

Ben Weiner 2000

A productive alliance: does the work of editors and designers add to the quality of scholarly books?

Abstract

This dissertation is about the interface between designers, editors and authors. Examining all three, it focuses particularly on the designer's role: what is that role and how is it perceived? In the eyes of author and editor, what does the designer contribute to the work? Typographical literature makes implicit assumptions about the usefulness of designers and their ability to refine or to obscure the text in a book, using the repertoire of type and space to give visual form to the text. But do laymen perceive the improvement? And in practice, are the books which are surely the most deserving (those which must convey difficult, complex and important information) given the greatest amount of attention?

I review the roles, products and goals of academic publishing with the intention of discovering the areas where editorial concerns, authorial concerns and design concerns overlap. I try to establish whether these opportunities for collaboration are taken. In this way, it is possible to see whether the improvements which are postulated ever find their way into published works and therefore whether publishers are providing carefully processed, reader-conscious texts or merely giving writing a printed form.

A productive alliance

**does the work of editors and designers
add to the quality of scholarly books?**

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Introduction

This dissertation examines the activities, products and goals of academic book publishing to find out what the contribution of designers to such a process might be. It is important not to underestimate the degree to which a burden of excellence is attached to scholarly publishing: if evidence is sought, book reviews in the general and specialist press provide it. The readership has expectations for accurate analytical writing, backed up by clearly presented data and access through a worthwhile index. High expectations in the readership create the impetus for high quality new work. In this dissertation I examine some of the ways in which high quality is achieved during the production process; that is to say in the period after the author or authors have conceived and written the work, but before it is ready for publication. There are many people performing a range of activities which transform texts (private written documents) into books (public written documents); these range in character from providing the cataloguing information to holding the sheets of paper together in a resilient manner. I cover many of these processes, but with a particular focus on the elements which transform the work intellectually, the range of activities which constitute editing.

Other tasks are more prosaic: the processes of typesetting and imposition, for example. I contend that these are craft skills, skills passed from one practitioner to the next and in which difficulties are overcome by reference to informal rules, or by published rules such as house styles, spelling lists, or dictionaries. I liken these to working from templates.

In contrast, I contend that the processes of editing and book designing differ from these, because each project has unique demands for problem-solving skills: these are skills which go beyond the scope of template-based work. I believe that design offers a complement to and extension of the opportunities which editing presents. These include responses to the challenge of clearly presenting arguments and their supporting data, the consideration of non-standard text setting (for example mathematics, physics, foreign languages or non-Latin alphabets) and an appropriate overall solution to the physical form of the book.

Therefore, I conclude that book design for academic publishing contributes directly to the efficacy of a title – its usefulness to the readership and its commercial success as a measure of that usefulness – and that it is not an activity that should be considered automatic, straightforward or trivial.

I write from the background of a student of typography, but also with a limited degree of experience of book production; many observations of practice come from my (occasional) work as a freelance proof checker and proof vetter (not to mention dogsbody) in the offices

of a large academic publishing house. My observations therefore reflect the idiosyncrasies of that organisation to some extent. But they are supported by study of the guides issued by other similar publishing houses, which I hope provide some balance.

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1. Activities in publishing production

This section is about activities and skills, and about the roles played by people involved in production. Many activities are shared out according to external factors such as the number of people who work on a project or its budget. And since roles can quite easily be subsumed into one another, it is unhelpful to talk exclusively about 'copy editors' or 'designers' as if these roles are always watertight. Instead, I discuss the roles themselves, allowing both that they are sometimes labels rather than people and that they can be undertaken by people who, through their personal views, job description or training, might not think of themselves primarily as performing some of the tasks which they nonetheless regularly do. I consider this to be broadly equivalent to the remarks of Paul Stiff, when he states that '... in using the words "designing" and "designer," I here disregard conventional divisions of labour, taking them to stand for the work that has to be done to transform the text into a book, and for the roles – authorial, editorial, typographic – taken by the people who do that work.' (Stiff, 1997: 66).

It is helpful to make a distinction between two classes of activity in book production which, though interdependent, are different in character. I have divided the activities crudely into two kinds: the first category includes such tasks as composing, imposing and proof checking. All these tasks, skilled as they are, can be carried out after a craftsman's training: all are mechanical operations where there is a correct answer in all cases of doubt. I have called these 'craft skills'; they are all tasks which could be said to possess an invisible or a visible template of some sort. It should be noted that this terminology is slightly at odds with the use given to 'craft' by design writers such as John Walker: he sees craft in what is arguably a more conventional way, as a process of manufacture from concept to finished artefact outside the industrial system. (Walker, 1989: 38–44) I am using craft to stand for a system in which skills, acquired through apprenticeship, are employed almost unquestioningly in the production of a range of artefacts which have not been consciously 'designed'. In using this terminology, I also keep the writing of Philip Steadman in mind: his analysis of the use of biological analogy, and in particular the idea of 'evolution', in design includes discussion of the transmission of generic types of object from generation to generation in pre-industrial societies. A similar transfer is implied in my use of 'craft skills'. (Steadman, 1979) But the important point is that such skills are used pragmatically; they are not experimental, but learned and applied by rote.

The second category, which includes copy editing and designing the book, are tasks in which professional training contributes to a set of skills which also include problem-solving: there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer to the problems which may come up. More

pertinently, much of the time the answers will be expected as a matter of routine, and templates of the kind mentioned above cannot be used to generate appropriate responses. In other words, original thought will always be required due to the nature of the problem; whatever guides exist are guides alone, not fully-formed instructions or solutions.

Being a loose and generalised system, this grouping should be taken only as a convenience. I frequently note the permeability of such divisions as exist, and this applies to the divisions I have created as a part of my argument as much as it applies to the divisions made in the professions involved.

Inspiration for forming the division of activities in labour- and problem-led tasks comes from the writing of design theorists such as Norman Potter (Potter 1980) and John Walker (Walker 1989). Walker's examination of design is as an attempt to establish an academic discipline of 'Design History'. His study of the perception of the role of designers brings out, amongst other things, the contention that the designer is a product of industrialised society, a mediator (not necessarily welcome) between those who perceive a need for a product and those who make it.

In the person of the designer the power of planning and conception which all humans possess has been concentrated. Once [sic] could say the designer has virtually monopolised this power and by so doing has diminished the ability of the majority to influence the design of goods, services and environments. Concerned professionals periodically attempt to overcome this alienation – by means of public participation, community architecture, and so on – but it remains a difficult problem to solve.

(Walker, 1989: 54)

But Walker's remarks about the cult of personality which can surround illustrious designers don't ring true when applied to book design. (Walker, 1989: 45) As far as I am aware public exposure is rarely, if ever, achieved by designers working on books.

Preparatory work carried out by the author

In addition to writing the text, the author is expected to perform a number of tasks which contribute significantly to the usefulness of the completed work. These may include originating diagrams, tables and images (ensuring permission is granted for the reproduction of images which are not the author's own work) and creating the index; this task is carried out when page proofs of the book are sent to the author, at which time the author must also proof-read (something which the publisher will not do, except to check running heads are correct and establish that the contents list points to the right pages). In short, there are several tasks which the publisher asks the author to perform, so that the

author is brought back in to approve the changes the copy editor has made, and to check the entire text when it has been set.

‘Craft skills’

Typesetting

Today, when the text is being set, it is in the hands of typesetters who are trained in the business of accurately transferring text from computer files typed by the author or (if they are fortunate) an amateur or professional typist. Subsequently, these files may well have been quite extensively worked over by a copy editor. So the risk of spelling errors, typing errors and ungrammatical sentences is minimised. The typesetter has responsibility for running the text files into prepared templates and adding the running heads and other text which is not in the word processed files, forming a file (or a set of files) on computer which typically will be used to create film negatives from which printing plates will be produced to go onto offset lithographic printing presses, for example.

Despite playing this rather passive role in the editorial process, the typesetting company may employ a reader to query possible errors and pick up mistakes made in the process of importing the text files. In this respect, the typesetting company provides more than an automated layout service to the publisher, and retains an intellectual stake in the process of production.¹

But it is a rather diminished stake; historically, the place of the typesetter belonged to compositors and readers employed by the book’s eventual printer. This practice reflected the fact that production of letterpress books required the manipulation of large quantities of lead type, awkward to move more than a few hundred feet, and hence the activities of a printing house included producing the pages from marked up manuscript or typewritten copy.

In this system, compositors were the people who turned the author’s words into lead type, letter by letter. They normally worked in groups, splitting large jobs between several workers to speed the rate of setting. It was these people who became the operators of keyboard-controlled type composing and casting machinery. Historically, book designers were sometimes able to issue quite broad instructions to compositors, knowing that with specialist knowledge, and with the relatively restrictive setting practices of the time, the compositors would be able to implement the style they wanted with minimal guidance: for (an extreme) example, James Moran points out the waste inherent in the preferred design methodology of Stanley Morison:

¹ This point was elaborated on by Richard Lawrence (see appendix 2). He told me that increasingly typesetters have to add value to their services by increasing the range of things they will do. Affirmation of the specialist skills of typesetters was given by Shelley Gruendler (appendix 3).

what mattered to Morison was the idea, and he conveyed this to a skilled compositor, sometimes in the most rudimentary fashion He would also alter proofs until a desired result was achieved. This technique earned him the soubriquet ‘The Printer’s Friend’... but it is not a practice which can be commended to either the working typographer or aspiring author of today.

(Moran, 1971: 9–11)

In a system such as this, the compositors were required to bring a considerable degree of personal discretion to bear on the setting; much of what they were doing went unnoticed by the designer and was only corrected outside the printing house if it seemed obviously wrong. This serves to demonstrate the considerable reserve of knowledge of the prescribed rules of published language which resided within the compositors and readers of a printing house; the application of this specialist knowledge is a defining characteristic of printed language.² In Britain, the era of highly-skilled compositors was at its height between the 1920s and the 1950s: Geoffrey Dowding looks back at it when he talks about ‘the typographer [who] has taken over duties formerly the craftsman-compositor’s (the composition or arrangement of types as distinct from the setting of them)’. (Dowding, 1966: xii) Along with a certain aesthetic sensibility, it is often implied, went attention to detail and the conscientious application of house rules.

It is important to note that typesetters, despite being limited in their range of influence, represent the best opportunity to obtain accurate setting. Attractive though this might seem, there is no reason to believe that all typesetters will be able to take mediocre marked up copy and produce faultless output. I talk later about *Legenda*, a minimal-cost imprint created by a university research centre. The *Legenda* imprint’s working method is to typeset internally, using the knowledge of an academically-qualified typesetter and with quick access to the author, via a specialist appointed as volume editor, to clear up problems which the copy editor is unable to resolve. This structure has cut the cost of typesetting (indeed, it has helped make the *Legenda* operation possible) and given greater control over the timing of publications. It also gives direct editorial influence to the typesetter. It is worth noting that the books produced do not contain particularly sensitive setting of the scientific sort covered below, but the presence in most texts of several languages, and of extensive quotes of prose and verse, means that typesetting internally helps greatly in ensuring that problems are quickly uncovered and can be cleared up while setting continues. At the outset, there was a

² By ‘printed language’ I mean the language as it is represented in print; this is a more formal version of written language, and is explicitly intended for public consumption. Linguists acknowledge the contribution of print to prescribed rules of written language: standardisation of spelling was largely accomplished in British English through the efforts of printers.

determination at Legenda to attain a reputation for scrupulously high quality of the design and the setting of the series. (appendix 1)

Another interesting feature of the arrangement is that this particular typesetter is not qualified to set type; instead, the rules of 'good setting' have been studied, and interpreted as a set of instructions in a text processing program written by him. The program not only performs most of the amendments a setter would make, but produces a report highlighting issues which it could not satisfactorily resolve. Such a sophisticated tool, if available publicly, would have major implications for the expectations which are made for setting; effectively, this is rather like a refined spell checker for printed language, about which most laymen know little.³

'A great deal of typographical subtlety is required in the setting of scientific and mathematical matter' (Butcher, 1981: 225). Specialist setters are required to perform accurate setting of scientific texts in which there are superior and inferior figures, fine distinctions between upper and lower case and italic type, and with symbols from other alphabets, such as Greek, or other special sorts. The majority of typesetters are unable to provide the expertise needed to transcribe such manuscripts: not only are there considerations of accuracy, but some transformation of the text matter may have to be done by the setter, as for example when an equation must be reset to conform with the style of the book and no instruction is provided; equally, an equation may need to be broken over two lines, a more common problem given that the copy editor cannot anticipate the line lengths which will be available. Unlike ordinary written language, vertical alignment plays a role in articulating a mathematical argument, so that simply applying a rule which aligns all lines to the left of the text area is likely to be unacceptable.

