

Kanji, Kana, and the Motion Graphics Connection

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Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Motion Media Design at
Savannah College of Art and Design

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e-Learning

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Dedication

I dedicate this to my loving and supportive family. Mom & Dad, you have no idea how many times I was at my wits end, ready to quit, but then you offered to help with something or just gave a bit of encouragement, and that's all I needed to keep going.

I especially want to thank my wife, Hitomi, who worked longer hours and took on extra work to support me. There are not enough words to express how much I appreciate you.

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Abstract

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Sergei Eisenstein recognized the powerful effect of the film montage sequence. The order and kind of images an audience is shown become more than the value of the individual shots. There is a process at work that is unique to moving images. In the book, *Film Form*, Eisenstein delves into the similarities between many aspects of Japan, including the Japanese language and its logographic writing system known as kanji, with his theories of montage.

Kanji, which initially came from China, is made of characters that can contain a specific meaning on a per-character basis. However, when these characters are combined, the sum is often more significant than the individual elements. Furthermore, many studies have concluded logographic-based writing such as kanji, allow the reader to directly access a mental image, bypassing the phonetic process of western languages.

Motion graphics, which utilize not only the principles of film montage, but also graphic design, typography, music, and sound effects with precise and measured quantization of time, create key visual moments for the viewer. In this paper, we will explore how modern motion graphics connect with the concepts of Eisenstein and others while demonstrating an even greater connection to the Japanese writing system than was shown concerning the film montage sequence.

Exceeding anything postulated by Sergei Eisenstein, the rebus of graphic design, imagery, motion, typography, and sound in motion graphics share a surprisingly strong correlation with the Japanese language, Japanese writing, and Japanese calligraphy, known as shodou (書道).

Keywords: motion theory, Japanese, shodou, Saussure, Eisenstein, Vertov, Patrick Clair, logographic, visual kanji, visual language, pictographic, visual mora

Chapter 1

1.1 Concepts Take Form

The thoughts, ideas, and imagery within the human mind are not connected directly to any type of language or communication. They are formless, entirely generated, and contained within the self. A method to successfully give meaning and ultimately transfer any concept contained within must be available to provide it with form and structure. For Ferdinand de Saussure, this vague notion exists within the *langue*. There exists meaning, but without communicable structure. To encapsulate a conception, one needs to employ a system of manifestation. In Saussure's terminology, this is *parole*.

In the compilation book, *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure breaks down the communicative process of speech from the ethereal realm of thought to the physical world, where an idea is given shape and finally is converted back to a concept by the receiving party. In this process, requiring a minimum of two parties, the mental is converted via physiological to physical, and then the process is reversed. Although Saussure applied the concept to spoken language, the method, whether physiological, mechanical, or technical, is not the key factor at work. Written, photographed, animated, spoken or typed, is only the method to give form to the idea in a way that can be perceived, received, and comprehended by another.

Although to say the method does not matter is not entirely true, as if the communicator delivers their information using a system foreign to the receiver, the process fails. This is to say there is no method by which an individual who speaks Yurok can transmit information verbally to an individual to whom it is foreign. The same applies to a deaf individual attempting to communicate using American Sign Language. This is, in fact, the difference between language and speech in Saussure's model. Even if the receiver has knowledge of the type of communication being attempted, without functional knowledge of the language being used, the information remains trapped within the thought of the communicator. To achieve success, both parties must share a structural foundation.

With the visual arts, like other forms of capturing and giving thought a physical structure, patterns begin to form over time. These syntagmatic relationships create unseen structures stored in the collective consciousness. In particular, with films, generations have been trained to recognize patterns, cues, signs, and symbols, leading to an expectation of outcome. It is the concept of genres and the codification of stereotypes and tropes. Barthes would call them *cultural codes*, a societal belief system that generates the impression of agreed-upon common sense. It is cultural relativism. Filmmakers, animators, and motion media designers draw from and rely upon these existing codes within the mainstream. It is an ever-changing, ever-expanding mental lexicon of shorthand to create and set expectations.

“Being cultured lies in our ability to transmit from one to another, allowing others to gain access to successful formulations and articulations which further our notion of being. This is what builds culture: the accumulated conceptual riches brought through the history of civilization.”(Traub and Lipkin) Thus to achieve laconism, it is vital to maximize the efficiency of communications. Visual forms certainly fit this goal as *“...the human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text, and 90 percent of information transmitted to the brain is visual.”*(“Humans Process Visual Data Better”)

Purely visual containers, such as icons, serve the function of transmitting information without text but require effort to learn since they are not a part of any type of written language. Whereas languages such as Chinese, with hanzi, and Japanese, with kanji, are languages with logographic or pictographic methods of communication as part of their foundation. *“In such a situation, the study of pictographs, which hover at the borderland of the text and image, can be especially useful. They help us to see that at the next level of abstraction, of texts and images as information, similar rhetorical mechanisms are at work. Each instance of text and image is an incarnation of such a metarhetoric, but it can be articulated according to its own rules and principles if it is rendered explicit.”*(Drucker and McGann)

Chapter 2

2.1 A Universal Visual Language?

Whether alphabetic, logographic, motion graphic, or some other methodology, the idea of having a universal method of communication is the stuff that has kindled the imagination of many science fiction authors. It is the magic bullet, reversing the Tower of Babel, requiring no translation or translators.

“Motion is an abstract language with the potential of being understood across cultures, so it follows that type in motion may point to a form of communication without boundaries.”(Stone and Wahlin)

It is quite natural to consider the implementation of visual imagery in the development of a method of communication that could cross linguistic boundaries. Visuals represent most of the content our brains process from the moment of birth. *“Adults as well as children encounter a flow of visual images in everyday life environments; through work, social activities and personal hobbies. They make use of the visual without particularly conscious reflection, as though visuals are there to be used, understood and to be created as a rule-free mode of communication: that the visual is something ‘transparent.’ (This leads to the notion of universality of the visual that suggests that there is no systematic regulation at work in visual communication, so that it can be understood and also produced in the same manner, regardless of the contexts in which it is located.)”*(Oyama)

Then why has there not been a massive undertaking to develop a new, visuals-based, universal form of communication? To certain extents, the task has been undertaken in a variety of disciplines. For example, the graphical user interface of computers, tablets, and smartphones use icons as a type of visual language. The icon of a trash can is identifiable as the location for unwanted items. Websites currently use a navigation system of three horizontal lines, known colloquially as a *hamburger menu*. Users who have never experienced this type of menu may not initially understand its function. Still, by virtue of its design, it tends to invite a curious mouse click, which immediately informs the user of its functionality. Within modern smart devices, people routinely use visual shorthand to express feelings, emotions, and

more in the form of emoji. Look to any public restroom to see examples of “Symbol Signs” created in 1974 by AIGA as part of a project for the United States Department of Transportation.



FIGURE 1: AIGA UNISEX TOILET ICON, 1974, PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

Moreover, AIGA continues to build upon this concept via the *Noun Project*, “a global visual language that unites the world - a language that allows quick and easy communication no matter who you are or

where you are.” (Lingo — The Visual Home for Your Brand) As a whole, society is slowly being trained to recognize these symbols and icons and convert them into meaningful representations of information.

