

A linear story of **typography.**

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Doodles of cavemen to

THE ALPHABET IS A SET OF SIGNS REPRESENTING SOUNDS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE. THUS IT IS A SIGN REPRESENTATION OF A SIGN SYSTEM. A VISUAL EQUIVALENT OF SOUND SIGN.



Writing began with pictures, but books as a body of knowledge was shaped by scribes.

UNTIL NINTH CENTURY, GREEK AND LATIN WERE WRITTEN IN CAPITAL LETTERS. MUCH

LATER small letters were introduced to make the process of writing, and hence book production, faster. Punctuations, were used, in different ways; at different times: They were aimed at - providing - breathing cues, while reading aloud, to a group. Punctuations also, helped to control, modulation and, tone of the reader. Seldom were they aids, to provide logical breaks in thought. The very process of making hand-written books justified the limited number of copies which in turn hindered spread of literacy. The power of knowledge remained in the hands of a chosen few. Against this background, movable type printing was revolutionary.



On the one hand, it was writing by artificial means; at the same time, mechanised reproduction had full potential for indiscriminate spread of ideas, desirable or

otherwise. Early printing tried to replicate handwritten books in form and decor. Printed books looked the same, but were produced using a mechanised process. ¶ We have come a long way from that point of time in the history of printing. All efforts from then by enterprising men had two objectives: enhancing the form of letters and improving the speed of the process - composing as well as printing. ¶ Letters took many shapes and styles moving farther and farther away from calligraphy. From Gutenberg's Bible script to Jenson, Aldine, Caslon, Baskerville, **Bodoni** and a plethora of shapes and styles afterwards. ¶ Linotype, and later monotype, completely automated text composing by casting and



arranging metal types to a set measure, thus making the process faster. Matrices replaced craftsmanship of the skilled punch cutter. Standardisation and limitation in font sizes and styles were a necessary evil of the system. The efforts to develop still faster methods continued.

Introduction of **photocomposition** marked the beginning of demetalisation of typography.

The physical form and texture of metal types gave way to a mere **picture of letter forms** capable of enlargement, reduction, condensation and expansion. Correction lines were cutout and replaced by pasting freshly

composed lines of text. The advent of computer and digital typography brought in the ultimate flexibility and freedom to play and experiment with type, a process limited only by IMAGINATION.

movable types of Guten berg: a long long

Typography may be defined as the art of rightly disposing printing materials according to specific purpose; of so arranging the letters, distributing the space and controlling the type as to aid to the maximum the readers comprehension of the text. Typography is the efficient means to an essentially utilitarian and only accidentally aesthetic end, for enjoyment of patterns is rarely the reader's chief aim. Therefore any disposition of printing material which, whatever the intention, has the effect of coming between author and reader is wrong. It follows that in the printing of books meant to be read there is little room for bright typography. Even dullness and monotony in the typesetting are far less vicious to a reader than typographical eccentricity of pleasantry. The typography of books require an obedience to convention which is almost absolute - and for good reason.

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Stanly Morrison

Ty p o g r a p h y
 of our time is the act o f playin g with
 letter forms, initially without any definite
 purpose; of arranging letters

arbitrarily and freely without any limit
 ng grid or meas ure to aid total engagement
 of the reader with the text. **TYPOGRAPHY** is an effective
 means to an essentially **expres**
sive but at times functional end for, appropriate-
 ness of form to content is the **designer's** chief
 aim. Therefore any de **sign** that me rely
 document au thor
 s words to the reader is ina
 dequate.

word is for seeing as well alo
 ng with reading and hence has a
 lot of room for inno
 vative an
 d **gra**phy can p ut o
 d will be an
 injustice to the value of
 content. Typogra
 phy of
 books, th erefore
 need **narrowly** set
 not obey **son**
 conventions that are **ted.** unrea able and

journey at snail's pace; a spate of inventions then



a book is to be read,

how

reading

a book is to be read
implying that it is not a picture,
to be hung on the wall
the act of reading
and the circumstances of that act
determine
the size of the book and
the kind of type used
reading, not what is read
a good type is suitable
for any and every book

