

The relation between figure & background expressed as form & counter form of the Typography in printed ads

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Abstract:

In typography form, the **counterform** is the area of a letter that is entirely or partially enclosed by a letter form or a symbol (the counter-space/the hole of). Letters containing closed counters include A, B, D, O, P, Q, R, a, b, d, e, g, o, p, and q. Letters containing open counters include c, f, h, i, s etc. Letters containing open counters include ج, ح, خ, د, ذ, ر, ز, س, ش, ع, غ, ك, ل, ن, ي. The digits 0, 4, 6, 8, and 9 also possess a counter. the **aperture** is the opening between an open counter and the outside of the letter. Typography form and counter form means negative and positive space in typography studies. Different typeface styles have different tendencies to use open or more closed apertures. although the letter typically functions as part of a word, individual letters are frequently combined into new forms and many configurations which can use especially in posters or printed ads Because of the conditions of the ease of the readability and the look. The Research is Aim to highlight the value of using typography form and counterform in printed ads, sometimes the designer may be unable to use typography form and counterform with its former knowledge of its basics in design. The Research is A theoretical framework, followed by a practical design experiment for a set of posters and newsletters to study the relation between figure & the ground through the form & counterform in Typography as an application of Binary Opposition theory in design which aims to create a visual contrast between the spaces in the presence of interrelated relations between the forms that combine harmony and contrast in color, size and shapes. The study problem can be demonstrated in the following two questions: To what extent the designer can use the typography form and counterform in printed ads? What is the visual relation between figure & the ground through the form & counterform in Typography as an application of Binary Opposition theory in design? It reached to the result that the using of typography form and counterform is one of the most prolific tools in designing printed ads. it assured that using of form & counterform of typography in design can create different visual rhetoric which can help to attract the attention of the audience.

Keywords:

Form
Counterform
Typography Form
Letter Forms

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Introduction

The Industrial Revolution and nineteenth century are revealed as an era of technological innovation and an outpouring of new typographic forms. From the twentieth century, typeface was shaped by the aesthetic concerns of modernism, the need for functional communication, technological progress, and the digital revolution in typography.

The research is looking for a different approach to interpreting emptiness within type form and counter form which is mean negative and positive space in typography studies through The Binary Opposition theory. although the letter typically functions as part of a word, individual letters are frequently combined into new configurations.

Statement of the Problem:

The study problem can be demonstrated in the following two questions:

- 1- To what extent the designer can use the typography form and counterform in printed ads?
- 2- What is the visual relation between figure & the ground through the form & counterform in Typography as an application of Binary Opposition theory in design?

Research Objective:

The research aims to :

- 1- highlight the value of using typography form and counterform in printed ads, sometimes the designer may be unable to use typography form and counterform with its former knowledge of its basics in design.
- 2- How to create a visual contrast between the spaces in the presence of interrelated relations between the forms that combine harmony and contrast in color, size and shapes.

Hypotheses:

- 1- There is a visual relation between figure & the ground through the form & counterform in Typography as an application of Binary Opposition theory in design?
- 2- The designer can use the typography form and counterform to create different visual rhetoric in the presence of interrelated relations between the forms that combine harmony and contrast which can help to attract the attention of the audience in printed ads.

Methodology:

The Research adopts a descriptive approach through the theoretical framework, followed by a practical design experiment for some posters and newsletters to study the relation between figure & the ground through the form & counterform in Typography as an application of Binary Opposition theory in design.

Background:

Meaning of Form, counter, counterform, and aperture

In typography **counterform** is the blank spaces between individual letters and as designers this can be used to great effect, also referred to as ‘negative space’.(1)

a **counter or aperture** is the area of typeface anatomy that is entirely or partially enclosed by a letter form or a symbol (the counter-space/the hole of). Letters containing closed counters include A, B, D, O, P, Q, R, a, b, d, e, g, o, p, and q. Letters containing open counters include c, f, h, i, s etc. (2)

