

Experimental Type

The City by Ray Bradbury Part II

INTRODUCTION

The Experimental Type project assigned each student with a short story, and the objective was to create a two-page spread that broke away from using the conventional column grid. The project also focused on activating the text to make the reading more engaging while maintaining readability.

The City by Ray Bradbury is a story about a group of astronauts who explore a city that has remained uninhabited for 20,000 years. The city has lay dormant, patiently waiting to seek vengeance against its enemies that have destroyed the planet many years before. As the astronauts cautiously travel throughout the unfamiliar surroundings, the city slowly awakens and recognizes the intruders as descendants of their enemies. Not long after, the astronauts become consumed by the city and are re-animated as robots to be sent to Earth to perpetuate the revenge. In the end, the city peacefully dies knowing the past has been rectified and the destruction continues. This experimental type layout visually portrays the second half of the story where the astronauts begin to feel the imminent danger and ultimately meet their untimely fate.

METHODS

Story Analysis: Prior to designing, I read the short story multiple times to fully understand the plot and the theme to find a concept to represent visually. I made notes of recurring elements that I noticed such as the city's "senses" awakening and any symbolism that I had interpreted from the text. From this analysis, I was able to realize that the second half of the story is about the city and its vindictive feelings towards the intruders.

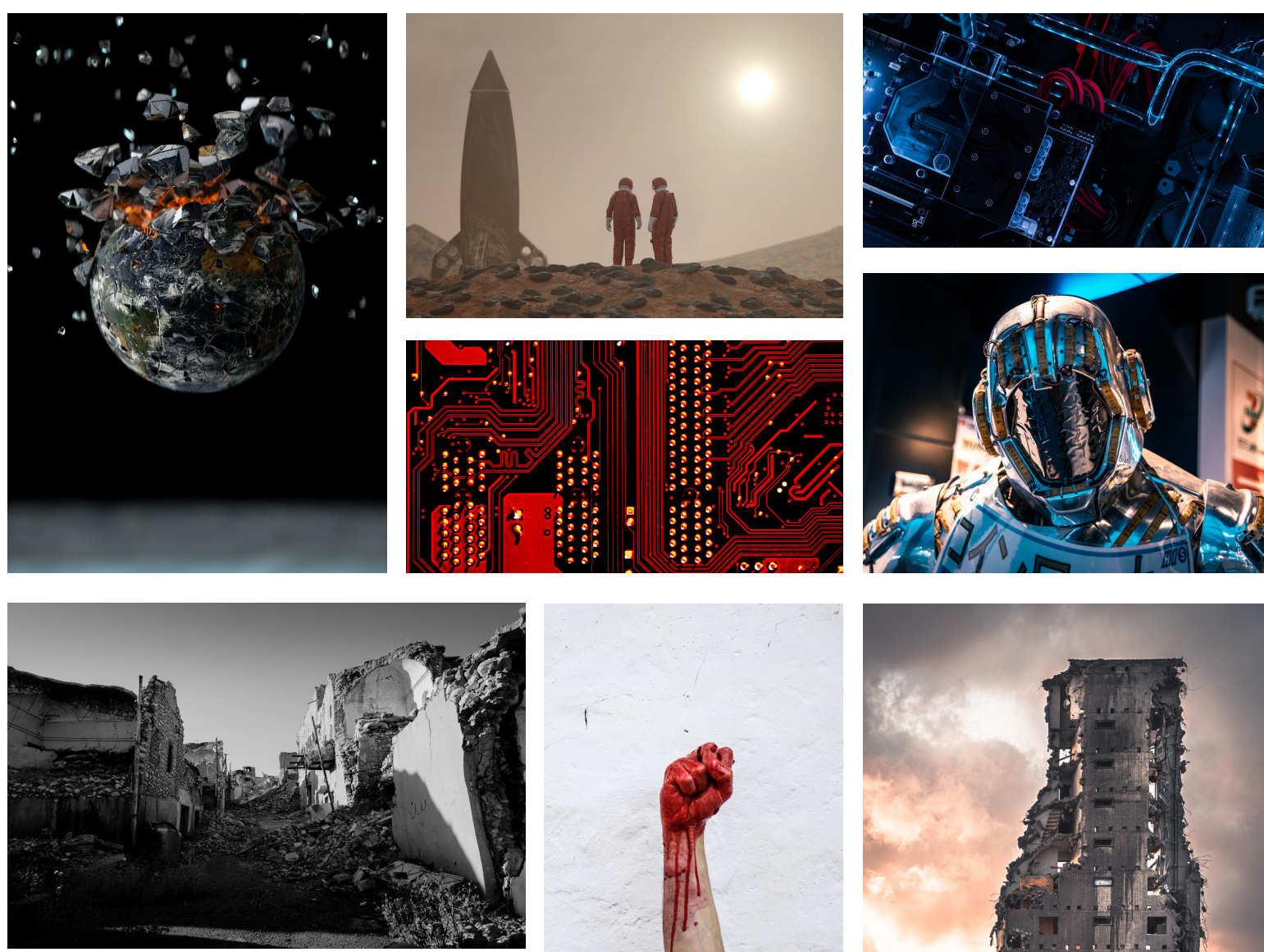
Moodboard: A moodboard is a collage of images that guide the direction and concept of a project. Moodboards can be used as a reference for a particular style in which to portray the chosen concept or can be used as inspiration on what feeling designers would like to evoke in the work.

