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COMD 1112

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Assignment- Helvetica Film

Rick Poyner, a design writer, said modernism was a movement that started in the 1950's. It embraced idealism in design. Essentially, there are two outlooks on Helvetica: those who hate it and those who love it. The history of Helvetica ties into two design movements that we have analyzed in class, modernism and postmodernism. Modernism was an era from about the 1920's to 1970's where the motive was to shift from art nouveau and fancy decorations to more simplistic designs. The purpose of modernism was to be more functional rather than form. In context of Helvetica, it functions to present information as clearly as possible and "shouldn't be expressive.

Helvetica originally called Neue Haas Grotesk, is a popular sans-serif typeface created in 1957 by Max Miedinger with the help from Eduard Hoffman. He also collaborated with Max Meidinger, a graphic designer and type salesman. Alfred Hoffman, a former director of the Haas Type Foundry, Helvetica was created in Munchenstein, Switzerland. Helvetica modernized the traditional 19th century sans serif Akzidenz Grotesk. The creators decided that the Latin word for "the swiss type" was more marketable and chose the name Helvetica. Linotype owned the Haas and Stempel Foundries and is the owner of Helvetica. Helvetica was originally supposed to be named after the latin word for switzerland.

Mike Parker, former director of Typographical Development of Mergenthaler Linotype USA(1961-1981), states that "Helvetica is all about the interrelationships of the negative shape, figure ground relationships. The Swiss pay more attention to the background. Each letter in Helvetica lives in a powerful matrix of surrounding space." Lars Muller states that "Helvetica is the typeface of Socialism, not the typeface of Capitalism". Lars said that "Helvetica is the perfume of the city." He explains that statement by saying that "Helvetica is something we don't notice usually but we would miss very much if it wasn't there. It's amazing that a typeface can advance to such a status." He walked around the city and pointed out an abundance of Helvetica signage. The original created name of Helvetica was Die Neue Haas Grotesk. This information was from Matthew Carter, a type designer. His father was Harry Carter, a typographer. Matthew believes that Helvetica's strength lies in its horizontal terminals.

Erik Spiekermann, a self-described "typomaniac", doesn't like Helvetica. He calls it a meta typeface. According to Erik, "Helvetica is a default. It was the "default" on the Apple system. Windows used it because Apple used it. Arial is the cloned version of Helvetica. Helvetica is air, so you have to use Helvetica." Erik feels that people who have no vision use Helvetica. Win Crouwel loves Modernism. He states that "creating order is typography". He believes that computers speed up your work but can't do your design for you. He worked with a grid to create typefaces. He loved a type that has clarity, is clear, readable, and straightforward. Win states that "Helvetica was more machined, and did away with manual details. Helvetica

embraced neutralism. Typeface shouldn't have a meaning in itself. The meaning is in the content of the text and not in the typeface." Massimo Vignelli and Helvetica. He states that "Helvetica provided better legibility, was a modern type, a very clear type. It was loud and clear Modern." He helped to create the original AmericanAirlines logo using Helvetica where the two words were combined as one word.