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Jack Stauffacher, Printer &c
By Chuck Byrne
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LUST
PETER MAYBURY
JACK STAUFFACHER
LORRAINE WILD

\$7.95

EMIGRE 45

UNTITLED

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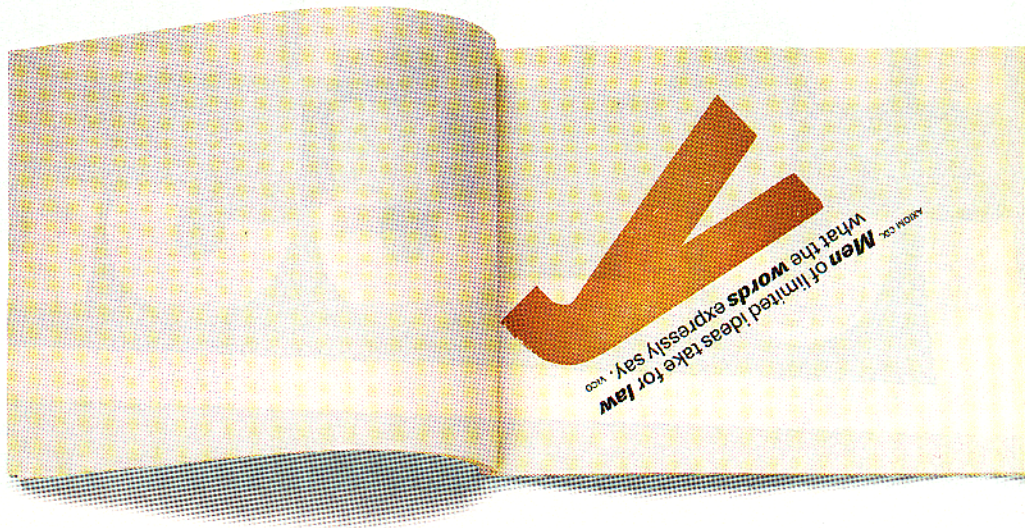
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self-sewing &
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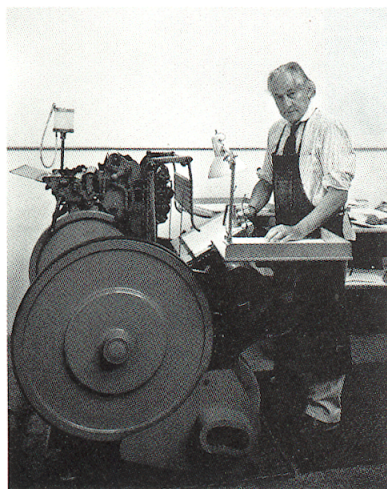
To both the staid world of fine book publishing and the more venturesome world of 20th-century graphic design, Jack Werner Stauffacher is a revered practitioner and a perplexing enigma. In a 1979 catalog to an exhibition, *Five Fine Printers*, at the University of California, Davis, editor Sandra Kirshenbaum says of him, "Jack Stauffacher, in his long career as typographer, book designer, teacher, and fine printer, has always defied easy categorization."

While he describes himself merely as "a printer," the 60 or so years he has worked as a craftsman have gone beyond mere printing to produce an aesthetic that is a rare combination of thoughtful experimentation bound with the integrity of tradition. Both of these qualities are born of a love and respect for words and ideas and a passion for sharing them with others through type, ink and paper.

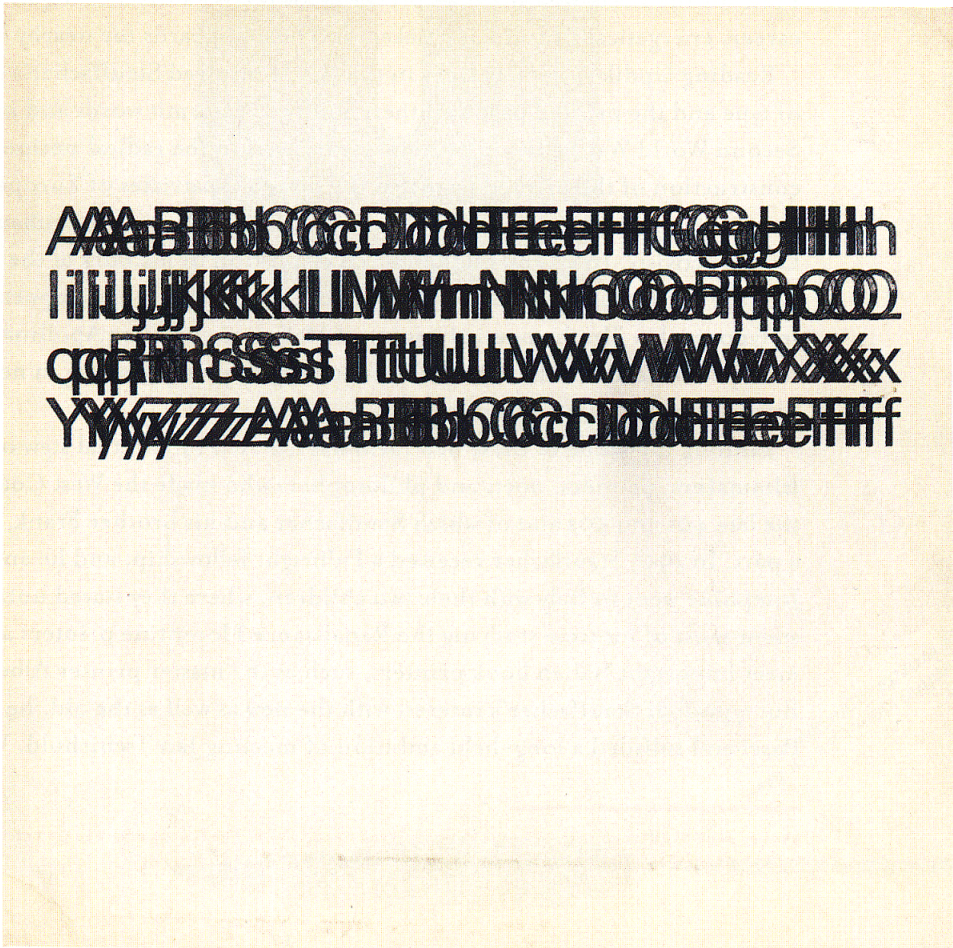
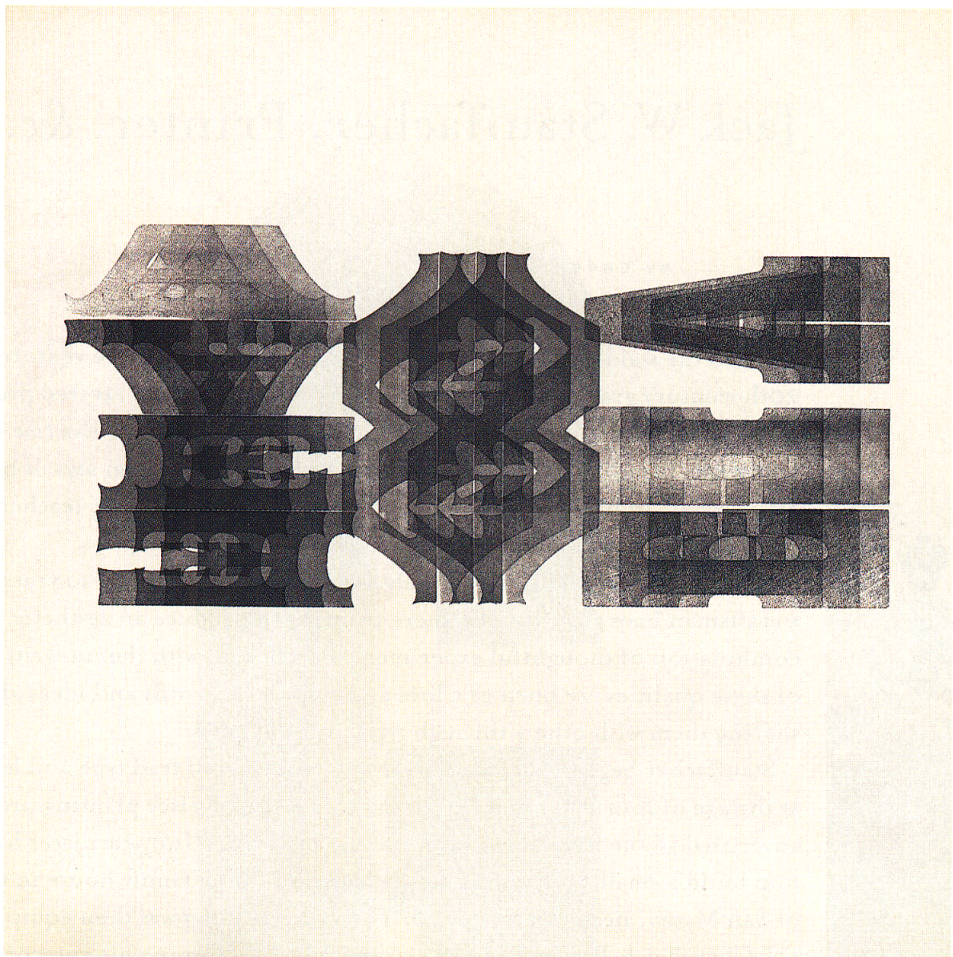
Stauffacher began his apprenticeship in the craft of lead type and letterpress printing at the age of fourteen when he purchased a 3"x 5" Kelsey printing press he saw advertised in the back of *Popular Mechanics* magazine. Two years later his father helped him build a small studio/shop in the backyard of the family house in the small city of San Mateo, near San Francisco. The little building was then equipped with a 10"x 15" Chandler & Price press and Garamond type. Naming his enterprise the Greenwood Press for the street on which the press was located, Stauffacher began his printing career, energetically producing tickets and business cards for nearby businesses.