Thus, it is logical by extension to consider motion graphics as a potential next step that combines iconography with motion and sound to create the singularity of a universal visual language. Nevertheless, there are many limiting factors. Indeed, the possibility of creating simple iconography has already been demonstrated, and they function within a limited construct. However, beyond the most basic, common concepts, the challenge is simply too immense. Artist and author Xu Bing created *Book from the Ground*, “A book without words, recounting a day in the life of an office worker, told completely in the symbols, icons, and logos of modern life.” (Press) Bing’s book, a plain, mundane narrative, is rendered in the form of smiley faces, emoji, and icons that are used in forms of communication such as instant messengers. More art than literature, the book requires the reader to maintain considerable focus to comprehend even a single thought. This is not efficient, nor would it be considered universal. Creating vibrant, compelling narrative literature requires much more nuance. As the complexity of the information being encoded increases, the more decoding will be influenced by other elements that make up the matrix of understanding within the culture of the receiving individual. Barthes’ idea of *cultural codes* is both the doorway to and the limiting factor of this pursuit. Culture, customs, and the existence of vocabularies that have no direct translation to other languages have a significant influence on how a message is received.

Simply consider color palettes, and, immediately, universality suffers its first defeat. “In Western culture, we are familiar with the color black as a symbol of death and mourning. Funeral directors wear black

jackets, and it is usual for those who attend to wear black. Athletes wear black armbands to show respect for those who have been lost. This is a symbolic sign that we have all learned, and it is also, to a degree, iconic. However, in other cultures across the world, this relationship between color and loss is quite different. In China, for example, white is used for funerals, which could create the impression of a wedding to a Westerner, who has quite a different understanding of the symbolic use of white.”(Crow) This is not to say the entire western world would immediately associate a motion graphic project involving the color black with death, but instead is an indication of the pitfalls and minefields faced when creating something with the intention of a universal message.

The human mind is designed to sort, organize, and give meaning to the world around us. Moreover, when confronted by something abstract or unrecognizable, it is human nature to imbue the unknown with qualities and meanings from our own experiences and knowledge. The psychological phenomenon known as pareidolia causes humans to see recognizable shapes, especially faces, in anything from a cloud to a fire hydrant. In the case of a crab native to Japan, the face of an angry samurai makes an appearance. Once more, this is Barthes’ *cultural codes* at work.



FIGURE 2: SAMURAI CRAB, HEIKIGANI (2015) BY RD 77, CC 4.0

RD 77 / CC BY-SA

Hermann Rorschach inadvertently demonstrated the process of pareidolia when, in 1921, he created the Rorschach test. The now widely discredited evaluation involved showing patients a series of inkblots in which they were encouraged to describe the images formed by the ink. Pareidolia is a phenomenon that attempts to create sense from the visually senseless. A Rorschach inkblot could be seen as a bunny rabbit, a ballet dancer, a monster, or any number of things. However, even within a well-researched phenomenon like pareidolia, cultural codes are at work. Rorschach inkblots will produce different results merely due to cultural differences. Consequently, when it comes to the samurai crab, it may not have

been so named had it been native to Norway where an angry samurai mask would not be culturally relevant.

With the pervasiveness of icon-based graphical user interfaces and the ever-increasing use of emoji to express thought and emotion, each new generation may indeed become more able to express themselves in a cross-cultural visual way. Nevertheless, the idea of motion graphics serving as some form of shortcut to a universal language falls flat in the face of the relativistic nature of societies across the globe. Instead, motion designers should maintain an awareness of the norms within the community most impacted by their works, utilizing the stenographic shortcuts of the existing zeitgeist to manipulate and magnify their message. A design resembling an angry samurai mask does indeed have cultural relevance to a specific group of people, and thus maintaining knowledge of these types of relativistic cultural codes can play a significant role in the work of the designer.

The structure and function of motion graphics can be deconstructed and codified for culturally significant usage without specifically attempting the generation of a universal communicative methodology. By decoupling meaning from structure, we abstract social relevance from conveyance. It begins by first recognizing western languages, specifically English, as inadequate devices with which to pursue this goal. Instead, the requirement of this endeavor is met by langue where the need for vocalization, mental or physical in its formation, is bypassed entirely.

Chapter 3

3.1 Visual and Phonetic Representation

Logographic, ideographic, and pictographic systems include Egyptian hieroglyphics, Sumerian cuneiform, Chinese hanzi, Korean hanja, and Japanese kanji. To avoid confusion or misrepresentation, the terms logographic and pictographic share similarities whereby an image or icon are direct representations of an object. These are concrete, straightforward illustrations, such as an image of fire, to signify the concept of fire. On the other hand, ideographic writing uses symbols to represent conceptual ideas. Research has shown, many elements of hanzi, hanja, and kanji, while currently identified as

ideographic, were developed over centuries from pictographic symbols. As this paper's intention is not to be a study of linguistics, it uses the terms logographic and ideographic as broader terms to mean a representational language, rather than an entirely phonetic language such as English.

Japanese hiragana and katakana are phonetic but are considered syllabaries rather than alphabetic since each character represents a specific, individual mora. However, mora are not syllables and are not counted in the same way syllables are counted. Other than the character ん(n), which is syllabic, kana consist of sound elements; ま(ma), み(mi), む(mu), め(me), も(mo) are examples of this principle. To most native English speakers, Tokyo contains two or three syllables. however, in Japanese, it comprises four morae. 東京 is written in hiragana as とぅきょぅ and is correctly Romanized as toukyou where the letter “u” represents a moment of additional time the sound “o” is held. It is to\u\kyo\u, four individual morae.



FIGURE 3: ORACLE BONE SCRIPT TO KANJI,
PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE CC 1.0

Thus, while English is a phonetic system, the structure used to create the phonemes is very different from the structure of Japanese. However, auditorily, kana, and syllables are similar in that they are merely a physical manifestation of vocalization and contain no distinct information.

Japanese is unique in its combination of the ideographic with the phonetic. Kanji, borrowed from the Chinese, is effortlessly mixed with hiragana and katakana to form a complete language system. *“Unlike the alphabet, which has developed a linear form of representation, the writing systems of Chinese and Japanese, to which kanji belongs, represent a situation of equilibrium unique in the history of mankind in which the signs function not simply as signs with which one builds sentences, but as signs which by virtue of their pictorial representation and sequencing retain their potential for creating groups of images which are visually meaningful. Yet in that capacity they are fully capable of portraying mathematics or biology quite adequately.”* (Ikegami)

3.2 Logographics and Visual Thinking

The appeal of Japanese kanji to Sergei Eisenstein, Roland Barthes, and others becomes evident when considering not only the construction of the characters but how the mind of an individual raised with Japanese as their native language perceives the characters. *“Because logographs represent meaning, a reader can mentally access concepts unmediated by phonology, or subvocalization.... Reading logographs is not dominated by phonological processes and appears to rely to a greater degree on visual processes...”* (Tavassoli and Han) It is the epitome of linguistic pith. Kanji characters grant access to much more than phonetics ever can. *“In essence, while an English word may be graphically represented by the combination of sounds that form the word (e.g. logo consisting of the symbols l, o, g, and o, which in turn contribute the sounds /l/, /oʊ/, /g/, and /oʊ/, in the correct order), a Japanese word could be represented by a single symbol, or combination of symbols, that map more directly to that word’s morphological components 速読 (e.g. /sokudoku/ (“speed reading”) consisting of the character 速, which contributes*

the /soku/ (“fast”) half of the word, and 読, which contributes the /doku/ (“reading”) half of the word).”(Dylman and Kikutani)

Kanji, though part of the Japanese written language, originated in China, yet Chinese and Japanese as languages are verbally nothing alike. The Chinese characters used in Japanese are occasionally pronounced similarly to Chinese but will usually have more than one pronunciation. Despite the linguistic differences, Japanese and Chinese people can glean the meaning of the written word in either language due to the shared meanings contained within the written characters of kanji and hanzi. The encoding of meaning in visual, logographic writing serves to bypass vocalization and transmit ideas and concepts without the need for translation. Thus if a motion graphics composition serves functionally as kanji, the encoding and communication of thoughts should similarly occur.

