Diacritics

Why do we have them?

To extend Latin

to cover more sounds

Latin begins with

A B C D E F G H I L M N

O P Q R S T U X

Later

JKVWYZ

are added

Why?

The Latin script does not perfectly fit all sounds in the languages that adopt it – even Latin

Eventually instead of adding lots of new letters...

old letters are adapted using the Greek diacritic model

example:

ÀÂÇÉÈÊËÎÏÔŒÙÛÜŸŽ

are added for French

Adaptions are language specific.

This means the sound and letter don't always agree between languages

Why are they called Diacritics?

Many (but not all) diacritics have their origin in Greek

The name "diacritics" comes from Greek too

διακριτικός

or diakritikós

means

distinguishing

What kinds of diacritics exist?

In addition to marks that sit above and below letters...

Àk̨

AK,

some letters
have marks to
the side

l’l·t’d’

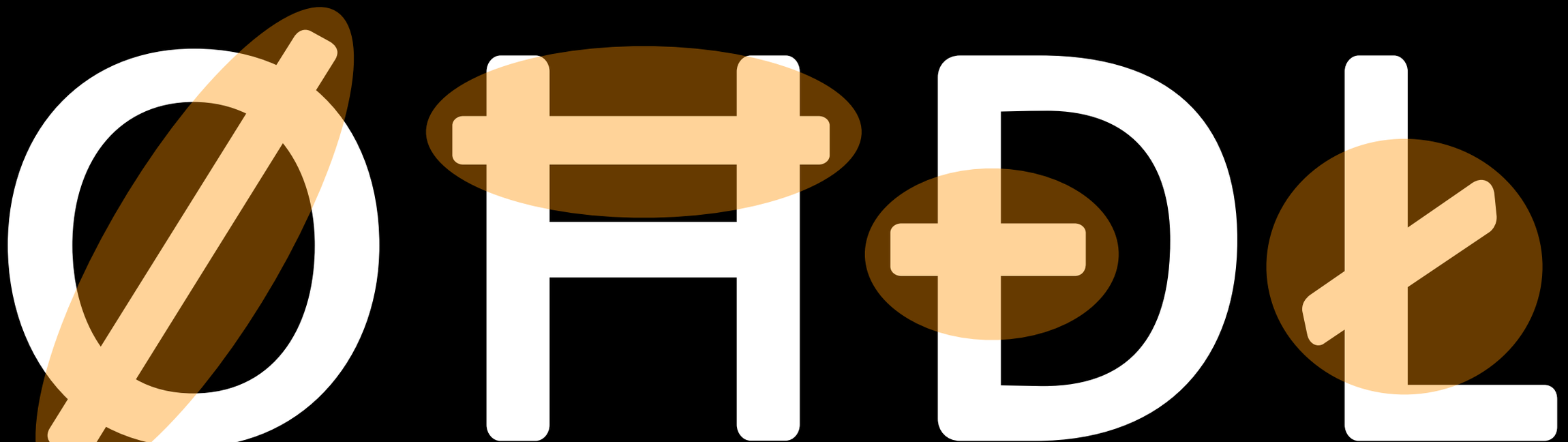
Wednesday, July 24, 2013

Lotd

some letters

are crossed...

ØHDL


DAD

or have
parts added

SEN

SEN

or are made
with two letters
combined

ACE

Some letters are irrationally grouped with diacritics

ðßijk

This is not logical

Many things in type just have to be studied

For instance these are upper and lowercase Thorn...

Pp

upper and lowercase Tbar...

Ŧŧ

What about upper and lowercase Eth?

