ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF BOOK JACKET DESIGN & ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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Book jacket designs act as historical snapshots of the visual culture prevalent during their creation through the use of typography, shapes, style of imagery and overall mood. Illustration also played a significant role in development of the book jacket as an art and advertising medium, although illustration now struggles to maintain its prior prestige in the digitally dominant 21st century. By studying these historical examples and examining the development of the medium, I created three book jacket designs as a practical demonstration.

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By

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CHAPTER ONE

The History of Book Jacket Design & Its Cultural Significance

The book dust jacket was originally created in the 1830s to keep dirt from damaging the book's cloth cover and binding. However, during the 1900s the dust jacket transcended its humble beginnings, evolving into an artistic design medium that captured the aesthetic transformation of American design. The ascension of the book jacket into the realm of graphic design and fine art was largely due to the efforts of passionate graphic designers who dedicated their careers to creating conceptually and visually engaging book jacket designs. These book jacket designs act as historical snapshots of the visual culture prevalent during their creation through the selection of typography, use of shapes, style of imagery and overall mood. By examining the history of book jackets and their ever-changing aesthetics, one can construct a visual history of American design and the cultural influences that impacted the population at the time.

The evolution of the dust jacket is inseparably related to the development of the cloth bound book, which resulted from the population growth of literate Americans in the 1800s. The swelling number of middle-class citizens purchasing books prompted the publishing trade to accommodate readers' desire for affordable books by using more cost effective materials such as pasteboard wrapped in cloth. Traditionally books during this period were hand-bound in leather and displayed as symbols of affluence and education; however the average middle-class American

sought books for leisure purposes and informal learning. Trying to maintain some of the sense of luxury that leather bound books possessed, bookbinders applied subtle tactile patterns to the cloth bindings of books to mimic texture of leather.[1]

During the 1840s, the practice of applying patterns into the cloth binding of books evolved into the embossing of simple illustrations and symbols into covers.

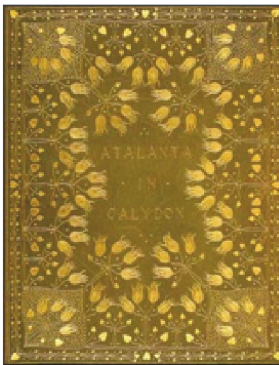**Figure 1 (1860)**
The Silver Swan
Designer Unknown

These cover illustrations were created solely through raising the surface and excluded the use of any additive colors or dyes.[2] The technique of gold stamping (fig. 1) became popular in the following decade as an extravagant form of cover decoration, in which gold leaf was applied to the surface of the cover. However, the outbreak of Civil War in the 1860s curbed any lavish book cover treatments, since the limited resources during this period went towards the war effort. The books that were published during this time received bland cover treatments with neutral colors and simple designs.[3] The economic impact of the Civil War on the publishing industry continued to restrain book cover design until the 1880s, when the publishing trade managed to revive the ornately decorated and illustrated cloth book covers.[4] The illustrations included on the cover of books during the 1880s typically fit into one of three categories: pictorial, symbolic or ornamental.[5]

Figure 2 (1865)
Atalanta in Calydon
Designer Unknown

The most literal type of illustrations, pictorial images depict the subject of the

book directly, while symbolic illustrations reflect the essence of the book. Ornamental covers (fig. 2) provided mere decoration in the form of floral and nature inspired patterns, occasionally referencing historical or cultural themes relevant to the book. Pictorial and symbolic illustration covers eventually dominated the publishing realm because of their marketability and appeal to readers, while ornamental illustrations prevailed as preferred collector items. Art Nouveau illustrator and artist Will Bradley explained that ornamental cover designs experienced a short-live novelty because "floral motifs [were] overused" on the book covers and quickly became outdated.[6]

On the other hand, readers gravitated towards books adorned with pictorial and symbolic illustrations because they evoked "an impression or feeling for the content of a novel," giving insight into the content of the text.[7] In the interest of marketability, publishers began crafting book cover illustrations to mimic the style of other visual mediums of the time. Publishers appealed to readers by imitating the "decorative arts trends of the era," making books appear aesthetically modern.[8] In the 1890s book cover designs began to emulate the graphic style of posters of the period in order generate a sense of relevance. The relationship between dust jackets and artistic styles grew more prominent in the 1900s; however, not all publishers viewed this as positive trend.

While some bookbinders wholeheartedly endorsed the decoration and embellishment of cloth covers of books, traditionally minded publishers rejected the use of any type of illustration on the covers. Bookbinders who favored visually

minimalistic typographic covers argued that by utilizing only letterforms, the book's literary merit was preserved. For these traditionalist bookbinders illustration symbolized "low taste," that appealed, "to the uneducated taste of the masses…[and challenged] the superiority of the written word."[9] Those who favored solely typographic bindings argued that the virtue of owning a book lies in its text and that decorative illustrations detract from the integrity of the book, but by the beginning of the 1900s even the stoutest of traditionalist publishers began to realize the marketing potential of dust jacket design.

Wanting to present their merchandise in the most appealing form, publishers began shifting their creative resources away from the concealed cloth cover of books and onto the paper dust jackets encasing the books. Publishers "convinced that a book, like a woman, is none the worse, but rather the better, for having a good dressmaker" used book jackets as a marketing tool to drive sales.[10] Originally developed as a means of protection, paper dust jackets shielded the permanent cover of books during the journey between the publisher and the reader, after which the jacket was discarded. However, by the 1920s the majority of publishers used dust jackets as vehicles for intriguing visual designs and hired artists to create original designs for literary works. While the term dust jacket and book jacket denote the same object, the phrase dust jacket typically refers to the disposable, paper wrappings used during the 1800s and the term book jacket indicates thoughtfully designed book covers meant to be permanently kept with the book. Since book jacket design was a budding avenue of design, most early 1900s book jacket designers were largely anonymous. However design legend William Addison

Dwiggins was certainly an exception to most early book designers' obscurity.

Renowned for his impact on the field of American graphic design, William Addison Dwiggins greatly increased the quality of book jacket designs by being "most adamantly dedicated to t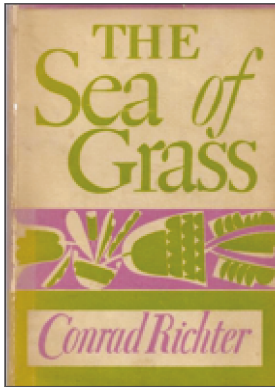otal book design."[11] Responsible for coining the term "graphic designer" in 1922, Dwiggins helped elevate graphic design into a recognized profession through his book jackets. Dwiggins used a combination of type, calligraphy, illustration, and stencil forms to create his distinctive brand of cover design.[12] Drawing upon the Art Deco style popular during the twenties, Dwiggins crafted geometric compositions that balanced repetitious patterns with color.[13] Dwiggins mastery of color and geometric pattern is exhibited in both his cover for The Sea of Grass (fig. 3) and in The Autobiography of a Super Tramp (fig. 4). Paying special attention to the spines of his designs, Dwiggins often created decorative ornamentation running vertically down the spine of the book.[14] In addition to inventive designs, Dwiggins directly challenged the publishing trade with his writings, which pointed, "out that most trade books were printed on poor paper" and "that careful design and typography were practically non-existent."[15] Dwiggins's literary campaign to advance the quality of books combined with his "ability to give old, well-worn books new meaning, new zest, a new lease on life," established a professional standard of book jacket design in the United States.[16]

Figure 3 (1937)
The Sea of Grass
Designer W. A. Dwiggins
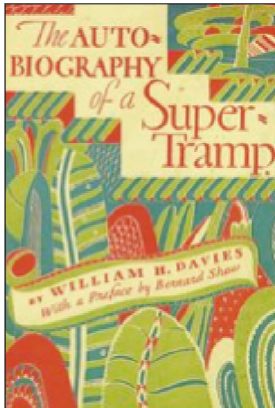
Figure 4 (1938)
The Autobiography of a Super Tramp
Designer W. A. Dwiggins

Dwiggins's passion for well-designed books found a kindred spirit in Allen Lane who with his two brothers formed Penguin Books in 1935 with the intention of producing the lowest cost paperback books, 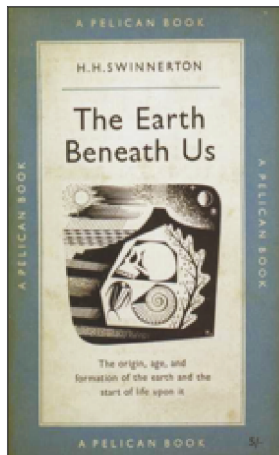while maintaining the highest quality of design.[17] "Inspired by Albatross paperback reprints that were popular on the European Continent," Penguin Books was one of the first profitable publishing companies to successfully publish paperbacks and even managed to sustain business during the restrictive paper rations of World War II.[18] Penguin quickly established itself as a publishing house that provided "the general public with a wide range of affordable, easily attainable, and exceptional literature."[19] Allen Lane held the fundamental belief that quality design should never be sacrificed, and he frequently hired the best designers and artists of the time to work on the covers of Penguin books, despite the extra cost (fig 5). Penguin Books specifically showed a profound understanding of typographic design by demonstrating impeccable attention to detail and letter spacing within their cover designs (fig. 6). German typographer and designer Jan Tschichold, who worked as Penguin's art director from 1947 to 1949, was largely responsible for Penguin's reputation for superior typographic design.