Reading Updike's *Printing Types* in the 1940s inspired Stauffacher's consuming study of type and the printed page and their ability to transmit words and meaning. After the Second World War he began to immerse himself in the radical notions of type and the construction of the printed page that the design expatriates of Europe brought with them, as well as the theories of Tschichold, Moholy-Nagy, the Bauhaus and the Constructivists. In a 1969 catalog for an exhibition of his work at the Sonoma State College Art Department Gallery, Stauffacher reflected on the importance of new ideas in typography: "In the poetic imagery of Mallarmé and later Apollinaire we witness a new spatial freedom where both the content and form juxtapose in new and radical ways within the frame of the page."

Fanning the flame of these new ideas was the rich intellectual stew of writers, filmmakers, painters, poets and philosophers who made the West Coast their home in the late 40s and 50s and of which Stauffacher and his brother Frank, a filmmaker, were a part. In 1955 Stauffacher received a Fulbright fellowship, and he and his wife Josephine went to Italy with their two children, where they stayed until 1958. Here he spent most of his time studying the Renaissance Florentine printers and was able to meet important Italian book printers, such as the master printer Alberto Tallone. But typical of Stauffacher's interest with the new as well as the old, he also traveled to Basel and fulfilled a long-held ambition of meeting Jan Tschichold. While in Basel he



Above: Jack Stauffacher in his studio in San Francisco, 1997. Photograph by Dennis Let better.
Left: Letterpress studies, 1967.



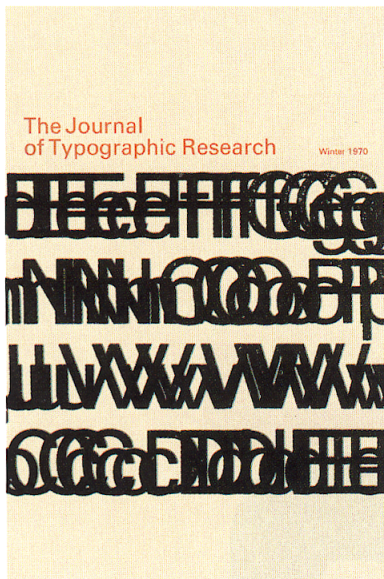
also met Armin Hofmann and Emil Ruder at the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule, whose influence on the world of typography was just beginning.

By the end of the 1950s, the 500 year-old typographic objective of the simple, clear presentation of words had merged with 20th-century concepts of experimentation and the typographic expression of words and ideas, both in Stauffacher's mind and his work.

Upon returning to this country he became Assistant Professor of Typographic Design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, where he reestablished the press started there in the 1920s by Porter Garnett, naming it the "New Laboratory Press." The proximity of the school to the east coast made it possible for Stauffacher to bring a steady stream of interesting visitors to lecture and gave him recognition in the Northeastern design and book establishment that he might otherwise not have received. It was during this time that he met Willem Sandberg and Victor Hammer, and began his long friendship with Hermann Zapf.

In 1963 he left Carnegie to become Typographic Director at the Stanford University Press, where he stayed until 1966. While there he managed to elevate the visual character of the Press's publications to a level where they began to receive international recognition for their design and production quality.

After leaving Stanford, Stauffacher reestablished the Greenwood Press on Broadway in San Francisco's North Beach area, where it has remained. The building had a long tradition of housing the printing industry, and some letterpress printers remained in the building when Stauffacher arrived. One, whose business was printing posters, gave him a small collection of discarded very large 19th-century wooden type. These display- and poster-size letterforms were to become the foundation of some of Stauffacher's most exciting informal typographic experiments.



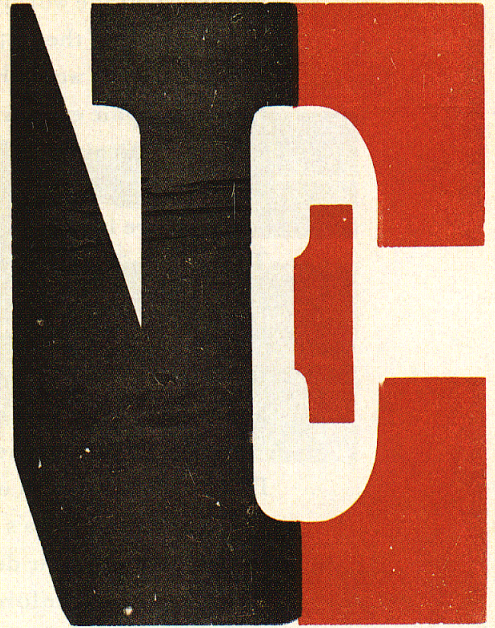
Experimentation can take either of two directions. One is informal, a kind of intellectual amusement. The other is methodical and examines specific issues. Stauffacher is a master of both. The informal series of experiments that began at Carnegie and continued in the new home of the Greenwood Press consists mainly of repeated letterforms and words, arranged in such a way as to generate animated typographic patterns or abstract forms by carefully positioning the negative space of a single repeated letter. Both are accomplished by repeatedly moving the type in the bed of his Vandercook proof press.