I asked at Legenda whether their approach would have accommodated the needs of scientific publishing: their assessment was that it would not have been the chosen system. Mathematicians, for example, are normally asked by publishers to set their own texts. This represents a great saving in setting costs (because the setting is notoriously difficult), cuts down the chance of 'errors creeping in along the line' of editorial and typesetting work (Ransom, 1987: 156) and helps reduce corrections in proof (partly attributable to the methodical approach of mathematicians, but mainly because they, or their peers, may be the only ones who can comprehend the arguments or reliably check them for accuracy).

Personally, I can't adequately describe how wonderful it feels when I now make a change to the manuscript of my book, as it is stored in the Stanford computer, since I know that the change is immediately in effect; it never will go through any intermediaries who might misunderstand my intention.

³ It may be that bespoke programs of this sort are indeed used by typesetters themselves.

(Knuth, 1999: 28)

In the limited context of such specialist fields, author-setting has been the response to the opportunities presented by changing technology; the preferred software for such texts being TEX, which is a set of computer ‘tags’ – labels applied to groups of letters – which describe the final positioning of letters relative to each line of regular type in a way that can reflect their role in an equation. Software is used to process the tags and produce typeset pages.

Donald Knuth, the originator of the TEX language, was well aware of increasing costs and deteriorating quality in complex setting and designed his system to treat ‘typography as the servant of mathematics’:

The goal here is to communicate mathematics effectively by making it possible to publish mathematical papers and books of high quality, without excessive cost.

(Knuth, 1999: 20–21)

Regardless of its ultimate ‘user-friendliness’, the system is used very widely to exchange information; it is the standard in producing documents of a presentation quality, and easily sophisticated enough to make it suitable for published texts (Diller, 1993). And it has helped take away the unhappy situation depicted in a work describing letterpress mathematical typesetting:

Authors should remember too that to destroy an elaborate formula that has cost the compositor time and effort can be very discouraging to him.

(Chaundy, Barrett and Batey, 1954: 71)

Other ‘craft skills’

Other craft skills include the printing, finishing and binding of the books. Despite being good examples of the craft-like activities which I categorise as ‘craft skills’, these are not within the focus of this discussion. This is because the implementation of checks on quality within those activities can be seen as very similar to quality control in any manufacturing process: once the pages are imposed, they are locked into the final format unless errors in that imposition occur. In contemporary practice, all that remains as an obstacle between the author and the reader at that point is the technical competence of the printing organisation, something which can be taken for granted at a time when the standards worldwide are high (although not necessarily optimal).

In the era of letterpress printing, it would have been less prudent to take the technical competence shown in the output of the press so much for granted. The reason for this is that in many cases, the printed impression was taken directly from individual metal characters held within the bed of the press. These characters, secured by pressure alone, did sometimes come loose and require replacement during a print run. In replacing a letter, whoever did so reintroduced the possibility of making an error. This is something which offset lithography,

using a homogenous printing surface made from a single sheet of material onto which the images of the book's pages are etched, avoids.

To sum up my caricature, I view the craft skills force as acting within mental templates. The templates may be loosely applied, but they delineate the roles which have been played into distinct activities: keyboarding, imposition, picking up the correct letters from a type case. All activities which are quotidian, and necessarily so, in the manner of assembly-line construction.

More contentious, I imagine, is my placing of some of the work of the production editors in publishing houses into the category of 'craft skills'. I would not place activities such as dealing with the cajoling of authors, editors and contributors into such a category. But on the other hand, to the extent that well-defined procedures exist for such tasks as budgeting the book and obtaining the services of copy editors, indexers and designers, such tasks are readily grasped; there is little skill involved other than that of negotiation. Templates exist here, in the form of the written and unwritten instructions, and the forms that must be completed, and these ensure that the administration of book production in a publishing office is, to the greatest possible extent, automatic. Evidence for this is in the plethora of forms which must be filled in; these are designed to ensure that projects do not miss crucial stages and that other parts of the publishing organisation know what is going on while production is being carried out. There is evidence too in leaflets given to freelance readers, copy editors and proof checkers (a selection of these is provided in appendix 4).

Today, when a book designer is responsible for implementing the design, they must exercise the same kinds of craft skills: professional familiarity with the machinery (computer software) and expert knowledge of the conventions of printed language. As my interview at Legenda demonstrates, the use of computers can automate drudgery when programs deploying the expert knowledge of compositors and readers, distilled into routines which look for errors, are used to scan and automatically correct the typescript without human assistance. Therefore, the computer too becomes one of the craft-skilled workers using expert knowledge in the preparation of the typescript for print. In general terms recourse to handed-down procedural knowledge, and to works which condense this knowledge such as style guides and house rules, is an indicator that the process being carried out falls under the category I have labelled 'craft skills'.

Problem-solving

Problem-solving tasks in publishing, as noted above, are characterised as the counterpart of the craft skills tasks I have outlined above. They involve making spot decisions, applicable in individual circumstances. However, in the absence of knowledge which overlaps that of the person carrying out such tasks as typesetting or composing, the problem-solver is unlikely to

be able to carry out a task any better than a layman. Therefore the problem-solver needs to be conversant with the terminology and methods, if not the final details, which will be employed in the manufacturing processes.

Reading before acceptance by a publisher

Before a book gets near the production department, it must be approved for publication. Often a synopsis of the book is produced, but the author may submit what is felt to be a completed manuscript. The approval process may rely on the advice of external consultants; in the case of academic works, referees are nominated or sought whose experience allows them to give opinions about the quality of argument and the interest it is likely to generate.

The reader or readers may contribute significantly to the quality of the text, since they are effectively a sample audience. But if they read the unedited typescript, they will not get the benefit of work done by copy editors or book designers, who will only be able to influence the text once it has been accepted for publication.

Copy editing

In book publishing, it is an established practice to arrange for a copy editor to read the author's manuscript. The copy editor is permitted to make detail changes to the author's text which he or she feels will clarify the argument. Copy editors will also query points of fact which they are not sure about, and may go to some lengths to check up on the sources the author has cited. It is frequently the case, particularly in academic works, that the book may incorporate the work of more than ten authors. The copy editor, following directions from the publisher, will impose a blanket 'house style' incorporating elements which make sense to the reader such as a common set of spellings (where alternatives have been used) and rationalising the written style to clarify meaning and make the book a seamless whole.

In altering the author's words, the copy editor is not only risking the wrath of the author, but also perpetuating a situation which all editing cannot avoid creating. For with every effort to clarify the argument, there is potentially an attendant alteration in the meaning of the argument, not seen by the editor. To take such a critical view is to move into territory which is beyond the scope of my argument,⁴ but it is worth noting when assessing the published version of an author's words the fact that some of those words will be substitutes. In any case, usual practice is for the author to have the opportunity to reread the text after stylistic changes have been made, and to approve or reject those changes. It is also worth noting that copy editing can be lightly applied or used in a much more thorough way. As noted in one publisher's guide to copy editors, 'For the sort of academic books we produce,

⁴ Disciplines such as bibliography and textual criticism, and research into the social aspects of the communication between reader and writer, take up this theme.

only light copy-editing of the author's English is usually appropriate.' (SMJ, 1994a: Preface) In other words the genre, and (perhaps implied in this passage) the selection of authors, partly determine the degree of work needed.

Copy editors also help to shape the text, making it easier for readers to navigate it and understand how the elements of the argument fit together. They will check the headings used, which may help a designer to see how these might best be treated graphically:

Part of a copy-editor's job is to analyse each job in terms of structure, to enable the designer to accurately represent the hierarchy of parts, chapters and subdivisions in his typographic treatment of the material.

(Barlow, 1987: 204)

In her discussion of the quality of images used in academic publications, Vicki Bennett offers incidentally a good brief definition of the role of the copy editor, one which helps us to understand the goals which copy editing seeks to meet:

Many writers are not prepared to employ the same standards of quality to visual imagery as they apply to texts. If one is to equate the importance of the imagery to the importance and subsequent management of the written text, the work of the copy editor can provide a useful frame of reference. Most people will agree that it is the job of the copy editor to repair spelling, ensure grammatical correctness, and cull the text of effete verbal residue. This is done both to ensure press standards and because most readers are not inclined to apply themselves to a text that is unnecessarily cumbersome. The copy editor is not expected to compose the text; by the same standards, then, the production department should not be expected to create material *ex nihilo*, and readers should not be subjected to unnecessarily cumbersome imagery.

(Bennett, 1999: 193)

In this passage, Bennett is talking about assessing the utility and quality of images, the addition of which add greatly to production costs.

Other elements of the copy editor's work are closer to what the compositor's training would have provided: such issues as the use of the hyphens, en dashes and em dashes in a consistent fashion (so that each can be taken to imply different connections between the two words joined), the correct use of single and double quotes, the observation of house style, and other subtle refinements which are the marks of good setting. These I exclude from the 'problem-solving' category.

To maintain the integrity of a designer's solution to a text, it may be important to ensure that decisions affecting the visual style are not made by copy editors, as the following passage indicates:

And where a book designer has created a striking and fresh type layout for a book, a strict adherence to conventional styling in the details may be calamitous. In such a case it is essential that the design be so comprehensive that not the smallest detail is left to be decided by the copy-editor, the typesetter, or the compositor.

(Plewman, 1961: 83)

In other words, the copy editor can be seen to have a role to play, for instance, in defining how many levels of heading are present and how distinctive they are but not to specify their graphic treatment or to assume that this is unvaryingly standardised between books.

Volume editing

In a slightly different category are volume editors, who tie together the submissions of many authors in a multi-contributor work. These people may be academics with less comprehension of the editorial process, but the publisher entrusts them with the responsibility of checking that the final typescript incorporates the corrections which individual authors have altered or approved in each chapter. They will also write an introduction which may help show how the disparate contributions can be united around a common theme.

Designing⁵

I propose that book designers are visual editors and that their influence on the interpretation of an author's words can be equivalent to the influence which an editor might have. In some areas this is particularly noticeable: such areas as the contents list or the indexes of books.

In general terms and in the broad use of the word, 'designers' sometimes see themselves primarily as generators of new ideas and fresh, non-conventional forms. In publishing, if this were to be the case, an editor and a designer working on a book would differ in outlook, because the editor's approach is likely to be to ensure the author's use of language and argument harmonise with orthodox use, so that they are comprehensible and not unnecessarily obscure. For a designer to pursue the opposite course – avoiding orthodox layouts and seeking novelty – would rarely be appropriate: what is needed is a workable new permutation of a standard mental template. Hence book designers tend to be conservative rather than radical. The book is intended to be used rather than looked at. Of course, there are plenty of books that thrive on the novelty of an unusual layout: I assume that in general, when the layout overrides the content, the argument is not being given the same importance as that in a conventional, academic, book and I have excluded such books from the scope of my argument.

⁵ Appendix 3 provides a slightly different, and more conventional, picture than the one I give here. Essentially, however, the designer's independence to create the layout they feel appropriate is a mark of the responsibility they have and the respect they are given by the editorial staff.

I have grouped together editors and designers as ‘problem-solvers’. But this label is perhaps not an accurate reflection of the real world. A true account of the designer’s contribution lies somewhere between the lyricism of Robert Bringhurst (1992) and the feeling that designers are adding gloss and nothing else.

If designers are perceived as giving a peripheral gloss to titles which would otherwise suffer only from a lack of attention from eligible readers then it is unsurprising that the voice of the marketing department is heard so clearly when layout issues such as that of the footnote raised by Paul Stiff (Stiff, 1997: discussed in section 3) come up. On the other hand, what would designers do if the marketing department were not interested? Would they oblige requests from the editorial staff? In other words, are designers interested in advancing their own ideas or merely making sure that what is done conforms in outline to type? If the latter is the case, there seems little need for book designers to exist. It would be adequate to employ one to travel around and reassure publishers that their books looked reasonable; all the rest could be done by typesetters employing their craft knowledge. As noted by Stiff, ‘printing was the first modern mass-production industry, and design for printing can reasonably be seen as an industrial craft.’ (Stiff, 1996a: 29)

Book designers have written about their perception of working on overtly academic books:

The real work of a book designer isn’t making things look nice, different, or pretty. It is finding out how to put one letter next to another so that an author’s words seem to lift off the page. Book design doesn’t delight in its own cleverness; it is done in the service of words. Good book design can only be done by people who read—by those who take the time to see what happens when words are set into type.

(Hendel, 1998: 3)

This analysis begins with a semi-factual assertion. I feel it is weakened by the poetic and impressionistic second sentence: talking about words ‘lifting off the page’, although it is a successful allusive device, fails to convey what a more prosaic explanation might. But we could take the phrase ‘an author’s words seem to lift off the page’ to mean something like ‘the text is not bound to the page, because the reader’s eye is not conscious of the marks on the paper, but only of the author’s words running through his head’. It is in the realisation of this feat (if we accept the transliteration, and without passing judgement on the passage itself) that the skill of book designer lies. The practical obstacles to its realisation represent the challenge which make the skill valued.

