIGNMENT 5

# STRIPES & BLOCKS

This week's parameters presented us with the opportunity to use shapes and forms not found within the Helvetica typeface for the first time. Building upon the arsenal of typographic elements we had acquired in previous weeks, our task was to utilize stripes and/or blocks of pure black to embellish our cover design. Students were free to play with the inversion of white text on black and vice versa.



STRIPES AND BLOCKS



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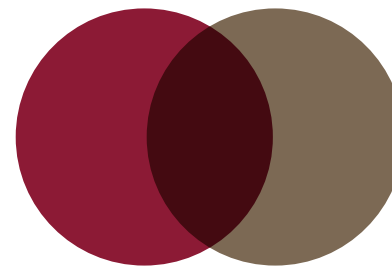
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## ASSIGNMENT 6

# SPOT COLOR

Its in assignment six that we take a huge step forward in our introduction to the art of typography, through the use of color. Students are asked to choose two Pantone hues in order to best express the novel's themes or atmosphere, while maintaining vibrancy and aesthetic appeal. These two colors can be mixed in any proportion to create blended or mixed colors, simulating the process of two color spot printing.



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## ASSIGNMENT 7

# PHOTOGRAPHY

All bets are off, no holds barred typography. We as designers have the opportunity to use any tools at our disposal in order to communicate the novel typographically, so long as we incorporate photographic or found imagery in one degree or another. The full spectrum of color is also added to the mix.

Our only restriction: use of Helvetica.

In order to simplify the possibilities presented to us with this new, open set of parameters I tried on to focus on the ways in which I could use photographic imagery to improve my designs from Assignment 6.



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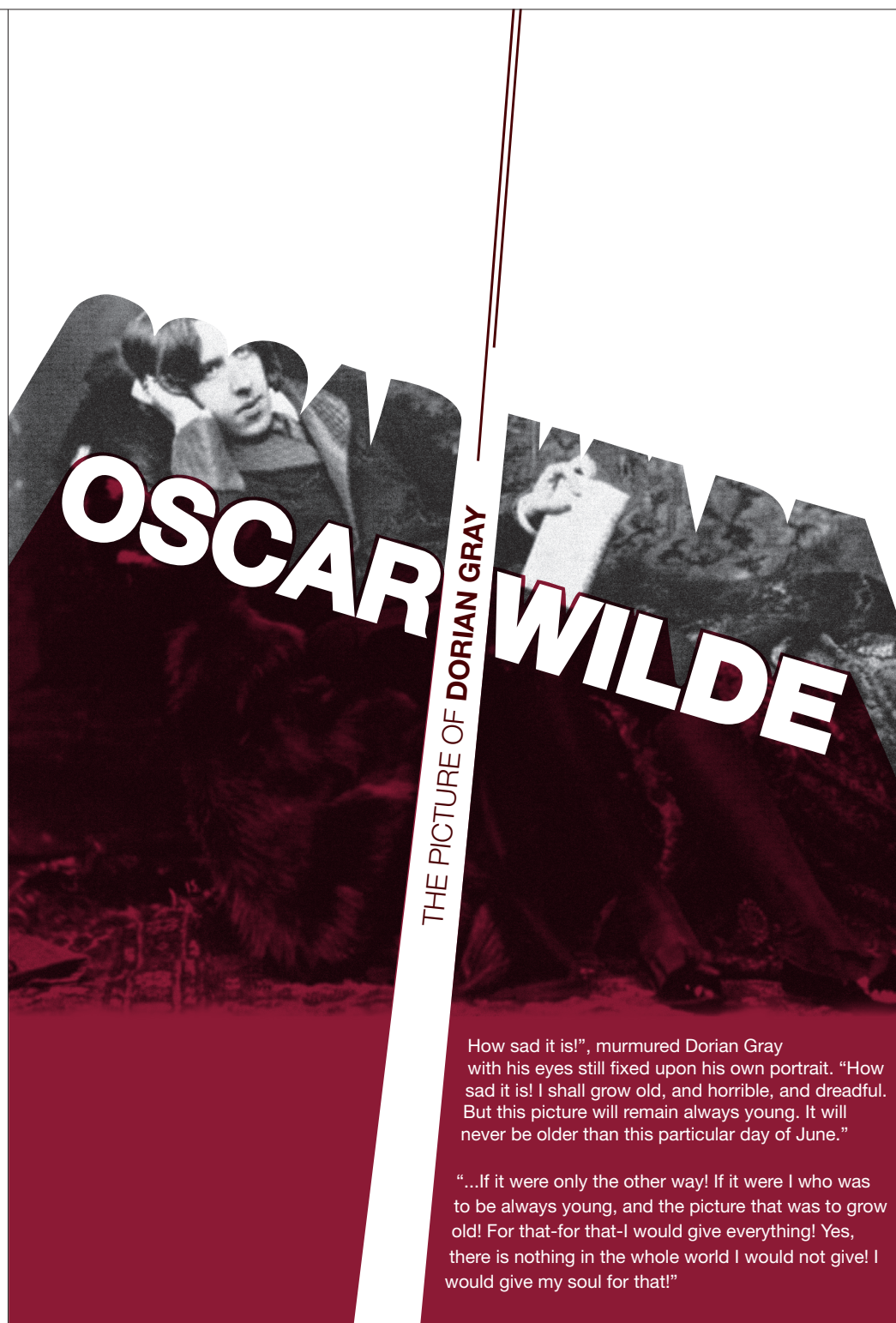
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## IN CONCLUSION...

I gained a lot of important insights into my own creative process and personal tastes this quarter. I discovered what I do well and I learned of plenty of things I need to improve upon. I gained a better sense of how to discuss design, how to give criticism and how to apply criticism.

Forcing myself to come up with new ways of communicating the same finite set of concepts week after week was certainly trying at times, but I truly believe the process has taught me how to really dig into recesses of my own creativity that I've never explored. Above all, I've come away from type with a newfound appreciation for simplicity that I know will have profound influence on everything I do as a designer from this point forward.