

The end of
self-evidence

Aaaaahhhh uohuoh ouh-ouh

Three type designers walk into a bar... a tech company in a small town in California. They have travelled to the United States to talk about letters. They want to talk about the difference between written and typified language, the influence that technology has on that subject and in particular about the influence that it might have in the future. This is what they mean with typified language: writing with the use of prefabricated letters, on the computer, on a typewriter, or on your smartphone. Uniform, repeatable and moveable letters, as Gutenberg invented more than 500 years ago, and which we use to this day.

The reason for their visit to the West Coast was a recent technological development, which was initiated thanks to a collaboration with Adobe, Apple, Google & Microsoft. On 14 September 2016, during the international typographic conference ATypI in Warsaw, these companies together introduced the technology *OpenType Variable Fonts*. From that moment on, the three type designers kept wondering what these technologies would mean for their own practice. Up till now, they were used to designing letters to mark the contours of a specific form. But with the introduction of *OpenType Variable Fonts*, this seemed to change. It was no longer the challenge to design these contours, but to create a programme that would determine these contours itself. Whilst considering this, the designers eventually came to the conclusion that, if

they could create letters whereby the contour is designed by itself, they could eventually also fulfil their dream: a self-writing letter. A digital letter that is able to write much more beautifully than a human being. With this result of their investigation, the three type designers went to America, to present it over there to the companies that underlie the technique on which *OpenType Variable Fonts* was based.

0.0000013

Since the world of the letters does not exist for 99.999% of the people — as letters are ‘something natural’ for them and thus obvious — the official presentation of *OpenType Variable Fonts* did not get any attention in the media. And subsequently the other 0.001% — those who know that letters do not come out of the blue, and therefore also know that letters are unnatural — was also barely interested. Two years later, the video of the official presentation had only been watched by 8259 people, of whom 70 people ‘liked’ it and one person ‘disliked’ it. From this, we can draw the conclusion that 0.0000013% of the world population is aware of the existence of *OpenType Variable Fonts*. So most likely, more than 99.99999% of the people is not yet aware. In case you are one of those: you can find the video at <https://youtu.be/6kizDePhcFU>.

In short, the bottom line is that *OpenType Variable Fonts* in particular differs from the current font formats, because it

can contain various, related fonts in one font. As it were, *OpenType Variable Fonts* are a whole family of letters in a single font.

Pragmatically, the *OpenType Variable Fonts* stem from the desire to be able to send fonts to a browser more quickly, so that the user — a reader — has less trouble with FOUT & FOIT (Flash of Unstyled/Invisible Text). This is an effect that occurs when a website wants to use its own fonts, and a font file has to be downloaded from a server for that purpose. Due to this, there is a moment when the font in which the text will be shown, is not yet available for the browser. There are two solutions to this problem: FOUT, during which the text is shown in advance in another font, until the desired font has been downloaded. Due to this, the text is immediately visible, but the font suddenly changes. The other solution is FOIT, during which the text remains invisible until the font is available. Research has shown that for both solutions the speed with which a text appears in its final form, is of crucial influence to the user experience. Apparently, the difference hereby is determined on the level of milliseconds. Every byte counts. That is why these big companies invented *OpenType Variable Fonts*.

However, on an abstract level the technology also implies that *OpenType Variable Fonts* make fonts variable, which is implicitly mentioned in the name. The underlying trick to be able to send the fonts to the user more quickly, is based