Figure 5 (1958)
The Earth Beneath Us
Designer Unknown
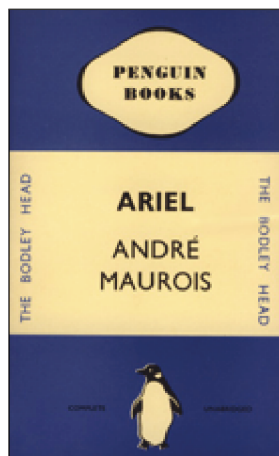
Figure 6 (1935)
Ariel
Designer Unknown

Tschichold's stress on typographic design and letterform manipulation was partly due to his European training and practice. During his three years at Penguin,

Tschichold established "principles of contemporary typography which still seem fresh and alive today," by implementing a grid system with strict guidelines.[20] Tschichold's typography rules adhered "to the tenets of traditional typography legibility" by using a "balance of type styles, wide margins, exquisite contrast, simplicity and integrated ornaments."[21] Many of the European design principles that defined Tschichold's style began making their way into American book jacket design as well.

Starting from the 1930s to the end of World War II "the American graphic design community was enriched by an influx of important European designers fleeing from the deteriorating political situation in Europe," including the German
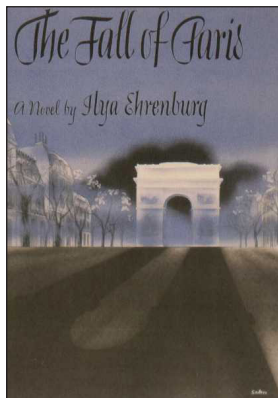

Figure 7 (1943)
The Fall of Paris
Designer George Salter

designer George Salter who fled from the Nazi regime in 1934.[22] Like Tschichold, George Salter stressed typography and calligraphy in his book jacket designs. Previously established in Germany as graphic designer known for his use calligraphy and an airbrush technique (fig. 7), Salter greatly contributed to American cover design with his "simple, down-to-earth, representational approach."[23] Breaking "from the organic and geometric decorations of the Art–Nouveau tradition that had dominated the book market at the turn of the century," Salter created a softer design aesthetic that effectively communicated emotion. Salter acknowledged that when he began designing book covers "the idea of a jacket being an active element of the promotional side of publishing books was still in its infancy" describing book jackets as quiet, non-competitive statements rather than
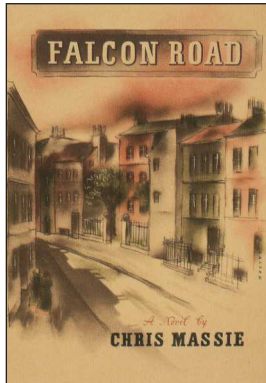
advertisements.[24]

Figure 8 (1936)
Falcon Road
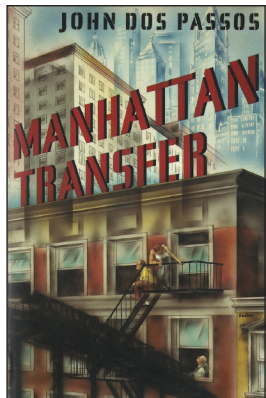Designer George Salter

Figure 9 (1943)
Manhattan Transfer
Designer George Salter

Salter's own work often possessed soft and subtle features because of his frequent use of an airbrush technique, which lacked hard lines and definitive edges (fig 8). By using the airbrush technique Salter captured "dreamlike, psychological states," in his designs, which often reflected the emotional turmoil within a book (fig. 9).[25] Later in his career Salter turned to teaching and wrote several books about graphic design and book jacket design specifically. As a part of his design legacy, Salter assisted in establishing the Book Jacket Designers Guild in order to aid in the recognition of book jacket design as a profession.[26]

During the 1940s the majority of book jacket designs utilized representational illustrations that were merely shallow depictions of the general subject of the book.[27] A key figure in shaping the progressive direction of book jacket design during the 1940s through the 1950s, Alvin Lustig allowed the "evocation of mood" to become the dominant element of his designs.[28] During this period literature began shifting away from the literal and representational style of writing towards a more expressive and figural style. To match this literary trend, book cover designers, mainly Lustig, began increasingly stressing the mood and atmosphere of the text through the cover design to mirror this change.[29] To gain his own interpretation of a book, Lustig

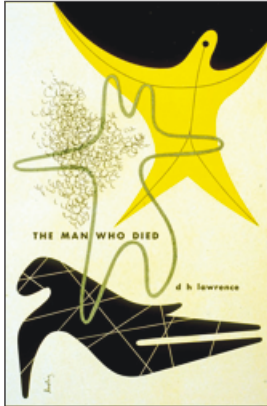would read a manuscript, while focusing on the intentions and feelings of the author.[30] A master of conveying concept through abstract forms, Alvin Lustig embraced the shift towards expressionism (fig. 10) and rejected the practice of visually narrating a text on the book jacket.

Dedicated to the Modernist movement, which encouraged experimentation and innovation, Lustig "utilized abstract shapes and symbols to express the essence" of a book (fig. 11).[31] One of Lustig's most influential covers was his black and white cover for Lorca by Federico Garcia (fig. 12), which used a five-symbol grid to create "poetic disharmony" through mismatched images.[32] Lustig prided himself on creating visual puzzles in his book jackets, which invited viewers to engage the design and solve it. Lustig's work with "fragmented images, photo-illustration, minimal typography and rebus-like compositions" created a style so timeless that characteristics of his designs are still seen in current American book jackets.[33] Passing away at age forty, Lustig managed to amass an impressively large body of work and established himself as a "linchpin of American twentieth century-design" during his relatively brief career.[34]

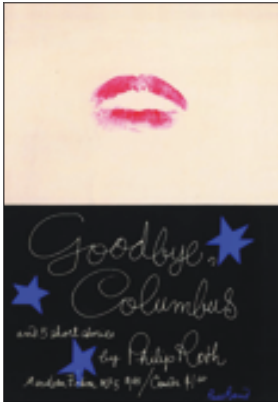Fellow Modernist designer Paul Rand followed in

Figure 10 (1946)
The Man Who Died
Designer Alvin Lustig
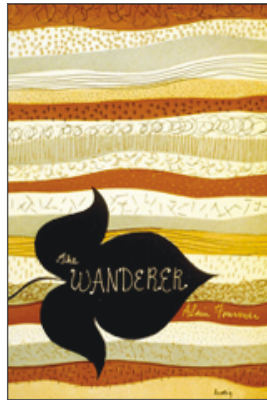
Figure 11 (1945)
The Wanderer
Designer Alvin Lustig

Figure 12 (1947)
Lorca
Designer Alvin Lustig

9

Figure 13 (1961)
Goodbye Columbus
Designer Paul Rand

Figure 14 (1945)
Leave Canceled
Designer Paul Rand

Figure 15 (1958)
Prejudices: a Selection
Designer Paul Rand

Lustig's wake by using handwriting and playfully forms in his book jacket designs (fig. 13). "Characterized by wit, simplicity and a Bauhaus approach to problem solving," Rand's work during the 1950s displayed uninhibited playfulness and timeless design.[35] The German Bauhaus movement encouraged the "removal of conventional subject, barriers" between different concentrations of art, which Rand did by adding three-dimensional elements and textures to his book jackets.[36] One of his most memorable designs was his design for *Leave Canceled* (fig. 14) by Nicholas Morisarrat, which featured a photo of cupid on a pink background with holes haphazardly punched into the jacket to resemble bullet holes, alluding to the central figure's fate. Although Rand understood the foundational principles of design, he often broke the rules to create intrigue or convey a specific concept. Using collage techniques and torn paper, Rand experimented with Abstract Expressionism, which completely juxtaposed Norman Rockwell's idealized, representational style of art that was also popular during Rand's career. "For Rand handwriting was the most natural form of communication" and he often included his own writing in his designs rather than using typography.[37] For his book jacket of Prejudices: a

Selection (fig. 15) by James Farrell, Rand even incorporated his personal signature into the design, demonstrating that he viewed his work as fine art.

Rand's recognition as a fine artist, while working as a book jacket designer marks a significant milestone in the history of graphic design, since before the 1930s book jacket designers were practically anonymous.[38] Alvin Lustig and Paul Rand elevated the status of book design into the realm of fine art; however, designers of the 1940s and 1950s held distinct advantages over earlier designers. One of the greatest contributing factors to Lustig and Rand's success was publishers' generous freedom and artistic license permitted to designers. Piet Schreuders, a leading authority on the American book trade, claimed that the period from 1939 to 1959 showcased "charming, naive, artistic, daring covers," which were "used as testing grounds for new graphic forms" as a result of publishers' faith in designers.[39] Publishers during this era understood that the freshest work was achieved when a designer was given wide enough parameters to be creative and inventive. Because of publishers' open-mindedness in the American book trade, "prosaic illustration and straightforward lettering grew, through the adaption of European Modernism, into a sophisticated integration of type and image".[40]

Largely dictated by the work of Lustig and Rand, book jacket design during the 1950s developed its own characteristics, which made pieces created during this period distinctive from any other decade. Shying away from the rigid geometry of Modernism, jacket designers in the 1950s focused on creating organic and humanistic elements in their covers. Designers transitioned away from abstract

formalism and turned to "biomorphic shapes, and the direct representations of the hand as the creative tool" to create a more personal feeling design.[41] Advertisers imitated casual handwriting in typefaces in order to create the sense of a "note dashed off by a friend-a personal message to the reader," undoubtedly due to the influence of Rand and his successful use of handwriting on book jackets.[42] While Modernist designers continued in the footsteps of Lustig and Rand into the 1960s, more progressive-minded designers sought more variety than Modernism offered and began mixing past aesthetics to create historic eclecticism, leading to a division in ideology during the 1960s amongst graphic designers.