Sketches: Designers create sketches before transferring their work digitally onto the computer because drawing allows for many quick explorations of ideas. Moreover, sketches encourages designers to focus solely on the idea itself first rather than the technicalities when producing digital versions. Sketches help designers document their work and act as rough drafts when they brainstorm concepts.

Development: In this stage, designers begin to generate digital versions of their work. Developing concepts on the appropriate software, in this case InDesign was used, to produce more refined versions of the design.

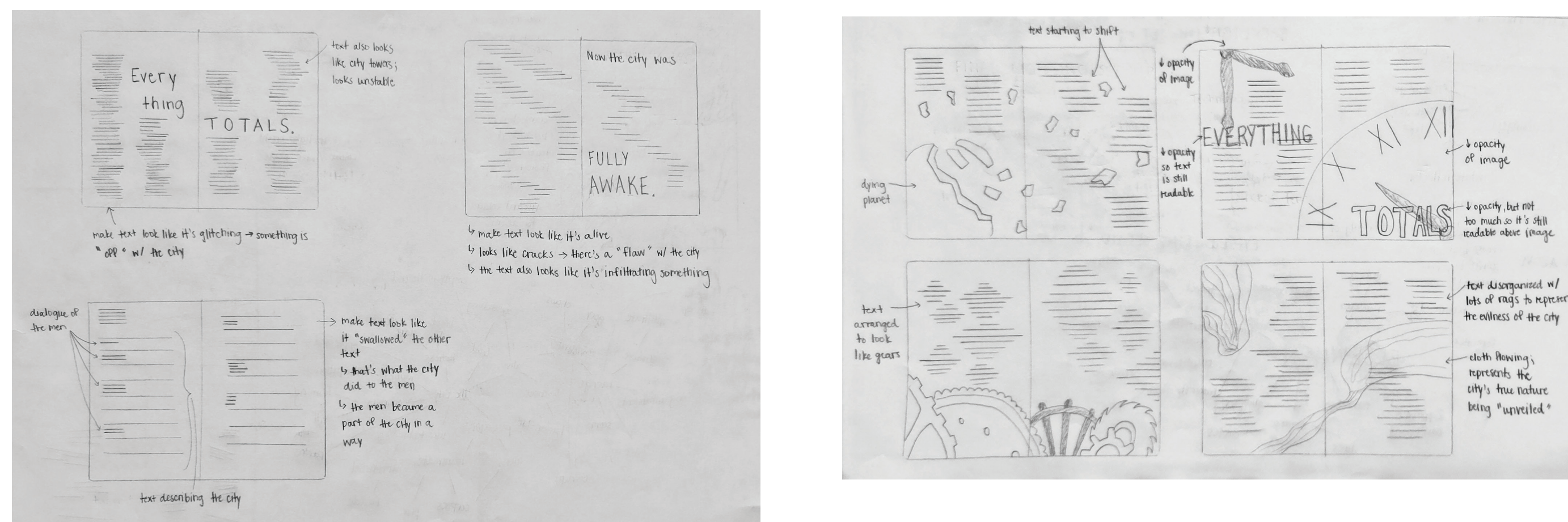
Moodboard

For this moodboard, I captured the feelings of ruination, isolation, and detachment with the collected images, as well as concepts of technology, revenge, and mechanization.



