The Influence of Digital Technology on Modern Thai Typography: *Trans-customary knowledge in modern Thai typography and design in the twentieth century. Impacts on Thai culture and identity*

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Preface

The terms *"cultural"* and *"political"* nationalism refers to the distinctive value in diversity in a condition of a nation, where the majority of resident population are indigenous peoples like Thailand, a non-colonised country, ethnic groups of people are mostly cultural orientated. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word diversity is understood as "the condition of being different". Coming from to live in New Zealand for over a decade, I've had multicultural experiences by living in the significant multicultural atmosphere where customs and traditions of different races and ethnicities live together.

Living in the same condition might start to isolate cultural value at the current era. In the article *"Workforce America"* by Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener describe a crucial mistake many people make with "race" and "culture" is to mistakenly think of the meaning of these two to be the same when we talk about diversity reinforces stereotypes and promotes "race" and "culture" as an "us versus them" *(Loden & Rosener, 1991).* Loden and Rosener also demonstrate value of diversity through four difference dimensions of diversity consist of personality, internal dimensions, external dimensions, and organisational dimensions. Interestingly, according to these dimensions of diversity, primary dimensions are things that we cannot change, which include age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical qualities, and sexual orientation. These are uniquely categorised described as "ethnicity and race identification" *(Loden & Rosener, 1991).*

To draw a connection of these diversity of dimensions to the area of typography and letterform, French philosopher Jacques Derrida describes aesthetics of writing in his 1967 book, *Of Grammatology*, Derrida wrote against this arbitrary distinction between speech and writing, and emphasized on how written symbols are also legitimate signifiers in themselves. These linguistic variations are uniquely personalized- aesthetics are inimitable *(Derrida, 2013).*

As being contemporary typographer/designer, I'm always interested in how the past informs the present. My design proposition is to examine cultural value appears in creative framework as the perception of typographer and graphic designer of the modern era could dictate the aesthetics of letterform, and how this sensory information is valued in a present condition.

Key words: Western consumerism, Traditional and non-Traditional, Western typography methodology, Thai typographic methodology, Unprecedented, Preservation, Looping terminal, Buddhist philosophy, Materiality, Memorialization, Design metaphor.

"Cultural history often combines the approaches of anthropology and history to look at popular cultural traditions and cultural interpretations of historical experience. The narrative descriptions of the past are captured through the past social, cultural and political event, situating the establishment of past to inform the present. Cultural history establishes its ethos inspiring the future as the past is often experienced in present condition".

Jacques Derrida

Introduction:

This quote from Jacques Derrida demonstrates the principles, methods, and/or ideas describing our present condition that we all experience. This one is informed by the past, he describes the idea behind his method by acknowledging values of cultural history.

In typography design, the distinction of traditional letterform is not valued when cultural and historical knowledge is no longer considered in a design process. As the need of cultural and traditional skills – such as typesetting, platemaking, and printing are no longer appreciated; valuable technical aspects that communicate cultural information is now replaced by digital computing skills and online searching method. When the digital revolution introduced the desktop computer to creative practice, this digital revolution has changed graphic design and typography design disciplines *(Erlhoff & Marshall, 2008).*

Because of this digital revolution, everything about typography as a creative practice can easily be revealed online and in the public domain through the internet access. Available, online resources – such as free digital images, free fonts, and free design templates, have disadvantaged graphic designers from being able to pursue basic skills to generate work *(Cole 2005; Austin, 2002).*

Along with this loss of an emphasis on European culture and traditional skills during the digital revolution in the late 1980s, in Asia, the absence of trans-customary attributes in a modern Thai typography in the twenty first century causes a significant impact on typography aesthetic in the new era *(Wongsunkakon, 2012).*

The examination of trans-customary typography using new media technology and method will be explored in my research. Inspired by the provocations from political conflict in Thailand, the present political chaos arousing the sympathy of the entire nation. Language and writing are expressions of a culture; letterform is a visual manifestation of language. Historical and cultural background also provides a new cultural value through type and speech and how these define the use of an alphabet.

How could cultural, traditional, and historical perceptions (cultural value of Thai traditional letterform) be re-introduced into contemporary Thailand?

My interest is in drawing attention to a relationship that exists between cultural identity and letterform. This is the basis of my exegesis.

"ค.คน *: A loop of Siam"* explores the absence of historical knowledge and background research, raising design concern in relation to cultural identity. My exegesis seeks to regain the loss of cultural focus in typography and graphic design in the twenty first century. Thai graphic designers mistakenly see the visual aspects of corporate identity as a simple combination of a logo, a color scheme, a font, and some auxiliary graphics. In my methodology, I am proposing to use Jacques Derrida's analysis of typographic shape and form to interpret the loop terminal as essential signifier within Thai type and Thai Buddhist culture. Using typography design as the exploratory medium: this project aims to employ concept of cultural exchange as my research method to explore a process in type creation through my emotional response from the non-typographic eye as creators, this result might offer some suggestion through an aesthetic of a letterform.