One of Stauffacher's experiments from about this time later became something of a common sight in studios around the world for many years. In 1967 he was asked to design the interior and cover of the *Journal of Typographic Research*, which later became *Visible Language*. The lower portion of the cover reproduced a letterpress study of repeated overlapping black Univers letters. With the title of the publication in red at the top acting as counterpoint to the large area of black type below, the cover is a classic Stauffacher layout, which was to become a modern icon to many designers, and an affront to just as many typophiles. The furor stimulated by the blurred, barely recognizable, Univers characters strikes a familiar chord today. A letter to the editor of the *Journal* from October, 1968 complained, "Above all, good typography must be based on legibility." Stauffacher's response also has a familiar ring to it: "I claim no need for legibility within the alphabetic lines of the cover design.... I don't say this is 'legibility'

Left: Two Letterpress studies, 1960s
This page: Cover, *Journal of Typographic Research*, 1967.

All of us, among the ruins, are preparing a renaissance beyond the limits of nihilism.

But few of us know it.



Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.



Life is this dichotomy itself, the mind
soaring over volcanoes of light, the
madness of justice, the exterminating
intransigence of moderation.



in the reading textual sense, but rather I have taken the letters and extended their vitality.... We must try to shift our view and resee other possibilities... and free the typographic language from stale and useless devices." Stauffacher is careful to point out, then and now, that this philosophy does not apply to text that one expects to read as text.

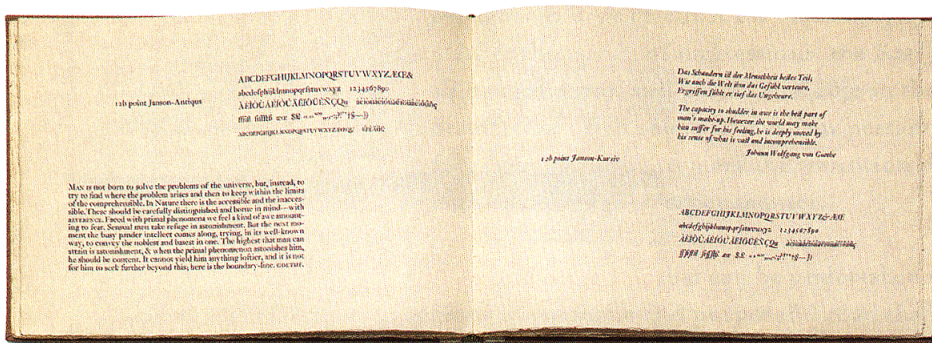
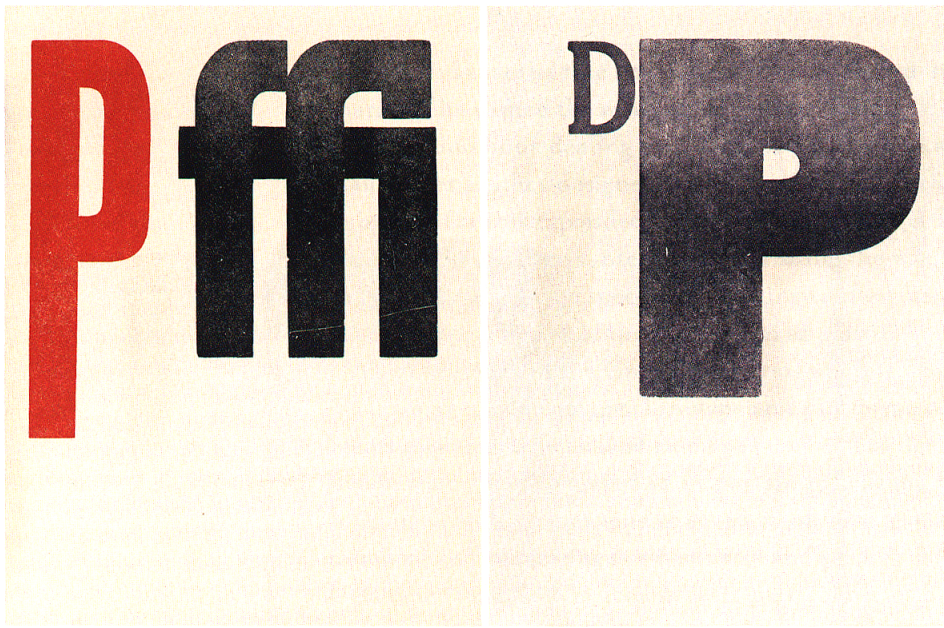
In the early 1990s Stauffacher again returned to experimenting with wooden type. This time he incorporated large, poster-size numerals and letters that appear in combinations or contrasted with small letterforms. Some of the most unusual examples from this period are done with diluted black ink and splashes of solvent that are sometimes allowed to run down the page.

While the ethereal surface textures Stauffacher is able to produce in all of these experiments are amazing, it is the placement of the forms within the space of the page that gives these studies their exhilarating quality. The characters are so big that they lose their identity as type as the strokes and negative spaces of the letters become pure form and take command of the white spaces of the page. As are most of his experiments, these are monoprints, with only a few examples pulled and evaluated before a change in direction.

Their aim is to heighten one's sense of type, ink, paper, form and space. Stauffacher

Top and left: Single pages from *The Rebel Albert Camus: Twenty-Five Typographic Meditations*, printed as a limited edition of ten portfolios.





laughingly says these experiments are a kind of joyful exercise that all typographers and designers should do in order to loosen themselves up for the more serious tasks that lay ahead of them. These lyrical displays of pure typographic form are certainly more than mere fun and stand on their own as extraordinary images. They are also exemplary of the kind of casual, random experimentation that can lead to not only additional understanding of one's craft, but sometimes, true revelation.

Stauffacher is selective in choosing the material that the Greenwood Press publishes, not only because the resources for book production are limited, but also since the author or subject must possess insight and values that are illuminating. Thus, the Greenwood Press's very limited production is based, for the most part, on the likes of Plato, Camus, Goethe, Horace, or pertain to important, but little known personalities in the history of printing and type, such as Porter Garnett and Nicholas Kis.

Stauffacher's fascination and love for the typeface that we now know as Kis-Janson led him to publish two books on the subject. The first in 1954, *Janson: A Definitive Collection*, was an outgrowth of his purchase from the Stempel Foundry of a complete run of the 17th-century Baroque Janson type. Stauffacher had, after much study,

Above: Spread from *Janson: A definitive Collection*, 1954.

Top and left: Single pages from the limited edition portfolio *The Wood letters of the Greenwood Press*, 1975.

ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ

PHAEDRUS a dialogue by Plato

It might be a lot worse! But how so? To what do you refer?

At the moment when I was about to cross the river, dear friend, there came to me my familiar divine sign, which always checks me when on the point of doing something or other—and all at once I learned to hear a voice, forbidding me to leave the spot until I had made statement for some offence to heaven. Now, you must know, I am a seer—not a very good one, it's true, but like a poor scholar good enough for my own purposes—hence I understood already well enough what my offence was. The fact is, you know, Phaedrus, the mind itself has a kind of divine power, for I felt disturbed some while ago as I was delivering that speech, and had a winging feel might, in the words of Hyacinth—By diving in the sight of God with high renown from men.—But now I realize my sin.

That was a terrible theory, Phaedrus, a terrible theory that you introduced and compelled me to expound.

It was foolish, and somewhat blasphemous, and what could be more terrible than that?

Well, do you not hold Love to be a god, the child of Aphrodite?

But not according to Lysis, and not according to that discourse of yours which you caused my lips to utter by putting a spell on them. If Love is, as he is indeed,

led by the multitude as virtue, and exalts it to float far over thousand years hither and thither, around the earth and beneath it, bereft of understanding.