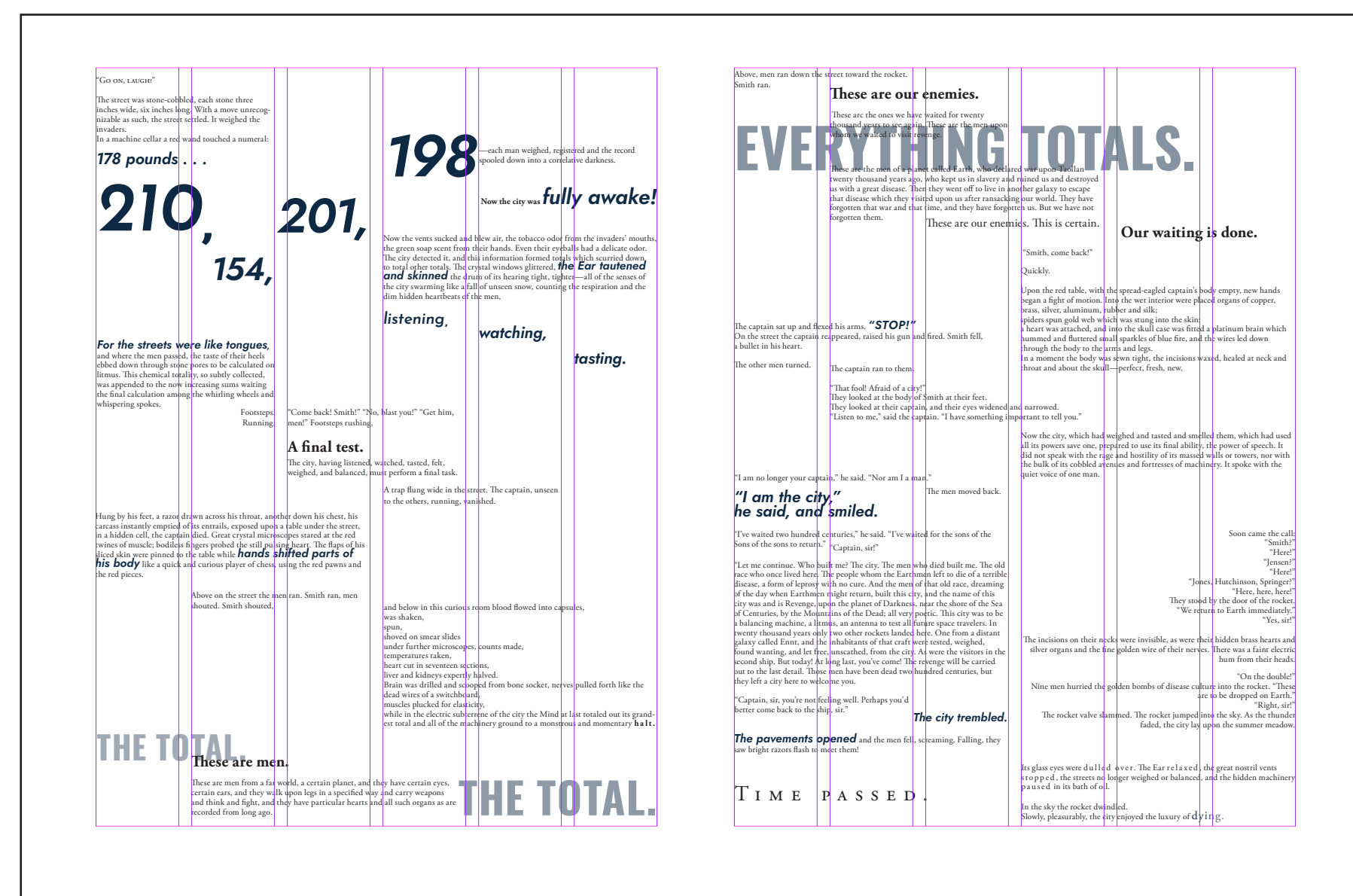