on the simple calculation that less data is needed when determining only one outline for a font, than when sending two separate fonts that have their own outline. During which subsequently it must be further defined, how these can be adjusted to another letter shape. You can compare it with a circular tour. The trip Amsterdam – New York – Amsterdam – San Francisco – Amsterdam, is much more effective when you go straight from New York to San Francisco. While you can always say about a digital letter that it only exists once it is displayed, it even goes a step further in case of the variable fonts. A letter of a variable font can only be displayed when it is calculated. And just like there is an unlimited amount of subdivisions between the 0 and the 1, this is also the case for a letter in a variable font. Each variable font contains an endless amount of intermediate fonts. It is up to the type designer to determine how the font changes. From thin to thick, from thick to thicker, from narrow to wide, from serif to sans serif, from angular to round, from a lot of contrast to little contrast. But also, provided that a type designer feels like it, from A to O. Because the contour of the letter is dynamic, the shape of the letter is also dynamic. This dynamification of the letter shape means that this development is significantly different to all other typographic developments over the past 500 years. Up till now, the shape of a letter was inviolable. A letter was just a letter. Definitive in its shape. Static to time: it remains the same, now, in the past and in the future. The letter was timeless. A letter was a thing that was fixed and

could never change. Just like all the books with letters that were printed over the past 500 years.

But what appeared to be obvious for us up till now — the shape of a letter — has come to an end thanks to *OpenType Variable Fonts*. While, up till now, letters were obvious in both a literal and a figurative sense, this can be completely different in the future. Then a letter now will be different than later. And since this is in complete contradiction to our ideas about letters, it is also so difficult to depict this at this moment. It seems impossible: a situation in which $A = O$. Even though we now have this technology that makes it actually possible.

Variable fonts relate to the fonts that we mainly use in the year 2018, just like the internet relates to traditional books. And just like the dynamisation of information by means of the technology of the internet has unexpectedly transformed all aspects of our daily life over the past 20 years, the dynamisation of the letter shape will also without a doubt have such unexpected consequences. Moreover, we have to realize that people have never really been able to predict the socio-cultural consequences of technological developments. Not in the case of the internet, and not in the case of variable fonts. And since this time it is about the existential materials of our existence, namely typified language, there's a good chance that this transformation will be much larger than ever before. For us, it is impossible to

depict the results of this case, just like it was impossible, 20 years ago, to predict the ultimate influence of the internet. This is what Søren Kierkegaard said about this issue: 'Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.' In short: insight always works backwards, never forwards.

ONE TO ONE

Back to California. Together with the experts responsible for the typography at the tech company, the three type designers sit at a square table with a view over an impressive canteen. The table they sit at is 85 cm high, the canteen almost 30 metres. They sit on a type of balcony that allows them to look from above at the employees who are eating their lunch. The people sit at long tables, between gigantic trees and most of them wear the colour of the letter: black. The scale of the trees gives the impression of real nature. At one time, those trees were brought into the building through enormous glass doors of no less than 16 x 28 metres. Now, these doors divide the inside from the outside, just as the contours of letters do. People say that the doors can be opened or closed within 12 minutes and that with their height of 28 metres, these doors are made of the largest panes of glass that were ever made in one piece. As the trees were placed well before the building was finished and put into use by the employees, no one has ever seen the doors move for real. It remains speculation therefore

whether those doors will ever move again. And perhaps more importantly: what would the reason for that be?

During a moment of silence, somebody mentions that it is indeed very special that the restaurant in which they find themselves truly looks one to one like the rendering that could be found on internet many years ago. After this remark, one of the letter designers spontaneously and with a strong German accent asks the question: [du: ju: nəʊtəkʰtsa:n]? The people from the company react visibly surprised. They look at him as if he speaks a language they cannot identify. Then he tries again, this time more clearly than the first time: [du: ju: nəʊtəkʰtsa:n]? But again, the response reflects only surprise. Confused faces, wide eyes, speechless. And in order to finally create clarity, the German guy, after a short and especially unpleasant silence, simply tries it again - for the third time. He sticks his chest out a bit, sits a bit more upright: [du: ju: nəʊ 'Aaaaahhhh uohuoh ouh-ouh']? To which the hosts spontaneously and particularly clearly relieved reply with: [oʊju: mi:n 'ta:zæn].

