

Typocratic WorldView

Francis Ponge writes: a text that can in no way claim to be answerable to a reality of the concrete (or spiritual) world must first attain the reality of its own world, the reality of texts.

By way of experiment, replace the word 'text' by the word 'word', and then replace 'word' by 'type' (letter, number).

Let us begin at the beginning, or rather at the end, for the beginning of the time-vector of a cultural condensate known as writing is shrouded in the history that lies behind us: people start to transform the forms of mutual communication (sounds, dumb-show, gestures, etc.) into autonomous elements (signs, particles, etc.). This means that a more or less stable repertory of object and/or action-related communication elements is now, in the abstract, available for certain conditions of the world and circumstances of life.

Linking sound and gesture to form a 'word', and sign and action to form an 'image', inevitably resulted in a dialectic of 'logos' and 'eidós'.

We know what happened; we know about the victory of the individual, letter-like type (the morpheme as something imprinted on the body of language, the impression then carved out, recording the traces) over the pictogrammic image. A victory that made culture the harbinger of eternity. Language is now literally condensed into writing (signs for sounds = letters, signs for amounts = numbers), heralding the birth of a typographic code, of the alphanumeric code.

From now on it is not just the case of man mediating between himself and the world, but of a 'sign for ...' and a 'sign of ...'. When necessary, they simultaneously or singly fasten on people and the world, like vampires. Without people they would be bloodless, without a world boneless.

Descartes meditates: the spirit utilizes its freedom. Max Bense observes, though, that Descartes ought to have added: utilizing things uses them up. Indeed, the repertory of signs is soon depleted; people start fashioning chains and combinations, employing permutations which rapidly augment the supply. Retrospectively, this tallies with the need for a more differentiated content and meaning, and prospectively it separates redundancy from innovation.

53 **Louis 20 stacking chair**
Louis 20 Stapelstuhl

Material: Recycled polypropylene plastic, recycled aluminum.

Material: *Recycelter Polypropylen-Kunststoff, recyceltes Aluminium.*

Typocratic World-View

Letters, now markedly abstract, enter into relationships with verbal structures, and an ingenious grammar enables texts to unite in textures, in sentences, their abundant nuances now turning the ways of the world into conditions of life.

But in the 16th century Johannes Gutenberg introduced moveable type, arranging lines of wooden or lead typefaces. Although already long in use, the alphanumeric code, as elementarized set matter, undergoes consumption and subsequent re-use.

In this way the text becomes a communication channel between two realities: the true reality of the natural world and the possible reality of the technical world. Gutenberg elevated a principle of re-use - not of similar but of the same letters and numbers into a system permitting repeats of existing or new text to be disseminated not in the form of handwriting, but in print. The re-use, i.e. processing, of material must have given a tremendous boost to occidental consciousness. Today there is practically no escaping the consequences after five hundred years of printing and the worldwide dissemination of myriads of texts and in view of our collision with electronic, digitized data.

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