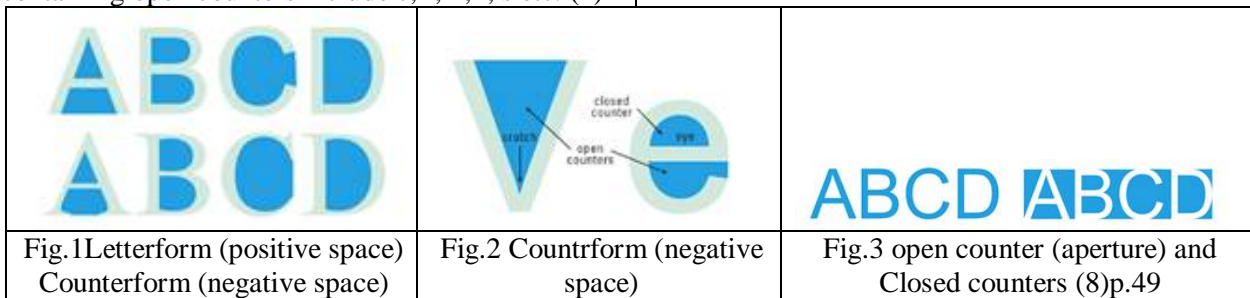
counter The negative space of a letterform. A counter may be either fully or partially enclosed (9)p.3

The counter of an 'e' is commonly called an eye. When the letter is open at one end, as is the case with 'n' we speak instead of an **aperture**. (1)

From these definitions we conclude that **counter** means area where space is contained or enclosed by a letterform, but **counterform** is the negative spaces inside and around letterforms.

The word counter literally means "opposite," so it makes sense that the white (or negative) spaces inside and around letterforms are called counterforms. The counterforms of letterforms are just as important to letter recognition as the letter shapes themselves. The positive space (the letterforms) and the negative space (the counterforms) exist in relation to each other to produce distinctive characters, as you can see in figure (1)

Sometimes characters contain areas of white space, these areas, like the ones shown in figure (2), are called counters. Counters can be open or closed. As you can see in figure (3), an open counter is a space that is contained, but not enclosed by a character. For example, a crotch, the pointed space where two parts of a character meet, is an open counter (aperture). A closed counter is a space that is enclosed by a character. For example, an eye the small upper space in the lowercase letter e, is a closed counter. (8) p.49



The relation between the counter, counterform and Legibility with typography:

By definition, a word has the potential to express an idea object, or event. Word signs are independent of the things they represent, yet by design they can be made to signify and reveal their meaning.

Form and counterform relationships, found within individual letterforms, also exist within individual words. Speaking on the structural consideration of form and counterform and the designing of typefaces, The material of typography is the black, and it is the designer's task with the help of this black to capture space, to create harmonious whites

inside the letters as well as between them. By observing this principle and by combining form and counterform into word units, the designer discovers subtle typographic connections and rhythms. The word unit is a constellation of individual letterforms, suggesting a union and forming a cohesive whole. Optically adjusted spaces and consistent counterform relationships assure the overall clarity of this union.(5) p.88 Counterforms create internal word patterns that provide cues for word recognition. When these internal spaces are altered sufficiently, the perceptual clarity of a word may also be altered. The weight of letters is vital to word recognition

and influences an adequate internal pattern. The combination of word shape and internal pattern creates a word structure, an all-inclusive term describing the unique composition of each word.

Text type that is too small or too large makes reading difficult. Small type reduces visibility by destroying counterforms, which affect word recognition, while large type can force a reader to perceive type in sections rather than as a whole. According to legibility research, the most legible sizes of text type at normal reading distances range from 9 to 12 point. (8) p.52,54

In text type, weight changes significantly affects legibility. Light typefaces cannot be easily distinguished from their background, while a typeface that is too heavy has a tendency to lose its internal pattern of counterforms fig.4

In text type, legibility is affected when condensed or expanded typefaces are used.

A narrower letter changes the form/counterform relationship.

Playing with forms, imposing new meaning, and changing the standards of typographic communication. (8)p.55,50

Typographers and designers have a definite responsibility to their readers to communicate as clearly and appropriately as possible.

Different typeface styles have different tendencies to use open or more closed apertures. This design decision is particularly important for sans-serif typefaces, which can have very wide strokes making the apertures very narrow indeed.