The splitting of artistic philosophies mirrored the social and political debate shaking American culture, as half the country rejected the out-of-date aesthetics of the past and the other half found new hope in revitalizing historic styles. Designers
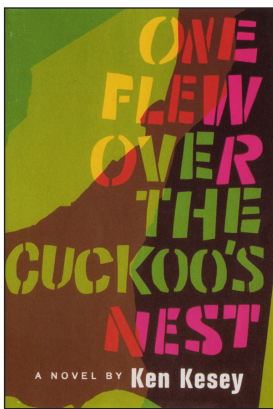

Figure 16 (1962)
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Designer Paul Bacon

in favor of continuing the Modernist style adapted it to the 1960s by using a minimalist approach, reducing designs to a single graphic image or concept. Modernist designers valued formalism because of the sense of order it generated within designs and its capability to communicate "the entire emotional spectrum" with simple clarity.[43] Formalism primarily examines the compositional elements of a piece, such a color, shape, and line rather than a piece's conceptual meaning (fig. 16). On the other hand, jacket designers that drew inspiration from past artistic styles created a seemingly disharmonious aesthetic by pulling Victorian fonts, elements of Art Deco, and characteristics of Art Nouveau into a single design.
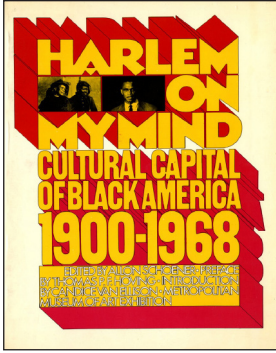
Figure 17 (1968)
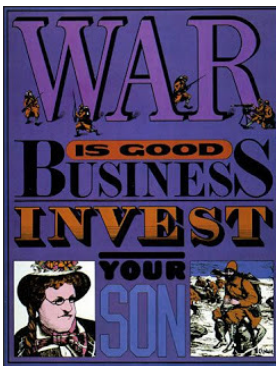*Harlem on My Mind*
Designer Herb Lubalin

Figure 18 (1967)
*War is Good Business
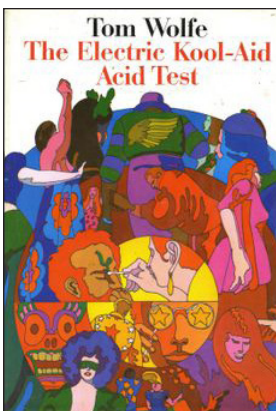Invest Your Son (Poster)*
Designer Seymour Chwast

Figure 19 (1968)
*The Electric Kool–Aid
Acid Test*
Designer Peter Max

Partly due to the impact of color television on American culture, progressive book jacket designers began integrating multiple, vibrant colors into their designs (fig. 17). Artists in favor of historic eclecticism had grown dissatisfied "with the rules and rigidity of the past" and believed that historic eclecticism offered a new vitality to visual forms.[44] A proponent of historic eclecticism and largely responsible for the popularity of that style, Push Pin Graphic, a small independent publication, developed a style so fresh and inventive that it shaped the direction of graphic design and book jacket design for a generation.

Push Pin Graphic started in 1954 as collaboration between former classmates illustrator and designer Seymour Chwast, Reynold Ruffins, Edward Sorel and graphic designer Milton Glaser to create a promotional publication to send to art directors in order to attract illustration work (fig. 18).[45] Push Pin Studios quickly became known for its witty, quirky, and intelligent style, and by the mid-1960s it was "the most well-known and influential design studio in the United States."[46] Push Pin Studios developed its style by drawing inspiration from past artistic movements such "Viennese Art Nouveau, Art Deco of the 1920s and 1930s, German Expressionist woodcuts and Surrealist fantasies" to produce "fanciful, hand-
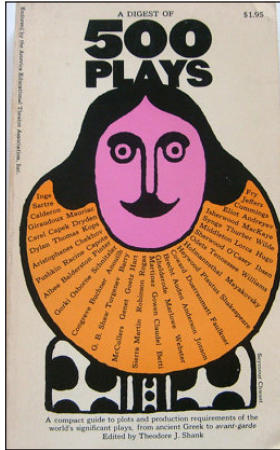
Figure 20 (1967)
A Digest of 500 Plays
Designer Seymour Chwast

drawn work" (fig. 19).[47] During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Push Pin's influence prompted other designers to reference past styles, bringing new life to design and causing a resurgence of illustrated covers such as the cover of *A Digest of 500 Plays* (fig. 20). Each issue of Push Pin Graphic developed a single theme through the seamless integration of story, typography and illustration. One of Push Pin's greatest achievements included "proving that…type, layout, and illustration are incarnations of the same craft and are, or ought to be inseparable."[48] In 1967 Jerome Snyder writer for Graphics magazine captured the impact of Push Pin Graphic by writing, "if imitation or plagiarism is any parameter of flattery, then Push Pin consortium is by far the most flattered group in contemporary graphics."[49] While the artists and designers of Push Pin Studios enjoyed unhindered artistic liberty to experiment with design, most commercial book jacket designers of the 1970s experienced a decrease in artistic freedom due to increased competition within the industry.

As the book publishing industry grew larger and more competitive, publishing houses became more involved in the design process due to their concerns over sales. In contrast to the 1940s and 1950s when designers were recognized as artists, publishing houses of the 1970s claimed authority over the final look of book jackets. The quality of book jacket designs declined as a result of publishers' interference and increased use of cheaper, inferior printing materials and methods by publishers. In addition to obstacles with publishers, the 1970s was
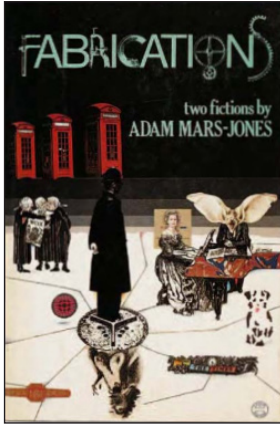
Figure 21 (1981)
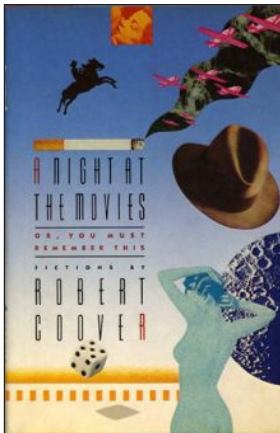*Fabrications*
Designer Naomi Osnos

Figure 22 (1981)
A Night at the Movies
Designer Carin Goldberg

a period riddled with "social and cultural upheaval brought on by a decade of war, racial tension, and political scandal" that led to "a time of restraint in book cover design."[50] Characterized by the incorporation of "flat abstract forms and simple type with little attempt to communicate the book's content," book jacket design in the early 1970s experienced a drought of intelligent and innovative design.[51] However, by the late 1970s book jackets were allotted new life as Post-modernism integrated itself into American graphic design. Believers of the concept that meaning is interpretative, postmodernist designers integrated a mixture of styles and images in order to create book jackets with multiple possible meanings (fig. 21).

By utilizing a variety of typefaces and collaged images, Postmodernist designers "produced densely packed designs that demanded focused reading, allowing multi-layered meanings," which resulted in both complicated and often unintelligible designs.[52] During the 1980s Postmodernist designers continued using historic eclecticism, but adopted a collage technique that quickly dominated the treatment of book jackets (fig. 22). Designers often implemented the collage "aesthetic to create spatial contradictions" between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional, playing with the reader's perception of depth on a flat surface.[53] The collage technique became popular because it allowed designers to experiment with several styles simultaneously in a time, when

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publishers encouraged low risk designs.

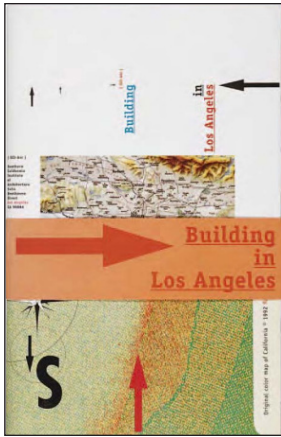Responsible for laying "much of the foundation for American Postmodern graphic design," designer April Greiman displayed great talent for balancing the often chaotic mixing of historic styles, while maintaining clear communicative designs (fig. 23).[54] Even when using busy compositions, Greiman displayed an understanding of "the mechanics of legibility and meaning," which many designers of the early 1980s failed to grasp.[55] Greiman viewed herself as the "natural bridge between the Modernist tradition and future generations of designers" because of her study of Modernist tradition combined with

Figure 23 (1997)
Building in Los Angeles
Designer April Greiman

her eagerness to exploit new media.[56] Her interest in mixing media reveals itself in some of her book jacket designs, which often reference architectural elements and play with three-dimensional illusions on the flat book surface. While some Postmodernist designers, such as April Greiman, created successful designs with the "new wave" style, other designers lost their way attempting to integrate technology, prompting a backlash of criticism from Modernist designers.

Modernist-minded designers such as Paul Rand and Massimo Vignelli attacked postmodern book jackets as examples of undisciplined and unfocused design. One Modernist designer complained that the Postmodernist collaged image technique is akin to "listening to six radios playing at once, each with a different station," categorizing the style as visual noise.[57] Sharing a similar distaste for Post-

modernism, design historian and critic Steven Heller vehemently rejected the style in his 1993 essay titled "Cult of the Ugly," which asserted that Postmodernist designs have nonexistent concepts rather than interpretative ones.[58] Interestingly, many of the objections made against Post-modernism in the eighties echoed the complaints against historic eclecticism in the 1960s, when Modernists criticized designers for "pillaging history." However, designers at the end of the 1980s faced a larger challenge than the criticism of their peers. Designers "[made] use of the lessons learned from Post-modernism and [applied] them in an increasingly market-driven environment," where, unfortunately, profit margins were becoming the measures of good design.[59]

Concerned primarily about the marketability and the sale of their books, publishers began encouraging jacket designs that had already proven successful rather than fostering new innovative designs. Struggling with publishers for control over jacket designs, designers in the 1990s found that technology compounded the battle that had been intensifying since the 1970s. Due to computer-generated compositions, publishing houses had access to scrutinize every version of a design, making designers feel increasingly micromanaged. Graphic designer Paula Scher explained her frustration with the process

Figure 24 (1988)
Real Estate
Designer Paula Scher

stating "often a design that had already gone through five or six revisions would be rejected by a more powerful corporate authority."[60] Mounting irritation prompted "many book-cover designers who had made an impact in the 1980s," including Paula

Scher, to leave commercial publishing to seek out other creative opportunities (fig. 24).[61] The designers who remained in the commercial publishing industry began to reintroduce clarity into book jacket designs, while maintaining the postmodern style and ideology.