This clear, dear god of love, I have offered the fairest examination and fullest statement that my powers could compass, some of his language, in particular, was precise, practical, to please Phaedrus. Grant me the pardon for what I have said, and thy love for what I meant, be merciful and gracious, and take me from me the bitter's salt, wherever it thou hast blended me, whether let it suffer by reason of thy displeasure, but grant me still to increase in the concern of the fair. And if anything that Phaedrus said and I said rather sounded discordant to thy ear, set it down in Lysis, the only logographer that I know, and saying him from discordant after this fashion, thou hast saved the love of wisdom, even as his teacher Prodicus has been turned. Then will his loving discipline here prevent no longer hind between two opinions, as now he does, but live for Love in singleness of purpose with the aid of philosophical discourse.

If that be for our good, Socrates, I join in your prayer for it. And I have this long while been filled with admiration for you, than the one you made before. It makes me afraid that I shall find Lysis cutting a poor figure, if he proves to be willing to compare. The fact is that only the other day, my dear good sir, one of our politicians was calling at him and reproaching him on this very score, —speech writer,—so possibly we shall find him desisting from further competition to preserve his reputation.

What a ridiculous line to take, young man! And how utterly you misjudge our friend, if you suppose him to be such a trivial creature! And I believe you really do think that the person you speak of meant his saltery as a reproach?

He gave me that impression, Socrates, and of course you know as well as I do that the man of greatest

determined that the face possessed “pure, workman-like letters” that reflected the basic character he wished the work of his press to have.

His second book dealing with the typeface, *Nicholas Kis*, was published in 1983. Stauffacher neither designed nor printed the more than 500-page book, but acted as publisher for this expanded version of the Hungarian original by type historian György Haiman. Stauffacher’s interest in publishing the work was stimulated by the discovery in 1953 of a 1685 type specimen pointing to the Hungarian punch-cutter Nicholas Kis as the actual designer of the face known as Janson.

All of the work of the Greenwood Press was not, and is not, done in hand-set type. Over the years, Monotype, Linotype and phototype have each had their place in Stauffacher’s production of fine books, as well as the art catalogs, wine labels and other design work that has played an important role in the Press’s history. Today even the computer, with its inexpensive access to hundreds of new and old typefaces, occupies a humble position among the type cases and presses at Greenwood. But Stauffacher still feels today that the Kis-Janson face, particularly in metal, possesses “a simplicity of means combined with an effortless clarity of content... (which)... has been a constant reminder to me that the responsibility of the typographer is to transmit his author’s thoughts in lines of effortless readability.”

After thousands of impressions, the Kis-Janson foundry type has taken on a quality all its own, but it still plays a vital role in the daily life of the Greenwood Press. Stauffacher often refers to it as “my peasant type.” The arrival of the Kis-Janson type fifty years ago seem to mark the transition of Stauffacher from craftsman to craftsman/designer/experimenter.

A second direction that can be undertaken with experimentation takes the investigator along a systematic and purposeful road that allows the testing of ideas or the examination of proposed solutions to a problem. There is probably no better example of the benefit of this meditative approach than in Stauffacher’s *magnum opus*, *Phaedrus*. This extraordinary book was published in 1978 and was the culmination of four years of experimentation and deliberation. The book, and the process leading up to it, demonstrate Stauffacher’s unique ability to meld typographic tradition with aesthetic curiosity and daring.

Phaedrus is probably the first of the central trilogy of Plato’s (ca. 428–348 BC) dialogues. This form of writing by Plato is one in which philosophical arguments are portrayed by the two characters in the dialogue. This dialogue takes place between the Athenians Socrates (469–399 BC) and Phaedrus, concerning the nature of the soul, rhetoric, philosophy and love. For Stauffacher, these are not idle topics, nor is the *Phaedrus* merely a convenient, out-of-copyright text to be fodder for yet another fine press book, never to be read or pondered. His arduous study to arrive at a clear transcription of Plato’s mindful words into type were driven by his belief in these words.

Stauffacher states in the introduction to the *Supplement* that accompanies the *Phaedrus* that his typographic objective in undertaking the project was to find “the lost symmetry between the printed form of the voices speaking intimately....” The quest was to result in pages of outstanding communication and presence.

Like any sensible experimenter, Stauffacher’s first step in the project was to establish

Left: Cover, title page and spreads from *Phaedrus*, 1978.

the parameters and equipment that he felt would help define his research and realize the book. He decided that the book should be typeset by hand, using Kis-Janson, and printed on the Vandercook proof press: "the simplest and most trustworthy tools"

Phaedrus had been in written and printed form for nearly 2,000 years, so with the problem of the dialogues clearly identified, Stauffacher began to seriously research the historical precedents.

"I quite naturally found myself beginning my quest by moving backwards in time and reconsidering Aldus Manutius.... It dawned on me that I was reenacting in the present what Aldus himself had done over 400 years ago. As I realized this, I felt the presence of an unbroken tradition that reached back from the present of my printed pages through Aldus to the earliest manuscripts written down in Plato's time."

At about the same time, Stauffacher began to correspond with his former student Chuck Bigelow, who was living in Oregon, about the *Phaedrus* dialogue problem (See right). Bigelow, who later designed some of the first PostScript typefaces, received a MacArthur Fellowship, and became Professor of Digital Typography at Stanford University, was not only an accomplished typographer, but possessed a keen knowledge of the ancient world.

Bigelow and Stauffacher's typographic discourse is recorded in the eleven letters, from June, 1973 to November, 1975, contained in the *Supplement* to the *Phaedrus* volume. Along with the letters are reproductions of the eight different experiments that were an outgrowth of them. Also included are Stauffacher's statements, "The Tools" and "The Experiment," illustrations of early *Phaedrus* manuscripts, and a reproduction of the final type arrangement of the dialogue in *Phaedrus*. The *Supplement* is an important document in typographic literature, presenting as clear a picture of a methodical typographic reasoning and experimentation as can be found.

In his final letter to Bigelow, Stauffacher signals the realization that finally overtakes the exhausted investigator: "... *Phaedrus* is no longer in my hands. The content is slowly shaping everything, and the many experiments allow us to make fewer searchings." The time had come to "... act out the ritual of type/printing/inks, etc."

Actual hand-setting and printing of *Phaedrus* was begun in the fall of 1975 with the help of Jim Faris, a student of Stauffacher's from Santa Cruz on a one-year NEA master/apprentice program, and completed in 1978. Faris went on to graduate work in Basel and today operates the design firm of Alben + Faris in Santa Cruz with his wife.

As with many hand-set projects in the history of book printing, there was not enough type on hand to set the entire book prior to printing. Consequently, over the period of the year that it took to produce the *Phaedrus*, the type for the forms had to be broken-down many times in preparation for the next form. As the work progressed, Stauffacher and Faris found themselves more and more confident with the basic premise of the typographic dialogue and became more adventurous in its implementation. The gentle consequences of these changes are hardly noticeable, but contribute to the book's ethereal quality.

