

will remain the exception. In such cases the text face will be a good roman, and sanserif will be reserved for emphasis.

Even more than the historic typefaces, the "artists'" typefaces are disturbing because of their strongly individual character, which is in direct opposition to the spirit of our age and makes them unsuitable for properly designed printing today. No period was so preoccupied with individualism as that from the beginning of the present century up to the outbreak of war. The "artists'" types of this period reached their lowest point. None are in any way better than their predecessors, which are preferable for their superior quality.

Nevertheless the classic faces like Walbaum, Didot, Bodoni, etc. cannot serve as bread-and-butter types today. In terms of their conception they possess romantic associations, they divert the reader's attention into certain emotional and intellectual spheres and clearly belong to a past with which we have no connection. A natural development — not a forced one — would hardly have brought them back again.

To my mind, looking at the modern romans, it is the unpretentious works of the anonymous type-designers that have best served the spirit of their age: Sorbonne, Nordische Antiqua, Französische Antiqua, and so on. These three typefaces and their derivatives are the best designs from the pre-war period.* They are easily legible; they are also above all in a technical sense useful and free from personal idiosyncrasies — in the best sense of the word, uninteresting. They can therefore be used everywhere, when a roman type has to be used because no appropriate sanserif is available.

On the expressiveness of type

Those who claim that sanserif is the typeface of our own age are often told that it does not express anything.

Do other typefaces express anything? Is it really a typeface's job to express spiritual matters?

Yes and no. The widely held belief that every typeface has some "spiritual" content is certainly not true of either gothic type (textura) or sanserif. The enormous number of typefaces available today, which express only an absence of creativity and are the result of the feebly eclectic nature of the pre-war period, may lead to the erroneous conclusion that gothic type

* In the postwar period, the type foundries repeated their old mistakes in an even worse form; their daily "best sellers" have not the slightest importance for the future.

- individual typefaces accurately reflected spirit of times (early XIXC)
- degradation of values

expresses peace, solemnity and religion, and italic, on the contrary, expresses cheerfulness and joy. However, all the innumerable things that can be expressed in writing, of whatever kind, at any time, are set down in one — or at most two — kinds of lettering or type. Yes, the character of gothic is religious and solemn, that of rococo (as far as the wealthy class is concerned) is light-hearted, but the typography of those times, even when expressing something contrary to the "zeitgeist," is always logical and stylistically consistent. In the Gothic period even profane texts were set in textura, and in the Rococo period an invitation to a funeral looks in no way different from any light-hearted printed matter of the same period (cf. illustration on p. 20).

All lettering, especially type, is first and foremost an expression of its own time, just as every man is a symbol of his time. What textura and also rococo type express is not religiosity, but the Gothic, not cheerfulness, but the Rococo; and what sanserif expresses is not lack of feeling but the twentieth century! There is no personal expression of the designer, nor was it ever his aim, except in the first years of our century. The different kinds of type get their character from the different ideas of form in every age. Every punch-cutter wished to create the best possible typeface. If Didot did something different from Fleischmann, it was because times had changed, not because he wanted to produce something "special," "personal," or "unique." The conception of what a good typeface should look like had simply changed.

The eclectic nature of the pre-war period led people to play with typefaces of every period, thus revealing their own artistic poverty. A book about the Thirty Years' War had to be set in a different face from Mörike's poems or an industrial catalogue. But St Augustine was set in textura, not in uncial! All printed matter of whatever kind that is created today must bear the hallmark of our age, and should not imitate printed matter of the past. This applies not only to the typeface but of course to every element of the manufacture: the illustrations, the binding, etc. Earlier periods, unlike us ever conscious of themselves, always denied the past, often very crudely; that can be seen in the building of cathedrals, in the general development of culture, and in typography. The punch-cutter Unger, creator of Ungerfraktur (c. 1800) and a famous typographer, declared that Schwabacher was an ugly type and introduced letter-spacing for emphasis in fraktur (previously, Schwabacher had been used for emphasis in fraktur). He was absolutely right. His age, the Rococo, found that gothic, and its ways of expression, including Schwabacher, were out of harmony with their own

contrast is just contemporaneity
(= cipher)

times, and hence ugly: Unger was merely its mouthpiece in our field of typography.