Pt 2

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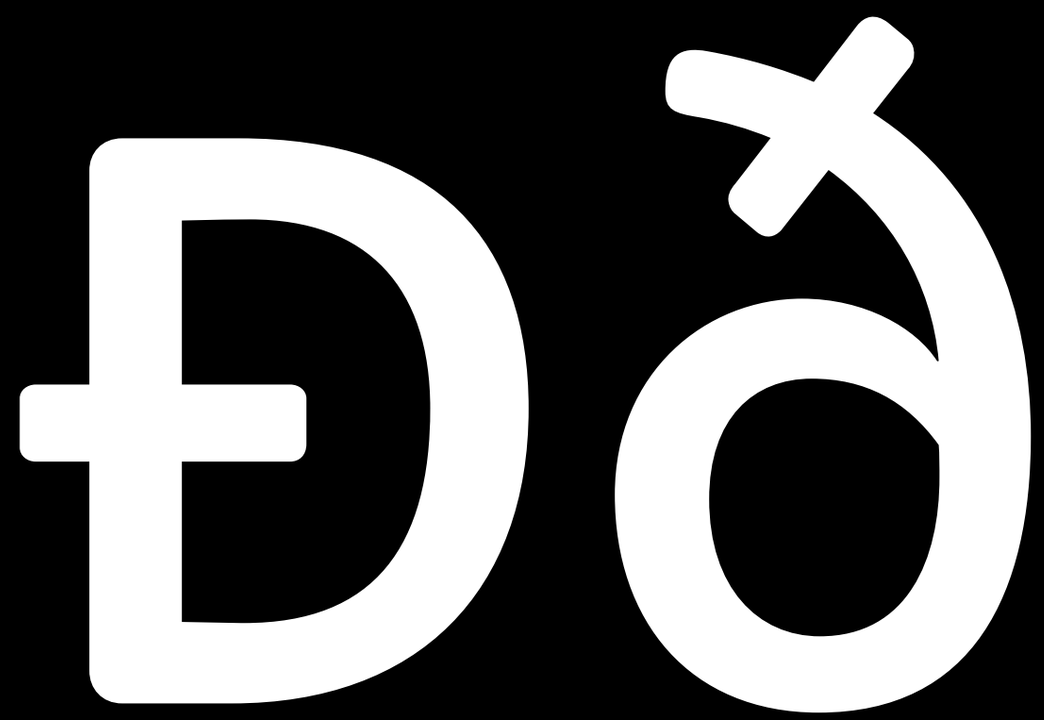
No!

This is correct.



đ *or "dcroat" is a different letter with no capital*

How do I do a good job designing diacritics ?

Diacritics that look similar in weight are better

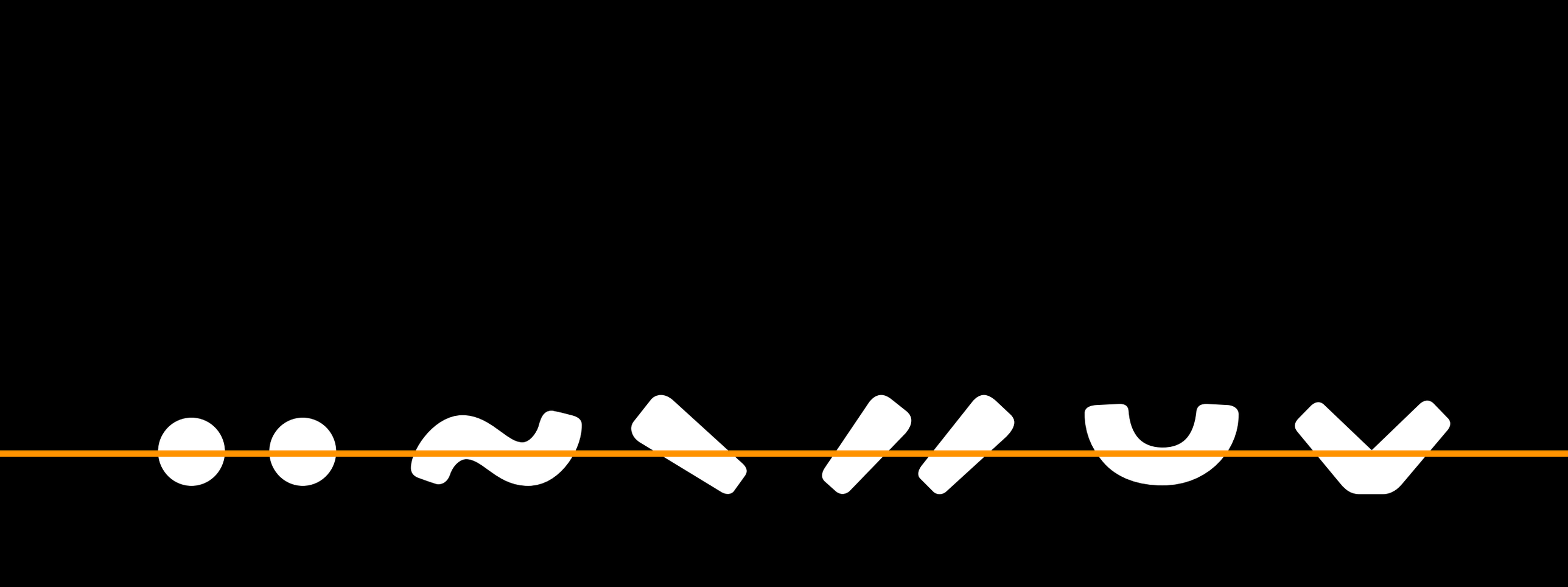
That is too vague. Give me a better metric.