The 150 pages of the *Phaedrus* are tall and narrow, 6¼" x 12½", and when opened, fill the grasp of a reader, gently requiring his attention. Socrates's words are on the right hand, or *recto*, page and those of Phaedrus on the left, *verso*. The line measure used for Socrates is a constant 25 picas of flush-left text. The measure for Phaedrus is

mostly 15 picas long, but changes to 25 at one point for a lengthy speech. The words of Phaedrus also vary slightly in placement as they face the gutter of the spread, and sometimes seem to change from flush-left to flush-right as short, single lines move towards the gutter. Alternating in depth and position on the pages are the quiet white spaces created by the absence of type as the philosophers listen to one another. The carefully studied approach, combined with the meticulous implementation of *Phaedrus*, serves Plato well and creates some of the most remarkable pages of type produced in the 20th century. So seductive are these pages that after turning a few, it seems as if the reader is taken back to that bright sunny day, some 2,000 years ago, to accompany the two philosophers on their constitutional outside the walls of Athens.

In the *Five Fine Printers* catalog, Kirshenbaum, who was publisher of the important type publication *Fine Print*, states that "This innovative arrangement has provoked some controversy, but the book is undeniably a remarkable paradigm of Stauffacher's principal typographic concerns: the exploration of the dialectic between author and reader, and the creation of an effective, uncluttered instrument for its conveyance."

While Stauffacher may appear as the archtypal metal type person, he is in reality one of the first established book typographers to become a part of the computer revolution. In 1986 he was asked to be one of the first members of the Adobe Type Advisory Board, and by the following year a Macintosh and a laser printer had taken their place at the press. Soon after, small laser printer and hybrid laser printer-letterpress publications began to emerge.

But overshadowing their electronic juniors are the presses, type cases and other tools associated with the 500-year-old craft of metal type that form the core of the small space the Greenwood Press occupies. Surrounding the equipment, every horizontal surface is piled high with correspondence, magazines and proofs for current work, and books and still more books. The surrounding walls are encrusted with proofs from long completed projects, photographs, broadsides, art, and more books stuffed onto shelves. But amid this seeming chaos, the seventy-seven year old Stauffacher moves quickly and deftly, searching out new and old artifacts to illustrate a point of discussion.

A man of clear, firm values and beliefs, Stauffacher can be an imposing and forceful figure when discussing something he is passionate about, which is most things, but especially his craft. At the same time he has a profound love of people, conversation and laughter. The combination of these qualities makes him a charismatic figure to those who know him.

In *A Portfolio of Book Club Printers*, 1963, Stauffacher's old friend and colleague, Adrian Wilson, refers to the Greenwood Press as "that oasis of migrant painters, misunderstood poets, starving calligraphers and beautiful girls." Add to those a seemingly endless stream of type designers, typographers, architects, graphic designers, illustrators, writers, philosophers, photographers, painters, publishers, scholars, students from around the world and even a few very special clients.

Stauffacher seems to thrive on their presence, eliciting from them their beliefs, opinions and ideas. He makes each visitor feel as if he or she is the one who is the contributor, but everyone who comes in touch with him leaves with much more than they brought.

E N D

2 June 1973

Dear Chuck,
Your letter arrived and I felt again your clear-eyed typographic presence. I would like to have your comments on the enclosed examples of Phaedrus. I have searched out the earliest examples, i.e., the complete works of Plato by Aldus Manutius of 1513 (Fig. 2). Here you see a continuous arrangement (no break between the speakers), merely a short abbreviation to indicate who is speaking. My first attempt moved in this direction but failed to make a satisfactory solution (Fig. 3); it seemed much too thick and difficult to read. The next was in the more traditional manner, trying to avoid the constant spelling of names with a return to Aldus's solution of abbreviation; that seems sound, once you have established Soc. and Phae. Possibly, in other dialogues you could not do this.

The final solution was a balance between the two, thus hoping for a vertical shape to the typographic form, so that the length of line would be shorter (Fig. 4), but I felt the signals (Soc., Phae.) were becoming too dominant in relation to the shortened line. Fig. 5 is somewhat wider and modifies this - but again, I have not solved the basic problem within the context of page size, where margin will give light and reflection towards the ethos of Socratic thought, etc. Anyway, look this over and let me have your insights.

in haste,
Jack

14 June 1973

Dear Jack,
Here are some thoughts on the Phaedrus. The formal arrangement (Fig. 1) does solve the original problem of confusion. The thread is visible. But each switch is a kind of 'Pow!' A burst of meaning which fades quickly. Socrates . . . Phaedrus . . . Socrates . . . The speaker is too much emphasized at first, then forgotten. Also, a tremendous amount of horizontal white space appears. Very staccato. Long lines seem too long as short lines are very short.

Looking at the very first attempt, and the page from Aldus Manutius (Figs. 2 & 3), these questions and thoughts: Did people read more slowly in Manutius's time? Did they think more in between the words? Probably, yes.

Now we read quickly, as if our books must be freeways with smooth curves and prominent signs. We cannot return to stroll on those narrow streets of antiquity.

But the modern way of reading is not so bad; it is swift and powerful.

The typographer's task may be to add grace and agility.

The continuous version (Fig. 3) is confusing because it lacks paragraphs, those rhythmic white breaks. The paragraph is claimed to denote a complete thought, but often it is just a breathing space - the mind rests, while the thought rushes on. We are accustomed to that regular signal.

When the speaker, or the thought, or both, changes randomly within the lines, we become confused. We lose the thread, the momentum of the discourse, because we are accustomed to thinking (getting our bearings) only at the beginning and end of lines. This first version (Fig. 3) does look good on the page. It is 'full.' Just as in conversation, we do not notice breaks and gaps when the thought or speaker switches, so here, too, the dialogue is a continuous stream, modulated, but not broken. (Speech is a kind of natural music, like birdsongs.)

Let me skip Fig. 3a for a while and go to Fig. 4. Again a switch in the personal signals. They cannot be ignored. The problem they constitute is

the gate through which we must enter the dialogue. In a play, the personalities are important; in a dialogue, the speech is important. In a play, names must be prominent, because there is complex personal interaction. In a dialogue, thoughts must be prominent, because there is complex rational interaction. Thus, the signals used in a play are not appropriate to dialogue.

Rather than signals equivalent to 'exit' and 'enter,' we need signals of a continuing kind. Here the signs are to one side, rather than inside the stream of discourse. An improvement; it accurately mirrors the situation. The sign does not interrupt; it cannot be confused with speech. Further, from its side position, it holds sway over a larger number of lines; more of a continuing signal.

Again, music is an analogy. We need to separate the speakers as though they were separate voices in harmony. We want to keep track of both, as well as the whole of their discourse - the argument. Socrates is the warp and Phaedrus the woof of the fabric of dialogue. Fig. 5 improves on Fig. 4. The signals are strong and distracting. The short line is weak in comparison. But the short line is also tense. The longer line (Fig. 5) balances the text against the signs, and the longer line is more relaxing to read. (I like this translation better, too.) Perhaps a few additional improvements are possible; at least experiment.

a) Why not try the signs flush-right?

They are few, and the eye needs only to note them in passing. The uneven space between sign and text disturbs me.

b) Why not take out a bit of space. Bring the signs closer to the text, so the eye doesn't have to make a separate move to see them. (reduce from em to en, or something between.)

Now return to Fig. 3a. This interests me the most of all. The most striking solution! But the most difficult.

The typographic purists claim that all typographical problems are soluble within the dimensions of the page and black and white. Color may be a spice, a decoration, but it is not fundamental.

I wonder. There's no proof of that position. It's just a style, a good one, admittedly.

