

SWEET  
BREAD  
FOR  
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When I look around, I see disorder in the world—needless chaos and messes. I sense panic and stress. In fact, I feel it myself. It rattles my soul and gives me a headache and a sourness of the stomach. This is because everywhere I am assaulted by sloppy text that is displeasing to the eye. There is no respect for proper letter spacing and font choice. Letters are squished together, piled up, overlapped and jumbled. They are inappropriately and self-indulgently tracked out. People mix typefaces with incompatible type styles.<sup>1</sup> Or they think, “Why use a simple, clean typeface to convey an idea when you can use three or five or twelve.” This is wrong. This is sad. This is an affront to a cultured society, and it must be stopped. Immediately, before everything is tossed away to an angry wind. Order must be allowed to thrive, to flourish, to bring us into a tidy harmony.

<sup>1</sup> Setting a script typeface in all caps shows a lack of character and good judgment. Never do it.

There are those who say that technology is interfering with our society's intelligence and literacy. This is not true. No, technology conveys thoughts more cleanly and rationally than our imperfect mortal abilities.<sup>2</sup> That is why I do not believe the text messages and the instant messages are corrupting our ability to communicate (although they do not allow for typographic control, which I cannot tolerate). It is not the shortening of words into grunt-like abbreviations that troubles me so. Instead, it is the fact that 96 percent of all written communications in the world contain words that by their very appearance dissuade people from reading them.

The reason more people do not glean wisdom from *War and Peace* is not because it is dull. The reason people only pretend to have read *Ulysses* is not because of the maddening run-on sentences and dearth of punctuation. No. Absolutment non! It is because no one has taken the time and care to properly set the type,<sup>3</sup> thus rendering the words useless.

Readable type also has psychological benefits, and if we think psychosomatically, benefits to our physical well-being. Take a moment to study the following word.

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**COROLLARY:** *To truly increase literacy, typography must be taught in even the earliest grades. If we do not instill in our young citizens the importance of properly set type—and the ability to kern—then we will perpetuate the cycle of creating literature with unattractive letter spacing that no one wants to read (and no one will read), causing people's literacy to grow sloppy and feeble and atrophied.*

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# PERFECTION

It is a well spaced word in a font that was chosen to help convey meaning. The word itself is the yin and the typeface is the yang—a harmonious, soul-lifting balance that your eye perceives and your mind appreciates. Imagine if all words did this. What great peace and order could be accomplished if the way we communicated was inherently beautiful?

For example, let us posit that the leaders of Lichtenstein and Alphania<sup>4</sup> were attempting to broker peace between their nations. If all their communiqués were sloppily kerned, they surely wouldn't be very pleasant to read. It wouldn't matter if one said to the other, "I will meet any demand you have to ensure peace, even if I must groom your overexcited and incontinent poodle every third Thursday of the month." The words would lose their sincerity and would foster a sense of unease if the letters were incorrectly spaced.

<sup>2</sup> I admire the effort of men who hand kerned type, but when I look at their work, I see fragments of sloppiness everywhere. Like little flecks of white lint on a black 12-gauge cashmere sweater.

<sup>3</sup> I would do so myself, but the publishers complain that I'm too exacting. This is because they are idiots.

<sup>4</sup> If you do not believe Alphania exists, you are an imbecile. The reason you do not know of it is simple. In 1408, the king became displeased by the appearance of the country's name on a continental map (the letters were haphazardly spaced). When His Highness attempted to argue his point, the ruling society of cartographers (a short-sighted and vindictive group) placed an infinite ban on the nation, preventing it from ever appearing on a map again.

I must also address the vital issue of honesty. Typographic integrity cannot be feigned, and pretending with type only leads to disillusionment. Never, ever, ever fake condensed type. Do not try to create your own kerning pair when a master has already done it for you. Emulating a type style with a word processing button should never be done if the font includes a typeface in that style.<sup>5</sup> Attempting to alter a font so it looks like one you do not have at your disposal is arrogant and reckless. Only idiots do that.

One more bit of stupidity I must comment on is the raging abstraction perpetuated by many designers today. They are careless and undisciplined. They play Jackson Pollock with their type and I find that annoying. I not only refuse to read their work, I cannot read their work. Being clever with letters for the sake of cleverness is not clever at all. It is anti-clever. It is idiocy and it is bad typography.

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Now is the time to take a stand for orderly type. Uphold cleanliness above all else. Enjoy using type that is stable, healthy and visually pleasing, and you will learn that nothing is more fulfilling. Using it properly is rewarding work and your duty to society. Never forget that order is beauty, beauty is order, and type should be both.

You should thank yourself for taking the time to read my masterwork.<sup>6</sup> To keep yourself alert and armed for righting typographic wrongs, read my [Maxisms](#). They will be your compass and lighthouse as you navigate the choppy waters of sloppy text. Good luck.

<sup>5</sup> For example, you must not italicize Gill Sans when you can set it in Gill Sans Italic. It may seem like the same thing, but it's impertinent and inconsiderate.

<sup>6</sup> This has also been referred to as my manifesto, which may seem odd since it is not hundreds of pages long and has not been written by someone with an unkempt beard and filthy military surplus clothing. I believe in simplicity in all its forms. That is why I am inclined toward brevity. And why I comb my hair.