Bases 89
Bases 89
Bases 89

Fig.4 Three sans-serif fonts: Corbel, Helvetica, and Haettenschweiler

Three sans-serif fonts: Corbel with open apertures, Helvetica with closed apertures and Haettenschweiler which is also condensed. Notice how 8 and 9 in Haettenschweiler are barely distinguishable. figure (4)

Fonts designed for legibility often have very open apertures, keeping the strokes widely separated from one another to reduce ambiguity. This may be especially important in situations such as signs to be viewed at a distance, materials intended to be viewed by people with vision problems, or small print, especially on poor-quality paper.

The universal principle for spacing letters is this: the typographer, calligrapher, or designer attempts to make the interletter space between each pair of

letters appear equal to the space between every other pair of letters. Because these counterform spaces have such different configurations, this spacing must be achieved through optical balance rather than through measurement. (8) p.49,50

Binary Opposition Theory

The Binary Opposition theory is a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning. In structuralism, a Binary Opposition is seen as a fundamental organizer of human philosophy, culture, and language.

There is a classic example of a Binary Opposition is the presence-absence dichotomy. In much of Western thought, including structuralism, distinguishing between presence and absence, viewed as polar opposites, Binary Opposition is a fundamental element of thought in many cultures. The Binary Opposition has different definitions with same basic meaning. The researcher chooses the definition as The principle of contrast between two mutually exclusive terms: on/off, up/down, left/right etc; an important concept of structuralism, which sees such distinctions as fundamental to all language and thought. (3), (7)



Fig.5

Designing different visual rhetoric through using form & counterform in Typography

Although the letter typically functions as part of a word, individual letters are frequently combined into new forms and many configurations. A typographic sign is visually dynamic because of its interaction with the surrounding white space. In the figure (5) the repetition of the letter t is balanced and complemented by its white space.

The visual interplay between the three letterforms animates the page. This equilibrium and spatial interaction and the manner in which it is achieved. (5) p.223, (8) p.51

Form and counterform relationships, found within individual letterforms, also exist within individual words. Speaking on the structural consideration of form and counterform and the designing of typefaces.

The typographer, calligrapher, or designer attempts to make the interletter space between each pair of letters appear equal to the space between every

other pair of letters. Because these counterform spaces have such different configurations, this spacing must be achieved through optical balance rather than through measurement.(5)p.88 For any shape which we introduce into a field there will appear, in addition to that shape, a shape which is its complement. The form and the counterform are invariably complementary To produce the one is to produce also the other. in Rudolf Arnheim's collected essays towards a psychology of Art There are Numerous instructive notes on the issue we noticed that Form and Counterform a somewhat similar topic has been dealt with in the aesthetic literatune in terms of figure and ground.(6)p.5

Practical Design Experiment :
Materials & Procedure:

Julianna Kunstler (Prof. in Berlin – Germany _ university of Berlin) creates Typography sequential typographic forms in squares. This typographic diagram reveals the design process as a flexible, dynamic, and unpredictable mental journey. Diverse lines of thought and activity lead eventually to closure. figure (6). (4) By applying This typographic diagram in the researcher experimental work : Two fundamental typographic principles were examined size and combination, and show that out of their interaction emerge three qualitative levels

of the typographic image: form, pattern, and texture discover dynamic relationships between form and counter-form (positive/negative)

The following considerations

- a) apply Gestalt principles of closure, continuity, and figure/ground (crop, scale, rotate, etc.)
- b) unified elements to create a stable gestalt.
- c) The material of typography is the black, and it is the designer’s task with the help of this black to capture space, to create harmonious whites inside the letters as well as between them.”