Bread dough

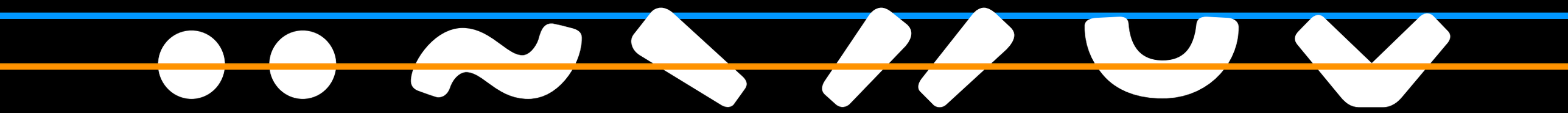
Photo: Christian Guthier

If you think of making each diacritic from the same amount of bread dough that can help.

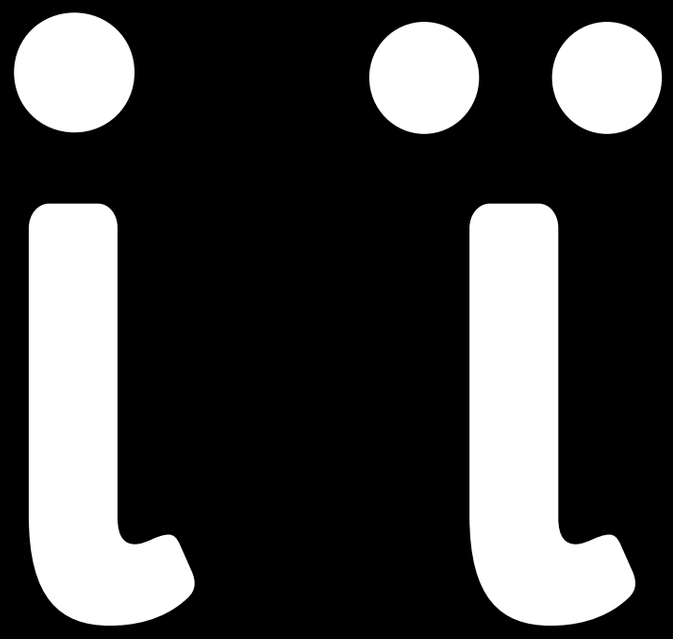
Their heights should not be centered but the middle of their weight should feel aligned