Preserving the spirit of the collage trend, designers favored design layouts that paired unexpected elements together and required thoughtful interpretation from the reader. Designers of the 1990s sought "ways to reinsert meaning and expression into design," while still applying "a juxtaposition of styles and layering of images" to mentally engage the reader.[62] Book jacket designers achieved this by simplifying the collage technique to just a few elements. By combining contradictory elements, designers generated new visual associations and returned "to the creative, communicative role espoused by designers such as Lustig and Rand in the 1940 and 1950s."[63] As jacket designs shifted away from historic imitation, they moved toward "conceptually driven book cover designs," and communicated "more evocative, fluid narratives" than the book jacket designs of the previous decade.[64] The 1990s also experienced a "cultural shift away from happy formalism towards darker, more ambiguous visual narratives" as the grunge and punk aesthetic grew in popularity.[65] While most publishing companies clung to security during this period, the Knopf Group of Random House embraced risk by fostering an environment of innovative design, which produced one of "the highest-profile contemporary book cover designers" of the 2000s, Chip Kidd.[66]

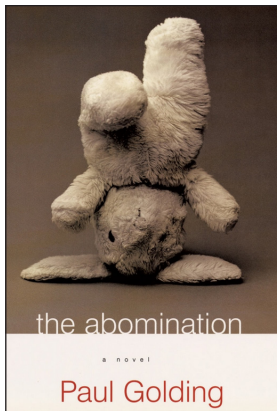"Designing covers that engage the readers' intelligence and imagination,"

Figure 25 (2000)
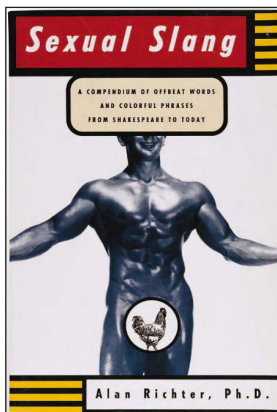*The Abomination*
Designer Chip Kidd

Figure 26 (1995)
Sexual Slang
Designer Chip Kidd

Figure 27 (1989)
Watching the Body Burn
Designer Chip Kidd

graphic designer Chip Kidd often pairs a book's title with images in a manner that forces the reader "to bridge the gap between what they read and what they see" in his designs (fig. 25).[67] Believing that the book's jacket should augment to the ideas within the book rather than visually restate the plot, Kidd refers to his disjointed image pairing as "the magpie method."[68] Similar to Alvin Lustig in his approach, Kidd gathers images, usually photographic, to apply an unconventional meanings to them. Perhaps Kidd's most distinctive design quality is his "love of pop culture imagery," which he uses to visually voice his uniquely witty and irreverent humor (fig. 26).[69] While integrating his own brand of mischievous comedy, Kidd manages to balance both timeless and contemporary styles in his jacket designs. Kidd liberally employs his witty humor in his designs but exercises a level of restraint in his typography, because he believes that typography can date a design quicker than any other element.[70] As a graphic designer who has dedicated his career to creating innovative, timeless book jackets, Kidd thoughtfully designs his covers with consideration as to how they will appear twenty years in the future (fig. 27). Kidd plans his designs to withstand the test of time because so many book jackets that simply embrace the popular style

during their creation become quickly outdated.

Book jackets should not be dismissed as simple advertising tools, because "when a text is published and the book is designed and printed, it becomes a physical manifestation…of the cultural ideas and aesthetics" of a specific time in history.[71] The style of imagery, typeface choices, and color combinations of a book's design reveal more than a single designer's preferences. A designer's decision of what visual elements to include function as a "document of a historical moment and an articulation of [American] cultural identity."[72] Due to their disposable nature, book jackets act as better representations of cultural styles than book covers, because publishers were willing to allow more experimentation and artistic liberty. The most memorable and intelligent book jacket designs "recall particular moments in [American] cultural memory" because they conjure nostalgic "associations of…personal and collective encounters" of the period.[73] In addition to narrating the aesthetic history of American culture, book jacket designs can also reveal insights about the publishing industry during that time.

Book jackets provide evidence "of how tastes and fashions ebb and flow and how this affects the way books are promoted, marketed, and ultimately perceived by the general public."[74] Because popularity of trending styles transfers so quickly, publishers are constantly updating jacket designs to appear modern. While the "American jacket design has been subject to many fads and changes of style" over the decades, the industry has grown too large and competitive for a single artistic style to establish dominancy.[75]
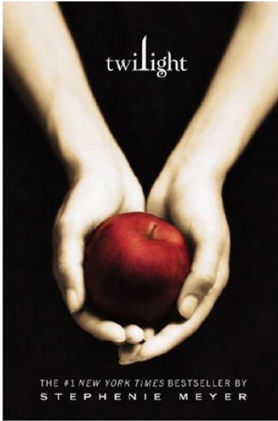
Figure 28 (2005)
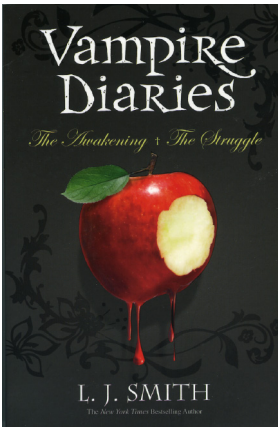*Twilight*
Designer Gail Doobinin

Figure 29 (2011)
Vampire Diaries: The Awakening & The Struggle
Designer Unknown

The book jacket design styles of the 2000s are best identified by the intent of the design rather than by specific formal elements like previous book jacket designs. Publishers have developed three principal strategies to distinguish their books from competitors, not all of which inspire inventive jacket designs. In current book jacket design a book "may be entirely successful from a sales standpoint without having the slightest claim to aesthetic excellence."[76] With millions of books available to readers, "book design is increasingly a matter of 'attention-getting. In the visual clamor of a bookstore, the important thing is to be different; a whisper becomes a shout, and the ugly becomes beautiful if it attracts attention;'" however, this marketing strategy does not result in thoughtful and successful cover designs.[77] The second preferred marketing strategy of publishers, "genre publishing" tries to imitate the design of the last book that sold well in the hopes of attracting the same audience with a feeling a familiarity, which encourages a recycling of jacket designs (fig. 28 and 29).[78] Many graphic design critics complain that this practice results in "hollow trendiness," although not every publisher has deserted the production of original jacket designs.

The final advertising strategy that publishers use when developing jacket designs is engaging readers through an emotional connection which might simply be a smile or a pique in curiosity.[79] Many jacket designers achieve this personal

connection by considering viewers as "participants in the construction of meaning," which is a mindset that designer Chip Kidd has successfully integrated into his work.[80] By leaving room for interpretation, designers force the audience to interact with the book and when these viewers successfully solve the puzzle, the small sense of accomplishment prompts many to purchase the product. This strategy of engaging a reader challenges designers to invent new visual puzzles, since they must develop a design that both attracts people from across a store and intrigues them enough to investigate the cover closer.

Graphic designers such as Alvin Lustig, Paul Rand, and Chip Kidd shaped the history of book jacket design during pivotal historical moments in American culture and heightened recognition to the art form of book jacket design. Starting as a disposable wrapping, book jackets have undergone an impressive evolution in a relatively short period of time and now represent a respected design field. Although some scholars and designers believe that evolving technology will bring the demise of the printed book, jacket designs have proven their versatility and adaptability throughout history and will continue to do so as long as passionate designers continue to create innovative designs.

CHAPTER TWO

The Impact of Illustration

Illustration occurs throughout history in the form of Paleolithic cave

drawings, Egyptian hieroglyphics, ancient Greek pottery, Roman wall paintings, and

medieval altarpieces continuing to modern street graffiti. Mankind's inherent

proclivity for image making stems from the desire to communicate with one

another. Images communicate on a universal level in a manner that written

languages cannot. Illustration is particularly effective as a means of communication,

because each element within the drawing requires a conscious decision on the part

of the illustrator, making it a very deliberate form of visual communication. The

medium is particularly conducive to conveying a complex message within a single

image, which makes illustration ideal for book jacket designs. Because the only

limitation of illustration is the imagination of the artist, the medium embraces

stylistic diversity. All effective illustrations share two attributes; they engage the

viewer and communicate a concept.

When executed successfully, an illustration provides its own ideas and

insights, independent of any accompanying text. Successful illustrations "require the

viewer to become actively involved" in interpreting the image but still clearly

communicate the message portrayed in the illustration.[1] Visual illustrations

embellish, exemplify, and illuminate a subject, making a "subject more pleasing or

easier to understand" by using visual representations.[2] An illustrator may use a

single style to define an entire body of his work or adopt several styles according to the needs of individual projects; however, style should not be confused with
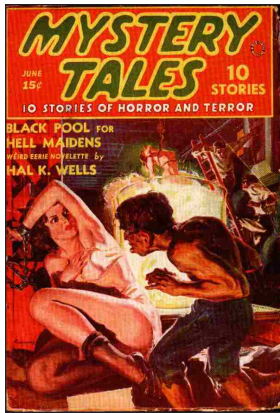

Figure 30 (1938)
"Black Pool for Hell Maidens"
Illustrator Norman Saunders

concept. Style is merely the voice or tone that the artist uses to most effectively convey his message. An illustration's style functions as "a transmission code, a means of signaling that a certain message is intended for a specific audience," which is why certain illustrative styles repel some audiences while attracting others.[3] For instance the dramatized, macabre style used for pulp fiction illustrations communicates directly to an audience intrigued by sex, adventure, and danger (fig. 30).