-Eric Gill

the dominant organ of sensory and social orientation in pre-alphabet societies was the ear. hearing was believing. the phonetic alphabet forced the magic world of the ear to yield to the neutral world of the eye. man was given an eye for an ear. western history was shaped for some three thousand years by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet, a medium that depends solely on the eye for comprehension. the alphabet is a construct of fragmented bits



experience

so says convention
a book is not a showpiece
can we all agree?
text stimulate thought
interpret content and
effectiveness of design through
an affair with content
evoke emotional responses
engage the reader
type in any form
can be appropriate to communicate

neutral world of the eye. man was given an eye for an ear. western history was shaped for some three thousand years by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet, a medium that depends solely on the eye for comprehension. the alphabet is a construct of fragmented bits and parts which have no semantic meaning in themselves and which must be strung-together-in-a-line, bead-like, and in a prescribed order. its use fostered and encouraged the habit of perceiving all environment in visual and spatial terms - particularly in terms of a space and of a time that are uniform, continuous and connected. the fragmenting of activities, our habit of thinking in bits and parts - specialism - inflicted the step-by-step liner departmentalizing process inherent in the technology of the alphabet.

- marshall mcluhan.

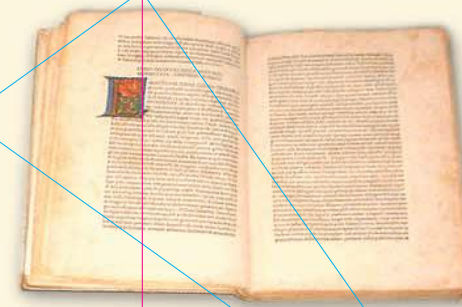
to mechanise a natural process: the dawn of

According to structuralist theory, a sign derives its meaning in relation to the surrounding (environment) signs. Signs have no relationship with the signified. Thus we recognise *horse* as different from *house* or *mouse* which are also different from *tree*, *cupboard* or *dirt*. In the same manner, a typographic letter derives its identity from the alphabet rather than words. The alphabet has a specific order and the respective letters have their position within the alphabet. Hence, for the letter, whatever be the language, the alphabet is the signified. Printed letters responded to this signified in a variety of ways. Early letter forms were calligraphic while geomet-