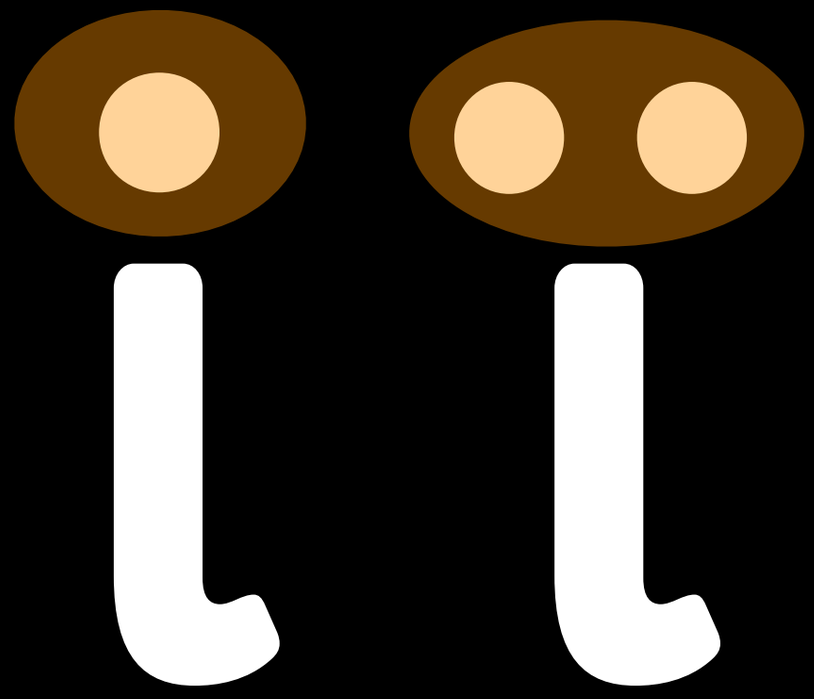


The tallest ones should be similar in height



The dots on dieresis should not be exactly the same weight as the dot on i