An art historian may prize the good qualities of the old Schwabacher type, and we too can see that it was an excellent face of its period, but we must not use it today, it is totally unsuitable for the 20th century. So are all the other historical typefaces.

Like everyone else, we too must look for a typeface expressive of our own age. Our age is characterized by an all-out search for clarity and truth, for purity of appearance. So the problem of what typeface to use is necessarily different from what it was in previous times. We require from type plainness, clarity, the rejection of everything that is superfluous. That leads us to a geometric construction of form. In sanserif we find a type that comes very close to these requirements, so it must become the basis for all future work to create the typeface of our age. The character of an age cannot be expressed only in rich and ornamental forms. The simple geometric forms of sanserif express something too: clarity and concentration on essentials, and so the essence of our time. To express this is important. But it is not important to create special types for advertising perfume manufacturers and fashion shops, or for lyrical outpourings by poets. It was never the task of punch-cutters of the past to create a type for a single kind of expression. The best typefaces are those which can be used for all purposes, and the bad ones those which can be used only for visiting-cards or hymn books. A good letter is one that expresses itself, or rather "speaks," with the utmost distinctiveness and clarity. And a good typeface has no purpose beyond being of the highest clarity.

Sanserif, looked at in detail, is admittedly capable of improvement, but there is no doubt that it is the basic form from which the typeface of the future will grow.

Other individual expressive possibilities of type have nothing to do with typography. They are in contradiction to its very nature. They hinder direct and totally clear communication, which must always be the first purpose of typography.

Orthography as at present or all in lower case?

In roman type and its simpler form, sanserif, we possess faces that have been made out of not one but two alphabets. This combination took place in the 15th century. The one alphabet, the capitals, known as majuscules, was made by the old Romans as a form shaped by the chisel, at the beginning of our era. The other alphabet, the small or lower-case letters, called

minuscules, dates from the time of the emperor Charlemagne, about A.D. 800; the so-called Carolingian minuscule, a written letter made with a pen, with ascenders and descenders. This script too was originally complete in itself. The concept of "capital letters" was foreign to it. It was during the Renaissance that these two forms of letter, the roman capitals and the Carolingian minuscules, were combined to make one alphabet, the "Antiqua" or "roman." This is the explanation of the dichotomy, especially noticeable in German, between the capitals and the smaller letters. It is much less noticeable in other languages, especially French and English, because they use capital letters much less often than in German. Settings in roman type in English always look better than in German because they employ fewer accents and in particular do not use capitals for the first letters of nouns.

For a long time now there have been efforts to abolish the use of capital initial letters for nouns and make German writing conform with the international style. This signalling of nouns with capitals started in the Baroque period and seems to us now no longer useful. The rules governing our use of capitals make teaching at school more difficult and also present problems in later life because of the many exceptions. Jakob Grimm, one of the founders of German studies, advocated its abolition already a hundred years ago, and referred to the Old and Middle High German literature in which capitals were used only for proper names and beginnings of sentences. Following him, capitals have been used by Germanic scholars only in this way.

The aesthetic critic finds this mixture of two such differently designed faces displeasing. For this reason many artists prefer to use capitals only, to avoid mixing them with lower case. In France recently there have been many examples of the independent use of lower case only (see the advertisement on this page) — mainly in fashion publicity and the announcements in fashion-shop windows. Besides the exclusive use of lower case for text can be seen the use of capitals alone for headings — and vice-versa, capitals for text and lower case for headings. From this one can see that it is now recognized that the two alphabets of roman are really two different styles, and should be used in parallel, but not mixed.

The New Typography does not accept either of these alternatives to the previous system — adjustment to the international writing method, or division of roman type into capitals and lower case and regarding them as separate alphabets, even if this is against current opinion. It accepts neither the view of the Germanists nor that of the artists following the eclectic