Books and their contents differ very greatly, and the nature of the written material contained in them offers an opportunity for much problem-solving, strictly on a case-by-case basis. In other words, the craft knowledge of (historically) the compositor, keyboarder or

typesetter does not go far enough: it does not interlock with the editorial aspects of the book. Craft skills such as typesetting treat words as meaningless strings of characters obeying arbitrary rules. A book designer must look, and read, much closer.

In the writing of Robert Bringhurst, the typographer (by which Bringhurst means primarily the book designer) is charged with delivering a 'performance'. But the use of such terminology conceals a definition which is more tangible: the centre of the argument is to place typographers equally in the role of professional elucidators and 'artists and craftsmen'.

The typographer must analyse and reveal the inner order of the text, as a musician must reveal the inner order of the music he performs. But the reader, like the listener, should in retrospect be able to close her eyes and see what lies inside the words she has been reading. The typographic performance must reveal, not replace, the inner composition. Typographers, like other artists and craftsmen—musicians, composers and authors as well—must as a rule do their work and disappear.

(Bringhurst, 1992: 21)

As mentioned above, a feature whose disposition is particularly closely articulated by typographic means is the index. As Kinross states, 'the different typographic treatment of the essentially similar material of index and contents pages suggests that indexes have been comparatively free from the purely formal considerations of symmetry and balance – the "display" values usually unrelated to use or to meaning.' (1977: 180–1) However, Kinross' contention is that indexes are best handled by those who 'unselfconsciously' develop the form to best suit readers' needs. (1977: 181) He points out that a successful index is created when the 'author-indexer' takes into consideration the nature of the material to be indexed, a nature derived 'not from any considerations of the designers or producers of the book'. (1977: 183) But the conclusion of the article is a suggestion that 'the indexer and the typographer should certainly get to know each other better.' (1977: 185) So investigation into complex parts of the text concludes that these areas demand the collaborative application of the skills of an editor and a designer.⁶

The same is true wherever spatial arrangement plays a role in the organisation of text, or wherever the different visual treatment of type is used to signal something; these are the points at which book design and typography cease to be conveniences relating a particular style of production (ie conventionalised letters transcribing an author's writing into a mass medium) and become essential, meaningful and active players in the transfer of information. It is this which offers a pragmatic justification for the employment of people who understand

⁶ An editor in the sense of somebody who refines and adds value to the text: in producing an index, an author takes on editorial responsibilities.

and can implement the articulation systems. Such people are visually editing the material which they process; they add usefulness to the work as a whole by amplifying the content of the text without altering the words. Additionally, if we look at such typographic features as tables, they must reconcile the form that a table will naturally take as a result of its content with the physical area available to it in a given conventional book format. (Hendel, 1998: 159)

The book designer and the series

Above, I claimed that people with craft skills working in publishing could be seen as operating within notional templates. Much book production is set around templates of a more conventional nature. The publication of books within a series gives a clear example, because it is usually assumed that books in a series should bear a family resemblance to each other, both externally and internally.

To take this idea to its limits, it is possible to imagine that the use of series templates poses a terminal threat to designers: there is a risk that the publisher could decide to have a set of templates designed that would allow all the books on the list to be subsumed within a super-template.⁷ The templates would be applied to every new publication from a catalogue, and perhaps a matrix chart would provide commissioning editors with a typeface, size and style based on the market expectation, the budget and the tenor of the work. Indeed, this is rather similar to the aim of Stanley Rice:

This book can be thought of as an order catalog of text typography. You order what you need from the variety you see, assuming only that both publisher and typesetter can refer to the book as necessary.

(Rice, 1978b: vii)

The book in question is in fact a large set of standard templates, created specifically as bland and typical solutions modelled on existing books. So they do nothing to assist in the details of solving problems specific to a certain text. The author seems to see his work as a way of obtaining visualisations of the design without the expense of getting sample copy set, which before the existence of desktop publishing was a matter of going through typesetting and proof-printing. The emphasis of Rice's argument is speed and efficiency: he talks of 'ordering "off the shelf"' and systems that can 'completely presolve for known formats'. (Rice, 1978b: viii) In other words, the book is a production tool with a heavily pragmatic slant.

But this scenario overlooks what should be the most significant component of a professional designer's work, which is solving specific problems on an individual basis. Not by the application of templates or algorithms, even of the most sophisticated sort, but by

⁷ Richard Lawrence informed me that this had been done at OUP, but that the templates thus produced were not in universal use (see appendix 2).

analysis of the data (the words, numbers and their interrelations) involved, the context in which it occurs, the area allocated to it, and the relative importance attached to it.

Summary

In many respects, the distinction between the craft-based and problem solving skills is a fine one. The contention that templates are involved in some parts of the process of production invites speculation that perhaps the templates can be discerned in all parts: that is, in editorial and design decisions. But while it is true that many of these latter decisions are approached with prior experience in mind, and as the result of professional training, the distinction is that absolute rules will not necessarily yield a satisfactory result, if indeed they do provide a result at all. The contribution of original thought in deciding how to clarify the arguments contained in an author's typescript, both verbally and visually, is more significant to the success of the book than the contribution of rules.

The introduction of the computer helps clarify the distinction between craft-based tasks and problem-solving: I discussed the use of a computerised typesetting operation by *Legenda*, in which part of the process was to run the text through a program which could note, and correct, deviations from printed language. Computers are good at performing algorithms, which are processes in which an item is compared with a known standard and modified to be compatible with that standard. The *Legenda* system is modelled on the knowledge of a human performing a craft skill; for a given house style, there is one correct way to typeset sequences of numbers (as in the elision of 180–189 into 180–9), and other ways are wrong. The program bases its decisions on external rules, as does the compositor, the typesetter or the reader. The text is treated as an abstract item which must be made to conform in its external appearance (the accidentals) with previous and subsequent texts, a notion of standardisation which is responsible for the continuity of published writing. In this system, and in *TEX*, a computer assumes the role of a craft skilled worker.

2. End products of publishing processes

The end product of the publishing process is information contained in books. But this kind of artefact is not assembled within the publisher's offices. Production and assembly of the physical book are the tasks of printer and binder, and they send the publisher samples of the emerging book as quality checks while getting ready for production: a printer will send running sheets (the sheet of paper on which a set of imposed pages is printed, which would later be folded and cut by the binder) and the binder will send fascicles which are the sets of sheets made up into signatures and trimmed. But these items, although they serve as last-minute checks on the running heads and the continuity of the text, are sent to maintain the confidence between the printer and the publisher; in addition to 'quality control', they demonstrate that the job is being carried out, not left as computer files in an unopened parcel at the back of an office.

It is the work done before this stage is reached that concerns this discussion. The products of those involved in the preliminary stages give us another way to examine the role of those whose work produces them. The products fall into two groups: firstly those which lead directly to saleable items and secondly those which are ideas or intellectual contributions.

Contributions unique to individual books

Into the category of contributions to a saleable item come the work of typesetters, copy editors and proof checkers. These intermediate products are one-off and tailored to each project on which they work. They include the corrections made on the typescript, the proofs and all corrections made on them, and the computer files containing final text and formatting. The typeset files for book A are of no use to book B: they contain the wrong words in the wrong order, and there is no way in which this could change. The typesetter must start again with the copy for book B in order to typeset book B.

This point can be equally applied to other intermediate products involving the wording of individual books. The text of running heads and contents page, the index, the spelling inconsistencies and the pagination are fresh problems for every new book. Therefore we can say that all those activities are directly linked to saleable items, because they are not transferable. Work done on one book cannot be applied to any other, although the experience gained in each job notionally increases the skill of those who participate in its creation.

The text

The text is the item which will receive the most focus from readers: it contains the rationale which holds the main arguments (together with whatever peripheral data is used) in a

framework. This framework is normally devised by the author, and it is the job of editor and copyeditor to see that the framework, if appropriate, is clear; sometimes the framework may suggest to the editor or the designer better ways to order the text than the one the author has used. My use of the word 'text' differs a little from some others, for example this linguistics-centred definition:

A text is a stretch of language which seems appropriately coherent in actual use.
That is, the text 'coheres' in its real-world context, semantically and pragmatically,
and it is also internally or linguistically coherent
(Quirk *et al*, 1985: 1423)

This definition includes spoken conversations; it translates into non-specialist English roughly as 'a text is any chunk of language in which all the elements within make sense both in themselves and in the surroundings in which it is encountered'. My definition does not include spoken language: it could therefore be qualified as 'written texts'. But for the purpose of this discussion, I feel that 'text' is an adequate signifier for something much easier to define: the completed verbal argument which an author submits for publication.⁸

The text is the mental construct which the book contains: the author's construct as it is written, and the reader's interpretation of that authorial construct when it is read. In the sense that cognitive scientists use the verb 'to read', it is the only thing which is read.⁹ The designer will probably have to expend less effort on the text, the single largest graphical element, than on the many smaller and more complex issues which lie outside it. But the text design establishes conventions which allow the distinguishing of heading levels and show the relationship of the text type in style to peripheral matter such as footnotes and quotes. It is the default from which all emphasis derives its reference.

Prelims, end matter and the setting of supporting data

The creation of successful contents pages, indexes and pieces of data which might be read not continuously but searched (such as tables) is a task most successfully carried out collaboratively:

⁸ In using this sense, I feel I am in agreement with most writers concerned with print design, and it seems wise to remain in agreement: this allows the flexibility of talking about 'text design' and the 'technology of texts' quite broadly (Jonassen (ed), 1982) but limits those texts to ones which have the permanence of a written record and excludes speech acts, which are outside the scope of typography.

⁹ 'It is obvious that to many people, reading is an all-encompassing activity that can take different forms. For example, when you look at a map, are you reading? When you proofread a paper, are you reading? ... We will take the conservative view that none of these activities are what we have in mind as reading.' (Rayner, 1989: 22) 'Reading is the ability to extract visual information from the page and comprehend the meaning of the text' (Rayner, 1989: 23, original in italics)

These definitions, from the field of cognitive science, show that their author implies that reading is something not reliant on the nature of the document. but on the nature of the action and its constituents.

Tables often require close communication among author, editor, designer, and typesetter. Authors and editors who fail to remember the size and finite limits of the text page make problems that are truly unsolvable. John Ryder calls this the absence of “visual editing.”

(Hendel, 1998: 159)

To achieve their object, such things must be designed. The ‘close communication’ is a process of consultation¹⁰ and, if the author and editor have failed to take into account the page area available for data which is sensitive to spatial positioning (the problem alluded to above) then negotiation is required as well. Ultimately the result should be the best possible compromise between visual efficacy and the volume of data the author is obliged to provide the reader. It should also be disposed in a way which enables that information to be found: poor design can make a table incomprehensible, so that it is almost a waste of space, and definitely a missed opportunity.

While analysing this quotation, it is worth noting the slant which Hendel as the book designer, mindful of the physical properties of the finished artefact, gives to his projected large table problem: he claims that those who create such things may ‘fail to remember the size and finite limits of the text page’ when in fact it will be the content of such a table which concerns the author: it could just as correctly be claimed that it is a failure of the text page to accommodate the argument which causes the problem. Making the material fit the page is a more economic solution because it avoids the use of different-sized pages (which might fold into the block), which are costly to produce and insert.¹¹

Indexes

Indexes are sometimes produced by a professional indexer, but often they are the author’s work. The difficulties faced by an author in compiling the index to a work with which they are familiar may result partly from having had so much contact with it. And coming at the end of the process, when proofs have already been approved for production, index production is inconvenient at best.

Indexes enable the reader to gain straightforward access to isolated facts within the text and to the context which surrounds those facts. They stand or fall by the selection of headwords out of which they are made. If these are an accurate reflection of what is in the

¹⁰ Echoed by Derricourt :

‘A good publisher’s editor will be involved in constructive discussions with you, the author, about the length and contents of the book, its overall structure, and the arrangement of its elements to best convey the contents and the argument.’

(1996: 26)

¹¹ Ideally, the book’s format would be chosen to reflect the need for tabular matter; usually the fact that this will have a large impact on production costs and benefit only a small amount of data overrides such concern for the best configuration.

text, then the index may be successful: on the other hand, an obscure choice or arrangement of the headwords and the subentries may ruin the index despite the fact that, overall, it contains a representative selection of entries. The subentries (and subsubentries) need to be clearly distinguishable from the headwords under which they come, and from turnover lines (lines which take up more than a single column width). Good quality index design is probably the providence of editors and indexers, not book designers; it is the intelligent use of typographical variables by those who understand the way in which the index is likely to be used which gives them visual efficacy. (Kinross, 1977)

One-off book designs

By this I mean the creation and implementation of throughgoing typographical specifications for a text. Book designs are frequently one-off (tailored to individual texts); covers are the most obvious manifestation of this to a casual observer, because they don't require opening of the book. But of course it is the interiors which benefit most from the attentions of a capable designer, able to carry out Bringhurst's exhortation [*italics and layout as original*]:

Read the text before designing it.