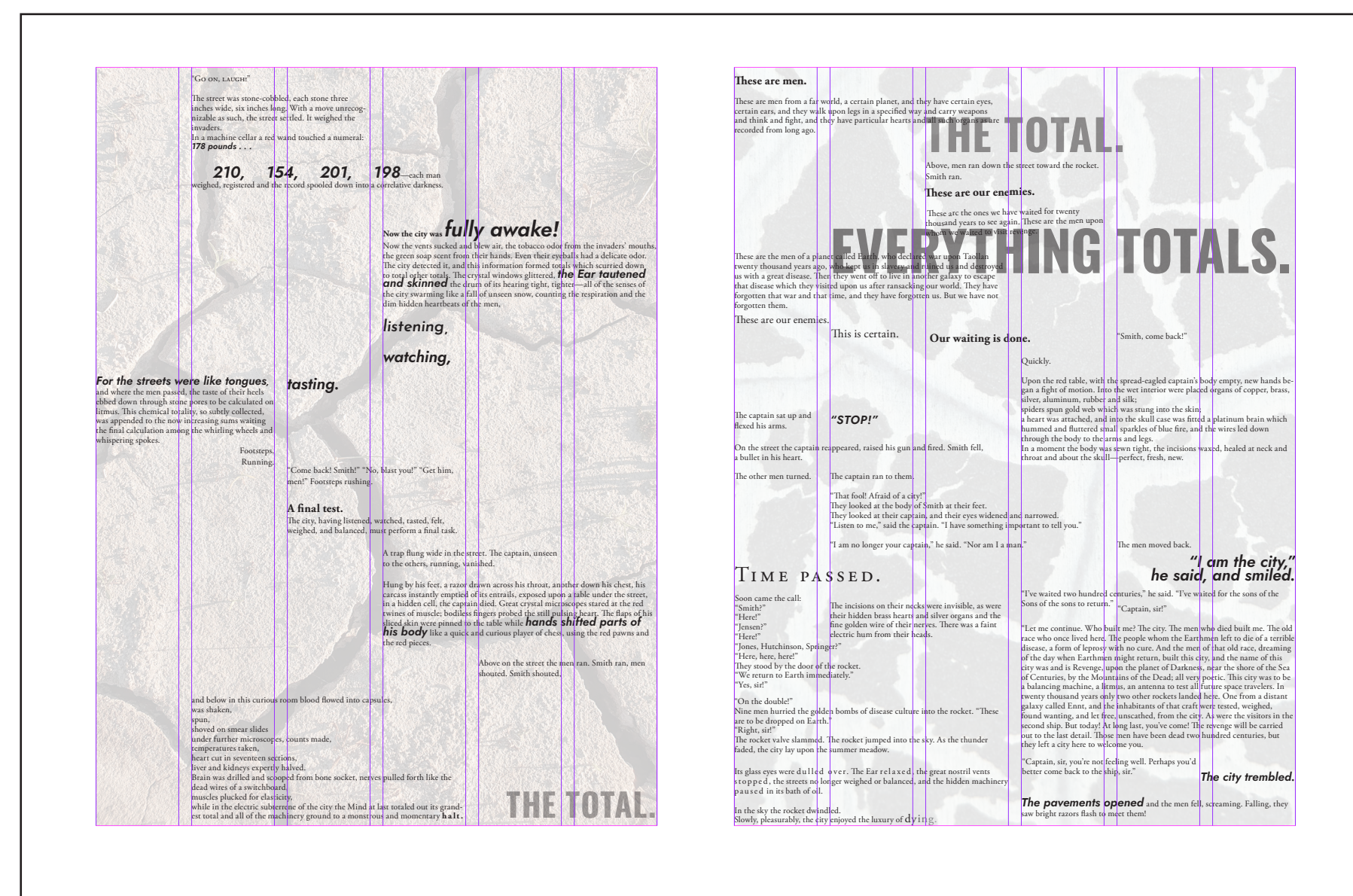
Sketches