What are the advantages of Fig. 3a?

a) Color, because it cannot be overlooked, makes both typographer and reader consider the underlying nature of dialogue.

b) Eliminating marginal signs removes a distraction. It also allows for a longer line within the confines of the page. This allows a return to that full textured page of Aldus Manutius and your first attempt (Fig. 3), a return to rhythm and relaxation.

c) The second color insures that we always know who is speaking. Unambiguous separation of the voices by chroma (timbre). This solves the signal problem. Calm pervasive differentiations.

d) Black has primacy, so Socrates is black. Blue, as a color, is secondary, so Phaedrus is blue.

e) I don't believe you need indentations if you use color. They disturb me. Maybe a simple paragraph (1 em) indent of the first line. What disadvantages?

f) Does it signify too great a separation? After all, in certain bibles, Christ's words are in red. But both Socrates and Phaedrus are men, and mortals.

g) How do we keep color under control? How to make it subtle and responsive?

h) What will readers accustomed to black do with extended text in blue?

i) What kind of blue is best?

A cool clear pthalocyanine?

A warm opaque ultramarine?

A neutral cobalt?

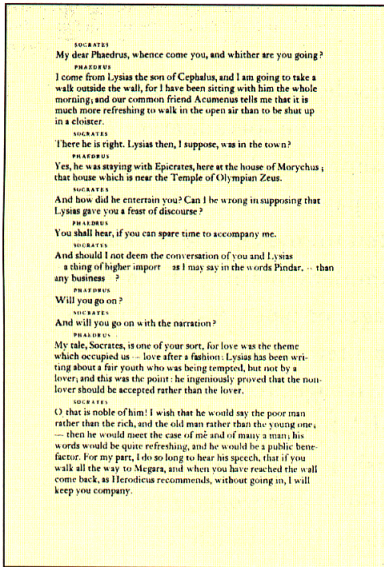


Fig. 1 First formal page design for Phaedrus, 1513.

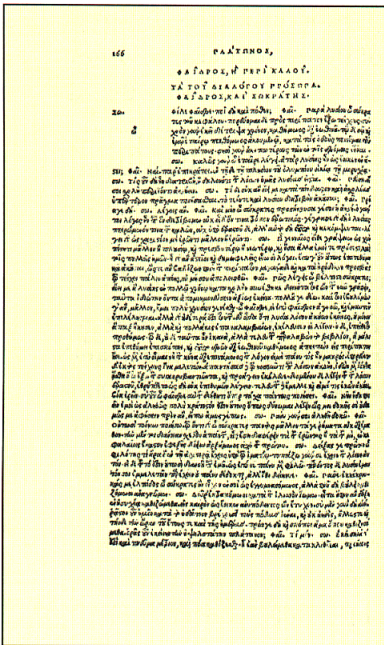


Fig. 2 Phaedrus, Aldus Manutius, Venice, 1513.

Soc. Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going? Phae. I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades. Soc. Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town. Phae. Yes, staying with Epicrates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus. Soc. Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the

Fig. 3 Textual rendering of Aldus Manutius's 1513 edition in English - continuous lines without paragraph breaks.

My dear Phaedrus, whence come you, and whither are you going?
I come from Lysias the son of Cephalus, and I am going to take a walk outside the wall, for I have been sitting with him the whole morning, and our common friend Acumenus tells me that it is much more refreshing to walk in the open air than to be shut up in a cloister.

There he is right, Lysias then, I suppose, was in the town?
Yes, he was sitting with Epicerates, here at the house of Morychus, that house which is near the Temple of Olympian Zeus.

And how did he entertain you? Can I be wrong in supposing that Lysias gave you a feast of discourse?
You shall hear, if you can spare time to accompany me. And should I not deem the conversation of you and Lysias a thing of higher import? I may say in the words Pindar, 'than any business.'

Will you go on?
And will you go on with the narration?
My tale, Socrates, is one of your sort, for love was the theme which occupied us — love after a fashion. Lysias has been writing about a fair youth who was being tempted, but not by a lover, and this was the point: he ingeniously proved that the non-lover should be accepted rather than the lover.

O that it noble of him! I wish that he would say the poor man rather than the rich, and the old man rather than the young one — then he would meet the case of every man, his words would be quite refreshing, and he would be a public benefactor. For my part, I do no longer bear his speech, that if you walk all the way to Megara, and when you have reached the wall come back, as Herodicus recommends, without going in, I will keep you company.

What do you mean, my good Socrates? How can you imagine that my unpractised memory can do justice to an elaborate work, which the greatest rhetoricians of the age spent a long time in composing. Indeed, I cannot; I would give a great deal if I could. I believe that I know Phaedrus about as well as I know myself, and I am very sure that the speech of Lysias was repeated to him, not once only, but again and again; he insisted on hearing it over and over, and Lysias was very willing to gratify him, so that when nothing else would do, he got hold of the book, and looked at what he most wanted to see, — and then when he was tired with sitting, he went out to take a walk, not until, by the dog, as I believe, he had simply learned by heart the entire discourse, unless it was un-

Fig. 3a Experiment with color and indentations — Socrates in black, Phaedrus in blue, 1973.

Soc. Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going?
Phar. I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads, he tells me that it is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

Soc. Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town.
Phar. Yes, staying with Epicerates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

Soc. Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the company a feast of eloquence.
Phar. I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

Soc. What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, «above all business» to hear how you and Lysias passed your time?
Phar. Lead on then.
Soc. Please tell me.
Phar. As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysias, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover — that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

Soc. Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself.

* Advertisement *

Fig. 4 Second version with abbreviations for speakers, 1973.

Soc. Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going?
Phar. I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads, he tells me that it is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

Soc. Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town.
Phar. Yes, staying with Epicerates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

Soc. Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the company a feast of eloquence.
Phar. I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

Soc. What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, «above all business» to hear how you and Lysias passed your time?
Phar. Lead on then.
Soc. Please tell me.
Phar. As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysias, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover — that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

Soc. Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear about it that I won't even have you even if you extend your walk as far as Megara, up to the walls and back again as recommended by Herodicus.

Phar. What do you mean, my good man? Do you expect

Fig. 5 Third version with wider line measure than Fig. 4, 1973.

j) How to balance the 'weight' of the blue text against the 'weight' of the black?

Problems of density and texture.

k) Registration.

This is unexplored territory.

An extension of the boundaries of traditional typography. If it is possible to use color effectively, a very luminous book could result, in which ease of understanding equals ease of reading. Deep and exciting potential. If the color is done badly, the book will merely be difficult to read, and therefore not easily understood. Perhaps extensive use of color will not be right for the Phaedrus — I don't know. But as I prepare, so slowly, for the dual-language Indian myths, color seems the only solution. Dyadic problems, a new field. Person/person; language/language; the interview and the translation. Fertile fields. yours, looking at the future

25 June 1973

Dear Chuck,

Finally, several proofs for your thoughtful consideration. Liked your comments about the music analogy — the separate qualities between Socrates and Phaedrus, but you will note that in this dialogue the sequence of each question and answer is always influx. So, the idea of making a separation too large would be wrong — they must bridge and support each other. Your thoughts (Fig. 5) — have made the adjustment you suggested (Fig. 5a), but somehow I'm not pleased — it clings too close to the text, and with the different widths of the abbreviations, causes the outside line to be heavy on the line.

After that attempt, I further reduced the names by merely having the lowercase, and here I discovered a method that finally clarified the problem. The s. and p. (Fig. 6) are enough to indicate the signal, whereas if you compare the other (Fig. 5a), you note how dense and out of balance the abbreviations are. I like a little space between the signals and paragraph.