The typographer's one essential task is to interpret and communicate the text.
(Bringhurst, 1992: 20)

And the classic one-line definition of typography is centred around this processing of data into a socially useful form:

Typography is the efficient means to an essentially utilitarian and only accidentally aesthetic end, for the enjoyment of pattern is rarely the reader's chief aim.
(Morison, 1951: 5)

Morison's statement is a good example of his polemical style; it is taken from a work entitled *First principles of typography*, which, ironically, is in essence concerned with the formal qualities of type (those concerned with aesthetics and not related to its use, in other words). But the claim he makes has been given some credence in the literature of typographic design theory which has followed.

Returning to the argument, it is not my intention at this point to cover questions of formal and functional design opportunities, or to discuss aesthetics and what importance, other than as providers of 'pattern', these might have, but simply to note and discuss the end products without passing judgement on their utility.

Something of the detailed way in which book designers have in the past been involved with the quality control of an individual title later in the production process is illustrated by S J M Watson. (Watson 1998) Watson discusses the records made by Hans Schmoller, who

was responsible for the design of a one-volume complete edition of Shakespeare. In this case, Schmoller, having created the outline design, was employed throughout the process of production to provide an additional check on quality. The proofs of every page of the book passed through his hands, so that he would see every instance of each of the style and layout features he had specified as they were executed.

This is not standard practice: there is usually much less opportunity for a designer to devote himself to one book in quite such an intimate way. It was the nature of the book, its size and extreme complexity, that made such an approach to production necessary. But it shows one way in which in special cases a designer can be involved with the artefact they have specified as an ideal while it becomes a real object, not just before and after production. Now that designers are increasingly responsible for typesetting themselves, they find themselves in a similar position to Schmoller.

Specifications

One piece of evidence of a book designer's work is the specification. As Stiff states, 'when design is practised within an industrial process, specification is the end product of the designer's work: it is what leads to manufacture.' (1996a: 29) As I have mentioned above, an attentive book designer would want to specify some things rather more directly than others: I refer, once again, to such 'customised' devices as the table or the contents pages. Other parts of the specification, such as the general treatment of the text (its face, measure, size, and leading amongst other things) can cover almost the whole of the text.

Specifications are also the embodiment of what the designer knows about the circumstances of the text and the book. They must be appropriate for the eventual producers of each page (the typesetter and printer) and also adequate to cover all the eventualities of the articulation of the author's text. George Mackie wrote about such all-encompassing specification, which he called 'industrial typography':

Industrial typography is different. The manuscript for a complex academic book, for example, has to be detailed in unambiguous, technical terms in such a way that workmen from a series of separate trades can carry out instructions competently, without the need for expensive revisions. The greater the fragmentation of the printing industry, the more necessary the typographer becomes.

(Mackie, 1991: 20)

'Outcomes'

This term is used to describe the consequences of an object influencing its user. (Stiff, 1996a: 27). For every reader of every book, there is a different outcome, albeit one linked by the common threads of the physical form and intellectual content of the book. So an outcome is

a one-off, but it is produced by the reader and their circumstances acting on (or reacting to) the products of designers and editors and so it is effectively only something guessed at by those agents. It is not designed, but it is something whose form is determined partly by the way the design issues have been solved.

The discussion of outcomes shows that the design community is aware of the fact that there is an event associated with the reader's interactions with a book. But the idea of an outcome is that it is unique for each reader, and thus it is less than useful in the design stages of the book, when that book's entire potential audience must be considered.

Enduring items: templates

The designer is able to contribute not only one-off designs. In opposition to Bringham's words, they may find themselves creating a template or a series, theoretically destroying the direct link between their work and the end product. The creation of a series is an act of collaboration between a commissioning editor, who must create the conceptual link between the individual volumes of which it is made up and a designer, who must establish the visual link between the volumes.

This creates the opportunity for a designer to create a pattern which will be applied to the work of several different authors, and which may in some cases have to be adaptable to different writing styles and somewhat diffuse subject matter. Series may have a very presentation nurtured by tight style and predefined sectional structure and policed by watchful copy editors (example: *Practical Approach in Chemistry* series, which gives guidelines for carrying out chemistry experiments, geared towards a narrow target audience in scientific education, published by OUP), or they may be the publisher's way to attempt to make order out of a collection of similar titles which have a looser editorial approach (example: *Oxford Architectural Guides*, geared towards a much broader audience of enthusiasts and travellers, also OUP). Equally, there are the large series of mainstream publishers, such as Penguin, which are scholarly in tenor; such series as have appeared under the Pelican imprint. Regardless of the purposes of the books in the series, initially at least the sense of belonging to a series seem to be appropriate in each case.

Applying loose templates

Templates, in theory at least, eradicate designers: having created the template, the designer's input is complete, and the template can be implemented by the typesetters, the template-bounded skilled labourers. Thus the designer would be the architect of the demise of their own usefulness, except that this is not always possible. Not all templates are assumed to be suitable for implementation by semi-skilled people: some require a designer despite being comprehensive guidelines. OUP's *Practical Approach* series must be typeset by the authors;

currently, the text is laser printed and used as camera-ready copy. This saves money, and makes the series economically viable. But other series are much too broad to allow such an approach to be error-free. Historically, the output of imprints such as Pelican adhere to sets of series templates (most obviously in the cover designs) but that does not prevent them from having different styles of contents list or different combinations of end matter.

If a loose template is used, someone has to bridge the gap between what is specified and what is decided *ad hoc*. Above, I noted the fact that the best tables, lists and so on are created on a one-off basis, with consideration given to the amount of data, the size of the page, and the demands of the audience. Whoever bridges the gap between ideal template and author's text creates a hybrid, a one-off template-based book, which in design terms is the union of a restricted set of variables (the template) combined with full control of detail points such as layout of tables or contents pages. As Hendel states:

Tables and lists are a problem to themselves because their design depends so much on the information in them. No amount of good design can fix a badly prepared table. Not all tables in a book can be designed the same way unless each table contains the same kind of information. More often than not, each table needs its own design.

(Hendel, 1998: 159)

My interview with a book editor showed the extent to which the generation of tables may be left to authors, or authors and copy editors. (appendix 2) His comments suggested that, by and large, this is the best way to design tables; as Hendel says above, 'their design depends so much on the information in them'. To enlarge that statement, the information dictates the design of the table not only in terms of the number of rows and columns but because frequently the table is intended to be read primarily in a certain way: the table's design is the result of the data relationships which are most significant.

The template of precedent

In practice, the majority of books are only designed through the editor's selection of an appropriate existing book, the specification of which can be judiciously modified to suit a new one. In this way, the characteristics of a previous work are transmitted to another generation. This kind of production takes place not least because it is far less expensive than employing a designer to generate a specification which might well be largely identical in any case. Although ideally it might be better to ask a designer to work on every title individually, it is hard to believe that the output of books which have themselves not been handled by a designer will lead to an unusable work in all cases, for several reasons. The first is that the design of the original work may be competent; the second is that the editor may well be fairly well acquainted with the typographic needs of a straightforward book. The third is that, as I

stated above, book design is a conservative practice: the contribution of a book designer is in small details. Where the text is unlikely to make demands on standard practice, there is little call for the work of a designer over and above that of the typesetter.

3. Goals of publishing

Judgements about the 'quality' of the end product are used by purchasers not only to evaluate the acceptability of the cover price of a book but also to make a pre-emptive (and potentially premature) evaluation of its intellectual worth. The question of quality is of prime significance in publishing, not least in regard to sales performance, but it is a subtle issue and there are many qualifications which modify purchasers' and readers' opinions. This section of the discussion covers the central features which I want to analyse: that the presentation of a book has an impact on its perceived value, and that the perceived value, by assimilation, covers the intellectual value of the book as well.

This section will establish some justification for making the link: without denigrating 'cheap' publishing, I show that the result of design work done with editorial input can be a superior book, and therefore that if an author's work deserves publication, it deserves attention to its visual structure. And I also look at the responsibilities and opportunities to clarify and improve the work which are presented during the publication process. I have looked at the activities and the products of book designers and editorial staff because those tasks are not carried out simply to create books out of texts, and because they are expected to ensure that certain standards are created and maintained. The alliance between book designers, editors and authors is intended to serve qualitative, not just pragmatic ends.

On the surface it seems fair that a book laden with misspellings and casually put together should lack integrity in its arguments. But it could equally be insinuated that a glossy, good-looking work in a neat and appropriate jacket has had too much spent (in time, money or editorial focus) on its presentation and not enough on its guts, the words of the book. How do the book's creators steer a median path through these extremes, and how conscious are they of the value judgements they and others make?

This section reflects on the fact that 'quality' is an attribute implying judgements of a moral and philosophical character. The word is used in all kinds of situations; it can relate to purchasing and the decisions behind it, or to the longer-term user satisfaction given by an artefact. It may be that the producer and the purchaser have different ideas about what is wanted from a book (and so what things must be of optimal quality), and in this case, if the purchaser is not consulted the producer may hold sway.

The university as publisher

Much academic publishing is carried out under the aegis of a university press. Such presses are established with the primary aim of assisting the kind of research writing that is of crucial importance to academics to be published and consequently made available outside the departments, universities and countries in which they work. Such activity is

unremunerative to authors and sometimes to publishers and is carried out as a service (or conceived of as one). The special attention to detail required is an additional burden in terms of cost to the publisher.

Whether much editorial assistance is needed or little, a university press is prepared to expend upon a given manuscript an amount of care that would normally be quite uneconomic in a commercial house.

(Jeanneret, 1961: 12)

This is summed up pithily by the 'mission statement' which is now added to all OUP books: 'Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship and education by publishing worldwide'. And the reputation of a publisher, particularly a university press, is what helps distinguish it from being merely a distributor of information:

The addition of a publisher's imprint to a publication is a statement of a certain standard. The standard may differ with different imprints, but in commercial terms the publisher's input adds not just scholarly value but commercial value to a book. A publisher of high status in a particular field is held to particular expectations of quality.

(Derricourt, 1996: 26)

Editing

The book's editor is responsible to their employer. The commissioning editor needs to make sure that the book is worth publishing and will therefore satisfy the aim of the organisation as a whole. The scope and ethos of the publisher, which are of course also defining factors in the quality of output, will act as the benchmark against which a new work is measured. Additionally, the editor will be on the lookout for anything which might embroil the publisher in legal proceedings: such things as defamation or obscenity, which might be attractive to some kinds of publishers, are potentially costly as well as damaging to the publisher's long-term reputation, which is an expression of social standing and integrity.

The editor will be to decide where the book fits into the publisher's output. Knowing this is essential if the book is to be sensitive to the likely demands of its readership. It will also have a great impact on the way money is spent during production: for example, is money available to employ a designer or must the book be based wholly on existing titles? The relative success or failure of a title in the market may be unfathomable, and in the absence of

detailed information about what potential readers objected to, there is scope only for educated guesses.¹²

The editor will be the focus for changes made to the statements of the author, and therefore will be the person most directly representing the mores of the book's public. The overall character of the book rests with the author and the editor. This extends to the mundane aspects of writing style, which are likely to be ironed out to a degree by the selection of a copy editor who will implement a certain level of correction later in the publishing process. Copy editors are selected by the production editor partly for the subject areas in which they may have particular expertise.

[The editor's] purpose is to assist in the communication of the author's ideas, not to substitute other ideas for them, and to suggest the removal of ambiguities or obscurities or awkwardnesses, not to destroy the author's original wording.

(Jeanneret, 1961: 12)

The editor stands as a mediator between the author and the reader, and as such has two principal responsibilities: the responsibility to the author, which is to convey the thoughts and arguments within the text in the best possible way, and the corresponding responsibility to the reader. To this end, the editor will be involved in 'constructive discussions' which assist the author to see beyond his own point of view. (Derricourt, 1996: 26)

Copy editing

The copy editor's goal is to deliver a typescript which is ready to be typeset and printed. Within this outline, the work of a copy editor is directed to bringing out the author in the best light.

The copy-editor's main aims are to remove any obstacles between the reader and what the author wishes to convey, and also to save his firm time and money by finding and solving any problems before the typescript is sent to the printer, so that production can go ahead without interruption.

(Butcher, 1981: 1)

The copy editor is therefore concerned with achieving quality of two different kinds: straightforwardly, the quality of a polished typescript, which is considered high quality because it does not incur unnecessary delays in the industrial processes which ensue, therefore acting to speed the product to its market and its readership (and to speed the profits of publication to the publisher and the printer).

¹² My discussion with Richard Lawrence, written up in appendix 2, highlighted the very sketchy information – derived only from sales figures – on which editors will have to base their assumptions about the reception of a book.