Study typefaces you feel are successful.

The best solution for one style may not translate fully to another style.

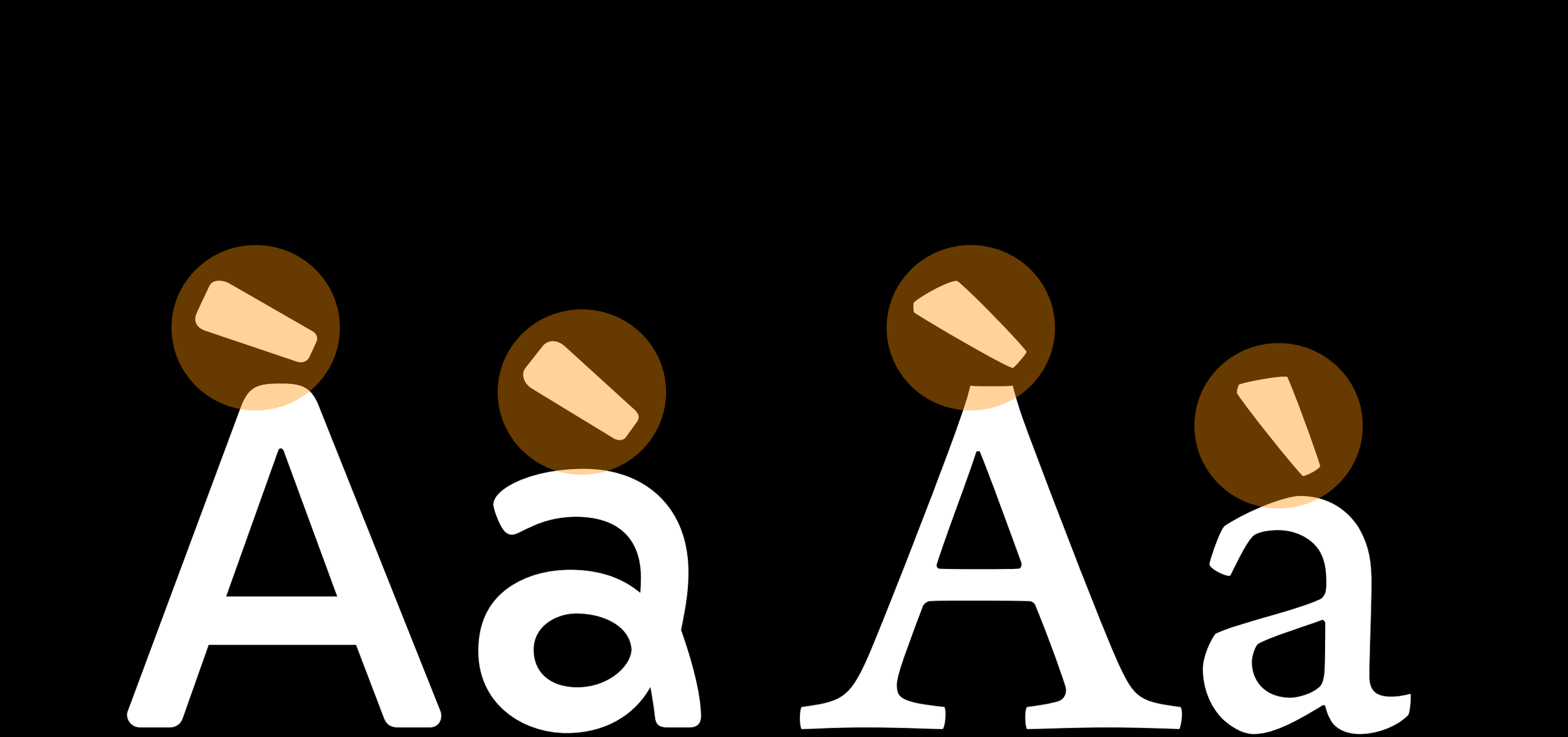
Are lower case and capital marks the same?