Apparently, words exist which we do not know how to pronounce. And words of which we do not even know how we should write them at all. How would you write the yell of Tarzan? In the official document containing the trade mark bearing the numbers 2210506, 3841800 and 4462890, with which Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. in 1998, 2010 and 2014

respectively officially registered the *Tarzan yell*TM, one can read the following about the mark:

The mark is a yell consisting of a series of approximately ten sounds, alternating between the chest and falsetto registers of the voice, as follows:

1 a semi-long sound in the chest register, **2** a short sound up an interval of one octave plus a fifth from the preceding sound, **3** a short sound down a Major 3rd from the preceding sound, **4** a short sound up a Major 3rd from the preceding sound, **5** a long sound down one octave plus a Major 3rd from the preceding sound, **6** a short sound up one octave from the preceding sound, **7** a short sound up a Major 3rd from the preceding sound, **8** a short sound down a Major 3rd from the preceding sound, **9** a short sound up a Major 3rd from the preceding sound, **10** a long sound down an octave plus a fifth from the preceding sound.

And the notation is:



Yet, an official spelling of the yell does not seem to exist.

But when do we start to accept sounds as words? What is the difference between making a sound and pronouncing a word? When does a child say its first word? Are these the sounds that sound like [mə'mɑ:]? And if so, what were all sounds made before that? Language or not a language?

Somehow, it seems fairly logical that the language can exist without any form of notation. But if indeed words exist without having letters, how do these words come about? Is Tarzan's yell a word in his own language, the Tarzan language? And if we truly accept it as a word, do translations of this word exist? Or could it be that no other language has a satisfactory translation for the *Tarzan yell*? Like there is no English translation for the German word *Schrift*? Commonly used translations are: scripture, font, typeface, writing, document, script, handwriting, type, work, paper, report, print, notation, leaflet, petition, and tract. And while the meaning of the German word *Schrift* is obvious for every German, most of them seem to find it difficult to express it in words. It is easier within a written text: *Schrift* is, among other things, that what you are looking at right now. And what are you looking at?

You could ask yourself what precisely the *Tarzan yell* is. For some people, it could come across as absurd to define the *Tarzan yell* as an own language. Even more so because in this case, we would be talking about a one word language. But there are actually languages that show that this does not necessarily have to be a problem. Try looking up OWL online; the *One Word Language* that consists of one word only and nevertheless offers the possibility of expressing everything. And if we accept the Tarzan language as a language, then indeed this language is spoken by a large part of the world population. Try it for yourself: if your speaking

partner understands you immediately, then ask him or her in particular if they know the original story about Tarzan. Chances are likely that they do not.

This story, published for the first time in 1912 in the *All-Story Magazine*, broadly is as follows. In 1888, by order of the British Colonial Secretary, John Clayton and Lady Alice depart by boat from Dover to Africa. Their destination is British West-Africa, but due to mutiny they never arrive at their journey's end. Somewhere halfway they are left behind on a deserted beach, with all their belongings, including a large collection of books. Then everything that should happen, happens. The man builds a hut, and the woman gives birth to a child. Shortly after the birth the woman dies, and not much later the man is murdered by a group of great apes that raids the small house. The baby, Tarzan, is spared and taken by the apes, and grows up with the apes in the primary forest.

Many years later, Tarzan accidentally discovers his destroyed parental home and finds the children's books that his far-sighted parents had taken along. These books contain simple drawings and large signs. And although Tarzan as expected immediately recognizes what the images show, the abstract forms next to the images are initially a big mystery to him. To him these abstract forms look like large insects. But clever as he is, he pretty soon discovers the underlying logic of these forms. And with this discovery, he manages to learn how to read and write.

At the time, for Tarzan the language exists purely visually. A silent language. Later in the story, when Tarzan knows how to fluently read and write (in English), he comes into contact with other people for the first time. These people are passengers from a ship who discover Tarzan on the island. As Tarzan is only able to use written language, he communicates with pen and paper. And at that point in the story, Tarzan's author, Edgar Rice Burroughs, thinks up a genius linguistic trick. Instead of an English speaking interlocutor, he chooses a French speaking sailor, resulting in the seemingly bizarre situation that Tarzan learns to pronounce words such as 'apple' as [pɔm], 'window' as [fənɛtɛ] and 'same' as [kɔm]. At the time, for Tarzan A = [ɔ] applies.