Butcher's remarks ignore the potential conflict between 'removing obstacles' and 'saving time and money'; for example, complicated tables or difficult setting which will help the reader might well result in more production time and a greater incidence of errors.

The copy editor is also the person most intimately concerned with the use of language in the author's manuscript. The power to make changes rests in the hands of the copy editor. But it is tempered by the knowledge that ambiguities must be carefully resolved and not worsened, and that as much as possible the author's words, which represent the closest transmission of the author's thought, are to be preserved. A line must be drawn between improvement and rewriting. The text is the author's, and the author is allowed to override the recommendations of the copy editor – accepting the possibility that this might diminish the quality of the text.

Copy editing is not carried out to a uniform level; some books receive very little, while others demand comprehensive rewriting in part. The editor will be keen to ensure that the author writes in a way which avoids the need for rewriting to fit the page count or the tone of voice which the book is supposed to have.

Typesetting

The primary goal of the typesetter is to get all the words supplied as copy onto pages so that none are added, changed or taken away. The typesetter is not concerned with the meaning, the moral character of the writing, the status of the author, or the validity of the assertions made.

Historically, there were various aspects of the processes which went towards producing pages of type which could introduce errors: these occurred at the points where today a typist would be producing copy, and where that typist comes before a copy editor, there is a chance that the mistake will be corrected. Composing required care in ensuring not only that letters were not only correctly picked up from the typecase or keyed in, but also that the words thus formed were indeed the ones in the manuscript.

Opinions about standardisation of copy changed over the four centuries during which composing was the way in which manuscripts were transformed into print: compositors were responsible for considerable change to the spelling and accidentals in works such as the First Folio of Shakespeare, as bibliographers have shown. (Hinman, 1963 and Gaskell, 1995: 110) They, and their overseers, contributed to the ever-increasing uniformity in written language. The printers' reader, or corrector of the press, whose place has been supplanted by the typesetters' reader, was important in establishing the quality of the compositors' work. A careful balance could be maintained in the printing house between the reader – the agent of the printer – and the compositors, who were effectively freelance contractors. (Gaskell, 1995: 111)

No such balance, should it be deemed necessary, exists between the typist creating a manuscript today and the typesetting organisation, although aided by spelling and grammar checkers it is possible to have some confidence that the text is in a reasonable condition without it passing a human eye. If the text is sent directly from the author, via copyediting, to the typesetter, then the amount of retyping will be minimal and there will not be a complete re-entry of the entire text; this should result in minimal creation of errors in typesetting of the kind involving substitution of characters or words, although it does nothing to prevent the loss of words, paragraphs, whole sentences or sections of a book.

As I have mentioned, there are counterbalances against a low standard in typesetting practice in the expert nature of some setting processes: Legenda's typesetting program, which implements such changes as hyphens to dashes and elision of page sequences, is one. The use of LATEX is another. These systems incorporate expert knowledge which compensates for, or augments, that of the author or copy editor.

Designing: the external qualities

The designer is often thought of as someone who applies 'style' to an existing product. This view has its roots in the formalist tradition in which detail is added to a sound existing artefact. It is a view which is, unsurprisingly, vigorously denied by many practitioners. Certainly, design of this kind is unlikely to contribute more than superficially to a culture: but then it does not necessarily aim to.

But the 'gloss' or the external qualities of the design are apparent in much design work. They are the qualities which can be discerned without use of the designed artefact: the surface features. Formal typography, as a design discipline, has plenty of these, and plenty of argument in typographic design centres around the politics of applying different surface treatments which are categorised and which send out strong cultural signals, discernible clearly by other designers and by laymen. The external features include such things as choosing the typeface, choosing whether the text is justified or centred, and establishing the proportions of the text block and the page. This is discussed in a specific case study below, where the advantages of adopting a solution closely modelled on an existing series are shown.

Regarding the 'politics' and 'principles' which the typographic designer may choose to follow, and with relevance to the external features, Robin Kinross has written of the example of Jost Hochuli. He compares Hochuli's approach to book design with that of Otl Aicher, portrayed as an overtly political and dogmatic designer. Both designers worked in Europe through the 1970s and 1980s. Kinross contrasts the attitude of Aicher, that a particular form could represent 'totalitarianism', with Hochuli's apparently apolitical stance:

The style-free or style-indifferent work of these anti-dogmatic but principled typographers seems to represent, in a microcosm, the spirit of enlightenment: appropriate means, chosen consciously, without regard to the prevailing spirit. (Kinross, 1994: 21)

Designing: the internal qualities

Internal qualities are not discerned immediately; they are the features which contribute to a product in use. For typography, this means the layout of printed matter into its most appropriate form, and recalls Morison's definition quoted above (Morison, 1951: 5) in which he talks disparagingly about 'the enjoyment of pattern' and proposes a functional definition of typography. In this way, as Morison could have continued, typographic design is about much more than selecting a good line length, or choosing the most pleasant proportions for pages. It is about careful deployment of the different spatial arrangements of type, including lists, tables, matrices and so on. Features like these, so integral to scientific matter or to any statistical argument, often slip through the fingers of writers on typography. Bringhurst (1992) devotes less than one page of his 240 odd pages of text to tables (1992: 68–9), and includes a single small and unhelpful illustration (1992: 70). By contrast, he devotes 33 pages to 'shaping the page'. (1992: 129–62) While the latter subject contributes mainly to the external qualities of the book, the former is likely to have a greater impact on the usefulness of the data which the author has chosen to illustrate their argument: an internal quality of the design.

By contrast with these authors, and outside typography writing, Judith Butcher has a detailed discussion of table quality, one definitely oriented towards the copy editor. It seems that the elucidation of tabular data is the job of the copy editor, and that once this has been worked out it is the 'exact spacing' which should be left to the 'designer or printer', the rather vague phrase suggesting an unqualified combination of aesthetic and practical design decisions. (Butcher, 1981: 158) The *Chicago Manual of style* devotes a chapter to tables, and begins by noting that 'tables offer authors and editors a useful means of presenting large amounts of detailed information in a small space.' (Chicago, 1969: 273) How much more positive than Hendel's words. (1998: 159, quoted in section 2)

It should not be assumed that no typographers have much of merit to say about the creation of tables, or by extension about the practical deployment of different structures of language within writing. I suggest that the lack of detailed coverage of such matters in some of the literature of typography – of which Bringhurst's book is an example – may be due to two reasons, both of which are value-related: firstly the lack of glamour and secondly the lack of aesthetics. The 'glamour' is exemplified in the choosing of typefaces with a rich cultural heritage, following the footsteps of famous design figures in the past and thus

becoming heirs to the approbation which their work received, and the 'aesthetics' are the deployment of these typefaces in layouts which follow careful rules of proportion based, for example, on polygons or the golden section. And of course it may be that such commentators are excluding themselves from academic works due to the confined design briefs of such books, or because of a lack of interest or experience on their part.

To pursue confining factors in book design, in practice such issues as determining page size may be irrelevant to the book's designer, the person responsible for its shaping, because economics have already decided the page size. Discussing one genre of writing on book design, Richard Hendel writes:

Tschichold, Jost Hochuli, Robert Bringhurst, and others show numerous diagrams of book formats based on ideal page proportions, but designers do not commonly have complete freedom to specify non-standard formats. More often than not, the format is decided long before the designer begins work.

(Hendel, 1998: 34)

However, in an assessment of what designers should strive for, the mention of aesthetics, of some consciousness of proportion, is essential; this passage serves to remind that designers must often work with uncomfortable limitations on some of the variables which they might prefer, aesthetically, to control.

Positioning the book

*Legenda: a case study*¹³

Legenda is an imprint of the European Humanities Research Centre recently established at Oxford University. Its publications 'range widely across European literature and related disciplines' and 'the emphasis throughout is upon original research of a high order.' (Lucas, 1998) One of the most significant factors in the creation of the Legenda series was its 'look and feel'. As Kareni Bannister (Senior Publications Officer) explained to me when I visited, the 'Oxford' look – the authoritative appearance of books in series published by OUP – was an important guide. She hoped that by achieving such an appearance, some of the good qualities which have been ascribed by readers to OUP books would be applied to the new series. This applied to the covers, but equally it applied to the interiors, with 'wide margins for notes' and off-white paper. The decision was made to use one typeface throughout the series, a decision which is reasonable given that the output of the imprint is restricted to a single subject area. But because it was to be used in every book it had to have lasting quality. While it had to fit in with the market expectations, the type's character set needed to contain all the accented figures necessary for foreign languages, and these characters needed to be of

¹³ See appendix 1 for my interview with Kareni Bannister.

good quality. Some non-Latin faces, historically much less plentiful, were also required. The series design template was created by a consultant designer (armed with sample Clarendon Press books).

This serves to show that a publisher may have a very clear idea of what is wanted: the designer must do what is possible to interpret such a brief, while remaining aware that an existing design may be reliant on production methods unavailable or inappropriate to the project and also that there will be particular production methods demanded by his own eventual design. Equally, it shows that the publisher expects the end result of the design process to be distinctive, and not just functional. This expectation is often justified simply by an exhortation to imagine a world in which all the books looked the same (to which the response should be that a great deal of them already do). As I discuss below, marketing plays a crucial role, and the interior as much as the exterior is subject to aesthetic judgements when a purchaser considers a book. And I consider some more long-lasting design decisions in the context of editorial quality.

‘Information design’: a user-centred design approach

Not all typographic design writing plays down the issue of complex typographical structures like tables. The field of information design has grown up centred around such things. Information design is a relatively recent discipline within the graphic design field. It has eluded easy, single-phrase definition, as noted by Paul Stiff. (1990: 98) But the term refers to an approach to design in which the user of the designed artefact assumes prime importance when the design work is in progress. In contrast to marketing-led visual design, the user is not treated as a critic of the artefact’s aesthetics. It is in this way that information design earns its place with disciplines such as industrial design, because it employs evaluation techniques and public consultation in an attempt to optimise designs. The user is assumed to be, for example, a non-expert looking for information held in the artefact: the subjective and objective ease with which the user gains access to the information is taken as a measure of the success of the design. In this way, the designer is making the most informed decisions: those based on appropriate research. Also, the designer’s personal interpretation of the work is not treated as typical, something which is rather unlikely to be true. Of course, as literature such as Potter (1980), Walker (1989) and Norman (1990) show, there are still plenty of opportunities for inappropriate research or incorrectly applied conclusions.

Book design could be seen as a fruitful area for work guided by the rigours of the information designers’ approach. Books are the largest single-unit containers of written information apart from computers, and despite offering a greater quantity or density of information than other systems they are generally much more straightforward to operate, so they are a good starting point for detailed work on individual projects. The classes of book

which might benefit especially from an information design-like approach include catalogues, data books, indexes and reference works such as dictionaries and encyclopedias where much of readers' time is spent searching through a large number similar-looking entries. But conventional texts are also navigated for isolated facts, so they could be treated with a similar approach.

Books are composed of multiple pages; the pages themselves are grouped by printers' long-standing convention (and by the physical demands of bookbinding) into several sections: the preliminary matter ('prelims'), which hold information about the book's publication and its publishing history plus title and contents pages; the main text, in which the arguments and supporting facts are contained; and end matter such as glossaries, appendixes, bibliographies and indexes, which qualify the information in the book and make the task of retrieving isolated facts easier.

The treatment given to the text in each of these sections is intended to be appropriate for the use which the information in it will have. In this fact lies the recognition that such structures differ significantly. The information which is held in the sections differs in kind, and in quantity: a book of 400 pages might devote only four of those to an index, in which the layout of words will be very different to the main text. The main text is likely to be predominantly composed of continuous text, running over sets of pages and grouped, on the basis of the way in which the book's argument breaks down, into sections, chapters, paragraphs and sentences. These sentences, if taken as the smallest discrete units of information, are composed of words which link together. Thus, to look at it the opposite way, a continuous text is built up from the meaningful assembly of words in order¹⁴

On the other hand, the index will contain an alphabetical list of headwords, each of which is likely to bear no semantic relationship to its neighbours. Therefore adjacent words in the index do not combine to form a continuous text. The design of the continuous text and the design of the index are two examples of the different ways in which, in books, written language is laid out to reflect, or to reinforce, its intended use. As Robin Kinross states:

The language of indexes is compressed, and abbreviations are much employed. These things give the text matter of indexes their characteristic complexity. And one may see this complexity of content as placing demands, to which the editorial and typographic form of the index must correspond.

(Kinross, 1977: 179)

Editorial and typographical elements of the design of books do not stand alone; they are mutually reliant. While a nonsensical selection of words arranged into a paragraph of text still conveys the typographical form of a paragraph, and implies to an experienced reader

¹⁴ This is what linguists refer to as 'cohering'; see Quirk *et al* (1985: 1423) from which I quote in section 2.

that the text within it should be meaningful, it offers no rationale as to why the disposition of the text should be the way it is. Likewise the text of an index, laid out as continuous text, loses its rationale; it is hard for the user to extract the information because the separation of the entries by vertical space (each being on a new line) has been lost.