Currently, Japan uses 2,136 Joyo kanji. Joyo is a list of kanji officially recognized by the Ministry of Education in Japan. By comparison, China’s hanzi system currently contains over 80,000 characters. Nevertheless, for both Japanese kanji and Chinese hanzi, the order in which the individual strokes making up a character are written are standardized and considered quite essential. This physical standardization of writing kanji reveals itself in fascinating ways.

When asked to memorize a list of words, verbally or as a written list, differences become immediately apparent. A research study found,



FIGURE 4: YAMA (MOUNTAIN) STROKE ORDER, PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

“...regardless of whether words were learned auditorily or visually, native Chinese speakers were able to recall logographs better by writing them down during free recall, whereas native English speakers were better at recalling alphabetic words by speaking them.”(Tavassoli and Han) There is a very distinct visual component to hanzi/kanji not seen in western written languages and, as Sergei Eisenstein opined, bears striking similarities to the processes used in editing film, and to a much greater extent, creating motion graphics.

When considering the written form of Chinese and Japanese, either language fits the idea of montage, as Eisenstein theorized. However, regarding the structure and visual language of motion graphic design, Japanese and its calligraphic form known as shodou (書道), contain elements, concepts, and construction that compare much more favorably.

Chapter 4

4.1 The Japanese Difference

Written Japanese forms a unique and delicate dance where Chinese kanji form conceptual islands and the fluid form of hiragana bestows motion, action, or conveys descriptive information and then links us to the following kanji form. In Japanese, kanji rarely stand alone in a sentence. Collectively called kana, hiragana, and katakana serve an exceptional function in Japanese. Hiragana modify kanji to create a distinct meaning or can help to convert or indicate the kanji are verbs or adjectives.

Katakana are unique in their usage since they generally function to reveal things such as foreign loan words. The sharp, angular structure of katakana stand out much like italics in a typewritten document in



FIGURE 5: PAUL GRISWOLD *HIRAGANA, KATAKANA, KANJI* (2020)

English. *“The semantic evolution of Japanese is the result of centuries of highly mediated, transcultural interaction with other Asian and Western languages. The original derivation of the Japanese written script from ancient Chinese, the development of two complementary phonetic syllabaries to accommodate the distinct polysyllabic and inflected nature of spoken Japanese, and the introduction of Western words and alphanumeric writing systems to Japan are well-known facts.”* (Weisenfeld)

Within a motion graphics animation, the concept of kana would be anything *other* than the main composition that functions to support, modify, or otherwise alter the structure. The use of a graphic match cut could be considered a type of kana. The motion of the camera or the movement of elements within a composition could also be regarded as serving the function of kana. They do not by themselves give meaning but instead are support structures that help to clarify or enhance the final composition.

For example, if our motion graphics composition were to take the abstract form of the kanji 白 (shiro), the meaning is “white” but alone does not indicate the adjective “white.” When written as 白い (shiroi), which is a combination of the kanji “shiro” with the hiragana character “i,” it becomes an adjective. Hiragana can additionally function to distinguish between a noun and a verb form of a word. If our theoretical motion graphics composition was 見 (mi), it means “looking,” as in viewing something. However, by adding two kana (hiragana) characters we get, 見ます (mimasu), which is a verb from the base



FIGURE 6: PAUL GRISWOLD *WE WATCHED FIREWORKS* (2020)

見る (miru). It means “watch” and can be used in sentences like 綺麗な花火を見ました。

Translated literally, it says, “Beautiful (the) fireworks (we) watched.”, or “We watched the beautiful fireworks.” Notice, the pronoun is missing, a typical feature of Japanese. Hiragana serves an essential

purpose in Japanese and separates it from any other modern language. Devoid of hiragana, leaves us 綺

麗花火見, a grammatically dubious sentence which means “beautiful fireworks to look.” The missing

kana significantly alters the meaning. Ernest Fenollosa, using Chinese examples such as 人(man) 見

(sees) 馬(horse), called them “...a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature.” (Fenollosa et al.)

Devoid of kana, they are compositions without motion, without pacing, timing, or music. They are a slideshow rather than an actual motion picture.

Nevertheless, kanji, as well as Chinese hanzi, become increasingly impressive when considering the structure of individual characters as well as how complete characters can be combined to create meanings that, while related to the individual

characters, are a new, utterly distinct

meaning. The following sequence of kanji



characters are clearly related: 木 林 森.

FIGURE 7: KANJI STROKE ORDER, PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

The first character, 木 (ki), means tree. The second 林 (hayashi) means forest. The third character 森

(mori), means woods. In this case, the kanji 木 serves as the radical for the other two kanji characters. A

radical is an individual element within a kanji character, otherwise known as a grapheme.

“They are thus visual signs that represent concepts. The graphic quality of kanji enables us to imagine from time to time what a particular Kanji might mean, even if we do not know how to read it.” (Ikegami)

Thus if we are unable to read the phrase 森林火災 but we know 森 (woods), 林 (forest), 火 (fire),

and 災 (disaster), we intuitively understand the meaning: forest fire. These kanji compound words are

called *jukugo* and are conceptually like compound words in English. Unlike English, however, the visual

nature of kanji can transfer information without pronunciation. This transfer is precisely the function motion graphics can and quite often do serve.

If we consider kanji from the perspective of C.S. Pierce, there is an argument to define kanji as icons since quite frequently, a character indeed contains iconic information. However, within many individual kanji characters are radicals that make up what Pierce would consider an index. As previously demonstrated, 木 林 森 are easily identified and understood because 林 and 森 contain the kanji character 木, serving as the radical. In this example, it merely indicates the kanji containing it will be related to a tree or trees. 杉 means Japanese cedar, 杣 means timber or lumber, 休 means, to take a day off, the first radical, 亻 indicates a person, the second a tree, thus a person resting under a tree.

Within the written Japanese language, there are 214 recognized radicals and a much larger number that are modified versions of the original radicals. Radicals can frequently give a hint to the meaning of a character, even when the radical is unpronounceable on its own. 疒 is a radical that is not a kanji, yet it confers the concept of sickness or illness. Thus, words containing this radical routinely are related to this concept: 病 (disease), 疲 (exhaustion), 症 (symptoms), 痛 (pain), 痙 (cramps).

Within a culture, an individual is exposed to visual components and subcomponents, which, over time, build a lexicon they can upon daily. The lexemes and their morphemes of this internal lexicon are what motion graphics artists draw upon as radicals to generate their visual kanji composition. For Eisenstein, radicals are not the montage, but the individual shot contained within a montage sequence. For motion graphics, the notion of radicals serve a more specific purpose where discrete components, functioning as graphemes, or more aptly, visual mora, can convey individual concepts. Still, the combination of radicals creates a complete thought as kanji. Radicals are visual clues that encode culturally relevant or specific

notions that should confer implicit ideas. Strokes, radicals, kanji, and jukugo form a hierarchical structure which can be abstracted as a framework separate from the encoded information.