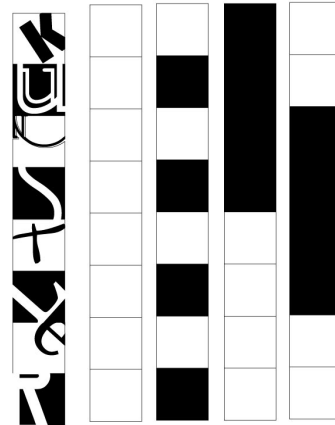


Fig.6

1- Typographic event poster design

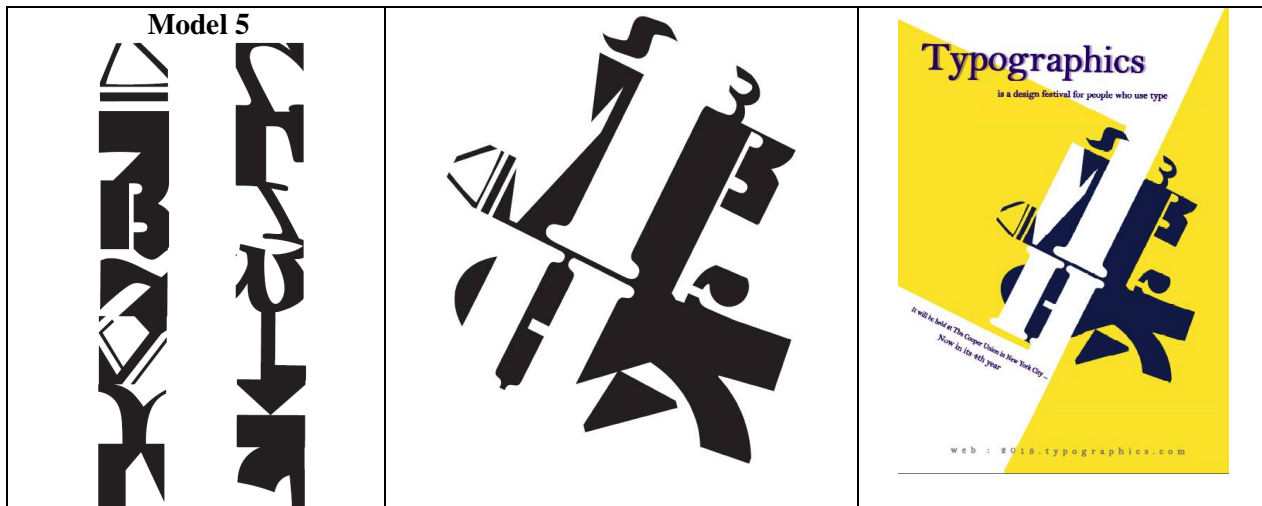
Square models from def. letters	Value , Gradation ,from value scale to dark &light	Design poster about atypographic event
<p>Model 1</p>		
<p>Model 1 : Using positive letters & negative letters (form & counterform) with def. size</p>		
<p>Model 2</p>		
<p>Model 2: Using positive letters & negative letters (form & counterform) with textures</p>		



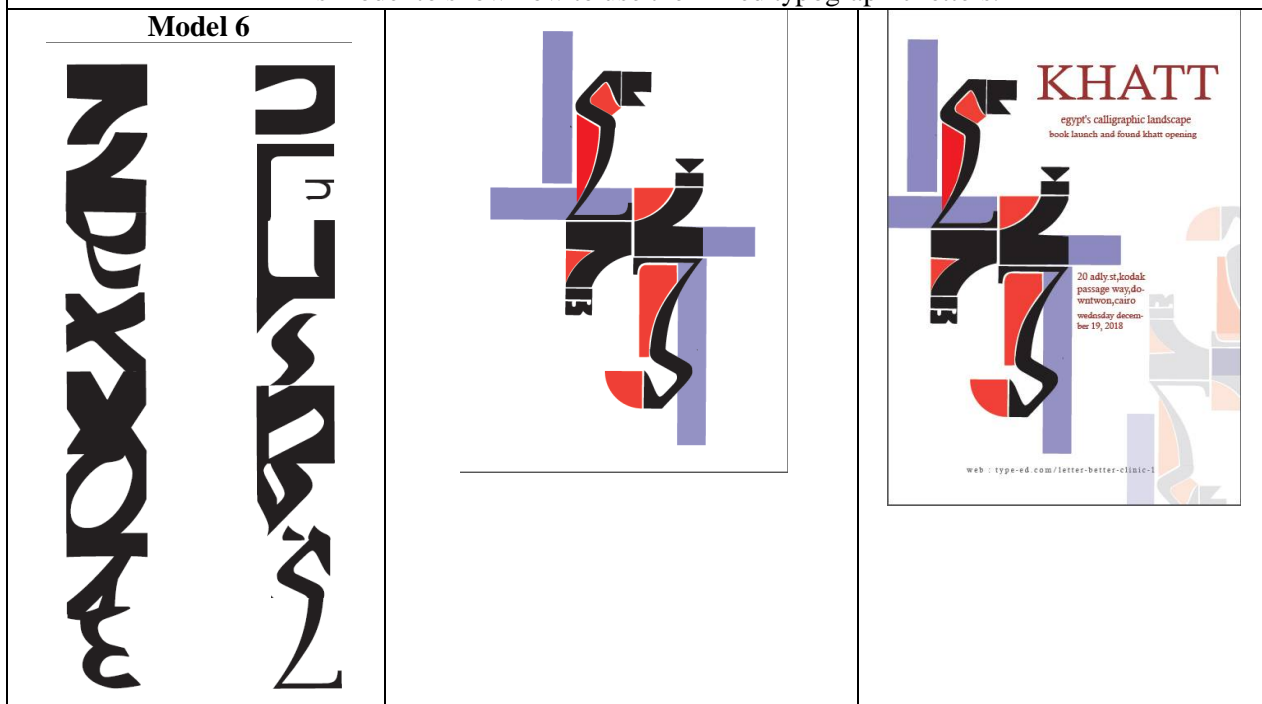
Model 3
 Using positive letters & negative letters (form & counterform) – textures
 This model to show how to use the same Square models from def. letters to Design different poster about atypographic event