In a book, the use of language is an editorial concern; the disposition of the language on the page a typographical concern. All the different elements of this editorial-typographical kind have evolved in response to the different ways in which books are used. The act of reading cannot be seen as one kind of activity; there are browsing readers, curious for more idea of the text's content, and searching readers, looking for a certain fact in a text they may have already read, as well as the readers who are progressing through the text from beginning to end (who may well be in the minority). The various reading strategies are anticipated (not always consciously) by the author, the editor and the designer. The text structure is intended to fit with these strategies. In the case of designers and editors, we might expect some familiarity (not necessarily academic or theoretical, but empirical or instinctive) with distinct categories of reading which have been established.¹⁵ This is part of what Waller (1987: 3) refers to as 'the tacit knowledge of expert practitioners'.

To reduce the discussion to elemental levels, different text structures are there because the book is a visual representation of non-visible concepts. These concepts need organising to cross the divide between private thought and public recording and discussion. The crossing of the divide is part of the essence of publishing and a key to understanding how quality judgements relate content and the publisher, because it is under the publisher's auspices that the transformation is made.

Information design isn't applied to book design

So are book designers creating artefacts which stand them at the forefront of information design? Evidence taken from academic sources suggests that this is not the case. An example concerns the use of the footnote, a device widely employed in academic publishing to allow supplementary evidence, substantiating an author's claims, to stand alone at the foot of the page on which the corresponding part of the main argument is found. Rice says that 'a footnote is, more or less, a footnote'. (1978b: vii) But this could not be further from the case;

¹⁵ In the context of establishing ways to teach students how to learn, Thomas and Harri-Augstein (1980) identified

... four categories for describing the structure of a text.

1. *Text links*. Connections to other sections of text.
 2. *Main theme*. The major ideas expounded by the author.
 3. *Qualifications*. Statements which add to the main ideas but are of a lower order of importance, such as definitions, justifications, explanations and so on.
 4. *Elaborations*. Reference to details such as dates, numbers, quantities, examples and so on.
- (Thomas and Harri-Augstein, 1980: 81. Italics as original)

the issue of the implementation of footnotes creates occasion for editorial and design debate.¹⁶ The footnote is sometimes banished (or implemented as an endnote) in the design of academic books, possibly through the influence of the publisher's marketing department. Paul Stiff alleges that this is because marketing concerns are paramount where there is any possibility that wider sales will result if the book is promoted outside the sphere of the scholarly market:

But 'look and feel' is far more important. The message given to 'non-academics' by footnotes is: 'not for you'. And, footnote readers are a tiny fraction of the book-reading population. So, the design decision was based on marketing priorities: Trade publishers think first of the choices that people make before they are readers – that is, when they are potential buyers.
(Stiff, 1997: 70)¹⁷

The implication of this passage is that influential design decisions are made not with the user in mind, but with the buyer in mind. An important issue is that these two people may not be the same; at least, they are not embodied in one person at the same time. In demanding that a particular typographical feature is dropped, the publisher is assuming that its presence will dissuade a substantial number of potential readers from buying the book. And they will be put off before they have had a chance to evaluate for themselves whether it is indeed the case that they have been deliberately excluded from appreciating the book's content.

Stiff's argument is concerned with establishing the validity of reader-centred design in books, and his use of the academic book as a model allows the assumption to be made that the book will be quite carefully used by its target audience, rather than just browsed and then left on a shelf. So the issue of the footnote is just an example of several features apparently geared towards aiding the procedures of reading (an editorial concern) which might be threatened during the process of designing the book. Here there is a demonstrable conflict between the reader's interest (guarded by the editor) and the publisher's interest (to make as great a return as possible, here reflected in the design brief). Regarding the fitness for purpose of published works, Stiff comments:

¹⁶ For a recent exposition of the footnote and its virtues, see Burkle-Young and Maley, 1996, particularly the chapter 'A very biased note on notes' (15–19). I know that my approach to referencing would incur their displeasure, since they advise me that 'with the footnote at hand, your reader can move smoothly through your writing, with unchecked concentration; ignoring, if she wishes, those tiny numbers that float into view from time to time' (Burkle-Young and Maley, 1996: 16).

¹⁷ Although this quote makes specific reference to 'Trade' publishers, it discusses a decision which is bound to be made in the marketing departments of all publishing companies, so what interests me is the nature of the text concerned. I take that to be academic in tenor because it required notes (the article is in *Journal of scholarly publishing*).

Printed books are an over-privileged category of mass-produced product. Unlike other designed objects, they rarely get close scrutiny from consumer organisations and user advocates. And, they look simple: all their features are visible, with everything on the surface, and no hidden functions.

(Stiff, 1997: 72)

It is precisely the innocuous appearance, mostly due to the simplicity and familiarity of books, which is under examination in this discussion: there are many aspects that must be checked during book production, and many cannot be left to an inspired guess. While readers are unaware of the potential that exists to make books better, can publishers nevertheless be accused of deliberately reducing the efficacy of the book's information-providing apparatus by pandering to the market rather than the readers?

'Structural defects': indicators of the restrictions of publishing practice

Further indication of the inadequacy of the design process to which books are subjected is provided by Malcolm Clark (Clark 1996). In what is nominally a study of structure and content in electronic documents, he makes several remarks which throw light on the current status of book production. His remarks suggest that authors lack knowledge of how their manuscripts are converted into books by designers, and of the experience the designers could bring to bear in articulating complex material. The designers in turn are ignorant of the range of structural features which the author's work calls for, though they may be qualified to successfully implement a wide range of effective solutions. In other words, the final books lack sufficient articulation because the authors do not know how to ask for it and the designers do not know that it is needed.

These observations show that there are potentially big losses made in the transfer of information from the author through the text design chosen to hold it, arising from the inadequacies of the scope of the structure. A lack of contact between author and designer could be responsible for this: the production systems of large publishing companies are not geared towards consultations of this sort. The editor is appointed intermediary. An author unaware of the gains which structural modifications might make to their writing is unlikely to insist on a complex typographic structure being applied in the published work, unless it is their own system. Although word processing software now allows just this, it is probably accurate to say that author-derived structure may well be intentionally lost somewhere in the copyediting and typesetting of a book from disk.¹⁸ This discounting of a feature over which

¹⁸ This loss of structure seems to vary with subject matter; while at *Legenda* I was told that strange or unconventional structures would probably be removed or rewritten, Richard Lawrence felt that the authors of mathematics books, for example, derived the structure from the direction of a mathematical argument and hence it was almost forced upon them.

the author may have expended much thought is part of a conflict between expert and amateur use of typographic conventions, in which the expert use is usually given preference: not surprising in a situation where the author is not present.¹⁹ On the other hand, author's diagrams are generally inserted with very little modification. This lack of modification might be due to the copy editor and the typesetter lacking acuity in handling diagrams, which have less straightforward grammatical rules than text does.

Economics versus the user

When assessing a book before having it designed or edited, a chief concern of the publisher is to ensure that the book is produced at the minimum cost necessary to secure an acceptable standard of finish. Without this consideration, of course, the publisher would rapidly go out of business and fewer titles would reach the market. There is likely to be a definite maximum page count, and both editorial and design means can be deployed to ensure this is not exceeded. It is unusual to find a book where these concerns utterly obscure the content, but quite common for books to be heavily pared in the process of production. And where a page saved avoids the addition of a new signature (which means an additional sheet of paper on the press), it is common practice to find a way to save the page. There is no reason why this should always be to the detriment of the text.

Navigational features, space, and economics

It would be difficult to assess how much the reader is put at a disadvantage as a result of strategies to save space. Chapters which do not follow the convention of starting on a recto (right hand page) are likely to cause minimal harm to the navigating reader, since chapters are generally identified throughout by running heads or running footers which include condensed versions of the chapter title, present on every spread. But without an index, a text that is anything other than superficial will be made much less accessible, because there are fewer ways for readers to find their way to relevant information. And the structuring of an index (the implementation of headwords to control the way subsidiary terms are found) is a matter for careful thought. The literature on index planning highlights the degree of effort and skill involved in producing a useful index. Indexers often operate under the pressure of working on page proofs which are ready to go to press, so that there is a premium on time: one publisher allows two weeks from return of proofs to submission of the index copy. (SMJ, 1993b: 4) Those with a vested interest put their case unequivocally, of course:

¹⁹ See the notes of my discussion with Richard Lawrence (appendix 2) for a view about author typesetting: sometimes this can be a condition of publication, and the typesetting in question extremely poor.

since nowadays a *good* index is increasingly regarded as an important part of a book or periodical, the indexer deserves to have every facility, in the matters of time and space allotted, for the production of just such a one.

(Knight, 1979: 30. Italics in original)

While an index of three or four pages might seem a reasonably straightforward proposition to a layman, the quality of that index will be heavily dependent on the sensitivity of the indexer to the nature of the text, which should be visible through its structure, and its audience. Knight mentions indexes which would represent considerably more work than a non-expert would want to take on: 92-page indexes to a 1274-page book, for example. In this case, there is an unquestionable need for a dedicated indexer. Where the index forms a particularly important way to access the material (possibly indicating diverse or rather unstructured material), the index may take up to 15 per cent of the book's total page count. If the author produces the index, the risk that it will be inadequate (something which may only be discernible in use) is balanced against the saving in cost. When a professional indexer is employed, the additional cost brings benefits in the thoroughness of the indexing and the quality of the index layout.

The initial editorial planning of the book, and any subsequent additions or subtractions, are key elements in the creation of a book which is useful to the reader. Under economic pressure, it is possible that along with external features such as broad margins and generous leading will be lost vital features such as the index. An editor who sees ahead will anticipate the need for important features such as the index and try to ensure that the publication budget includes provision for an indexer of suitable quality to do the work. But often the author must do that work, and then it is up to the production editor to decide whether the quality is high enough.

Conservatism in academic book design

As may be evident from the discussion above, analysis of notional design failure is one way to find the existing or potential expectations which might be made of book design. Paul Stiff makes the point that 'it is unusual for editors, and even more so, typographers, to get feedback from readers'. (Stiff, 1997: 66) But as I found when I talked to an editor with experience in academic publishing, there is little available. (appendix 2) In the absence of such information, it is unsurprising that the appearance of the recently published scholarly book differs little in its essentials from its predecessors of fifty years, despite the changes which have occurred in production techniques. Indeed, it is quite likely that the newer book will be the more conservative: this is certain to be the case if it is compared with contemporary 'trade' books intended for the general reading public.

But this is not to say that the editors and designers involved are unaware of the capabilities of newer setting techniques, or of contemporary taste. Editorial concerns in academic publishing do not generally cover complex visual treatment, because so much of what is appropriate is enshrined in the presentation methods of the subject area of the book: formulae and equations have standardised layout strategies which, having been translated into print, are for all practical purposes immutable until they are found inadequate. To impose additional formatting on these would be inappropriate, and by extension to the larger elements of the book it can be seen that the resistance to substantial change, beyond the moving of margins or the choice of type, is based on the assumption that the finished book will be presented in a way which is most convenient to the target audience. In other words, the imposition of structure by an external agent is unnecessary; it would be superfluous, because the readership (the users) is a group familiar with the way in which similar books normally work and they bring this knowledge to bear on a given book, so long as it has the expected range of navigational features. They will tolerate variable quality in the specification of the text because the value of the information they gain through using the book offsets the inconvenience of using it.

In many ways, the foregoing explains why those who write about book design are reticent when it comes to the kinds of features which are most common in academic texts. The writers in question may well not have the experience of working on such books, because so many are not designed. And complex matters of typographical significance, such as the setting of mathematics, are in the hands of the editors who deal with such books, and of typesetters who specialise in implementing existing conventions using their specialised craft knowledge. In other words, there is no place for a designer, because the authors and readers are part of a group which has designed its own solutions to the presentation of particular elements of an argument and the publisher has decided that the readership's existing conventions adequately cover all eventualities. It is a pragmatic approach in a market where overheads must be kept to a minimum.

Conclusion

This discussion has examined the work of practitioners involved in the production of academic books. The interaction between authors, editors and designers contributes in a large measure to the quality of books, and design is a significant contribution to this quality. I have highlighted some of the ways in which quality is perceived, and how it is established and maintained, in the course of production. I have compared the work of typographers and book designers to that of the editors, readers and copyeditors and the authors whose texts these people must transform into published books. The structure of a textual argument, held in the form of a book, is the result of careful refinement of an author's ideas, and these are given great respect as the work passes through the processes of production: a respect arising from the fact that without the text, there would be no production.