4.2 Shodou: Logographics and Motion

For the most part, motion graphics exist within the shape of a screen. It is the single most significant limiting structure of motion graphics. Perhaps the panacea of virtual reality or 360° video will usher in an unlimited realm of creative freedom. Still, from Mary Ellen Butte to Patrick Clair, the screen continues to be the frame containing motion graphics. Furthermore, even without the confines of a screen, we will

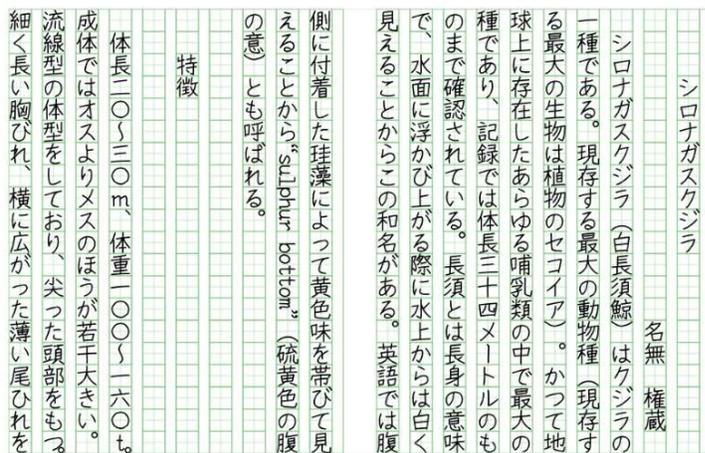


FIGURE 8: GUS POLY, GENKŌ YŌSHI PAPER (2016), IMAGE CC 4.0

PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

always be limited by the field of vision of the audience, a fact

that inherently creates a host of design problems as the focal point of a screen disappears. For now, we are free to explore the space contained within this rectangular box but cannot escape it. Similarly, the written Japanese language lives within a rectangular white area, called Genkoyoshi, a type of paper that serves the same purpose as lined notebook paper does in the west. For those versed in motion picture production, animation, or motion graphics, Genkoyoshi are quite like storyboards or more accurately, animation exposure sheets. Kanji are the key poses connected by in-betweens in the form of kana (hiragana or katakana). See Figure 6 above for an example of this concept.

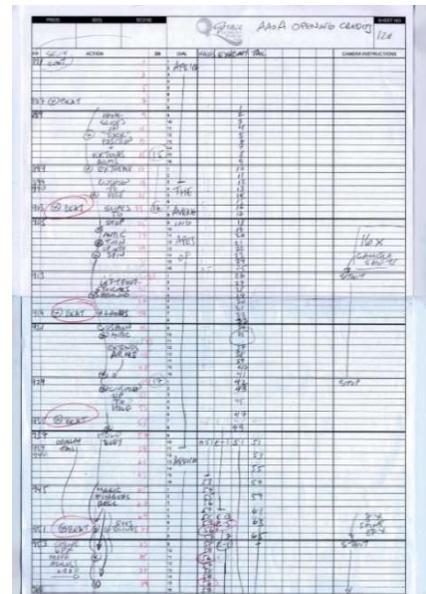


FIGURE 9: ANIMATION X-SHEET,

PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE CC 2.0

Japanese calligraphy, known as shodou (書道), demonstrates the same logographic nature of kanji that separates Japanese from other languages, also separates it from forms of western calligraphy. Unlike western calligraphy, shodou is more than simple words written in a calligraphic style; they are characters imbued with visual meaning.

In narrative filmmaking, montage is a useful filmmaking tool. However, by its very nature, narrative film, even with montage, maintains a logical, linear structure. When this structure is tampered with to an extreme, the film travels from narrative to experimental. The same can be said for western calligraphic writing. The style of the individual letters can undoubtedly be tampered with, but to function as a device of communication, they generally must maintain left to right, top to bottom structure. However, when writing Japanese, there are no rules governing

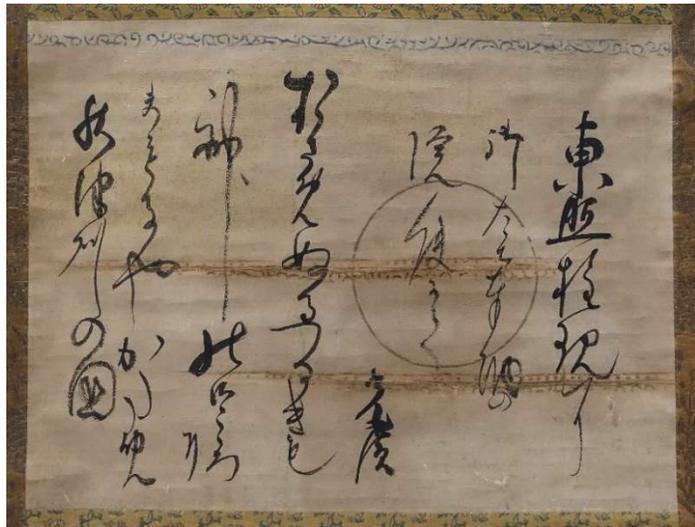


FIGURE 10: *WAKA POEM* BY KARASUMARU MITSUHIRO, EDO PERIOD, ISHIKAWA PREFECTURAL MUSEUM OF TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS, KANAZAWA, JAPAN

direction, nor defining the spacing of sentences or paragraphs. Whether calligraphic writing or not, Japanese can be read or written in any orientation. Moreover, punctuation is a western convention, added to the Japanese language via European influence. Therefore, Japanese, and its calligraphic form, shodou, can be executed without spacing, without punctuation, from right to left, top to bottom, or any other direction that serves the needs of the artist. Similarly, and unlike montage, motion graphics can use visual metaphor and symbolism without the need to maintain the structure of a narrative. Thoughts and ideas can be generated and delivered in any temporal order in an unlimited variety of styles, each of which represents a notion by the artist now given form.

With shodou, much like motion graphics, a specialized set of tools is required. At the forefront is a particular type of brush or fude (筆), “constructed in concentric layers of hair from wolf, goat, rabbit or marten.”(Gunn) The ink or sumi (墨),

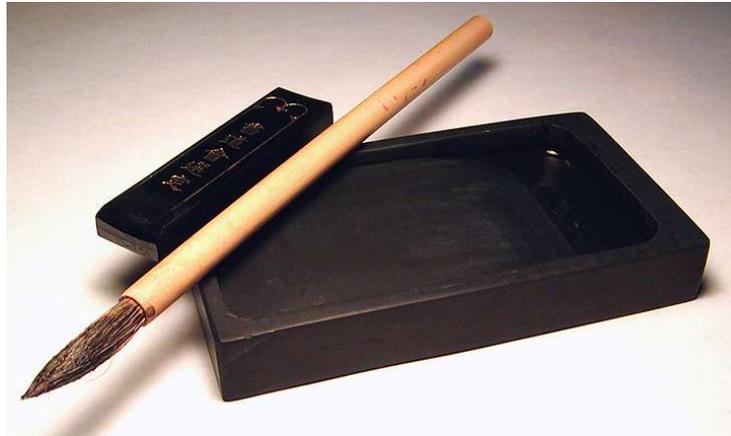


FIGURE 11: FUDE AND SUMI, PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

comes in the form of a solid block from

which small pieces are shaved and mixed with water to form the ideal consistency. *“It must be of such a consistency that it flows easily onto page, but doesn’t flow further than where the brush itself goes. It thus becomes a precise recorder of the brush’s movement, which is also a sensitive conveyor of every bodily motion, position and pressure channeled through the arm, hand and fingers.”*(Gunn) Brush and ink combine to form the software with which the artist executes their design. *“The play of the calligrapher with the calligraphy brush is often compared to the dance of a ballerina. Just like a ballerina moves the body to perform the choreography, the calligrapher maneuvers the calligraphy brush to shape infinity of calligraphic forms.”*(The Calligraphy Brush Made Of Goat’s And Wolf’s Hairs Performs A Graceful Dance)

Of course, the choice of paper is also critical for the artist working in shodou. Too thin and it will rip under the pressure of the brush, too slick, and the ink will run, failing to absorb the ink quickly enough. The paper is the structural backbone of any shodou creation. Within motion graphics, it could be argued that the structural backbone quite frequently is the accompanying music and sound.