Figure 31 (1933)
"The Red Skull"
Illustrator Walter Baumhofer

Pulp fiction illustrations promise readers fear, violence, sex, heroes, and villains and effectively "inspired the imagination in ways that surpassed even the more accepted illustration of the day" (fig. 31).[4] Pulp fiction novels enjoyed wide spread popularity from the 1900s to

the 1940s until World War II, when paper shortages caused the disappearance of these publications. While pulp fiction illustrations received criticism for being too risqué, pulp fiction publications made up the "red meat of mass culture" for a several decades.[5] Pulp fiction built its success on dramatic, action-driven illustrations inundated with heroic men and horror-stricken women in the midst of climatic action sequences.[6] Best described as "realism on steroids," pulp fiction illustration is characterized by massive exaggeration, particularly in regards to its

muscular heroes and sensual female counterparts.[7] While pulp fiction relished in creating scenes of dramatic action, many other styles of illustration communicated just as effectively using more passive themes and visual styles.

Figure 32 (1944)
"The East Front General Seeks Orders and Hitler Deliberates"
Illustrator Kukriniksi

Figure 33 (2000)
"By a Nose"
Illustrator Peter de Seve

Illustrations also utilize satire, humor, and wit to communicate their concepts. Political illustrations immediately come to mind, when one thinks of satirical illustrations because of newspapers' long tradition of publishing political cartoons to commentate on current events (fig. 32). Political illustrations often reduce "complex psychology into elemental, often cartoon-like or childish representations… [as a way] to inject playfulness into otherwise serious subject matter."[8] Often employed in political illustrations, satire offers a more humorous means of critiquing serious issues by including "elements of irony, parody, exaggeration, and double entendre" (fig. 33).[9] Satirical illustrations are designed to question convention and to attack folly with simple clarity. Satire is "for a higher purpose than simply to trigger a guffaw or chuckle;" it is meant to draw attention to erroneous thinking and persuade others to recognize the poor logic.[10] While illustration has proven its versatility stylistically, most art historians dismiss the idea that illustration is equivalent to the fine arts such as sculpture and painting.

Historically, illustration has never been recognized as fine art, because the

subject of the illustration is dictated by the commission, which many fine artists

perceive as selling out to commercial influences. Due to their contract-based nature,

illustrations are often "viewed as impure, commercial art when contrasted with the

nobler motivation of the fine arts," since "other hands apart from the artist's have

sullied the creative process."[11] However, this notion is flawed since wealthy patrons

dictated the subject of the vast majority of historical paintings and sculptures.

Furthermore many leading illustrators during the late nineteenth century and early

twentieth century trained as professional painters before they became illustrators,

yet they were perceived as lesser artists. In truth "illustration was not a lesser art"

and "from the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century it was

one of the primary means of mass communication," during what was known as the

Golden Age of American Illustration.[12]

During the 1880s, the height of the medium's popularity, the majority of

illustrations were typically small format in size and contained subdued imagery in

monochromatic color, making the individuality of illustrators difficult to determine.

Figure 34 (1905)
Easterv
Illustrator Joseph Christian
Leyendecker

However, illustration received a "primary boost from the

development of photomechanical color printing during the

1890s," which pushed illustration to dominate the

commercial art world as the main medium in advertising

and print during the turn of the 20th century (fig. 34).[13] By

the 1890s the technological advances in printing allowed for

magazine covers to be printed in multi-colors for the first

time. Advanced printing techniques, cheaper paper, expanding circulations, and a growing American population combined to support illustration as the primary means of visual communication.

Figure 35 (1902)
We Started to Run Back to the Raft for Our Lives.
Illustrator Howard Pyle

Figure 36 (1905)
The Buccaneer Was a Picturesque Fellow
Illustrator Howard Pyle

Regarded as the "Father of American Illustration", Howard Pyle dramatized his subjects and surpassed academic realism "by capturing the mood with inventive compositions" during the Golden Era of Illustration (fig. 35).[14] The majority of illustrators during this period, including Pyle, originally studied as painters. Because of this training, illustrations created during this era resembled realistic, detailed paintings rather than animated cartoons or caricatures (fig. 36). Realism reigned as the dominant illustration style during the first half of the 20th century, but in the 1950s the illustration style transformed "from what-you-see-is-what-you-get" to more conceptual based illustrations.[15] "Because the issues and themes covered in magazines were becoming more complex, more critical," illustrators became visual interpreters of current events and issues.[16] The trend towards conceptual illustration fostered the idea that illustration should add meaning to a text rather than simply restating it in visual terms. Push Pin Studios played a significant role in shifting the illustration aesthetic from realism towards conceptualism by demonstrating the expressive and exploratory capabilities of the medium.

Founded in 1954 Push Pin Studios "presided over one of the most successful fusions of graphic design and illustration" by reviving past illustration styles.[17]
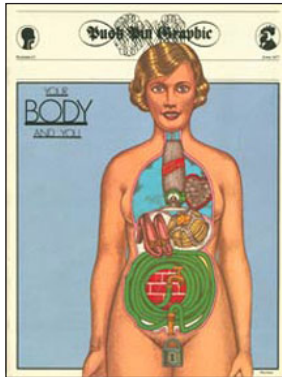

Figure 37 (1977)
"Your Body and You"
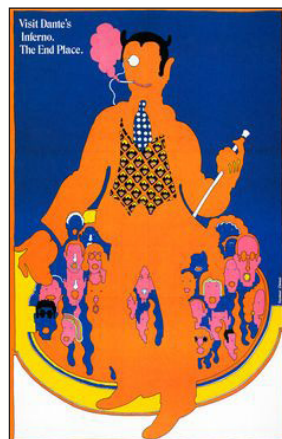Illustrator Push Pin Graphic

Figure 38 (1967)
"Visit Dante's Inferno. The End Place"
Illustrator Push Pin Graphic

When photography "was emerging as the dominant medium among art directors, Push Pin stubbornly used paint, brush, and collage in expressionistic ways" to create a distinctive eclectically retro illustration style that would shape the future of illustration for decades (fig. 37).[18] Seamlessly interweaving typography, illustration, and design, Push Pin championed illustration by proving its energetic versatility in a period when photography was favored (fig. 38). Push Pin's distinctive illustration style reflected the anti-conformist sentiment popular during the 1960s and 1970s with its colorful, and sometimes irrelevant images, which further championed illustration as a means of communication.

Despite Push Pin Studios' influence, photography currently dominates visual advertising in the 21st century. Because the current aesthetic favors realism, photography has grown in popularity, while illustration has suffered "from not being regarded as 'premium' enough, or even childlike to some".[19] Photography fits with the immediacy of the 21st century culture, since with a click of a button an image is digitally created and instantly available. However, photography does not lend itself to the same flexibility and attention to detail that illustration offers. Every detail in a photograph must be

premeditated, since an overlooked element can change the message completely; illustration, on the other hand, offers complete control over the environment created. However, photography is merely one of the complications hindering the prosperity of illustration as a medium.

Although illustration stock houses have been accessible to publishers and printers, since the 16th century, online databases of premade illustrations present one of the greatest obstacles to the prosperity of the illustration medium. As early as the 1500s, pre-made art and designs were used as engravings or stamps "to distinguish artisans' bookbindings in the early days of printing".[20] Pre-prepared graphics became "common during the late 19th century through the 20th" century as a means to quickly fill pages before deadlines hit.[21] The greatest factor of change in the 21st century is the unprecedented access that the Internet has brought to the general public that has resulted in readily accessible illustrations to anyone seeking them. Additionally detrimental, Internet stock houses have simultaneously driven down the cost and quality of illustrated work in their attempt to make the most profit possible. Artists sell their work for a pittance to stock houses who then in turn sell these generalized illustrations for a very affordable price. At the beginning of their careers many artists, including Paul Rand, create stock illustrations and sell their work to illustration houses for a fraction of its value. However, this causes a decrease in the number of companies and individuals seeking commissioned illustration work, because customized illustration seems greatly overpriced in comparison to stock house prices. Because of the massive quantity of photos and digitally created images available through stock houses, many designers,

illustrators, and artists have started a resurgence towards analogue art mediums.

Shifting away from digital photography and computer-generated illustration, graphic design and illustration are moving towards "a much more hands-on, freedom approach" in what many people see as a "natural progression from postmodernism".[22] The ease of image making in the twenty first century has fostered a resurgence of traditional artistic mediums and an appreciation for hand-made art. Surrounded by digital media, artists "are now more interested in the analogue, the archival, the obsolete, and pre-digital modes of communication".[23] Twenty-first century technology continues to play a part in the production of many artists' reinterpretation of analogue art, and they often use technology as a "tool for revitalizing the past".[24] Even though the 21st century illustration style has shown a return to analogue mediums, the current illustration style is impossible to define with a single style.

In the same manner that the aesthetic of current book jacket design cannot be explicitly defined, the prevailing 21st century style of illustration cannot be pigeonholed into a single classification. Illustrators and graphic designers alike "freely rummage through a big closet of historical styles looking for ones that are adaptable for their purposes" for a specific project.[25] While a specific illustrator may maintain a distinctive style in order to define his work, many illustrators adapt their visual style to accommodate the needs or attitude of an assignment. Illustrations today compromise of "a myriad of styles that…. come and go with such speed that a kind of cultural detonation results when one collides with another," leaving artists

with a wide mixture of visuals rather than one definitive style.[26] However, the revitalizing of historical aesthetics should be approached with caution and understanding, since these styles divorced from their purpose of existence can result in hollow imagery devoid of meaning or concept.