Designers who work on books can have two levels of involvement. The first, almost arbitrary one, is the management and organisation of the words in standard type onto standard pages; the second is the highly discriminatory one of providing for situations where the typography provides a meaningful framework, not just a container, for elements of an author's argument. It is here that collaboration between designer, editor and author brings unequivocal improvement: understanding of the argument is expressed by conventions of spacing and typography.

Behind my analysis in terms of agents such as editors and typographers is a more abstract fact, which is that typography is used as an editorial tool, assisting the transfer of an author's ideas into a reader's mind. Careful application of the repertoire of typography will bring the reader a much more comprehensible argument. This fact goes some way to accounting for the emphasis which style guides such as the Chicago *Manual of Style* place on typographic features such as tables. These exemplify the kind of presentation of data which is achieved through the deployment of typography, but which are usually realised as part of the author or editor's work rather than the designer's.

There is much challenge to be had in dealing with the individual problems of individual books for an interested book designer. For an editor or a copyeditor to be uninterested in the reader's argument would be the ultimate denial of their roles; book designers who are readers should be aware that their position is essentially very similar. I stated that 'editorial and typographical elements of the design of books do not stand alone; they are mutually reliant': the centre of my argument is that the quality of the author's argument equally does not stand alone, but relies on editorial and typographical elements, and therefore the visual and textual refinement work which these elements imply, to reach a satisfactory standard.

In many cases practical concerns, mainly economic, dictate that the more rarefied the work in question the less likely it is to receive attention from a designer. The reliance which

editors place on precedent is a consequence of the need to minimise costs. This comes as a disappointment to those who believe in the significance of good typographic design.

On the other hand, it may be difficult for a layman to see how such presented data as formulae or tables should be read, making a designer's decisions about how they should look arbitrary. In such cases only the author can make a useful decision about the layout of such material. As far as publishers are concerned, designer's time can be best used where it brings a direct return, and this means that books with a small specialist audience are unlikely to receive much attention, regardless of the notional improvements that such attention might bring. In such cases the conventions understood by author and reader alike, such as those of mathematical equation layout, must do the work of conveying explicitly and unambiguously the information which the author intends to communicate.

Limitations of this investigation

There are three areas of this discussion in which potential improvements are already apparent. Firstly, and applicable to the appendixes, the limited number of interviewees meant that a rather specific and possibly unrepresentative picture of the occupations I investigated was created. Secondly, there is much more to discover about typographical signalling and its relationship with the ways in which people use books (for example, when assessing the usefulness of a book before in-depth reading). Thirdly, the sociological aspect of reading is a large subject in its own right, and within that subject there is likely to be much to discover about the perception of quality by readers and the idea of a transfer of information from author to reader.

Appendixes

Appendixes 1–3: Interviews with academic publishing practitioners

This section contains details of three interviews I conducted in the course of my research. I talked to Kareni Bannister (Senior Publications Officer) and Graham Nelson at Legenda, about tailoring an academic imprint to its market; to Richard Lawrence, formerly a science editor at Oxford University Press, about the editorial point of view; and Shelly Gruendler, formerly a designer at University of North Carolina Press, about working as an academic book designer. I reproduce here the questions I prepared for each of the three informal interviews and transcripts of my notes. I wrote the questions more as starting points than as definitions of the discussion, and I was happy to allow the conversation to find its own feet. The result is that, particularly in the case of the interview with Kareni Bannister, the write-up does not bear an obvious relationship to the question sheet. Nevertheless I was satisfied with the relevance of the information I received from all three sources.

Appendix 1. The academic publisher

Questions for Kareni Bannister about the Legenda imprint

The drift of these questions is to act as a counter to the argument (which has already been suggested) that typography is divorced somehow from the editorial process, despite the fact that the likelihood is that the two should be mutually co-operating processes. KB is in charge of the day-to-day management and the medium-term direction of the Legenda imprint, which is a new publishing organisation set up within a faculty of the University of Oxford to cover texts which are not considered viable as on the OUP list. The interesting point is that although as a small publishing outlet there is a limited amount of funding available, and although the works published are of academic character (and therefore can be sold substantially on their content) the graphic aspects of the books have been carefully thought of, and according to KB, they are kept in mind throughout the publishing process.

- 1 When the series was conceived, were visual concerns, such as the series relationship of each book to the others or the quality of the internal design, borne in mind?
- 2 What made you decide to give attention to the appearance of the imprint? Why was it not considered viable to pursue a low-grade design with, for example, setting that reflected the budget of the books? Is this an unusual approach for a small-scale academic publisher?
- 3 What proportion of the production budget is reflected in the way the books look?
- 4 Do you think that publishing the Legenda series is distinctly different to publishing trade books, or being a large publisher?
- 5 Do you think that if you were publishing scientific or mathematical works you would follow the same path? Do you think this would be roughly equivalent in terms of production costs?
- 6 Do you think that your authors/editors agree with your attitude towards production?
- 7 Is it more expensive to have a well-designed book than to have a poorly-designed one?
- 8 Who implements the designs?
- 9 Do you get feedback on the visual as well as the content aspects of your books?
- 10 Do you think provision for navigating texts is an important concern for the editor and the designer of the book? If so, how do you think it can be best facilitated for the reader?

Interview with Kareni Bannister, 7 January 2000

Legenda is an imprint established by the European Humanities Research Centre at Oxford University. It has been active since 1995. With a staff of two, the publications of this department number some thirty so far. All are monographs; that is, they are the writings of leading scholars, and of sufficiently limited appeal to make them not viable to larger publishers. Legenda now also publish several academic journals.

Despite very tight budgetary constraints, Legenda books are exemplary in production and finish, which is why I investigated the series and talked to the Senior Publications Officer Kareni Bannister and her assistant Graham Nelson, who carries out typesetting, about the establishment of the imprint and asked specifically about the production values. I was told that from the outset, the need was seen for a product which matched the quality of its academic credentials with a well-finished appearance comparable with series such as the Clarendon Press monographs with which academics were already familiar: conservatively designed books which had a high reputation for sound production.

In some areas, Legenda does not operate in the way a conventional academic publisher might. Rather than undertaking any commissioning, its list is composed of works recommended within the EHRC as outstanding. And funding for each work comes through the departments, faculties and other organisations which wish to support the book, as well as out of the author's own pocket: Legenda do not cover the full cost of publication. So in some respects their role could be seen as agents for the author, except that they have all the apparatus necessary to produce books in the way a publisher might.

The production of a range of books which appear to have come from a specialist publisher is Legenda's most remarkable achievement. Keeping such activities as typesetting in house is possible through computer technology. But establishing high quality is a complex matter: it involves discrimination on the part of the publication team at every stage of production. At each stage, attention must be given to the impact of a process on the material being published. To help make the production of the books as inexpensive as practical, a system was evolved, very much in the mould of academic publishing in general, which defined the path which each project would take through production. But although this path is not remarkable in itself, the people involved are specially chosen, and this maximises their contribution and, assuming their competence, saves money and time spent in correction later on. This carefully considered approach has allowed the series to maintain a high standard in the two areas of content and finish.

In Legenda's case, they have chosen to bring typesetting in house. This has two consequences: firstly, it brings the typesetting into close proximity with the publisher and so makes it more visible and accountable. Secondly, the typesetter can act as a copy editor and

designer; one-off design decisions about laying out verse quotes or changing the text can be made quickly and with confidence. The imprint has a very carefully evolved template design, so that its books can be considered visually as a series. The template is expressed in detailed Quark XPress templates and style sheets. These style sheets are associated with tags which are inserted into the copy when it is typeset. Because the tags are unified across all the books, it is a simple matter for the typesetting to be substantially carried out by the computer. This is achieved using a script which also checks through and corrects the typescript for the features a human typesetter would change: ligatures, elided numbers, correct use of quotes and so on. The script produces a report which highlights unusual features it produces, allowing the typesetter to go through and correct these manually.

Alone, this system represents a considerable cost saving, both in terms of time saved, and in terms of the confidence which it gives the publisher that the text has been vetted thoroughly. But it is not the only way in which Legenda's system is more carefully tuned than average. The copy editing too is tuned: there are few copy editors on Legenda's list, and they play a much more central role than might be expected. Their suggestions can be throughgoing, and their editorial 'powers' might include making substantial changes to the structure of the text. Bearing in mind the importance which Legenda attach to their copy editors' general opinions, I enquired whether there were instances of authors choosing esoteric hierarchy systems for their work or evolving unusual indexes or bibliographies. Apparently these are common enough and the usual response at the copy editing stage is to remove them. Additionally, footnotes will, by default, always become endnotes. These modifications normalise the book to fit both the publisher's template and a perception of what readers are expecting to find in the books. I was concerned to see whether author's useful ideas about structure were discouraged by this publication system, as suggested in Malcolm Clark's article (Clark 1996). My conclusion is that, within the subject area in which Legenda is operating, it is not necessarily conducive for publishers to support idiosyncratic ideas about the structure of the book or the text. The atmosphere of the Legenda operation, where authors are in close touch with the publisher, means that feedback is relatively straightforward and I do not believe that author's ideas will not be suppressed superciliously.

I asked whether the cost of producing a well-designed book was greater than that of a poorly-designed one: admittedly, a generalised question. Legenda's response was that, as far as their production system allowed, they were reaping all the benefits of a streamlined template design which saved them time and effort. In this way, their system was cheaper than producing a poorly-designed book.

Appendix 2. The academic editor

Questions for a book editor

NB 'text' is used to refer to the author's argument in its verbal form; 'book' means the product of the publishing process.

- 1 In your own notions of what might constitute a high quality scholarly book, does the visual element of that book convey more than just the aesthetic improvements that a book designer might be able to provide?
- 2 Do you think that a designer would be able to provide more than styling?
- 2 Is the work of a designer seen as contributing to the text because it improves its aesthetic appeal, or is it merely used to dress the text to look like a conventional, familiar book?
- 3 Do you think that the designer has the ability to perceive or to implement changes in the way data could be shown, for example in tables or diagrams?
- 4 Do you think that a designer might be able to predict when an image used by the author as an adjunct to the main argument is genuinely useful and informative or simply there for incidental interest?
- 5 Do you think that authors understand the purpose of a designer in the production process? Do they see the designer as someone who will beautify the work they have created, or someone who will make the text more accessible?
- 6 What would represent an undesigned book to you: one that lacked structure in its argument (and had a text that was hard to follow) or one that lacked an obviously visible structure?
- 7 Do you believe that an undesigned book would seriously impede the progress of those who will use it?
- 8 In your own notions of what might constitute a high quality scholarly book, does the visual element of that book convey more than just the aesthetic improvements that a book designer might be able to provide?

Interview with Richard Lawrence, 27 February 2000

The intention of my conversation with Richard Lawrence was to gain insight into the perceptions that book editors have about the way in which 'design' elements of a book's production are incorporated; for example, is it through the designer that the structure of a text is made clear? Does the book stand or fall on the grounds of its design? Will the designer be able to contribute to the editing of tables or figures?

RL pointed out that his field of expertise was quite narrow: he has worked in the Science and Medical department of OUP on scientific and mathematical books, and this means his knowledge and opinion is limited to a degree. I felt, however, that the type of books which are produced in such a department represent quite an interesting category, featuring as they do a reliance on supporting data in tabular and diagrammatic form to augment the main argument. I could relate some of RL's points directly to my own experiences, since I have carried out freelance checking work in the same department.

Different categories of academic book receive different degrees of attention

In contrast to what I thought to be the case, RL pointed out that the main focus of design attention in scientific books was on textbooks, rather than on more specialised writing such as monographs. While the latter are bought and used by their audience regardless of the presentation, textbooks require more guidance features to be built in. And monographs do not sell in the numbers needed to justify individual attention to matters which do not relate directly to the text: the designer's time is better spent working on a book with a less specific or highly qualified audience, helping to make such a work accessible. There are not enough designers in an organisation such as OUP to allow every book to be worked on by a designer. Of course, certain books may demand design input, and these have to be handled on an individual basis.

Specification by the editor often suffices

RL made the point that the editor may be able to provide an adequate specification without recourse to a designer: he said that in his own case, he had enough knowledge of the points that the typesetter needed specified to be able to provide them himself. He suggested that in many cases, the specification would be based on an existing book, and in such cases the only thing which needed checking was whether there were enough levels of heading in the template book to provide for the new one. It might be that a designer would in effect be asked to do just this, or to bridge a gap where the template book did not have enough heading levels. Sometimes a new book is based closely on a previous design because that design was a successful seller; RL suggested that the sales department might be particularly keen on the similarity of the setting to try to take advantage of this, despite the apparently unsuitable combination of subject matter and design.