Motion graphics have maintained a long relationship with music and sound design, with several hypotheses and academic papers written on the subject to develop theories and practices for visual music. However, it is one of the foundational elements of the Japanese written language through which we can glimpse perhaps a more profound, essential, understanding of the connection between not only visual and musical but a much broader scope of creativity. *Kanji* — to describe it somewhat roughly — incorporates painting, poetry, music, sculpture and even gesture in their original form in the words... A language based on such a writing system can never be dissolved into a constellation of nothingness like western languages, for the ‘seeds’ of the constellation are inherent in the very signs and lines used in writing. When learning traditional calligraphy with brush and ink, the Japanese learn not only to write the character but also to incorporate the empty background as an additional carrier of meaning in the text, particularly when writing a poem in ink. Especially in the case of ink calligraphy, one can say the background emptiness is imbued with additional meaning. There are even so-called ‘empty brushstrokes.’” (Ikegami) A profound connection encapsulating sound, color, shape, and motion is made in the form of shodou.



FIGURE 12: CALLIGRAPHY IN ONE LINE, BY RYU KOBI, EDO PERIOD, ISHIKAWA PREFECTURAL MUSEUM OF TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS, KANAZAWA, JAPAN

The method of executing a stroke is viewed as exceptionally important in Japanese, specifically in shodou. Students of shodou are required to practice 永字八法 (eiji happo), the eight major strokes of calligraphic writing. The character 永 (ei), which means “eternal,” contains all the strokes used in the majority of all Japanese characters. By practicing the individual strokes enclosed within “eternal,” a student develops the skills necessary to travel from novice to expert to master. For the motion graphics artists, this would represent concepts such as ease-in and ease-out with keyframes, or nested compositions (“pre-comps”).

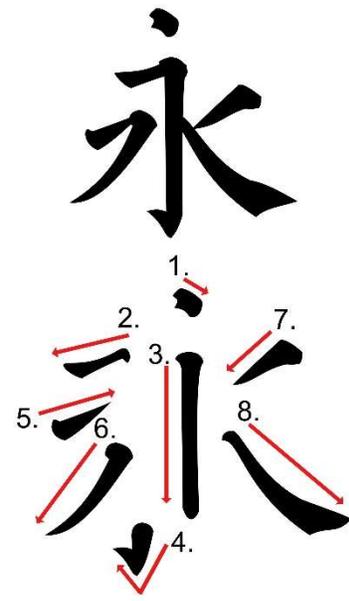


FIGURE 13: PAUL GRISWOLD *EIJI HAPPO* (2020)

Additionally, stroke order can be thought of in terms of cultural expectations. When writing kanji, a specific order in which the strokes of a character are executed is expected. A character written with strokes in the incorrect order or direction immediately are noticeable as erroneous, regardless of their legibility. In creating a motion graphics composition, creating elements that are counter to the lexicon of the intended audience can create confusion or misunderstandings. Developing fluency in these areas are the rudimentary skills that must become second nature before an artist can begin to express themselves rather than mimic others truly.

For the practitioner of shodou, the brushstroke is irreversible. *“According to the aesthetic of Japanese calligraphy, the brush strokes cannot be corrected, and even a lack of confidence shows up in the work. The calligrapher must concentrate and be fluid in execution. The brush writes a statement about the calligrapher at a moment in time.”* (“Calligraphy of Japan”) For the motion graphics artist, a lack of mastery is not irreversible but instead manifests as amateurish projects, lacking the core foundational elements audiences have grown to expect.

Becoming proficient in this way frees the shodou artist from the fear of a misstep. Working with ink and brush, the artist has but one opportunity to create each stroke. *“To put it another way, a calligraphic line is not the margin of a space but the space itself—a one-dimensional space. This is why calligraphy needs no color; a calligraphic line needs to be only visual, so that the extremes of visuality, black and white, are most effectively employed. A line, moreover, can have attributes which a space cannot have—speed, rhythm, momentum, and other attributes of time art. These, combined with the elements of visual art, provide the calligrapher with a number of tools to work with.”*(Ueda) The work is created and immediately reflects the technique used in its creation. The speed of each stroke, the amount of ink on the brush, the steadiness of the hand holding the brush all combine to tell a story that is separate from the characters contained within the paper. *“A line drawn rapidly would somehow show this speed after the action is completed; in a work of calligraphy it will have the effects of quickness, aggressiveness, directness and simplicity. A slowly written line could mean tranquility, meditateness, passivity, and skepticism.”*(Ueda)

4.2.1 In Summary

Thus, when considering a motion graphics project as it relates to shodou, many parallels can be drawn. A single composition within a motion graphics project is a kanji character which is made up of radicals, and those radicals are made up of strokes. Strokes are created using tools, the brush, the ink, the paper, or the software, the fonts, the music in motion design. The strokes combine to form a radical, an element with connotative quality. The multiplicative effect of strokes and radicals creates a completed kanji character, a complete composition that is greater than its parts. Furthermore, multiple kanji characters can be combined to form jukugo, a compound word that exponentially increases the ability to transmit information.

Kana, the collective term for hiragana and katakana, on the other hand, are elements such as transitions, movement, growth, and color. As visual mora, they serve to bind the motion graphic composition together and further develop or define a concept. Unlike the conceptual containers of thought known as

kanji, kana alone do not contain, nor convey specific information. Kana form a binding mechanism to modify meaning, generate contrast, and create connections or visual bridges between kanji.

As Japanese is read, the kanji and kana contained in the written page are vocalized in a clear, rhythmic fashion. These are mora, not syllables. It is the natural ebb and flow of movement film editors often describe when discussing their craft. As a motion graphic design is executed, morae become self-evident. It is both incredibly personal and, within the culture most receptive to the codes they contain, universally understood. Our motion graphic strokes, radicals, kanji, jukugo, and kana form the syntagmatic relationship expressed as visual mora. Visual morae are *parole*.

Chapter 5

5.1 Historical Context: Dziga Vertov

While Sergei Eisenstein connected kanji with the concept of montage, in practical terms, his implementation does not fully realize the potential of visual mora, radicals, kanji, and kana. David Abelevich Kaufman, under the pseudonym “Dziga Vertov,” focused on his form of documentary filmmaking, yet while he did not subscribe to Eisenstein’s belief in the connection between kanji and montage, his published manifesto, as well as his films, clearly demonstrate a strong correlation to the concepts laid out in this thesis.