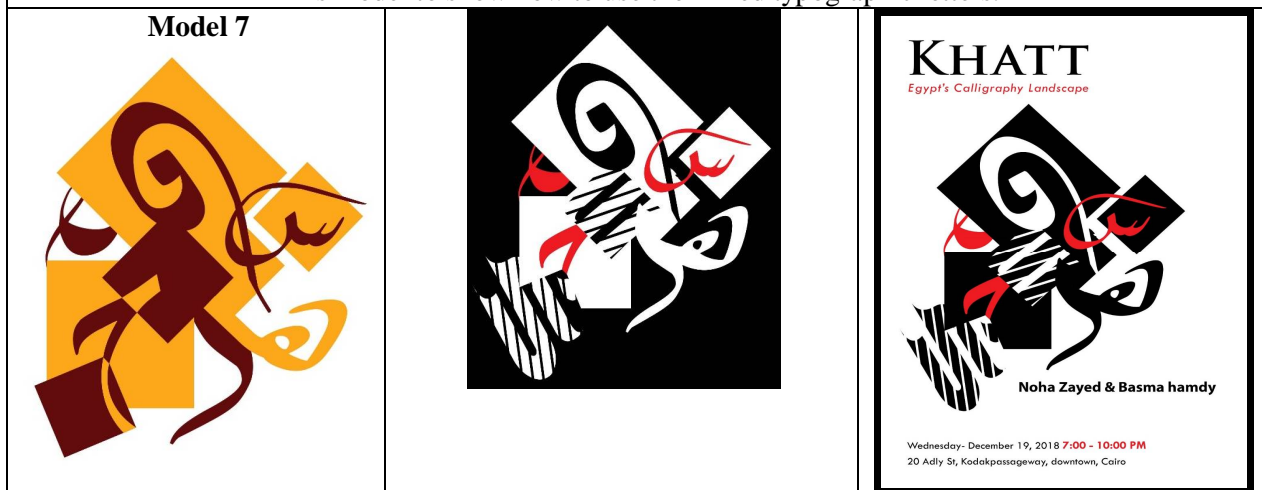
Model 4: Using positive letters & negative letters (form & counterform) – textures
 This model to show how to use the same Square models from def. letters to Design different poster about the same typographic event. then create cube form in 3d



Model 5: Using positive & negative mixed letters (English & Arabic) (form & counterform)
This model to show how to use the mixed typographic letters.








Model 6: Using positive & negative mixed letters (English & Arabic) (form & counterform)
This model to show how to use the mixed typographic letters.