Scientific books are particularly straightjacketed in terms of their looks, and not all of this is the result of limited budget. The fact is particularly clear in the case of physics or mathematics books, where the demands of equation setting make certain outline configurations suitable. Of course, there may be other successful ways to design such books, but the inertia of existing designs is maintained partly because they are understood by their

readers: the convention is a powerful incentive not to innovate. In fact, some of the conventions of such setting are now enshrined in the TEX page layout system, which is widely used by authors working in these subject areas, so they have become even more firmly established.

The structure is best made apparent at the time of writing

RL said that the best way of getting a successful book where the structure was clear was to have a good author. He said that if there was an editorial interest in creating a book with, for example, a subsidiary column of information on each page, it was best to ask the author to write the work in such a way that the information to go in that column was provided as the text was written, rather than taken out of the main text at a later stage and rewritten to fit the column.

In any book project, the designer is likely to be called upon to give form to an editor's outline idea of how a book should look, rather than to make that decision himself. The editor may present his requirement in terms which suggest to the designer that he should use a similar solution to that found elsewhere, without implying that the designer will have no say in the way the book looks.

Authors are expected to work out how best to display supporting data

I asked about the contribution that a designer might make to the form of a table or diagram. RL responded that he did not believe that there would be the opportunity for the designer to comment on such an issue, although there might be a particular project where this was not the case. In general, he believed that the author was expected to read the guides which are given to authors to help them produce appropriate presentation of data. It was assumed that an author who was a specialist would be the best person to control the way in which a table was laid out. Of course, the specification might change the proportions and the type, but the way in which the data was divided into columns and rows was the responsibility of the author.

Structural clarity depends on subject matter and argument

RL was able to distinguish in the different scientific disciplines different approaches to the structure of books. Mathematicians, physicists and chemists, for example, progressed in clear stages towards their conclusions, and these obvious stages, perhaps numbered, made the structure of the book conceptually and visually clear. But in biological writing, the direction of the argument might not be so clear, and neither would the structure be as clear. He said that medical books tended to require more detailed copyediting and structural refinement by the publisher than mathematical books. Arguments will be divided, steps or equations numbered and punctuation and white space used to show how elements belong

together as part of the written language of mathematical argument, whereas in natural sciences the lack of a logical foundation for discussion, and a consequent absence of the use of spacing as part of the written argument, might contribute to a less obvious visual structure as well as a less constrained text structure.

Templates are mostly existing books

Templates were discussed both in the sense of published works being used as guides for new books and in the sense of explicit sets of instructions, pre-designed for future use on a range of books. The Science and Medical department of OUP has occasionally had templates designed, but RL felt that the majority of books do not make use of them. He said that the design costs which they theoretically reduce are minimal because the specification is done usually by the editor. In this case, the only opportunity for savings will be in the avoidance of confusion on the part of the typesetter, which will depend on how well the editor knows what the typesetter needs to know.

Feedback is minimal

Feedback from users to editors is practically non-existent according to RL. The only feedback editors get is from sales figures, on which they impose their own interpretations. This makes it impossible to know whether the design of a book might ever be responsible for its good or bad sales.

Computers have brought savings and pitfalls for authors and publishers

The impact of the computer has had a considerable effect on the way in which scientific books are produced. At the author's end, the use of computers which can output files or printed pages of high quality has meant that authors sometimes expect to have a say in how the book looks, and to be allowed to 'style' it themselves. Or they may become so fascinated by the technology that they rather neglect their obligation to write. But equally, they may be expected to do things which were previously carried out by professionals, such as keying in the changes a copy editor has made. Some authors insist on typesetting their work themselves, which can lead to very badly designed, indulgent results: wasted space, odd typefaces, and the perpetuation of errors which typesetters would have removed as part of their work. RL cited a particular work on which the author had imposed his own typesetting as a condition of publication. Not only was the presentation idiosyncratic (and expensive not least in its extensive use of colour), but the author's attitude to implementing the copy editor's corrections was hostile: they represented an insult to his communication skills.

Because there is little need for typescripts to be keyed in, typesetters have been obliged to rethink the kinds of service they provide. Some may offer to carry out all the work from author's typescript to page proof, including whatever copy editing and design work is

required. Others merely impose finished text files onto pages. The cost of typesetting has reduced to the point where it is more economical to have a professional typesetter process a text than to have the author provide camera-ready copy; this is as a result of the improvement in quality of personal computer output as well as the adoption of desktop publishing techniques by typesetters.

In contrast to the approach at Legenda, it appears that in scientific publishing on a large scale the trend is towards uniformity and the 'defaults' with which authors are familiar. Of course, OUP does not have to make itself visible; it is a large and very well established presence. The more highly technical books it produces do not generally benefit from one-off design treatment; instead the editors can rely on the fact that they already have a reputation and produce books on which the money available has been spent on the text itself rather than the visual presentation. As far as the appearance of the book is concerned, the choice of a good-looking existing book determines how attractive it appears, and the structure of the author's argument determines how easily the reader can negotiate the text.

Appendix 3. The academic book designer

Questions for a book designer

- 1 Do you read the text; do you expect to be able to comprehend the nature and the genre of the book you're working on, and would you therefore avoid working on other kinds of text?
- 2 Are you asked to give a style to a text, or expected to provide a suitable style? How free do you feel to style a text in whichever way you choose? Are there constraints imposed by the genre of the book, and do these affect the quality of the text design you are able to create?
- 3 Looking at this from another perspective, do you think that editors will assume you are going to provide the book with a particular style, or that they assume you will use whatever seems appropriate to you?
- 4 Do you think your role is understood by authors and editors and do you think they make good use of the opportunities you might afford them?
- 5 Do you collaborate closely with editors?
- 6 Do you collaborate closely with authors?
- 7 What are the greatest obstacles to progress on the specification? Do you find yourself rushed into making quick decisions or is there time to contemplate and to go back and change?
- 8 To what degree are you aware of, and affected by, publishers' house style?
- 9 How important a consideration is copy fitting? Do you find that the texts on which you work come with a page count already imposed? Is this generally realistic?
- 10 Would you expect to avoid complex matter, such as any tabular material, or would you look over such things at proof stage to see whether they have been implemented satisfactorily? Do you follow up on the design as it goes through page proofs? Do you expect to find that elements of your specification have been lost in typesetting and if so are these often obvious, important elements or are they microscopic details?
- 11 Have you experience of working on a project where it was necessary to oversee/design each page?
- 12 Do you think that your work adds to the ease with which a reader can use the book? Do you consider or model the kinds of tasks a reader might perform when you draw up a specification?
- 13 Are you a confident proof reader? Are you interested in the details of the text, or merely getting the outline typography correct?

- 14 Have you worked as typesetter-designer and did this give you further insight into the one-off problems in creating page layouts or applying a specification to a particular piece of text which typesetters might face?

Interview with Shelley Gruendler, 10 March 2000

SG worked as a book designer at the University of North Carolina Press (UNCP) between 1994 and 1998. She was most the junior of three designers, her boss being Richard Hendel (whose book I make several references to in my discussion). As the most junior designer, she was often given the projects which the other two did not want. In general the subject areas she covered included women's studies, economic history, Latin-American history, and books about the American Civil War. She considered that, in general, she was designing books 'for the library'; that is, books which would be bought and used primarily as part of university or departmental reference collections. The books tended to feature large bibliographies, several levels of heading, and pages of notes (there being a house style rule against footnotes).

I think that this interview gives a picture of book design as a very cloistered occupation, in which the designer is untroubled by editorial concerns. But in so far as the design of books can be a full-time occupation in its own right, this approach is not without justification, and through the expectations which are made, it encourages the pursuit of high standards. But this interview reflects the practice of one academic press, and it's a picture which is quite different from that provided by Richard Lawrence (see the interview in this section). What would not be apparent to a designer is the flow of books which bypassed the design department altogether. In the case of UNCP, it appears that all titles received some attention from a designer, even if this was simply the preparation of specifications from a notional template. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the design department was responsible for production schedules.

SG said she believed that the test of a book designer was successfully making a dull book (by which she meant one which was not accessibly written or which did not have any obvious merit) interesting; if a designer could achieve this, then they could probably make any book interesting. Her working method was to start each design from the chapter openings and title page, and from these to work out the text pages.

Reading and comprehending the text

SG said that to get an idea of the work, she would read through a launch sheet and might attend an internal presentation at which the editor would be 'selling' the book to the marketing department. Her best source of information about the book was through the editors, who were able to give appropriate answers. The topic of the book did not generally

concern her, and this made the task of creating the design simpler. There was no way to create innovative structures for each book, and as such she was expected to make the text look 'clean'. In this, the high production standards of UNCP, exemplified by the fact that every book was typeset, helped greatly; such things made it hard to create a book that looked cheap.

Applying a 'style'

Editors did sometimes ask for SG to design a book because they wanted to look a certain way, and they believed that she would do it best. For example, as the youngest designer she was asked to design a book on youth slang that was required to reflect something of the character of the kinds of people who used this slang.

Sometimes, it was necessary to keep design time to a minimum to reflect the low budget available. In this case, the design work would be minimal, and practically template-based.

Understanding of the role of the designer

Some authors and editors did appreciate the role of the designer. A company rule prevented the designers from dealing directly with the authors, and only exceptionally did the authors have power to reject either the cover or the internal design of the book.

Despite the notional prohibition on consulting with authors, SG did occasionally have to ask them for material (such as images). It was not clear during the interview whether these was purely for use as decorative elements.

The design department at UNCP was respected partly through the reputation of the head of department. The department also handled the scheduling of production, which gave it leverage. This may well have meant that the contribution of the department was well understood.

Making progress

SG could not recollect there being any obstacles to producing specifications. She felt that she had never been rushed, and that possibly that was because she joined the department having never before had to make specifications, and therefore was given a time allowance while she learned. She said that 'spec'ing' (creating and writing up typographical specifications) was a process she enjoyed.

Also, she noted that the designers no longer carried out marking-up of manuscripts. This time-consuming process was apparently considered unnecessary by the typesetters. However, difficult passages would be sought when the manuscript was examined by the designers, and they would flag the text and either mark it up or indicate in the written specification which exceptions to the rules applied and where. The search for difficult passages was assisted by a comprehensive question sheet, filled out by the editors, which

asked, for example, for maximum and minimum heading lengths, levels of heading and other information which would help the designer to anticipate problems and plan efficiently.

Awareness of the publisher's house style

The house style did provide a basis for design work. It was mainly evidenced by broad guidelines such as 'no footnotes'. There were also standard table designs, although SG did prefer to design her own tables, by giving an example in the type specification and allowing the typesetter to set the individual tables.

Copy fitting

Copy fitting was very important, and all books came with a page count imposed. There was also, therefore, a nominal character-per-page count, around three thousand. SG said that over the period she worked at UNCP, the average length of books grew discernibly longer, which made copy fitting more important and resulted in the need to reduce type size.

Detailed typography

Some of the fine detail of the specification might disappear in trial setting. The designer was obliged to check through the page proofs, but in fact most errors in implementing the specification were weeded out when specimen pages were produced. The check through the proofs was perfunctory, and allocated a mere half hour, as a staging post between the editor and the author's check.

Overseeing each page

SG had two opportunities to oversee the design page-by-page. The first was an image-oriented journal (perhaps beyond the scope of my enquiries). The second was a book which again contained many images and tables. The book had been made small-format, which made the fitting of the elements particularly difficult. She said that she had not worked on image-heavy books and considered them to have their own particular pitfalls.

Contribution of the designer to ease of reading

SG thought that her work definitely did help the reader, and she said that she often pictured her mother's reaction to a design feature, thinking of her as a representative non-design-educated reader. She took particular care over the contents pages (which give an insight into the structure of the book) and was concerned about the amount of space around the page with which the reader could hold the book.

Interest in proof reading and the details of the setting

In proof reading, SG said she would be looking at typographical features, rather than the content of the text. In this, she was helped by the fact that the Press employed a proof reader

who paid very critical attention to typographical details such as (very fine, detail) kerning. Her particular concern was with consistency in such matters as punctuation. But she did not consider herself to be a confident reader for misprints or bad writing.

The Press' overall attitude to fine detail was ambivalent, as shown by the fact that, when the typographical proof reader was on holiday, books were produced with scant regard to the fine tuning of kerns on covers.

Experience in combined design and typesetting work

SG said that she had not had experience as a combined designer and typesetter, and it was something she felt she was not qualified to do; she felt that the skill level of professional typesetters was very high, and the results of their work beyond what she could achieve.

Appendix 4. Sample documents

These documents exemplify the type of instructions read by authors, copy editors and proof readers. They are sent out by production staff in publishing houses in an effort to introduce laymen to the niceties of writing for print, and to ensure freelancers know what the particular policies or 'house rules' of a publisher are. They take the place of style guides, providing only information relevant to the job in hand. The final sheet is an example of a query sheet sent by a copy editor to the authors so that they can incorporate corrections on the first round of proofs.

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