Consider the film “The Eleventh Year” within the same context. Released three years after Eisenstein’s “Battleship Potemkin,” during the height of the constructivist movement, the film contains design concepts which, in hindsight, can be considered the precursors to elements used in modern motion design. “The Eleventh Year” is a documentary of the growth of socialism in the Soviet Union cataloging its rapid industrialization. In moments branded as experimental, Vertov demonstrated visual mora and jukugo by his use of cinematic collage or compositing.

In figure 11, a scene from “The Eleventh Year,” Vertov shows the image of a fossilized skeleton with the title, “A 2000-year-old Scythian”. This initializes the presumed Soviet viewer using cultural codes. Scythians were a nomadic tribe from the region known as Siberia and would have been identifiable and culturally significant to the viewer. The skeleton, the rock formations, and the shot composition all are radicals combining to form the kanji, which is the finished shot. This is followed



FIGURE 14: DZIGA VERTOV, *THE ELEVENTH YEAR* (1928), PUBLIC DOMAIN

by several examples of Soviet industrial growth, strengthening the underlying message. We then are shown men hammering a railroad spike in perfect synchronization, again individual radicals of the shot; men, hammers, spike, etcetera, form a kanji composition. Vertov taps the zeitgeist of his era, not only through the industrial imagery but specifically the use of hammers being swung to grow the Soviet Union in a direct reference to the nation’s flag. This culminates in a shot where the hammers of progress are superimposed over the Scythian. The hammers land directly where the skeleton has lain for 2000 years. Combining the two kanji compositions to form a visual jukugo, Vertov visually crushes the past with the future.

Vertov looked at the machines of filmmaking, the camera with its clockwork mechanisms functioning with extreme precision, within the context of the industrial revolution surrounding him. The power and dynamism of machinery demonstrated a level of control unobtainable by human beings. His *Kinochestvo*, a word he coined to represent the abstract eye of the motion picture camera, was to categorically separate the mechanical from the natural as it pertains to cinematography.

However, consider Vertov’s writing instead, in the context of modern motion graphics design and execution. “*Intervals (the transitions from one movement to another) are the material, the elements of*

the art of movement, and by no means the movements themselves. It is they (the intervals) which draw the movement to a kinetic resolution.

The organization of movement is the organization of its elements, or its intervals, into phrases.

In each phrase there is a rise, a high point, and a falling off (expressed in varying degrees) of movement.

A composition is made of phrases, just as a phrase is made of intervals of movement.”(MacKenzie) Vertov describes the elements that convey movement and rhythm but do not themselves contain information, just as kana has previously been described as they pertain to the structure of motion graphics. However, for Vertov, the movement itself is the composition, whereas kana is simply a connecting or modifying structure in service to the kanji, which represents the composition.

5.2 Historical Context: Robert Brownjohn

When thinking of the opening title sequences to the James Bond series of films, most will turn to Maurice Binder as the definitive voice. However, before Binder, Robert Brownjohn set the franchise tone for decades to come. In 1964, following his work on “To Russia with Love” where slide projectors were used to illuminate titles on the bodies of female dancers, Brownjohn decided to expand the technique. Using a film projector and a female model painted entirely in gold make-up, Brownjohn created the first iconic James Bond title sequence for “Goldfinger.”

“The projected images develop new meanings where feminine contours act as a secondary landscape. A golf ball traces a trajectory into Nolan’s cleavage for the proverbial hole in one, Nolan’s knees turn into sand dunes in which Bond must navigate across and Bond’s Aston Martin DB5 makes



FIGURE 15: ROBERT BROWNJOHN, *GOLDFINGER* TITLES (1964)

its first appearance with its revolving license plates masking Nolan's mouth. Neon signs, lights, explosions and fires flash over and around the actress, their inspiration drawn from pop art, modernism and nightlife." ("Goldfinger Film Titles 1964") In this way, Brownjohn describes jukugo. A gold-painted female model draws upon many western, male, cultural codes of his era to generate the first concept or kanji character. Within this visual kanji, we have radicals, the color gold, and the female form. When



FIGURE 17: ROBERT BROWNJOHN, *GOLDFINGER* TITLES (1964)

considered alone, each contains cultural significance and meaning when viewed through a temporal prism.

Subsequent imagery such as the Aston Martin DB5 also forms individual kanji compositions. The radicals of the

Aston Martin are the car itself, and the rotating license plate. One, an expensive sports car and the other a spy gadget, each contribute a specific code as they are combined. Physically projecting imagery upon the female model create jukugo, generating

something more than its individual elements. This technique not only inspired decades of visually stunning Bond, and other title sequences, but occasionally inspired motion designers to pay homage to Brownjohn. Patrick Clair's opening to the Netflix series "Luke Cage" demonstrates the



FIGURE 16: PATRICK CLAIR, *LUKE CAGE* (CA 2016), NETFLIX

agelessness of the technique. Kanji compositions modified by kana in the form of motion of the projected imagery, movement of the model, the music, and the editing, leading us from one jukugo composition to another, modifying them as they transition.

Chapter 6

6.1 American Gods

The book, *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman, creates a fictional world where gods are the product of human worship and adoration. As human society has evolved, their religion has followed suit, creating new gods with each generation. There is a god of media, a god of surveillance, a god of information, and others who have grown more powerful over the years while the old gods such as Odin, Anubis, and Anansi are slowly being forgotten. The conflict of old and new plays out, culminating in a war of gods. The book became an international bestseller, which led to the development of *American Gods*, the television series, for Starz Networks.

Patrick Clair was tasked with creating the opening title sequence for *American Gods* that, in a Saul Bass mentality, would prepare the audience for what they were about to witness. As a series adapted from a well-known book, Clair's work needed to both attract and prime the uninitiated as well as assuage any concerns fans of the book may have.

The sequence opens with environmental sounds, including rolling thunder, which gives way to a synthesized bass, a drumbeat, and finally, a trilling trumpet played through a Harmon mute, sounding like a growl or like the rattle of a rattlesnake. Throughout the piece, the synthesized bass and pounding drums create a strong, driving rhythm, forming the underlying sonic backbone against which the motion graphics are placed. In terms of shodou, the soundtrack is the paper upon which the strokes creating the individual characters leading to complete motion graphics kanji and jukugo will be written.

Next, consider the following images from the *American Gods* title sequence.