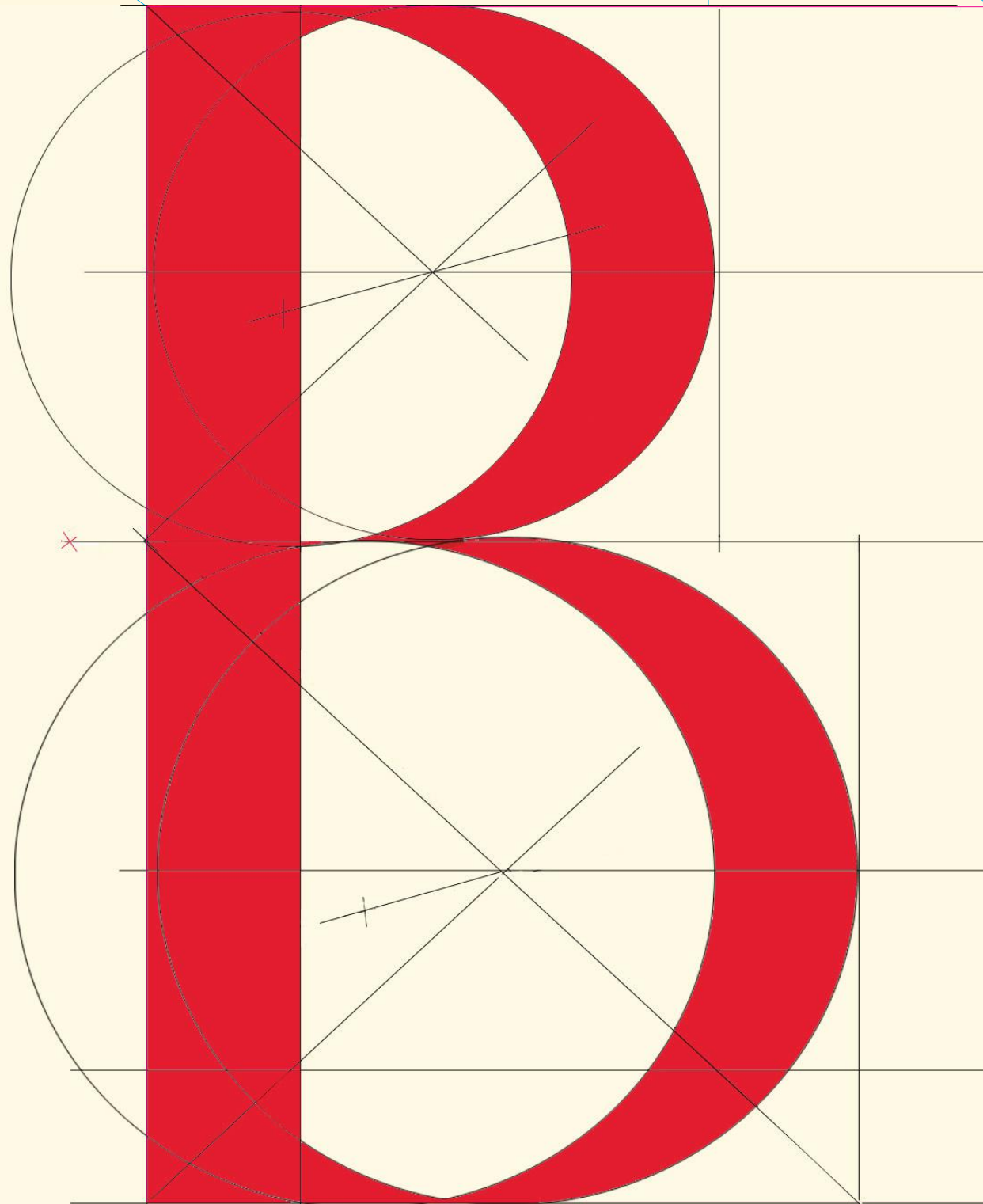
tyy५|grafi५ is य३त
ano॥२ अ३nage रिअ३tem
to repreअ३nt म३nguaद३
just म३ke the अ३nage
रिअ३tem ०५ sp३ch.

ric shapes, modelled on the proportions of human body became more prevalent. Now we have almost an infinite variety of type forms as a variation of the basic alphabet, the recognition of which depend on the order and position of each letter in the alphabet. Type forms are yet another signage system representing language, just like the signage of sounds. So long as one can decode the system from the order and place of letters in an alphabet, the form of the type face is immaterial. It should then be possible to adapt the type form of one language to express another. For example, it will be interesting to combine the shapes and phonetic representations of Devanagari alphabet with that of English.

no-holds-barred digital typography. Born out of



THE SIZE OF A BOOK IS NOT REGULATED BY WHAT IS IN IT, BUT BY WHETHER IT IS TO BE HELD IN HAND (A NOVEL) OR AT A TABLE (REFERENCE BOOK OR DICTIONARY) OR AT A DESK OR LECTERN (A CHOIR BOOK) OR KEPT IN POCKET (A PRAYER BOOK)... The top margin needs to be sufficiently wide to isolate the type from the surrounding landscape of furniture and carpets (like a picture frame, to isolate the painting from the wall paper). On the other hand, the outer and bottom margins need more width than is required for mere isolation, for it is by these margins that the book is held in the hand; enough must be allowed for thumbs and bottom margins need more than the side or outer ones. *Eric Gill, Essay on Typography.*



typography. Born out of

that heritage,

an attempt for a

typographic synthesis.