Regardless if it is historical or current, illustration offers a diverse array of visual styles and emotions as a means of communication. The infinite number of illustration styles makes the medium extremely versatile and successful as a universal communication tool. Even though illustrators continue to struggle to earn recognition in the fine art community, the illustration medium boasts a history as the dominant means of mass communication for several centuries. No other fine art medium could fulfill the communicative role that illustration has effectively performed for last millennium.

CHAPTER THREE

Practical Application: Reflections on Three Book Jacket Designs

With the history and evolution of the book jacket medium in mind, I created three jacket designs as a practical application of the knowledge I had gained through my research. Illustration featured as the primary visual for one of the designs and functioned as supportive imagery in another. During the process of developing these concepts, the difficulty of utilizing illustration in a photo-dominated industry became apparent. Regardless of the medium, I focused on developing clear concepts for each jacket that presented the novel in an unexpected or interpretative manner.

As a lover of teen fiction novels, I selected the novel *Hawksong* by Amelia Atwater Rhodes for my first book jacket design. Besides my personal attachment to this novel, I chose to include *Hawksong* in the practical portion of my thesis, because the author inspired me, when I was younger. Amelia Atwater-Rhodes wrote her first novel at age thirteen and published it by age fourteen. I also believe that the current book cover design inaccurately represents the story and overall tone of the novel
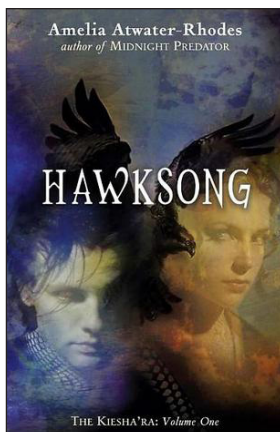

Figure 39 (2004)
Hawksong
Designer Unknown

(fig. 39). By designing a new book jacket for *Hawksong* I hoped to accurately convey the tone of the novel, while attracting the attention of teen readers.

Classified as a teen fiction novel, *Hawksong* tells the story of two warring nations in a fictional world who have been at war with one another as long as any living person can remember. Tired of the violence and death Danica Shardae, heir to the Avian throne, vows to end the war and

hesitantly agrees to a truce and marriage to the serpiente heir Zane Cobra. The novel follows Danica and Zane's struggle to achieve trust, peace, and friendship between themselves and their countries. Further complicating the situation is the great cultural differences between the races, since the Avians can change into birds and the Serpiente can shift into snakes, two natural enemies.

While the novel highlights the developing romance between Danica and Zane, the book primarily focuses on the compromises of the two young royals and the delicate balance between peace and war. This book fits in the teen fiction genre but would probably be misleading to readers, if it were advertised in the romance section. Because the love story plays a secondary role in the book, *Hawksong* is targeted towards young adult readers from age twelve to eighteen. With the target audience in mind I decided to develop a cover concept that highlighted the fantasy setting of the story, since the fictional world was an element that attracted me to the book as a reader. I also wanted to focus on the political themes and cultural differences that dominated the storyline rather than the romantic aspect of the story. The romantic aspect of the book does not truly reach fruition until the last page of the novel I felt that portraying this book primarily as a romance novel would lead to disappointed readers, so instead I focused on the aspect of two countries joining together through strained diplomacy. With these goals in mind I gathered visual references related to the characters, plot and setting and sketched six different cover concepts.

To better understand the audience who might purchase and read *Hawksong* I created a hypothetical bookshelf of other books in the same genre and with the same target audience as *Hawksong* (figs. 40-51). By analyzing other cover designs
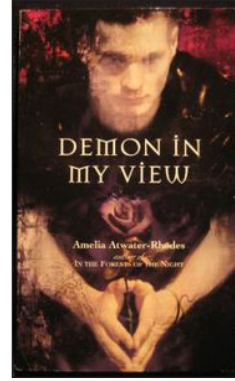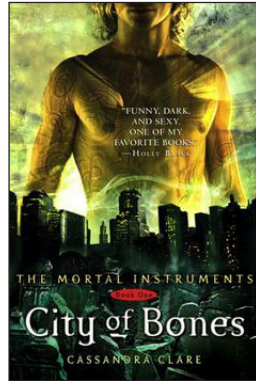
Figure 40 (2002)
The Sight
David Clement-Davies
Publisher Penguin

Figure 41 (2007)
City of Bones
Cassandra Clare
Publisher Margaret K.
McEldeerry Books

Figure 42 (1990)
Demon in My View
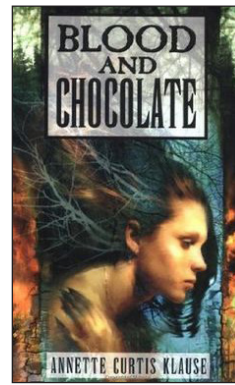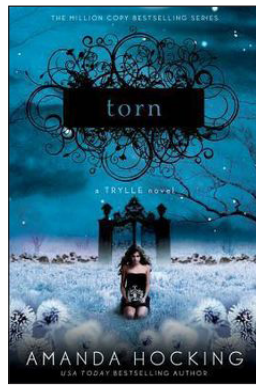Amelia Atwater-Rhodes
Publisher Random House
Children's Books
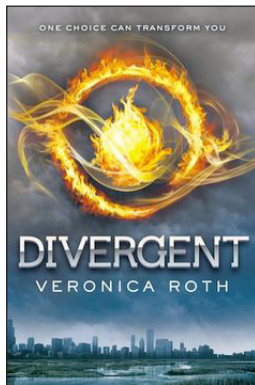
Figure 43 (2011)
Divergent
Veronica Roth
Publisher HarperCollins

Figure 44 (2012)
Torn
Amanda Hocking
Publisher Brilliance
Audio

Figure 45 (1997)
Blood and Chocolate
Annette Curtis Klause
Publisher Random House
Children's Books
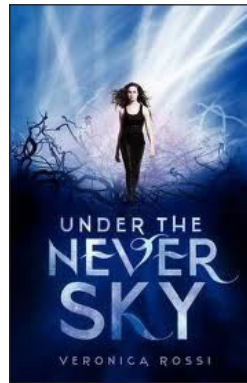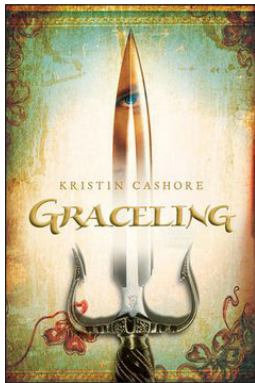
Figure 46 (2008)
Graceling
Kristin Cashore
Publisher Houghton
Mifflin Harcourt

Figure 47 (2010)
Incarceron
Catherine Fisher
Publisher Penguin

Figure 48 (2012)
Under the Never Sky
Veronica Rossi
Publisher HarperCollins
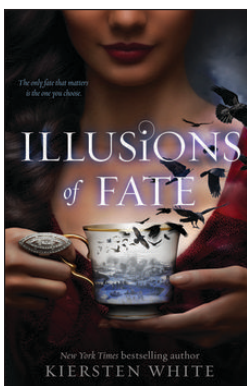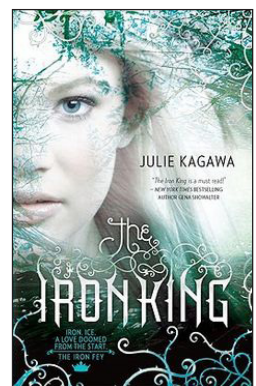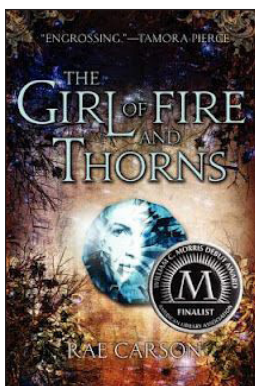
Figure 49 (2011)
The Girl of Fire and Thorns
Rae Carson
Publisher HarperCollins

Figure 50 (2010)
The Iron King
Julie Kagawa
Publisher Demco Media

Figure 51 (2014)
Illusions of Fate
Kiersten White
Publisher Harper Collins

that might be placed next to *Hawksong* on a bookstore shelf, I was able to determine the proper tone that the cover should convey and the audience it should attract. While the majority of books in the teen fantasy genre utilized digitally manipulated photographs for the cover imagery, I felt that vector-based digital illustrations could also be used successfully for this genre. For *Hawksong*'s book jacket design, I determined that using digital illustration would set the book apart from its competition, while maintaining a suitable mood for the fantasy genre.
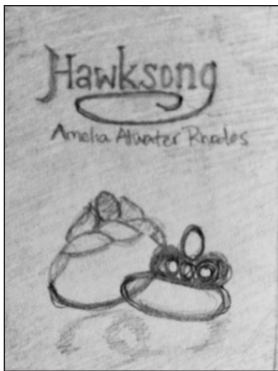

Figure 52 Initial sketch with interlaced crown concept
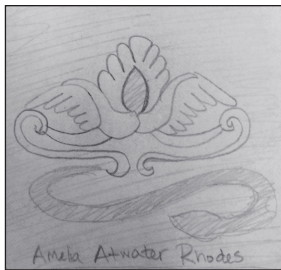
Figure 53 Revised crown sketch with snake as shadow

For the concept of the design, I settled on a cover that portrayed two distinctive crowns interlaced as symbolic representations of Danica and Zane's attempted diplomacy (fig. 52). Designed to reflect the contrasting nature of the two main characters, each crown reflected the animal nature of each race. However after reviewing the sketch and concept with my thesis mentor, it was determined that this design may be too literal and give away too many elements of the plot. I revised the crown concept so that only Danica's crown displayed on the cover, while Zane was more subtly represented by a snake in the form of the crown's shadow (fig. 53). The amended concept focused less on the union of Danica and Zane, while emphasizing the danger, suspicion, and mistrust issues laced throughout the book. I used feathers and wings as inspiration, when designing the crown so that the crown would clearly represent Danica and her country. I added a castle faintly in the background to give the cover more visual depth and also to reinforce the fantasy element of the story, while

hinting at the story's setting.

