

Rationale:

The goal of this piece was to create a semi-sarcastic guidebook on how to stay miserable, with the idea of showing the audience some of the negative habits they might have and providing a little information on how to combat these habits. The major inspiration for this idea coming from a YouTube video by CGP Grey titled “7 Ways to Maximise Misery,” in which grey analyses these negative habits in a similarly comedic tone. This project is targeted at anyone in lockdown, with an attempt to provide some assistance towards their mental health, while also presenting them with an interesting concept.



CGP Grey. 2017. “7 Ways to Maximise Misery.”YouTube. May 31. Accessed June 6, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LO1mTELoj6o&t=365s>

The theme of the guidebook follows what is basically a form of religious indoctrination, into a cult that worships misery. The structure takes inspiration from the idea of an explorer’s journal, the text itself reflecting this as if someone is exploring the garden of misery. Using a serious tone, humour is generated from the overall absurdity of the book and what it is covering. With this idea, I wanted to explore having a consistent thematic approach, with all the elements working together to elevate this theme.

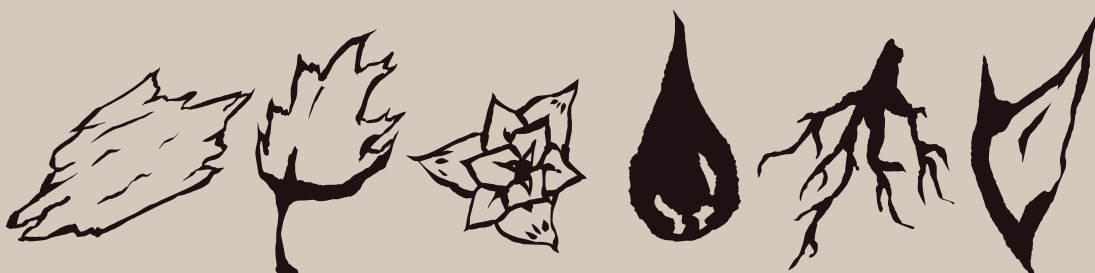
Six Poisons of Happiness

The central element of the book is the “six poisons of happiness” which are a part of the garden of misery. These ideas present the reader with strong religious imagery, relating to Christianity’s Garden of Eden and the forbidden fruit. Along with this the path through the garden, or the path of misery, is a representation of enlightenment in misery. This is another reference to religion, specifically the pilgrimages that worshippers would take to prove their devotion, referring back to the idea that walking through the garden of misery is a pilgrimage.

Each of the poisons of happiness has a correlating object as their physical representation. Each of them being standard things that you would find in a garden, they all have a specific thought process behind why they were chosen. Bark was chosen for exercise, as exercise can be a rough experience, like bark’s texture, however, with perseverance it can be chipped away at to reach the smooth surface of the tree below. A leaf was chosen for diet due to the connotation that plants are healthy. The flower of motivation was the initial idea that began this overall concept, motivation can be viewed as a flower blooming, it is sudden, it is short, but it is still very impactful. Out of all the visualisation, I think that this one is the best, as it has strong symbolism, but is still easy to understand.

With the water of beyond, I referenced pop culture, where reflections are often gateways to somewhere else.

However, ironically this gateway merely leads outside the space one has confined themselves to. The root of companionship not only refers to the family trees, but also to the idea of your roots being an embodiment of where you were raised, and the relationships that make you who you are. Finally, the thorn of rest refers to the saying “a thorn in my side” and that rest will almost always increase reduce your misery. Thus, it is always a thorn on the side of people trying to be miserable. The thorn is also a very sinister object and I think it perfectly encapsulates the mood of the book, hence its final position. I think all of the objects have clear rational thinking behind them, though some are more convoluted than others. The drawing themselves also fit in very well and suit the overall aesthetic nicely.



Consumption

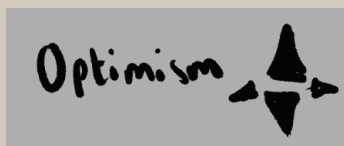
An essential element to the information design of this project is the corruption, which slowly covers more of the page the deadlier the poison. This is very visually appealing and breaks up to monotony of what would be a quite repetitive set of entries. I think that even without the text in the introduction explaining its meaning, it can still be easily interpreted due to the compatibility with the overall theme.

For every asset in the text, including the corruption was made as a raster image in Clip Studio Paint and then converted to a vector artwork using the image trace feature in Illustrator. This method worked very well as it not only gave me the artistic freedom that I am used to, but also the benefit of a vector image quality, and malleable nature



Symptoms

I feel that this is where the project is lacking the most, I originally intended for the symptoms to be represented as symbols. However, through trial and error, it was quite obvious that it didn't fit in thematically with my writing. Along with this, they would interrupt the flow significantly. Thus, I just decided to use words which is a little lacklustre.



Symptoms

Joy

Relief

Typography

There are three main typefaces present in the text, being: High Tower Text, Perpetua, and Old English Text MT. The majority of the book is made up of serif typefaces, these were chosen because they have strong connotations of formality. I chose High Tower Text for the heading because the letters are quite wide, and it gives a feeling of grandeur. While Perpetua was chosen as the body because I thought its compact nature reflected the compact text of old handwritten copies of the bible. To further support this Old English Text was chosen as a beginning letter, similarly to old religious texts.

High Tower Text

Perpetua

Old English Text

Colour

The colour palette is very limited, containing only 5 colours in total. Both the background colour and title page colour were sourced from my moleskin journal, through taking a picture and uploading it into illustrator, helping me narrow down the potential colour scheme. The low values of these colours contrast the strong black of the corruption and the bright text it leaves behind. Along with this, the original text colour is off-black, leaning towards brown, this is to give it the aesthetic of dried ink, also allowing the corruption to have an all-encompassing feel.



Reference picture moleskin Journal

Cover:
#3a0000

Page:
#D3cbbd

Consumption
#000000

Text 1:
#201414

Text 2:
#F5f3e3