My writing introduces a *"narrative method"* as a vital to my creative process *(thinking and making process)*. Using Thai graphic design and typography in the twenty first century is my case study. I also examine dialogue and information exchanges between the two disciplines that suggest the body and movement as emotional representation. An aesthetic tradition in typography will be clearly examined to observe its truth as a narrative inquiry of the analysis of narrative type of the Thai letterform.

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Context of the research:
If the history of letterforms show relationships between information communicated through materials used in writing. This tracing can be looked at as a documented archive, which helps protect history to remain existed at the current condition.

According to Claude Levi-Strauss and Jacques Derrida *(2013),* spoken language and writing share a relationship in many cultural histories. For Derrida, a letterform is a supplementary form of a spoken language; in fact, it is a spoken language that is reproduced in a new form. He explains how typography is an explicit focus on how the typographic shape, as part of this significant relationship between spoken language and writing, using "the concept of the *"graphie",* or written form. The graphie relies on the trace for its existence, "the framework of the instituted trace, as the possibility common to all systems of signification" *(1976, 46).* When we associate trace with the graph (gestural, visual, pictorial, musical or verbal), this trace becomes a gram *(letter).* Only at this instant does the outside appear (as opposed to the inside), as a *"'spatial'* and *'objective' exteriority" (1976, 70)".*

Part1: Cultural identification:

There is an important distinction between western alphabet and Thai letterform that I will demonstrate a clear connection between methods of writing and the culture(s). These methods reflect e.g. the loop terminal reflects the pervasive Buddhist culture of Thailand. When a letter *(written character)* is considered as a grapheme in western alphabetic system of writing, denoting phonemes in the spoken form of the language. A letterform on the other hand performs a totally different role to a letter.

I refer to Jacques Derrida's idea that the written form relies on its trace for existence *(1976, 46).* Description of the ancient use of writing and mark making type in relation to culture and history, the *"Ramkhamhaeng stele",* traditional analog mark making figure of Thailand, known as being the foundation of the creation of national legal and governmental structures created to demonstrate the law of King Ramkhamhaeng ruling the Sukhothai Kingdom *(a forerunner of the modern kingdom of Thailand)* from 1279-1298 *(Wiseman 1998 p. 89).* The traditional mark making method is used to document life of Thai people on the surface of the stele *(Wiseman 1998 p. 89).* The stele is also used to signify a beginning of the Thai alphabet (fig.1).
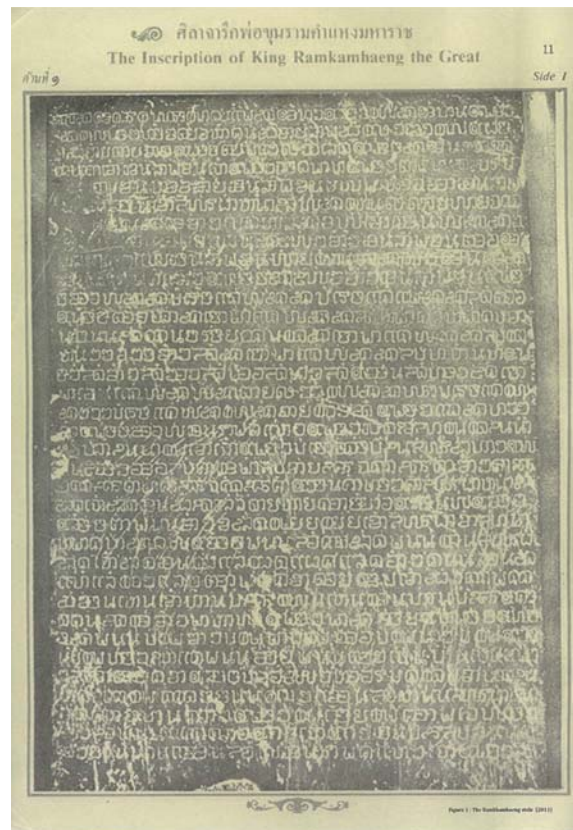
Figure 1. The "Ramkhamhaeng stele", Thai and English version
Le Broin, M. (2013) Pickaxe handles.