A AND O

An alphabet always has a beginning and an end. This becomes very clear in the saying about the alpha and the omega, also known as the A and O, with which we want to emphasize the completeness of a subject. This saying refers to the last book of the *New Testament (Book of Revelation)*, in which it is used for the comprehensiveness of God, and in particular of Christ. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet. Among other things, this refers to the fact that written language was at first used to document harvesting and herds. That's why the first letter in the Phoenician alphabet was the aleph; a sign with which

the head of a cow was imitated. However, for the Phoenicians the Aleph was not a consonant, but a glottal stop. A glottal stop is a consonant that in Dutch is not written as a separate letter, but that resounds when the vocal cords shut up, right before we pronounce a vowel. When the Greeks took over the alphabet of the Phoenicians, in 900 B.C., they changed one essential aspect: the vowels were given a function that was comparable to the function of the consonants. The vowels were no longer indicated with weird diacritical characters, but were given their own, full form that was comparable to the form of the consonants. The Greeks especially lacked a letter for the [ɔ] sound, the long o, which is why they added an Omega. And because the Greeks for the larger part maintained the sequence of the Phoenician alphabet, this new letter was added at the end of the alphabet. Considering this, the statement of ‘the A and O’ does not seem to fit in within the Latin alphabet, or seems to be — at the very least — a striking translation, comparable with that of the very first sentence of the Bible. As most of us will know, the first sentence of the Bible reads: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’.

Linguistic research has shown that in the original version, which was written in the Old Greek language, the word Λόγος (lógos) was used. A word that, according to the same research, rather means ‘spirit’ than ‘word’. But apart from the difference between spirit and word, this fact particular-

ly shows how important the language within the Bible is. At the same time, the Bible is, as any other book, part of something bigger, because it only exists within our language. Written with letters, printed on paper. And while the alpha and omega are the symbols for the comprehensiveness, the beginning and the end, language in itself is endless. Whereas two numbers (the 0 and the 1) are sufficient to create a virtual reality such as the internet, the possibilities for our 26 letters seem to be infinitive.

A simple trick to get a better understanding of things (or as is said in English; 'to get a grip on something'), is looking at a specific subject or object from a viewpoint of different languages. Or in other words: to translate the word or subject. Look for example at the noun 'self-evidence'; Dutch uses the word *vanzelfsprekendheid* and in Germany the term is *die Selbstverständlichkeit*. And while you could say that these three words identify three different things: 'something that possesses a certain evidence', 'something that speaks for itself' and 'something that stands on itself', together these three concepts form a better framework for the underlying concept than that each of the concepts individually does. They reinforce each other because they do not contradict each other. Together they provide us with a better image of what the actual meaning of the concept could be. And when we reflect on this, it occurs that this definition also applies to written language. Writing as we know it, use it, and are reading right now.

1. A text is evident, because it is what it is. Look at this sentence, for example. The only reason why this sentence can reference to itself, is because of the evidence it has. If it would not be evident, it would not be possible to refer to itself.
2. A text speaks for itself because we fix spoken language on paper by means of the letters, words and sentences. It is a sort of visual recording of the spoken language.
3. A text stands on itself, because we speak for the language. In the beginning reading was always a loud reading. And it is still the case that when we read, we speak to ourselves.

And if you look in a German dictionary under the word *Schrift*, you will also discover a number of interesting nouns, such as: *Schriftwart*, *Schriftsetzer* and *Schriftsteller*. That the word *Schriftleser* does not exist shows once more the self-evidence of the written word.