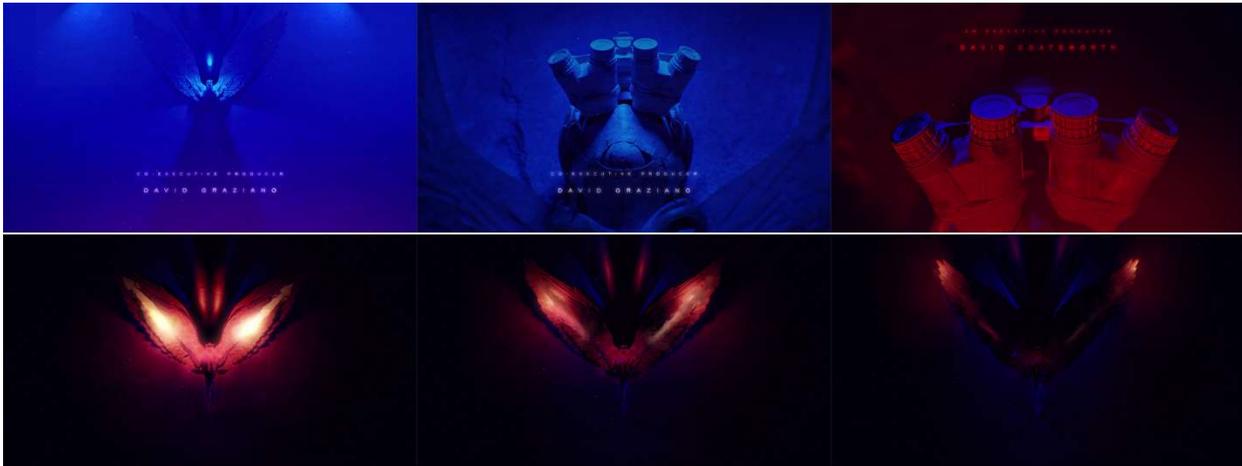


FIGURE 18: PATRICK CLAIR, *AMERICAN GODS* (CA 2017), STARZ NETWORKS

At first, a figure is shown hanging from a wall, legs dangling, with what appears to be a military-style rifle in each hand. Behind each arm, we see a large wing pointed upwards. The wings, vaguely like those of the “Angel of Peace,” which sits atop Wellington Arch in London, also seem reminiscent of a type of angel wings. Placing



FIGURE 20: PATRICK CLAIR, *AMERICAN GODS* (CA 2017), STARZ NETWORKS

things in context, the figure, the weapons, and the wings are all individual strokes that create radicals. We



FIGURE 19: MRS ELLACOTT, *WELLINGTON ARCH* (2016), CC4.0

now have our first combination of radicals that form the composition, or our finished kanji. However, Clair wants to clarify or modify our understanding further, cutting to two closer views of the head of the figure hanging from the wall. These cuts would be the kana, containing no information themselves, but serving to enhance the information we have been given.

We see in the closer views, what would be considered radicals within the kanji—a set of four lenses as part of what looks to be military night vision goggles. The goggles give soldiers the ability to see things



FIGURE 22: PATRICK CLAIR, *AMERICAN GODS* (CA 2017), STARZ NETWORKS

an average human cannot see. They are worn to provide a battlefield advantage to the soldier who wears them. They also have a distinct appeal, or at least resonate, with a macho western male mentality. As the shot focuses on the military night vision goggles, a jump cut serving as visual kana, provides us with an extreme close-up of the goggles, giving emphases to their existence. The cut, camera, and lighting all serve as kana, modifying the kanji composition.

The scene then cuts back to a wide shot. We have a figure wearing advanced night vision goggles, holding two military rifles, yet it also is a figure with wings like those of traditionally depicted angels.

an average human cannot see. They are worn to provide a battlefield advantage to the soldier who wears them. They



FIGURE 21: US AIR FORCE, *SPECIAL OPERATIONS AIRMEN RECEIVE PANORAMIC NIGHT-VISION GOGGLES*, (CA 2005)

Having established all the necessary radical elements making up this kanji character, we are free to experience the mora, as the guns fire twice, matched with a squealing trumpet blast.

Using the cultural codes within those radical elements, we see an angelic figure, able to see in the dark, firing weapons designed to kill.



FIGURE 23: PATRICK CLAIR, *AMERICAN GODS* (CA 2017), STARZ NETWORKS

Furthermore, like kanji,

knowing precisely what this figure might be named is unnecessary since the radicals and kana have given enough information to garner a culturally relevant meaning—the Angel of Death.

Conclusion

For Sergei Eisenstein, Japanese kanji were metaphorically montage. He understood how strokes formed radicals, and radicals could inform the meaning of a kanji, even if the pronunciation were unknown.

Kanji then combined established a string of visual concepts that created something entirely new, known as *jukugo*. *“From separate hieroglyphs has been fused—the ideogram. By the combination of two “depictables” is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable.... It is exactly what we do in the cinema, combining shots that are depictive, single in meaning, neutral in content—into intellectual contexts and series. This is a means and method inevitable in any cinematographic exposition. And, in a condensed and purified form, the starting point for the “intellectual cinema.” For a cinema seeking a maximum laconism for the visual representation of abstract concepts.”* (Eisenstein and Leyda)

However, Eisenstein’s understanding of Japanese was similar to Ernest Fenallosa’s view of Chinese

because it ignored the use of hiragana and katakana. This fundamental flaw is why Eisenstein mistakenly understood kanji as elements of montage. If kana is taken into consideration as this paper has demonstrated, then within a montage, the individual shots are kanji characters, and the edit itself functions as kana, modifying the kanji. Moreover, when considering motion graphic design, we can see how the Japanese language is indeed a worthy intellectual framework by delving further into what separates it from other languages.

When looking at a motion graphics composition, we can see individual elements that can quite often carry cultural codes, each adding meaning to the whole just as radicals function inside a kanji character. Within a Japanese sentence, kana are used to modify the connotation or take the reader from point A to point B. This, for the motion graphics artist, is our ability to create transitions, direct the eye via lighting and shading, or use motion to enhance or call attention to a specific area of the screen. More than with montage, the elements and concepts of motion graphics design share engaging and thought-provoking similarities with the written Japanese language.

Taking the concept further, we look to the shodou, Japanese calligraphy. Shodou is more of an art than a communication method in the way that karate is a martial art, not merely a means of fighting. The shodou practitioner must deal with tempo since speed directly impacts the outcome of their craft. In fact, quite often, shodou is performed before an audience due to the rhythmic nature in which it is created. It deals with line weight, the ability to create a composition that respects white space, and, of course, incorporates all that makes Japanese a unique language. For the motion graphics artist, our tools are the software, the soundtrack, the color palette, the font choices. In shodou, it is the brush, the ink, and the paper.

When creating a composition or kanji character, there is meaning in the character. Still, there is also meaning in the way in which that character or composition is delivered to the viewer. Motion graphic designers should consider the words of shodou masters as they create. Informing their work through the

study of shodou will help the artist understand more about how cultural codes are used within a motion graphics project.

“If one looks more closely at the revolution in the arts in the modern western world, one realizes that it is nothing but a process of disassembling the traditional language of each genre. In other words, western artists gradually tried to disassemble more and more of the art-language attached to objects in each genre, and from the resulting chaos they sought to revive the original functions of the signs, now freed from their objects – such as dot, line, surface, light, color, texture space, sound, rhythm, movement, time.” (Ikegami) Which is precisely how we can view motion graphics in light of the method in which kanji characters are constructed. The radical is the smallest element of a kanji character that still can contain meaning. The radicals can be combined and recombined to generate new meanings. As the motion graphics artist works, they combine existing components, from the simple line to the advanced compositing of photographic and film work—all designed to build something new and innovative.

“The interest of the Western world in the graphic quality of kanji is no doubt based on the rhythmic forms which it still incorporates and the qualitative form which permits the direct recognition of pattern and symbolic thought. Even if, according to the theories of entropy of informational aesthetics, one scatters the letters of alphabet in space, or even takes apart the forms of individual letters, one cannot achieve the original gestures still contained in kanji. In the process of taking apart a Kanji, the original gestures still remain in their original form, or an echo thereof.” (Ikegami) This echo is precisely the cultural codes at work in motion graphics. When reading a shodou work of art, there is a rhythm created by the mora of Japanese. Within motion graphics, the mora comes about as each element, from sound to motion, combine to form a natural rhythm as well. Thus, through this methodology, we gain a more precise, perhaps more appropriate way to dissect and better understand the structure of a motion graphics project.

