



METHODS OF TRANSLATING
WRITTEN RESPONSE

Fuck Content

(re-presented)

Designer as Author (Rock 2009) argued that “we are insecure about the value of our work”. That designers are envious of the power, social position, and cachet that artists and authors have. By declaring themselves “designer/authors” they hope to garner similar respect. This motivated a movement in design that values origination of content over manipulation of content.

Michael Rock attempted to recuperate the act of design itself as a vibrant, evocative language.

“Designers trade in storytelling. The elements they a designer must master are not the content narratives but the devices of the telling: typography, line, form, colour, contrast, scale, weight.” (Rock 2009)

Problem

The problem is one of content. The misconception that design is pure style, without deep content. If form-follows-function, it is reconfigured as form-follows-content. If content is the source of form, form without content is an empty shell.

Apotheosis

The apotheosis of this notion is repeated ad nauseum. “Design should be a transparent vessel for content.” Minimalists embraced it, maximalists rejected it. But neither questioned if it is all about the content.

Dichotomy

This false dichotomy has been accepted. It seems that developing content is more essential than shaping it. But the designer’s purview is to shape, not to write. Shaping itself profoundly affects form. The work must be saying something, which is different than being *about* something.

Elucidation

The elucidation is that design can change the way we look the world. Designers have profound control about the manipulation of elements and form to reshape and transform content meaningfully. The designer’s *What* is a *How*. Content is, perpetually, Design itself.

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Michael Rock
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Epilogue

Using as an example my project for Methods of Translating, the content of research was bright, hot, shocking pink. Due to time constraints, once abandoned the idea to become an author and create something new such as a video essay, the focus was about how to manipulate and present the researched content. The output, an A to Z of Bright Pink video montage. A moving mood board of bright pink, an exercise on manipulating existing content rather than creating new.

Michel Rock perhaps would say, the way I have disassembled, reorganised, and rendered the footage and the graphic elements reveals a philosophy, an aesthetic position, an argument, and a critique. (Rock 2009)

Arguably, given more time and thought, my visual storytelling could have been designed better, but it was in my control *how* to manipulate the footage and transform it to create something meaningful.

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Elva Rodriguez

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Please note, I do not claim the words from Fuck Content by Michael Rock are mine, I simply manipulated them to emulate the Conditional Design Manifesto aesthetic presentation and build on it for my written response.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Rock, M. (2009). *Fuck Content — 2x4*. [online] 2x4. Available at: <https://2x4.org/ideas/2009/fuck-content/> [Accessed 17 Nov. 2022].