The following sketches communicate the different ways I explored breaking the column grid with the lines representing the text being arranged in a variety of ways across the two-page spread.

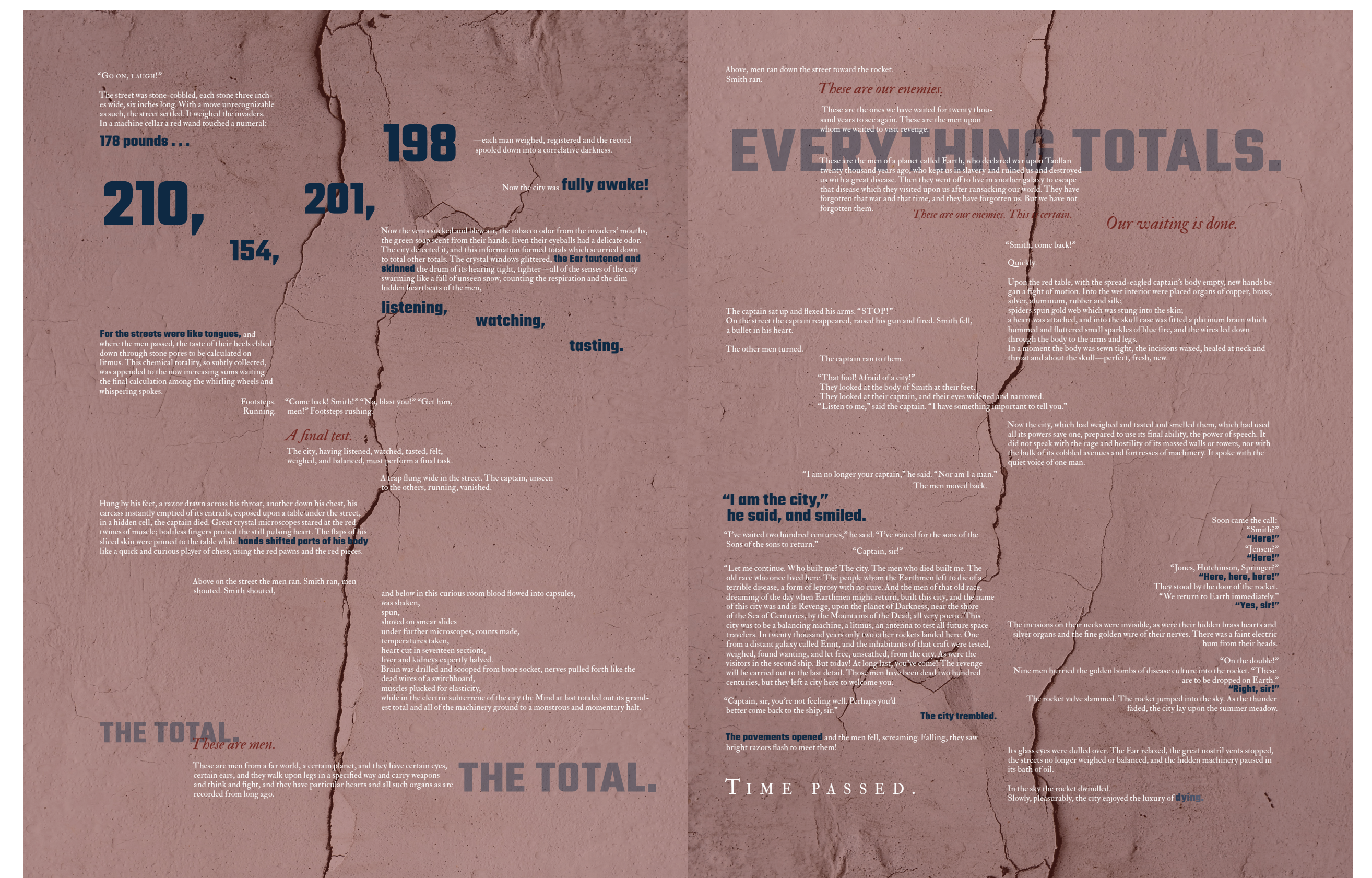


Development

In the initial version, I used pictures of cracks to assist in the placement of the text on the column grid. For the following version, I positioned the text on the grid to behave and appear as cracks instead which also improved readability. The refinements on the digital versions led to the final results with a more minimal image of cracks being used as the background to allow the text to be the main focus on the spread.



RESULTS



CONCLUSION

The concept for the layout comes from the idea that the city's "flaws" are becoming more visible. The image of cracks on the spread shows that the city's modest façade is gradually breaking apart. Similarly, the theme is echoed by the text being staggered across the column grid to imitate fissures to emphasize the unstable, apprehensive atmosphere of the narrative. The tight leading of the body text also reinforces the tension felt within the story. Moreover, the city's unravelling is most evident through its senses by reacting with what it sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes as the men explore the surroundings. Teko is the typeface chosen for the city's personification as the thick, wide letterforms emulate the mechanical and oppressive nature of the city.

Additionally, the body copy uses IM FELL Double Pica because the dated appearance of the typeface reflects the city's age and how long it has waited to exact its revenge on its visitors. Furthermore, the italicized text represents the city's thinking during the visit. The faded text in the background symbolizes the dominant, recurring thought that the city hungers for vengeance against the men. Finally, only the last portion of the story is right-aligned to reflect that something is "off" with the astronauts as they have been converted into robots before they return to Earth to cause more destruction.

REFERENCES

Bradbury, Ray. "The City." *The Illustrated Man*, CSUCLC, pp. 1-183, csuclc.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/illustrated-man-by-ray-bradbury.pdf. Accessed 19 April 2022.

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Celine Trinidad • trinidadc3@mymacewan.ca