Visual Production Element

Firewater: A Place Not So Unkind

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, both the initial planned production as well as backup production were put on indefinite hold. This put the production schedule significantly behind schedule. However, since this thesis is descriptive rather than prescriptive, the visual component exists as a method to utilize the concepts previously outlined.

In a stroke of good fortune, the New York band Firewater needed a music video to celebrate the anniversary release of the album “The Golden Hour” on vinyl. This became the obvious choice, but the Covid-19 problem remained. The only available option was to rely on stock footage to create the first conceptual piece, which can serve as a proof of concept for the band until filming becomes feasible. If shooting is impossible within the time needed to finish the project to accompany the anniversary release, the finished project will be a combination of stock and footage shot within the requirements of the current quarantine.



FIGURE 24: TOD ASHLEY, *FIREWATER THE GOLDEN HOUR* (2008), BLOODSHOT RECORDS

The following is a brief breakdown of a few portions of the music video to demonstrate how the ideas discussed in this paper can be used in both the production of a motion graphics project as well as a method for deconstructing a motion graphics project for further analysis.

A Place Not So Unkind: Lyrics

*Things falling out of the sky
A woman with stones in her eyes
Here's hoping that she may find
Some asylum to hold up inside
A place which is not so unkind*

*Tears breaking waves on the beach
Crumbling walls which have never been breached
And only the lucky may find
Some high ground to wait out the tide
A place which is not so unkind
Yes, here's hoping that they may find
Some shelter to crawl in and hide
A place which is not so unkind*

*Faces melting like wax in the heat
People dying like dogs in the street
And love is a word in the sand
That a wave wipes away with her hand
And the ocean just don't understand
So here's hoping that we may find
Some asylum to hold up inside
A place which is not so unkind
Someday somewhere down the line
A place to be free in our minds
A world which is not so unkind*

Practical Examples

Reading through the lyrics, the idea of the ocean, beaches, storms, and similar visuals play a large part in the song. Musically the song presents us with two elements—first, the immediate reality of a desperate situation. Second, the hopes and dreams for relief, rescue, and peace. A dichotomy of what is and what could be. This dichotomy is what needs to be visually represented in a method that contains both metaphorical as well as literal imagery.

Since this song is by a New York rock band, standard western cultural norms are appropriate and give us a set of expectations to draw from when constructing the music video. During verses containing negative emotional words, there often are words referring to things like the ocean. For most western cultures, blue carries the connotation of sadness, therefore using a blue palette for adverse elements of the song becomes the first radical of all kanji compositions related to this emotion.

For elements of hope and peace, warm colors would be quickly understood by most with a western upbringing as an emotional opposite of the blue palette. Shades of red, orange, and yellow all tend to be viewed as elements of warmth and even love. This cultural code is what makes it the ideal choice to form the foundational radical for all kanji compositions related to lyrics of hope and peace.

In Figure 25, we see an aerial shot of waves crashing on a beach as the sun is setting. The waves are churning, which creates considerable whitewater. To anyone familiar with ocean currents, large crashing waves with considerable whitewater signals potential danger in the form of rip currents. The whitewater would be the strokes that are forming the first radical element within this visual kanji composition.



FIGURE 25: JONAS MICHALZIK, *WAVES ON A SUNNY BEACH* (2019), ARTGRID

As discussed in Chapter 2, pareidolia is a function of the human mind that finds not only faces but is genetically predisposed to find meaningful patterns in seemingly random shapes. The ability to rapidly identify a subject visually is a survival mechanism born from natural selection, but for the motion designer is an important consideration. In Figure 26, the video, *Waves on a Sunny Beach*, has been mapped on to 3D geometry. In this configuration, it is no longer recognizable as ocean waves crashing upon a beach. However, just as the radical 𠄎 alone

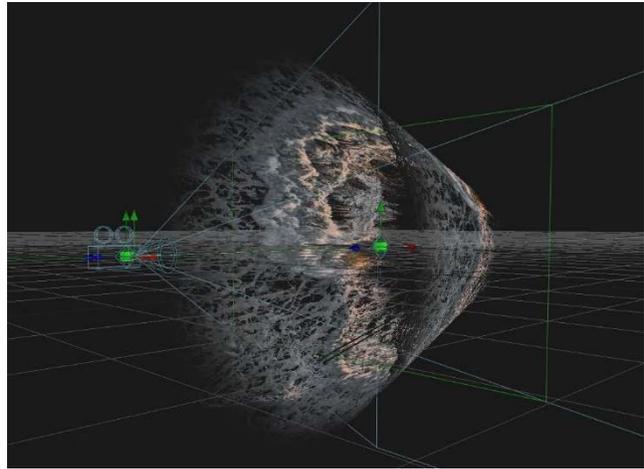


FIGURE 26: PAUL GRISWOLD, *3D IMAGE MANIPULATION* (2020)

confers the concept of illness, we can use graphic or video elements that have been disconnected from their source because pareidolia and existing cultural codes maintain a natural connection. Moreover, like kanji, it is this feature that allows the viewer to gain an understanding without needing to have an explicit definition.



FIGURE 27: PAUL GRISWOLD, *A PLACE NOT SO UNKIND MUSIC VIDEO*, (2020)

In the completed visual kanji composition, Figure 27, the color radical blue is combined with the 3D image map of whitewater crashing on a beach. In the center, a woman walking barefoot on a beach. Since the song references a woman explicitly, this element could be thought of as the radical 𠄎 which is the radical used to indicate a person. It serves to connect this visual kanji composition with the subject of the song as a kanji compound, or jukugo.

In subsequent shots, the same methodology is implemented. In Figure 28, using the same blue color scheme, a close-up of a woman's face has been combined with drone footage of a foreboding shoreline as storm-driven waves crash upon the rocks. The woman is looking down, which is typically interpreted as a negative emotion, forming a radical



FIGURE 28: PAUL GRISWOLD, *A PLACE NOT SO UNKIND MUSIC VIDEO*, (2020)

connoting this idea. Like Figure 25, a stormy, rocky, beach scene is typically associated with things like watercraft in danger, drownings, and other potentially deadly situations. By combining radicals, the finished compound again conveys more than the component elements, which, in turn, helps connect with the underlying song.

As discussed earlier, when the song, musically and lyrically, changes to thoughts of hope and peace, the color scheme transitions to one of warm tones. In Figure 29, we have several radical elements in addition to the color, forming the complete kanji. The woman is in the water, which indicates no threat of rip currents or other tidal dangers. The water itself is calm, and since the woman is in the water, it no longer signifies cold but seemingly pleasant.



FIGURE 29: PAUL GRISWOLD, *A PLACE NOT SO UNKIND MUSIC VIDEO*, (2020)



FIGURE 30: PAUL GRISWOLD, *A PLACE NOT SO UNKIND MUSIC VIDEO*, (2020)

The next visual kanji, Figure 30, maintains the same warm hues overall. The woman is now walking towards us, smiling. The lyrics at this moment are, “Here’s hoping that she may find some asylum to hold up inside.” The location is made of stone and appears ancient, indicating its solid construction has

stood the test of time. When combined, these radicals would create a single kanji, but on either side of the composition, we have ocean water with waves moving in her direction. Both water elements are shades of blue. By combining the location kanji with the water element kanji, it gives us a kanji compound or jukugo. This alters and enhances the meaning to bring in to question the stability of this place as the hoped-for asylum.

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