They can be.

However it can be useful to make separate ones.

Nejprestižnější
na České stran

The style of your font should be seen in the diacritics.


Aa Aa

Aa Az

English has no diacritics – right?

Not true!

They are rare,

but do exist.

Coöperate

Noël

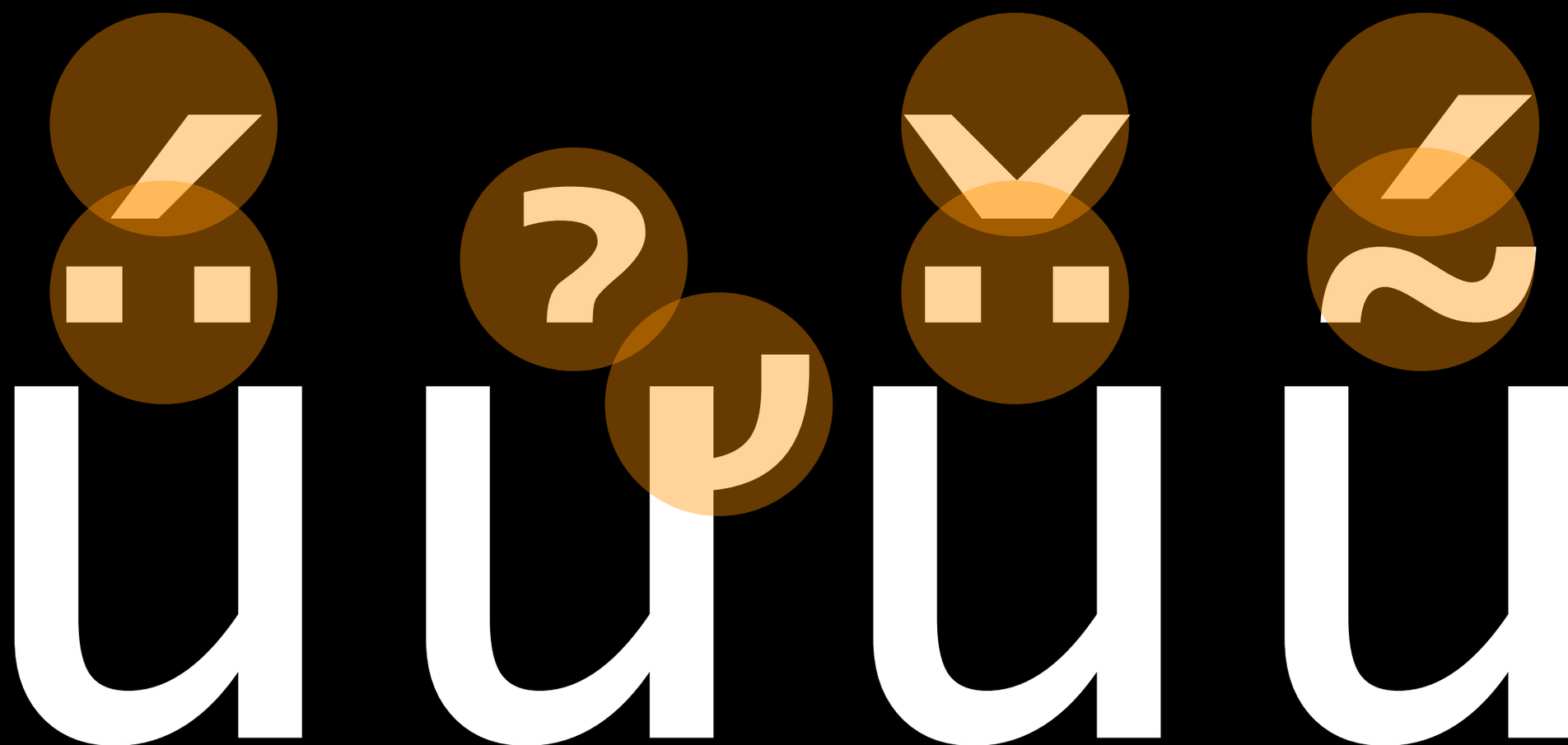
They can also be in loan-words

Saké

What are the hardest diacritics to design?