For the color palette I selected colors that traditionally represent royalty to compliment the primary visual of the Avian crown. For the font I chose a serif typeface that possessed subtle, non-traditional serifs to reinforce the fantasy element. I also created decorative swashes that integrated bird silhouettes to use as a compliment to the front cover illustration. I used this swash pattern to frame the text summary on the back of the book jacket and add to the sense of ornate royalty. In order to visually invite the reader to turn the book over to the back cover, I extended the swashes onto the spine. For the treatment of the book jacket flaps, I designated the front flap for a brief excerpt from the novel and used the back flap to highlight the author and her literary career.

Figure 54 In progress cover (Version 1)
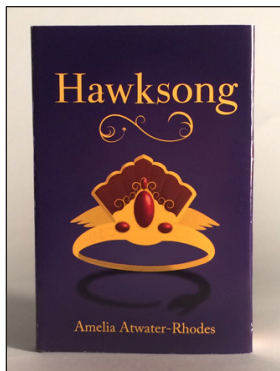
Figure 55 In progress cover (Vesrsion 2)

Overall, I am pleased with the final result of the *Hawksong* book jacket design. The largest challenge during this design process was undoubtedly creating the crown illustration (figs. 54-55). I would have liked to have rendered the crown illustration further, but for my current skill level I am satisfied with its quality. The challenge with designing book jackets is that the artist has a single opportunity to capture the audience's attention so there is significant pressure to create visual intrigue, while accurately representing the book. I believe that this design successfully evokes that fantasy mood that I hoped to achieve at the outset of this project, yet accurately suggests

the major themes in the novel (figs. 56-57).
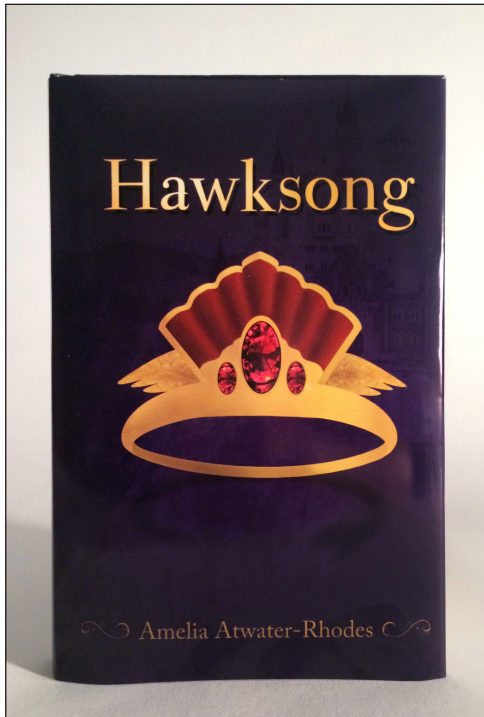
Figure 56 Final *Hawksong* book jacket design (front view)
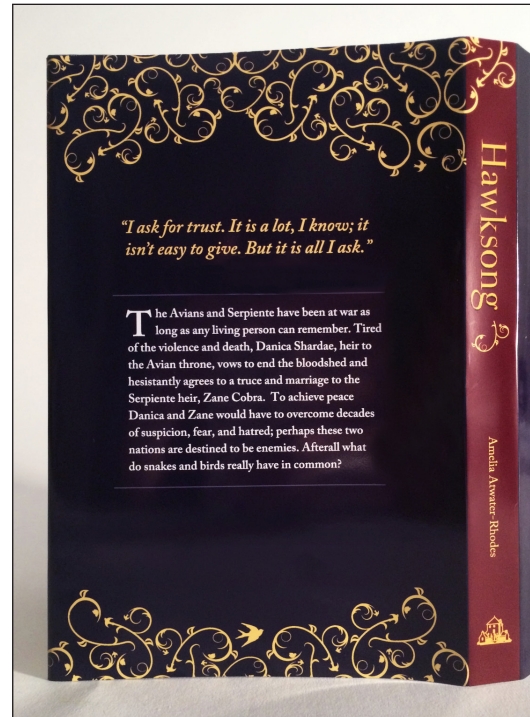
Figure 57 Final *Hawksong* book jacket design (back view)

For my second jacket design, I wanted to select a well-known literary classic in the hopes that others might be able to judge the success of the cover based on the content of the text. I decided to visually reinterpret John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, which also happens to be a literary favorite of mine. My goal for this design was to create a book jacket for a work of classic literature that adopted 21st century aesthetics in order to appeal to current readers.

The novel begins with the two main characters, George and Lennie, traveling to start their new jobs as ranch hands in California during the Great Depression. Even during such a trying time, George and Lennie dream of a future in which they own farmland. Lennie dreams of the day he can raise rabbits, since he loves to pet soft things and mice prove to be too fragile for his tremendous hands. Mentally

impaired, Lennie is a large man with a gentle spirit who enjoys touching soft things including fabrics, animals, and hair. As the boss of the duo, George frequently chastises Lennie for acting on his odd quirks, which usually bring hardships on the pair. Lennie's proclivity for touching things causes him to inadvertently break the neck of the ranch owner's wife. Lennie flees only vaguely comprehending that he has done something horrible. In order to save Lennie from the imminent abuse and execution for his crime, George calmly assures Lennie of their future of their dream farm and shoots Lennie in the back of the head.

As a writer, John Steinbeck is known for his shocking and unhappy endings, and he often used his written works as platforms for social commentary. Steinbeck uses *Of Mice and Men* specifically to examine the notion of the American dream, which states that if a person works hard enough that they can achieve success and better themselves. The Great Depression era undermined this optimistic belief as thousands of people starved and struggled to make a living. At the beginning of the novel George wholeheartedly believes that he and Lennie can achieve their dream by keeping their heads low and working hard. However, as the story goes on, George becomes disillusioned and adopts Steinbeck's more pessimistic view. Steinbeck uses *Of Mice and Men* to demonstrate how the American dream fails to become reality for deserving people. George and Lennie's dream farm is nothing more than a mirage that Steinbeck creates to call attention to societal problems; however, for George and Lennie the farm represents a hope for better life without constant roaming and homelessness.

Throughout the book George and Lennie's dream is a powerful motivator for both characters and inspired my design for the book jacket (fig. 57). George and

Lennie's aspiration to own their own farm drives them to continue working and

persevere through life's hardships. George also uses the promise of rabbits to

persuade Lennie into behaving at several points. George and Lennie's dream farm symbolizes the idealistic future that will never come to fruition for the doomed pair. The
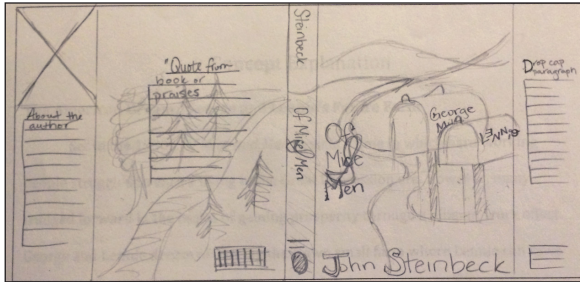
Figure 57 Intial full jacket thumbnail sketch

farm also represents a sanctuary for the two, since Lennie is always at risk of being

exploited or accidentally hurting people when around others. Because the farm

functions as the sole hope of the two characters, I used this powerful symbol for the

cover concept.

To convey the idea of George and Lennie's dream farm I selected a photo of

golden fields with a dirt road disappearing into the distance to suggest the idea that

the farmhouse accompanying the fields maybe be over the horizon. To emphasize

this point and to more definitively relate the cover image to George and Lennie I

integrated two mailboxes into the image as well. The mailboxes represent the

permanence and stability that George and Lennie desperately seek, but the fact that

the mailboxes are visually isolated from a home creates a paradox. I also

incorporated a rabbit silhouette in the form of a cloud over the road to reinforce the

idea that men's dreams are just down the path, but the ominous sky suggests that

their dreams are not so easily achieved. I used Photoshop and a combination of five

different photos to create the final cover image.

While I had a clear idea of what specific tone I wanted the front cover to

convey, I struggled to find a complimentary back cover design. I attempted bringing

in a second photographic image of a riverside to reinforce the idea of George and Lennie's dream or sanctuary, but the visual seemed disconnected with front of the jacket. I also experimented with using silhouettes of George and Lennie on the back
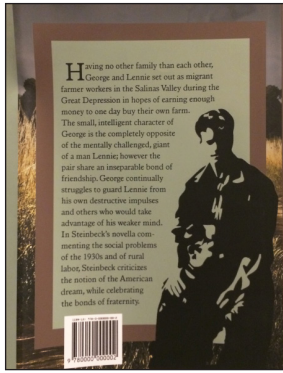
Figure 59 Back cover with silhouette design

cover but that also proved to be unsuccessful (Fig. 59). I discovered that using the same base photograph as the front cover, while concealing t he majority of the photo worked well in creating a cohesive jacket design. For the color palette I selected rural colors that complimented both the colors in the photograph as well as the California ranch setting of the story. Since *Of Mice and Men* is classified as a literary classic, a traditional serif typeface felt most appropriate for the design.

Overall, I felt that the final book jacket design for *Of Mice and Men* proved to be the strongest of the three jacket designs (Fig. 60-61). I believe its success is partially due to a deeper understanding and analysis of the text as well as the use of photography as opposed to illustration. Through the practical portion of designing book jackets, I learned that illustrated work must be flawless to compete with photograph-based designs, as many sources in the second chapter suggested. If the same concept used illustration instead of photography, I believe that the final product would not be nearly as successful.