Within the philosophical movement of the *linguistic turn*, from the early 20th century various scientists have shown to what extent language determines our construction of reality. While many people consider Wittgenstein as one of the fathers of this movement, it was the German writer and philosopher Fritz Mauthner in particular, with his three-part *Beiträge zu eine Kritik der Sprache* in 1901, who laid the foundations for this. In the reprint of *Ullstein Materialien* from 1982, the three volumes together come to almost 2100 pages! *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* by Wittgenstein, pub-

lished 21 years later, is only 110 pages (*edition suhrkamp*, 36. Auflage 2016). Even though Mauthner is reasonably accessible and the *Tractatus* is mainly incomprehensible, the book by Wittgenstein is far more well-known. Mauthner writes in his book: ‘Der Mensch hat in seiner Sprache die Welt nach seinem INTERESSE geordnet’. Wittgenstein responds to this in his publication with: ‘Satz 4.0031 Alle Philosophie ist “Sprachkritik”. (Allerdings nicht im Sinne Mauthners.)’ For his book, Wittgenstein chose a semi-logical set-up, in which an apparently logical numbering gives structure to the story. Point 1.1 is an addition to point 1, and point 1.11 is an interpretation of point 1.1. However, upon further inspection, it turns out that this numbering is not always correct, which remains one of the many mysteries surrounding the book. Nevertheless, thanks to the numbering, it is possible to summarize the book in a simple way:

1 The world is all that is the case. **2** What is the case — a fact — is the existence of states of affairs. **3** A logical picture of facts is a thought. **4** A thought is a proposition with a sense. **5** A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.) **6** The general form of a truth-function is $[\bar{p}, \bar{\xi}, N(\bar{\xi})]$. This is the general form of a proposition. **7** What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

Perhaps it is due to this last sentence in particular that the *Tractatus* has become so well-known over the years. Recently, the author of an article in *Der Spiegel* about the socio-cultural meaning of emojis, came back to this passage. He puts forward the position that emojis enable us to talk about things which previously had to remain hidden. Emojis are part of the Unicode, the organization which gives all the written characters on earth a number, so that we can communicate with each other in different languages and scripts. Once a character has been included by Unicode, it becomes a recognized text element. This makes emojis an official part of our written culture. Various planes exist within Unicode on which various types of characters and scripts are located. The emojis are on the ‘Supplementary Multilingual Plane’, a section of various characters, such as *Mathematical Alphanumeric Symbols*, *modern musical notations*, *Dominoes* and thus also emojis. Yes, in addition to emojis, musical notations have become an official part of our language. As a result, we can now also work out the official spelling of Tarzan’s yell. You only have to combine the previously shown notation with the Unicode characters shown on the right.