Probably the ones where there are two at once such as in Vietnamese

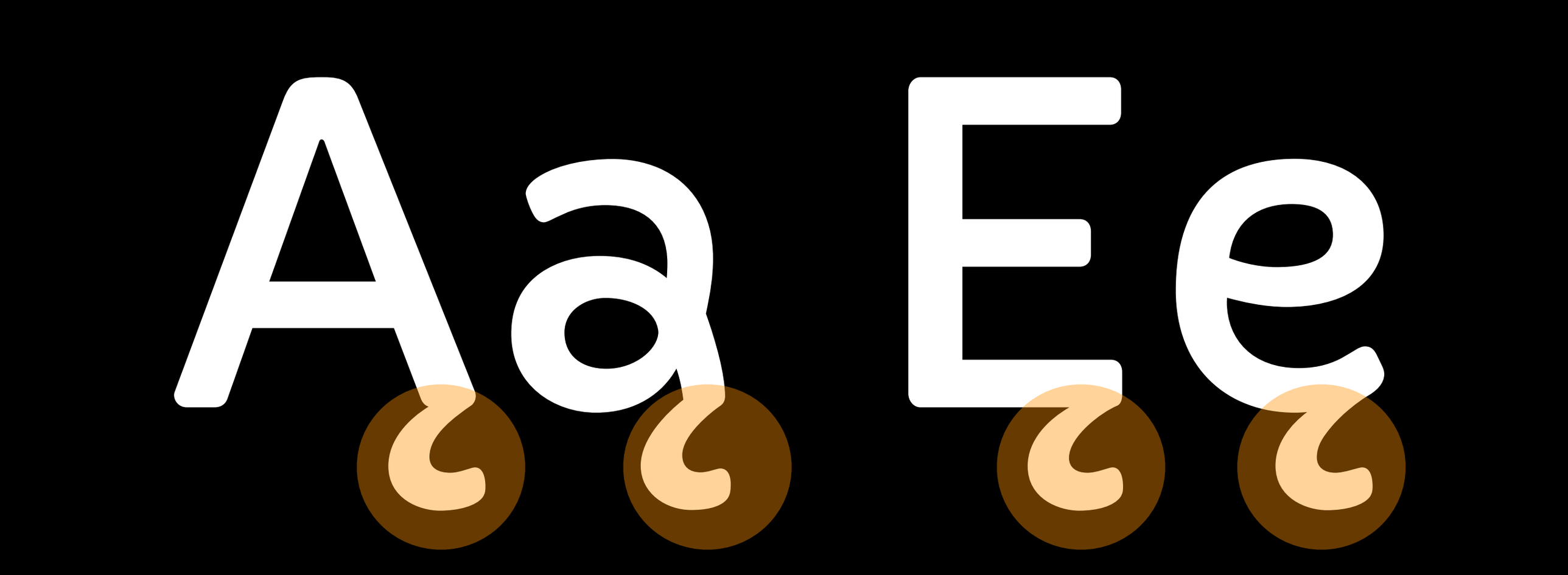
ứứứ



Designing the ogonek for Polish is also complicated.

Aa Ęę

Ii Yų

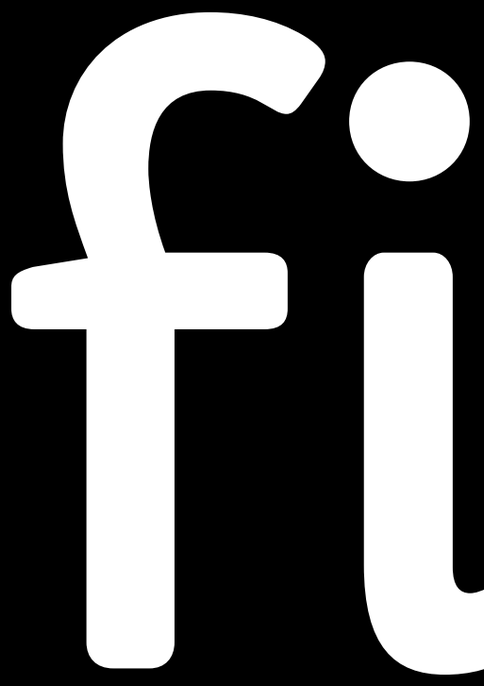

Aa Ɛɛ
Ii Uu

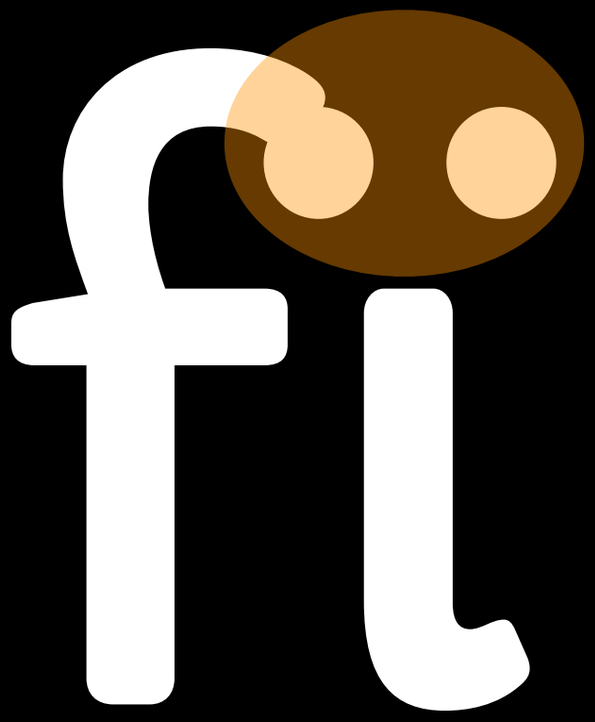
Please read Adam Twardoch's text on this subject!