Figure 60 Final *Of Mice and Men* book jacket design (front view)
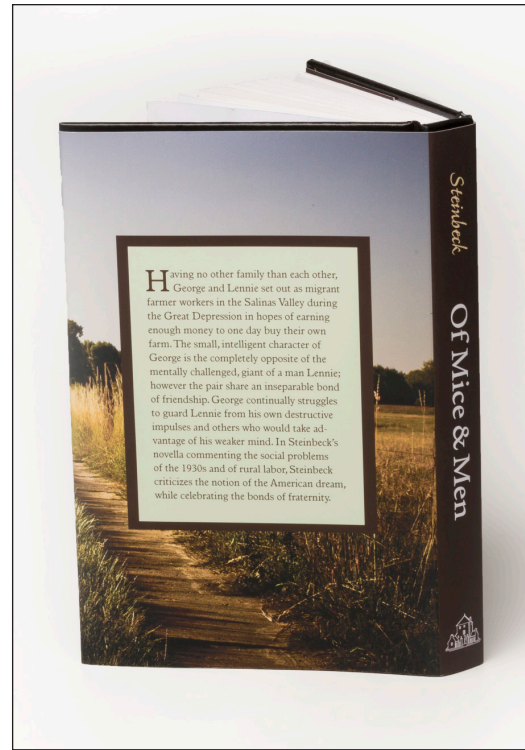
Figure 61 Final *Of Mice and Men* book jacket design (back view)

I selected an unpublished novel called *Book of Faces* written by my good friend Calley Jones for my final book jacket design, since most professional book jacket designers primarily create designs for new publications. *Book of Faces* is young adult contemporary fiction novel and is the first book in a series of four.

The story is narrated by sixteen year old Eliza who finds herself kicked out of her home for shoplifting, but she is quickly whisked away to the home of Tasha Collins who mistakes Eliza for her missing runaway sister, Taylor. Baffled by this case of mistaken identity, Eliza tries to convince the Collins family of her true identity but soon discovers that the evidence of her past life, such as her home and parents, are nonexistent. Left to question whether she is truly Taylor with a bizarre

case of amnesia or Eliza like she has always believed, she discovers a book called *Book of Faces* in Taylor's room detailing every physical and emotional aspect of Eliza adding to her confusion. Eliza determines that the Book is Faces is somehow tied to her since she feels pain, if the book is damaged in anyway. Eventually Tasha, Taylor's older sister, and Eliza come to the conclusion that Eliza is not Taylor. Eliza and Tasha finally receive answers about the *Book of Faces* when Taylor's ex-boyfriend shows up and takes the pair to a hidden underground world that teaches the art of writing people into existence. Taylor had been secretly training in this art and created Eliza along with two other people by writing a novel detailing Eliza's every characteristic. However, Arris, the leader of underground operation disapproves of Taylor's tendency to give her creations extra human abilities, such as Eliza's ability to take on the appearance of any other person. Like Taylor, Tasha and Eliza end up on the wrong side of this organization, when they refuse to give up the books and people that Taylor wrote into existence. Tasha and Eliza spend the rest of the novel attempting to safeguard the books and narrowly escape Arris' forces.

     *Book of Face*s is classified as contemporary fantasy, but the fictional elements in the story do not come to light until almost halfway through the novel, so I did not want to create a cover that strongly projected a feeling of fantasy. While examining the overall plot of the series with the author, it became apparent that the idea of being able to write people into existence was a dominant theme carried throughout the four book series. Also when discussing her expectations or preconceived ideas about the cover of the book, the author said that she always envisioned some kind representation of the *Book of Faces* on the cover, since it is so important to the story. She wanted the book jackets to appear visually cohesive as a four book series. To

fulfill the author's wish for a unified series, I explored concepts that lent themselves to reinterpretation for the remaining three book jackets. Although originally concerned with the literal concept of portraying a book on the cover of a book, I found that this concept avoided the issue of revealing key developments in the novel unlike some of the other concepts that I explored.

The first concept for the jacket design focused on the art of writing people into existence, since Eliza herself is a product of written words bringing people to life. While this idea is a major theme in the story, it also provided readers with the largest plot twist, which made portraying this concept on the cover problematic. If the jacket design implied the writing into existence theme too strongly, the book jacket would spoil the suspense and mystery of the story itself. I decided to play with the viewer's perception of the two-dimensional surface by creating an illusion of three-dimensional image in the design.

In my research I discovered a particularly interesting image, which showed a photograph being peeled away. I thought this technique would be suitable, if the way that the photo was removed created a contour shape that looked like a female profile (Fig. 62). For my adaption of this concept, I printed a photograph of a stack of books with their spines exposed and crumpled the paper to create a profile in the negative space (Fig. 63). For a viewer unfamiliar with the plot this cover image would be an intriguing visual, but those who have read the book

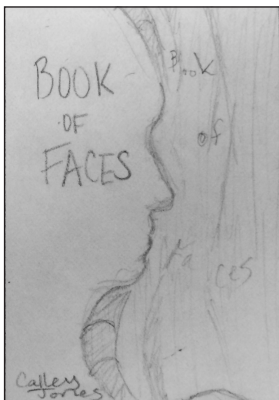**Figure 62** Initial *Book of Face*s thumbnail sketch
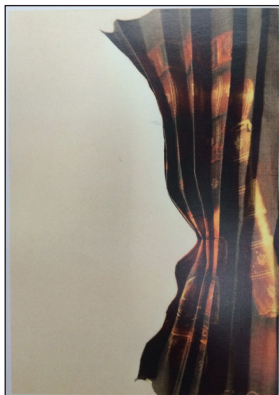
Figure 63 Experimentation with folded photographs for cover image

would comprehend the additional reference to Eliza being born out of the book itself. *Book of Faces* is a compelling story because the reader attempts to solve the mystery of Eliza's identity, as Eliza discovers new pieces of the puzzle. Each new development in the story adds to the complexity of her identity and by keeping the imagery vague the jacket helps generate a sense of mystery. I used a causal script for the typeface to create the sense of handwriting, since it plays such a pivotal part in the story itself.

The back cover design employs a similar technique of using vague but purposeful imagery with an illustration of a mirror and a bookshelf. The mirror references Eliza's ability to change her appearance at will; however, she always appears the same to herself. Eliza discovers this ability by describing the appearance she sees in the mirror to Tasha and realizing it does not match what Tasha perceives. I used illustration as a compliment to the photographic cover because of the emphasis on writing in the plot of the story.

Ultimately, I am pleased with the final results of the jacket design, but I am concerned that the cover may feel to mature for young teens (Fig. 64-65). This cover design may appeal to adult fiction readers more than the target market; however, the cover concept captures the story in an unexpected interpretation.
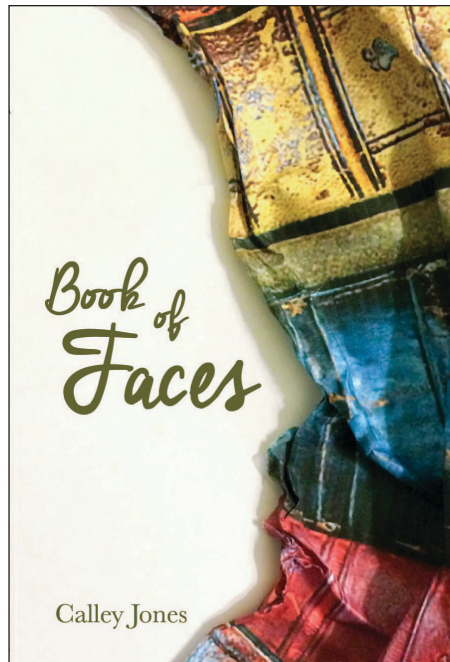
Figure 64 Final *Book of Faces* book jacket design (front view)

Sixteen-year-old Eliza would give anything to have a family as caring as that of Taylor Collins, the missing girl whose posters are still scattered across the city. But when Taylor's family accuses Eliza of being their rebellious runaway, she's certain she's not the girl they've described. But could she be? Eliza suddenly finds it eerily impossible to contact anyone from her old life...and no one seems to be missing her.

The only possible link to the past that she can find is the Book of Faces, a handwritten book on the missing girl's bookshelf that seems to describe, in elaborate detail, precisely the person Eliza always believed herself to be. But what does the book have to do with Eliza herself? And why does it cause her pain when it's thrown against the wall?

With Taylor's sister as an ally, Eliza embarks on a journey to find Taylor, as well as the answers to all of the questions she has about her existence. But she's about to learn that the Book of Faces is a fairly prized commodity. And by extension, so is she.

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$ 13.99 USA
$ 16.99 Canada
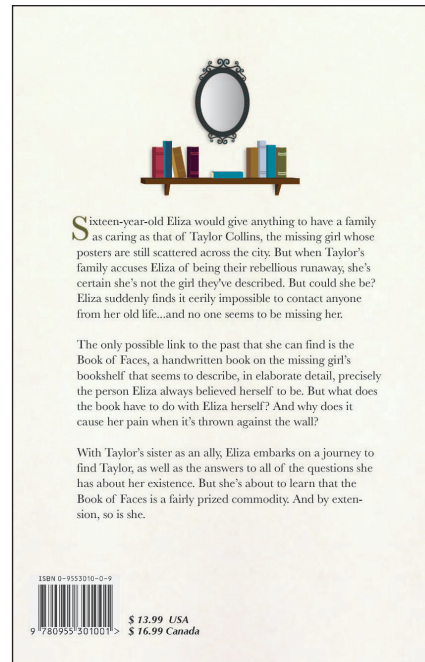
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