Also I attempted (very rough proof) that idea of colors (Fig. 3a), and again I could understand the exact beauty of such creation — the wonderful cluster of colors as they move in a flowing spread throughout the pages. But, my god, the difficulty of it all! Two set-ups for each run and still the jump between the colors may cause some kind of wound to the relationship. Are they really that separate? I can see that a subtle relation could be shaped with this style, but would rather hold to a certain primal form in the reading line and simplify the technique of printing those pages. What is the effortless page one seeks?

Of all the dialogues, Phaedrus needs the supreme clarity of typographic line, and I believe the color would cause a disorder to that flow we seek for these pages. Anyway, I want you to linger over them and tell me your reactions. Remember, I can't change the typeface or size; I must print it on a small proof press (limits the overall surface), and it must be done with the strong image of new/old honesty (typographically).

Summer is here — warm and full of thoughtful respects to the birdsongs that were heard yesterday on the hills overlooking the grand ocean — sea, bicycle, Phaedrus and birdsongs get all mixed in my thinking lately . . . as ever,
Jack

3 July 1973

Dear Jack,

Hope the delay does not disturb your efforts. Looking at these pages I merely drew a blank, after the intense scrutiny of previous proofs. Yes, I agree that the lower-case italic letter is the best solution. With some amusement I note that

my suggestions were not effective. I don't know what to think now. Gazing into the sky.

Asymmetry. Every version but Fig. 3, and Manutius's (Fig. 2) places great weight on the left, and on the 'upper' left. This last version (Fig. 6) is the simplest, therefore the lightest weight, the most delicate balance. The color is too great a difference. But for another use it could be good. An adventure saved for later explorations.

Asymm. vs. randomness. Any other solution on the left margin will probably only complicate matters. I note you have proceeded by progressive simplification, and that seems correct, for all the reasons of parsimony, clarity, etc. If the trend is right, the only question to ask is: Could that left margin be any simpler?

Earlier I thought of:

OE. Mmmmmmmmmmmmm

mmmmmmmmmmmmmm

AE Nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn

nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn

OE. Mmmmmmmmmmmmm

AE. Nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn

If the signals can't be made simpler on the left, then is Manutius's (Fig. 2) solution the only alternative? Random distribution through the text. It simplifies the margin, but it complicates the text. I've never read a book like that, and I suspect few have. Would we modern readers be disturbed? The single letters solve the irregular spacing problem. Now you merely have to be satisfied that the spacing is exactly where you want it.

s. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

mmmmmmmmmmmmmm

p. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

mmmmmmmmmmmmmm

s. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

Triangulation. Minimum distraction. Maximum identification.

Desired:

That the signals can't get confused with the text. That they can't get confused with the wrong speaker.

That they can't look like price tags dangling on the line.

A polishing of this final form.

Really, I feel these comments aren't much help at this point. I can't point to any direction, make any suggestion; only stir up the waters again in the hope that when it clears, you will see what you want.

Typography has always disturbed me because of the claims of absolute correctness, beauty, etc., on the part of designers writing about the art, whereas no matter how deeply I look, I see only the manifest absence of certainty. So complex! The structure of the eye and nervous system, the vicissitudes of human evolution, the accidents of culture and history.

Good Lord! We're trying to fathom a million years of accidents by moving black smudges in increments of 1/72 inch.

The fact that we do a pretty good job at it even so is encouraging. Looking forward to the great Phaedrus born out of 'confusion.'

Chuck

4 December 1973

Dear Jack,

This is a fairly confused letter. But I did want to respond to the Phaedrus announcement [prematurely printed and never circulated]. I am pleased to see the very pure and severe pages

St. Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going? 1974

Phae. I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Alcibiades I take my walk on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

St. Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town.

Phae. Yes, staying with Epicles, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

St. Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the company a feast of eloquence.

Phae. I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

St. What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, "above all business" to hear how you and Lysias passed your time?

Phae. Lead on then.

St. Please tell me.

Phae. As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysias, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover—that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

St. Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear

**Hermocrates 1.1.*

Fig. 5a Fourth version with the abbreviations for speakers flushed right to periods (.), 1973.

1. Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going? 1973

2. I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Alcibiades I take my walk on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

3. Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town.

4. Yes, staying with Epicles, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

5. Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the company a feast of eloquence.

6. I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

7. What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, "above all business" to hear how you and Lysias passed your time?

8. Lead on then.

9. Please tell me.

10. As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysias, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover—that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

11. Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear about it that I won't leave you even if you extend your walk as far as Megara, up to the walls and back again as recommended by Herodotus.

**Hermocrates 1.1.*

Fig. 6 Fifth version with italic lower case for speakers, 1973.

1. Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going? 1974

2. I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Alcibiades I take my walk on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

3. Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town.

4. Yes, staying with Epicles, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

5. Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the company a feast of eloquence.

6. I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

7. What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, "above all business" to hear how you and Lysias passed your time?

8. Lead on then.

9. Please tell me.

10. As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysias, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover—that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

11. Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear about it that I won't leave you even if you extend your walk as far as Megara, up to the walls and back again as recommended by Herodotus.

**Hermocrates 1.1.*

Fig. 7 Sixth version with the *Sigma/phi* for speakers, 1974.

(Fig. 6). Plato would probably have liked it. Here is the simple argument why: In your *Phaedrus* edition, you are seeking beauty. But you have removed all ornament and arbitrary formal composition. Only the text itself remains. Therefore beauty must lie within the text, or nowhere, because there is nothing but the text. Similarly, it can be demonstrated that the beauty and the text must be identical (without the text there would be nothing to be beautiful), and that beauty must therefore be truth (because a true rendering of the text is the only rendering which can be beautiful). I'm afraid the argument gets a little sophistic as it is expanded, so I'll abandon it here.

yours,
Chuck

21 May 1974

Dear Chuck,

Have been probing *Phaedrus*, gaining new historical food to claim the answer to the typographic dialogue. See enclosed experiment (Fig. 7); by using the *Sigma/Phi* I have caught the musical mode I had been searching for. I think we did talk about this, but I finally made the leap. This counterpoint pays homage to the whole Greek alphabet—at least in symbolic form. This is not mere decoration but part of the relationship we have been moving towards. Please react and tell me if I'm all wrong. Is this the door of the *Phaedrus* pages? as ever,

Jack

29 May 1974

Dear Jack,

Got your letter. First, the *Phaedrus*. I note the *Phi* is phonetically more accurate than lower-case *p*; therefore it is an improvement (Fig. 7). Further, *Phi* symbolizes the golden ratio, 1:1.618+, in honor of Phidias, the architect of the Parthenon, which is (putatively) designed in accordance with the 'golden ratio.' This is a very properly revered proportion in book history (as well as other histories). Further, the Pythagoreans were the first to discover and explore *Phi*, as well as doing work on the musical modes. So *Phi* is both analytically and evocatively a good choice. My friend Donald thinks the *Sigma* seems a bit alien. I think it must go with *Phi*. He likes the *Phi*.

Overall, the Greek majuscules do give an ornamental appearance to the column. (By the way, what is this Greek face? I am working on a quote in Greek.) I think the ornamental aspect is not a hindrance, but there are obvious modifications: lower-case Greek (not very traditional, since they are a late invention); smaller Greek majuscules (might reduce the decorative effect, more modest); I like the latter better than the former. (Fig. 7 is the latter. The other proofs have been lost.) The only problem with ornament is when it becomes too rich and insubstantial, losing its meaning, which is usually formal rather than discursive. So if the *Phi* and *Sigma* are kept humble, they should remain utilitarian and thus the decorative effect would only come from their meaning and use.