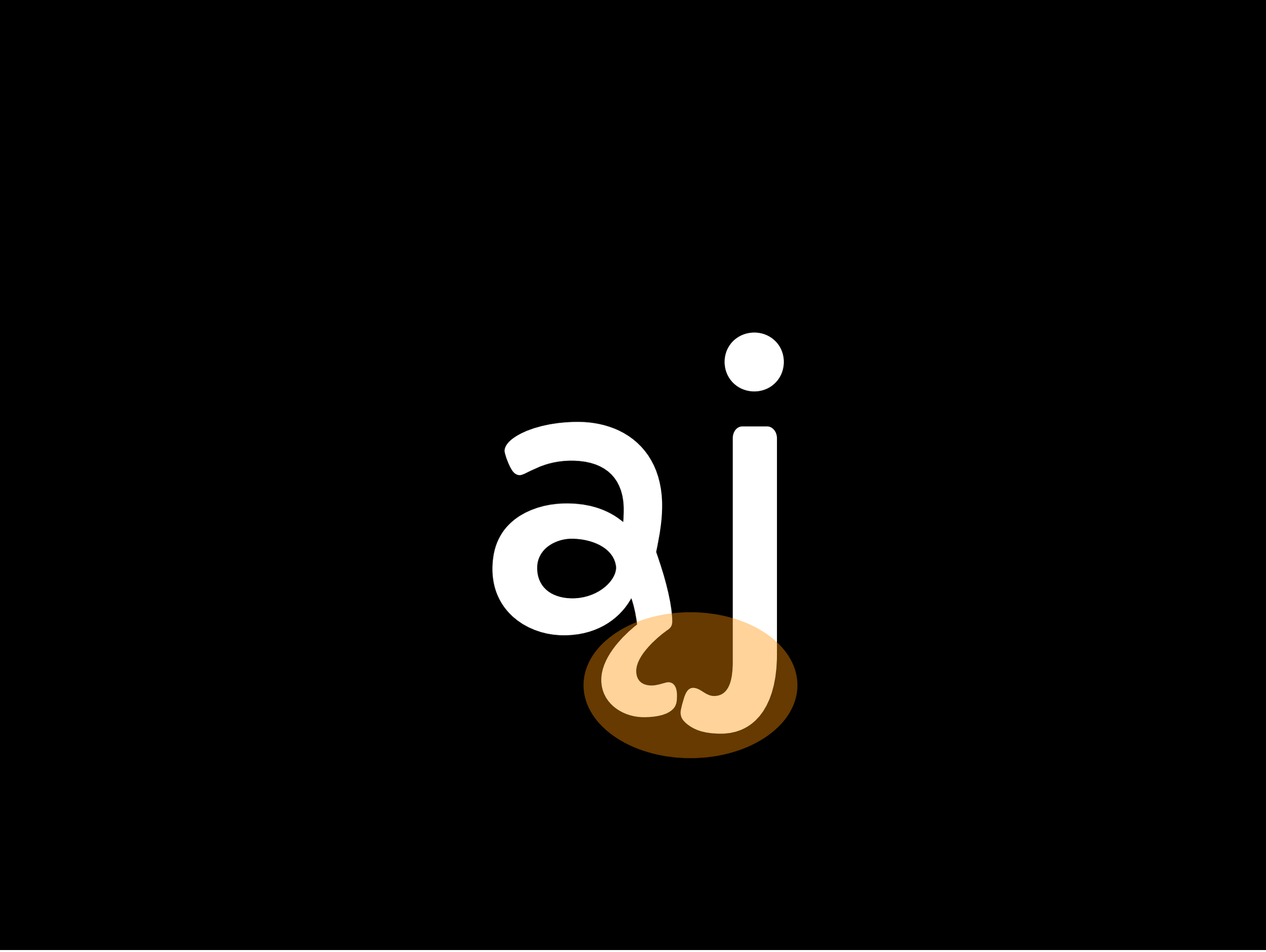
http://www.twardoch.com/download/polishhowto/ogonek.html

What special problems do diacritics create for kerning?

fò







Type used:

Merriweather Sans
Capriola

Made by:

Eben Sorkin

Thanks to:

David Brezina
Veronika Burian
Victor Gaultney
Gerry Leonidas
Adam Twardoch

Thanks!