1D10	1D11	1D12	1D13	1D14	1D15	1D16	1D17	1D18	1D19	1D1A	1D1V	1D1C	1D1D	1D1E	1D1F
															0
1D100	1D110	1D120	1D130	1D140	1D150	1D160	1D170	1D180	1D190	1D1A0	1D1B0	1D1C0	1D1D0	1D1E0	1D1F0
															1
1D101	1D111	1D121	1D131	1D141	1D151	1D161	1D171	1D181	1D191	1D1A1	1D1B1	1D1C1	1D1D1	1D1E1	1D1F1
															2
1D102	1D112	1D122	1D132	1D142	1D152	1D162	1D172	1D182	1D192	1D1A2	1D1B2	1D1C2	1D1D2	1D1E2	1D1F2
							BEGIN BEAM								3
1D103	1D113	1D123	1D133	1D143	1D153	1D163	1D173	1D183	1D193	1D1A3	1D1B3	1D1C3	1D1D3	1D1E3	1D1F3
							END BEAM								4
1D104	1D114	1D124	1D134	1D144	1D154	1D164	1D174	1D184	1D194	1D1A4	1D1B4	1D1C4	1D1D4	1D1E4	1D1F4
							BEGIN TIE								5
1D105	1D115	1D125	1D135	1D145	1D155	1D165	1D175	1D185	1D195	1D1A5	1D1B5	1D1C5	1D1D5	1D1E5	1D1F5
			<i>8va</i>				END TIE								6
1D106	1D116	1D126	1D136	1D146	1D156	1D166	1D176	1D186	1D196	1D1A6	1D1B6	1D1C6	1D1D6	1D1E6	1D1F6
			<i>8vb</i>				BEGIN SLUR								7
1D107	1D117	1D127	1D137	1D147	1D157	1D167	1D177	1D187	1D197	1D1A7	1D1B7	1D1C7	1D1D7	1D1E7	1D1F7
			<i>15ma</i>				END SLUR								8
1D108	1D118	1D128	1D138	1D148	1D158	1D168	1D178	1D188	1D198	1D1A8	1D1B8	1D1C8	1D1D8	1D1E8	1D1F8
<i>DS</i>			<i>15mb</i>		NULL NOTE HEAD		BEGIN PHR.								9
1D109	1D119	1D129	1D139	1D149	1D159	1D169	1D179	1D189	1D199	1D1A9	1D1B9	1D1C9	1D1D9	1D1E9	1D1F9
<i>DC</i>							END PHR.								A
1D10A	1D11A	1D12A	1D13A	1D14A	1D15A	1D16A	1D17A	1D18A	1D19A	1D1AA	1D1BA	1D1CA	1D1DA	1D1EA	1D1FA
															B
1D10B	1D11B	1D12B	1D13B	1D14B	1D15B	1D16B	1D17B	1D18B	1D19B	1D1AB	1D1BB	1D1CB	1D1DB	1D1EB	1D1FB
															C
1D10C	1D11C	1D12C	1D13C	1D14C	1D15C	1D16C	1D17C	1D18C	1D19C	1D1AC	1D1BC	1D1CC	1D1DC	1D1EC	1D1FC
															D
1D10D	1D11D	1D12D	1D13D	1D14D	1D15D	1D16D	1D17D	1D18D	1D19D	1D1AD	1D1BD	1D1CD	1D1DD	1D1ED	1D1FD
															E
1D10E	1D11E	1D12E	1D13E	1D14E	1D15E	1D16E	1D17E	1D18E	1D19E	1D1AE	1D1BE	1D1CE	1D1DE	1D1EE	1D1FE
															F
1D10F	1D11F	1D12F	1D13F	1D14F	1D15F	1D16F	1D17F	1D18F	1D19F	1D1AF	1D1BF	1D1CF	1D1DF	1D1EF	1D1FF

But back to emojis. The greatest limitation of emoji is currently perhaps that what you just did (or did not do) with the musical notation is not possible in practice with emojis. They are prescribed words, both literally and figuratively. Literally because, just like words, they also often consist of separate parts. Just look at this list with the smileys that are available nowadays.

😊 Grinning Face, 😄 Grinning Face With Smiling Eyes, 😂 Face With Tears Of Joy, 😃 Smiling Face With Open Mouth, 😆 Smiling Face With Open Mouth And Smiling Eyes, 😓 Smiling Face With Open Mouth And Cold Sweat, 😏 Smiling Face With Open Mouth And Tightly-Closed Eyes, 😇 Smiling Face With Halo, 🐉 Smiling Face With Horns, 😜 Winking Face, 😊 Smiling Face With Smiling Eyes, 😋 Face Savouring Delicious Food, 😌 Relieved Face, 😍 Smiling Face With Heart-Shaped Eyes Smiling, 😎 Face With Sunglasses Smirking Face, 😐 Neutral Face, 😐 Expressionless Face, 😏 Unamused Face, 😓 Face With Cold Sweat Pensive, 😐 Face Confused, 😐 Face Confounded, 😘 Kissing Face, 😘 Face Throwing A Kiss, 😊 Kissing Face With Smiling Eyes, 😘 Kissing Face With Closed Eyes, 😜 Face With Stuck-Out Tongue, 😜 Face With Stuck-Out Tongue And Winking Eye, 😜 Face With Stuck-Out Tongue And Tightly-Closed Eyes.