Good.
yours,
Chuck

6 July 1974

Dear Chuck,

Again the grand delay on my part. Your healthy reply to my *Phaedrus* waited so long on my desk. You completely caught the mood of the Greek letters and the rich references to the *Phi*. Now to the never-ending *Phaedrus* mystery. I have made a radical change from the preceding page experiments. Enclosed is a rough proof of the

first two pages (Fig. 8). By making the separation I have caused myself more problems in the spatial arrangements for each speaker. But by breaking them apart, I have achieved a richer page (you can almost hear their voices). What is your first reaction, Chuck?

Each page will have a different cluster of lines—sometimes jerky and uneven, like speech, and at other moments dense and commanding. It will make the book twice the size of the original, but I'm sure it will allow the pages to have a totally fresh and classical spirit. I won't defend it at this time, but merely want your feelings and thoughts. It shifts our attention towards a lucid format, and since this dialogue contains three main speeches—one for *Phaedrus* and two for *Socrates*—it will give the overall pages a true rhythmic texture.

with warm regards,
Jack

6 August 1974

Dear Jack,

I'm taking some time off from a busy day to write about the *Phaedrus*. It's clear that I've got several busy days ahead, so better to write now than to delay later.

A good friend and philosopher, Kate Croughan, visited Portland, and we spent a day talking about *Phaedrus*. I had read Hackforth's translation and she Jowett's.

This last version (Fig. 8), the two-page separation, made it obvious to me that the typography has gone beyond the standard aesthetic canons, though they themselves are difficult enough to achieve, and must be approaching the heart of this specific dialogue.

One gets lost in the dialogue and may lose sight of the printed word. I especially was taken with the passage comparing knowledge with seeds and the soul with a garden. And in a very different way, intrigued with the description of the soul's composition and the reasons by which one soul is attracted to another.

The questions you raise take us to that realm where very simple things must be thought very carefully in very subtle ways.

We hear sounds, we see mouths move, we read writing, we experience meanings, make words, and, taking a sighting on sound and vision to know how they compare, we perceive that the *kinds* of relationships which link the spoken word to the written word are themselves related to the *kinds* of relationships which link words to thoughts, and the thoughts of one person to the thoughts of another.

So, never leaving behind the actual sounds and the actual sensations of speech, we may nevertheless contemplate that realm of symmetries, of relations too simple for words, and too complex, and know that these things, though not divorced from us, yet have their own life.

Let me mention the myth of the cicadas and the muses. At first, we might think that the soul, or the psyche, is made of something, like a layer cake, or some other structure or substance. Yet when one looks inward to discern the composition, it is always very elusive. Like a cricket chorus.

As we approach a given source of song, that insect shuts up, but all others keep on. It is not any one voice, nor the exact character of them, but their relationship, their harmonies, that determines the chorus. And so we might guess that words and thoughts, and thoughts and thoughts, and ideas and things beyond, are more like a chorus than a layer cake.

The words are one part of the chorus; the writing is another. Within the stream of words there are depictions of the relationship between speakers, and thus within the path of writing there may be depictions of the relationship between speakers.

Socrates Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going?

Phaedrus I've been with Lysis, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

Socrates Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysis, I take it, was in town.

Phaedrus Yes, staying with Epicerates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

Socrates Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysis was giving the company a feast of eloquence.

Phaedrus I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

Socrates What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, «above all business»¹ to hear how you and Lysis passed your time?

Phaedrus Lead on then.

Socrates Please tell me.

Phaedrus As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysis, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover—that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

Socrates Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear about it that I vow I won't leave you even if you extend your walk as far as Mergare, up to the walls and back again as recommended by Herodotus.

¹ *epiboulon* . . .

Socrates Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going?

Phaedrus I've been with Lysis, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

Socrates Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysis, I take it, was in town.

Phaedrus Yes, staying with Epicerates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

Socrates Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysis was giving the company a feast of eloquence.

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Phaedrus What do you mean, my good man? Do you

¹ *epiboulon* . . .

Fig. 7a, 7b Retrogressive experiments following Fig. 7.

But these depictions are not isomorphic. The asymmetries become important, and the relations between them must be discerned so that they may also be arranged in a system of dissonances. As for the actual sample (Fig. 8), I have only a few comments.

I'm a bit worried about the eye's leap across the gutter. It seems very easy to learn, but it's not the kind of acrobatics we learn to use in reading. More like looking at a painting. An extremely orderly painting.

Can you embody in the arrangement some way of gently teaching the reader how to interpret/see it? Is the gutter margin thus too wide? Are short leaps better than long? How short? How long? In the vertical dimension, we have mechanical order and organic order. How are the blank leadings determined? If the blank space always fits the complementary text opposite, then that is a mechanical order which the reader will probably catch on to. If the blank space is what your eye/brain says is good, then it will be much more natural and clear than the mechanical in some sections, and possibly more bewildering and chaotic in others.

You see, if you have to teach the reader new principles in order for this book to be understood easily, then it does itself become a dialogue, but carried on at great remove — as if you have turned the soil, planted the seeds, watered them and gone away, and the reader must now take over managing the garden, watering and weeding, choosing the plants, waiting for them to bloom and bear fruit. By choosing to do it this way, you take the greatest burden and risk, to evoke the deepest principles. Because just like in a real dialogue, you must constantly attend to the words, the meanings, the consequences, the persons, the personal relationships. *Verso/recto*; mechanical/optical. You can no longer deal just in texture; formal principles become important because they determine the various patterns that will occur, and the patterns must be carefully articulated with the textures, so that the book doesn't collapse in a dizzle of (a)symmetries. Just like when meter and rhyme become so strong in a poem that the meaning is completely obscured. The day passes; I must return to other things.

yours, as always
Chuck

31 August 1974

Dear Chuck,
I'm here in Carmel and feel bad that I have not answered sooner. Everything assumes so many directions, plans, demands, etc. I felt a note of caution in your last letter, but it was sound and judicious — I react with detachment. Phaedrus is no longer in my hands. The content is slowly shaping everything, and the many experiments allow us to make fewer searchings. Yet I feel the need to move ahead with the project and act out the ritual of type/printing/inks, etc. This urgency is felt now — will write. with warm regards,
Jack

17 November 1975

Dear Jack,
How is the Phaedrus coming? When Plato wrote, the Greeks had not been literate for very long. He was a man from an oral tradition society writing about the nature of oral society and surmising about the transformation literacy would bring. So, although he was talking about the mind and soul of the individual, and the dialogue, for us he is also talking about the contrast of thought between oral society and literate society. In a sense he was doing anthropology, using the vocabulary of philosophy.* Among non-literate people, conversations may be different from those in literate groups. Very different. Interminable, full of digressions and digressions, unravelings of ambiguity, returnings to the major point, until the conversation fills you up. You couldn't forget it if you wanted to!
yours,
Chuck

* We could say he was the inverse anthropologist, since he was essentially an oral-society man analyzing literate society, whereas an anthropologist is a literate-society person who analyzes oral societies.

<p>1 Socrates Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going?</p> <p>Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysis, I take it, was in town.</p> <p>Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysis was giving the company a feast of eloquence.</p> <p>What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, «above all business»¹ to hear how you and Lysis passed your time?</p> <p>Please tell me.</p> <p>Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear about it that I vow I won't leave you even if you extend your walk as far as Mergare, up to the walls and back again as recommended by Herodotus.</p>	<p>2 Phaedrus I've been with Lysis, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.</p> <p>Yes, staying with Epicerates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.</p> <p>I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.</p> <p>Lead on then.</p> <p>As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysis, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover—that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.</p>
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Fig. 8 Seventh version, 1974.