Model 7: Using positive letters & negative letters (form & counterform) – textures
This model to show how to use def. Arabic letters to Design poster about atypographic event

2- Design newsletters about a typographic event
To show how to use form & counter form as a

layout in information design

The front of newsletter	The back of newsletter
<p>Model1(Korean letters)</p> 	<p>Model1(Korean letters)</p> 
<p>Model1(Korean letters) :Using positive Korean letters (form & counterform) with def. size & color</p>	
<p>Model2(Arabic letters)</p> 	
<p>Model2(Arabic letters):Using positive Arabic letters (form & counterform) The name of the event – the main title with def. size in the front of the newsletter – in the back of the newsletter : one letter to create a space to write information</p>	
<p>Model3(Arabic letters)</p> 	
<p>Model3(Arabic letters):The front of newsletter : using positive Arabic letters (form & counterform) with individual letters with def. size in the front of the newsletter</p>	



in the back of the newsletter : one letter to create a space to write information

Model4(English letters)



Results:

By using The principle of contrast between two mutually exclusive terms: on/off, up/down, left/right etc. from the Binary Opposition theory in design . The researcher can find the relation between figure & background through the form & counterform in Typography as a form of visual communication which aims to

- provide the knowledge of the recipient through the visual images and symbols that affect the consumer behavior emotionally and not logical in printed ads.
- create visual contrast between the spaces in the presence of interrelated relations between the forms that combine harmony and contrast in color, size and shape and help to attract the attention of the recipient in printed ads.

Using of typography form and counterform is one of the most prolific tools in designing printed ads. it assured that using of form & counterform of typography in design can create different visual rhetoric which can help to attract the attention of the audience.

Sometimes the designer may be unable to use typography form and counterform with its former knowledge of its basics in design but Typography sequential typographic forms in squares reveal the design process as a flexible, dynamic, and unpredictable mental journey.

To design a successful typographic diagram, the designer has to follow a specific framework that includes his decision of the following considerations:

Examining two fundamental typographic principles, size and combination, and show that out of their interaction emerge three qualitative levels of the typographic image: form, pattern, and texture discover dynamic relationships between form and counter-form

(positive/negative)

- Applying Gestalt principles of closure, continuity, and figure/ground (crop, scale, rotate, etc.)
- Unified elements to create a stable gestalt.
- The material of typography is the black, and it is the designer’s task with the help of this black to capture space, to create harmonious whites inside the letters as well as between them.”
- Although the letter typically functions as part of a word, individual letters are frequently combined into new configurations

Discussion

The Research is a theoretical framework, followed by a practical design experiment for some posters and newsletters to study the relation between figure & the ground through the form & counterform in Typography as an application of Binary Opposition theory in design which aims to create visual contrast between the spaces in the presence of interrelated relations between the forms that combine harmony and contrast in color, size and shape and help to attract the attention of the recipient by creating different visual rhetoric which can attract the audience. The designer have to create a nambre of variations, factual as well as purely imaginative , and try to find the best one.

This combination of form & counterform creates:

- 1- three qualitative levels of the typographic image: form, pattern, and texture.
- 2- Application of the philosophy of combining contradictions in advertising design
- 3- Playing acritical role in clarifying meaning in visual messages.

There is no ideal relationship between form & counterform but spacing is a visual problem but whenever the legibility and readability of the advertising media, the better to use form and

counterform.

To design a successful typographic diagram, the designer has to follow a specific framework that includes his decision of the following considerations:

- examine two fundamental typographic principles, size and combination, and show that out of their interaction emerge three qualitative levels of the typographic image: form, pattern, and texture discover dynamic relationships between form and counter-form (positive, negative, mix, or small type as value a very intriguing possibility/ The letters are layered in such a way to convey a sense of shadow or depth.
- apply Gestalt principles of closure, continuity, and figure/ground (crop, scale, rotate, etc.)
- unified elements to create a stable gestalt.
- The material of typography is the black, and it is the designer's task with the help of this black to capture space, to create harmonious whites inside the letters as well as between them.

Therefore, the advertising designer should expand the study of figure & background through form & counterform of the Typography With the importance of reference to ideas and sketches in the design that achieve the uniqueness and excellence of the idea.

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