With a textual summary such as this, you immediately see the problem with emojis. What will you do if you wish to communicate *Grinning Face with Horns* instead of *Smiling*

Face with Horns? You can think of plenty of situations where precisely a *grinning face* and not a *smiling face* is the right emoji. Finding the correct words is sometimes difficult, and finding the correct emoji is apparently often impossible. Our emoji vocabulary is determined by the emoji council within the Unicode consortium. This ‘emoji council’ is currently chaired by Google software developer Mark Davis, with Jeremy Burge of Emojipedia and journalist Jennifer 8. Lee as vice-chairs. And if you search for ‘Rejected Emoji Proposals’ online, you will find all kinds of lists of emojis which were not allowed to become part of our language. These include *Smiling Face With Hand Putting On Makeup*, *Happy Face With Lightbulb*, *Angry Pile Of Poo*, *Expressionless Face With Bruises And Bandage* and *Face Covered With Black Mask With Eyes And Mouth Exposed*.

In 2011, immediately after his appointment as governor in Florida, Rick Scott introduced the law that the press were no longer allowed to use the letters *space*, *latin small letter c*, *latin small letter l*, *latin small letter i*, *latin small letter m*, *latin small letter a*, *latin small letter t*, *latin small letter e*, *space*, *latin small letter c*, *latin small letter h*, *latin small letter a*, *latin small letter n*, *latin small letter g*, *latin small letter e*, *space* in this order in the media. A ban is definitely not the same as a conscious or unconscious limitation. However, in practice, it boils down to the same thing. One is an active censure and the other is a passive censure. From that viewpoint, we should not be against new emojis, but precisely in favour of them. For

their freedom to be allowed to be everything. It is only then that we can say again what we want to say. Now it is not our own vocabulary that we are using but the vocabulary of someone else. However, as we have already seen, it is now only a question of time before everything works out. The reason is that with *OpenType Variable Fonts*, variable emoji fonts will undoubtedly also emerge. And then we will not only have letters that write themselves, and letters A which change into an O, but also emojis which can be *confused face* and *confounded*.

2041

It remains difficult to predict the socio-cultural significance of the dynamification of letters. Perhaps it is even impossible to do that within the area of the statistical characters. As long as we use letters, such as these ones here, they will also form the framework that determines everything. The framework within which we think, express ourselves, communicate and act. Under point 5.6, Wittgenstein writes in the *Tractatus logica-philosophicus* 'Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt.' But is it not also the case that the boundaries of the Sprache are determined by the characters on which the language is based?

Perhaps there is more hidden in the dynamification of the letter than we are capable of thinking. Perhaps it has to do with our software: our way of thinking. Perhaps it also has to do with our hardware: our brain was not made for

this. Because a dynamic letter can lead to a different language, this could also lead to another world. A world which is fundamentally different to the one that we now know and describe. Perhaps the words and terms that are needed in order to be able to include this do not exist in the language in which we now live. The year 1996 is meanwhile known as the start of the internet, and since that time that has fundamentally changed practically all the aspects of our daily lives. Perhaps in 2041 we will conclude that the year 2018 was the time when the variable letter was born, by means of which a new world began to emerge. And then we will look back on the year 2018 as the time when everything was different. The time when letters were static, and things could be self-evident. When $18 \neq 96$ was.

Perhaps in 2041 we will realize that every form of self-evidence never really existed. That the actual invention by Gutenberg was not the uniform, repetitive and allographic letter (the typification of language), but the *simulation of the self-evidence*. The inventor of something which misled us for 500 years, because it showed us the world as much too unequivocal. Perhaps we will look back on 2018 as the age when mankind still believed blindly in the power of letters, and the potential of a text. The time when we realize that we are perhaps not the text, but just a letter.

2018

The type designers are back in Europe again. They have processed their experiences and thoughts about the trip in a text. Concentrated, they look at the letters, read the words and try to understand what the sentences actually say. All three of them ponder about the last sentence of the text. 'In which we realize that we are perhaps not the text, but just a letter'.

They look at each other and shout HOI.

The end of self,evidence

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Editor: Marie-Antoinette Sondeijker

Translation: Tiny Mulder & Marie Gallagher

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Underware
Groenewegje 137
2515 LR Den Haag
The Netherlands
www.underware.nl
info@underware.nl