

For þe Return of Þorn!

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It's not widely known today, but we used to have more letters in our alphabet þan we do today. For example, þe ampersand (which is noþing more þan a ligature of þe letters 'E' and 't') used to be a full-blown letter, þe 27^þ in the English alphabet. Today, it is considered no longer a letter, but raþer a logogram. Many people today incorrectly call it "þe 'and' sign." Perhaps you've seen it, it looks like þis:



Chances are, you have indeed seen þis ligature before.

But, þere are oþer letters þat once appeared in the English alphabet wiþ which you may be less familiar. I'm þinking particularly of þe letter þorn, which looks like þis:

Þ (capital)

þ (minuscule)

Have you seen it before?

If not, do not fret. Þe only alphabet þat still uses it is þe Icelandic alphabet.

It was during þe 14^b century þat þe letter “þ” began to get replaced wiþ þe letters “th.”

Þus, today, we find most English users writing “the” instead of “þe” and “thou” instead of “þou.” As it were, we have been wiþout þe þorn for six- or seven-hundred years!

Unacceptable. Clearly unacceptable.

Þere seems to be no logic behind using þe “th” digraph to pronounce eiþer of þe two phonemes for which we so regularly use it (*e.g. this* or *think*). Instead, it makes much more sense to use þe “th” to express þe /t/ sound found in the word “Neanderthal.” Using “th” to express /θ/ (*think*) or /ð/ (*this*) simply makes no sense!

Mepinks þe time has come for a return of þe Mighty Þorn—a veritable þorn comeback!

Of course, þere’s only one way to bring back the þorn: by using it, and þereby re-popularising it. So I ask, ladies and gentlemen, are you ready to join the Þorn Revolution? If so, þen loudly proclaim it wiþ me:

Þe þorn shall þrive þenceforþ!