Like *"Ramkhamhaeng stele"*, description of the ancient written script on object, also appears in other South East Asian cultures, with emphasis on a different purpose to Thai writing, Chinese script was made for divination. The first character *"Chinese writing"* inscribed on cattle bones and tortoise scapula during the Shang dynasty in 1600bc *(Fulford, 2002).* This demonstration of the *"Ramkhamhaeng stele" and the first Chinese writing* effectively demonstrate the distinctive value of culture and history communicated through written language, in this case, the attributes of individual letters signify more than just the use of traditional technique to create a letter; the visual aesthetics shows a significant cultural value.
While writing for communication is established by addressing written elements on found object as a documented surface from the two countries in East Asia.

In a similar way in Europe, when "Greek Capitals", the earliest European letterforms were also found as a written element scratched into a stone object *(Berger, 1994).* These three discovered results suggest relationships between traditional knowledge to written languages, beginning to raise my cultural concern on the aesthetics and/or meanings of letterforms. Communication of cultural information through expressions of letter could be looked at as "tracing of history and culture".

Traditional Value:

"Whatever the choice of letterform, whether Western type or Asian calligraphies, the culture that employs these will absorb the aesthetic of their origin while retaining the ability to communicate in the written language familiar to that culture for example the loop terminal of Thai letterform".

An Oxford dictionary gives the definition of loop as *"a structure, series, or process, the end of which is connected to the beginning" (2014).* Looping terminal in Thai alphabet is considered as the distinctive character of the Thai. Looping terminal also helps categorized Thai typeface into its own category. The method of Thai writing form in relation to the loop terminal also demonstrates important terminology behind the rule of creation.

Loop is a trace, in this context; it reflects an ideal of Thai orientation. It brings the past within the present for Thai people. Loop is a trace of our traditions and its importance is not being retained in the present. This is because contemporary global, consumer culture that means Thai people are struggling to maintain the loop as a reminder of the past where the loop was an essential part of Thai script and now the loop is a trace of the past, and Thai people needs to be re-connected to bring the orientation to the future. The loop was there to tell the reader where to look, where to start and finish and then begin again (fig.2).

"Attributes of the Loop Terminology in Thai letterform"

Loop 1.1: In the Typographical Sense The value of Thai alphabet is another form of historical elements that represents the value of Thai history. The anatomy of Thai custom typeface shows the characteristic of the Thainess (fig.10). The narrative of the Thai tradition is communicated through the expression of its shape and form culturally. The loop was there to tell the reader where to look, where to start and finish and then begin again. To draw a Thai letter, you need to start with the loop and carry on drawing the line to form the letter without a pause. *"You can't stop during a drawing process".*

When *Anuthin Wongsunkakon (2012)* described, *"loop terminal",* the terminology inspiring the Thai custom typography as part of content for the design of a fitting version of Helvetica Thai, he states an absence of cultural awareness in the typography design industry in Thailand. Wongsunkakon gives an example of the use of *"loop terminal"* occurring in the traditional Thai letter, rejecting to be used in the Thai Helvetica, because of the influence of the original Helvetica typeface from the West.

ประเทศไทย

Figure 2. Lino type, 2014. Neue Helvetica Thai light.

"Regarding the loop terminal as the defining characteristic of Thai glyphs without which they would lose their Thai identity".

Anuthin Wongsunkakon

Loop 1.2: In the Religious Sense Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit states the Buddhist temple's historical position in Thai culture and the dynamic role it continues to play in everyday life. The relationship between Thai people to the Buddhist monks and Buddhism religious are solid *(Baker & Phongpaichit 2014).* In religious context, the aesthetic of the loop terminal in Thai letterform can also signify both Thainess and human being in Buddhism by referring to the "circle of life" known in Sanskrit as "bhavachakra"*(Neuzugang, 2015).* "Bhavachakra" refers to all existences in life conditioned by ignorance, suffering, and the unexplainable flow of time in Buddhist philosophy view is not linear like a straight line but a circle, a loop of birth, death and rebirth in Thai culture & its identity *(Baker & Phongpaichit, 2014).* (Fig3)

Figure 3. Neuzugang, L (2015). The Buddhist Wheel of Life.

Thai type has this essential gestural feature in the loop, which Derrida calls the *"trace"* and it is associated with the *"graph"* so that the gestural and pictorial form of the loop, which, in Thai type, reflects its origin in Sanskrit and Buddhism e.g. Thai Buddhist monks apply *"Yantra"* script to Thai Buddhism. Yantra scripts offer power,

protection, fortune, charisma and other benefit for the receiver. The loop begins the writing of nearly all-Thai type also signifies both Thainess and Buddhism. This example indicates a close relationship between letter and culture; the loop refers to Buddhist concept of future incarnation and also demonstrating a disconnection of cultural history to a revolution of type and language at the current condition. The visual aesthetic of the Thai alphabet, its shape and form are literally drawn in close association with Thai culture concepts especially the loop form in relation to Buddhism **(fig4).**
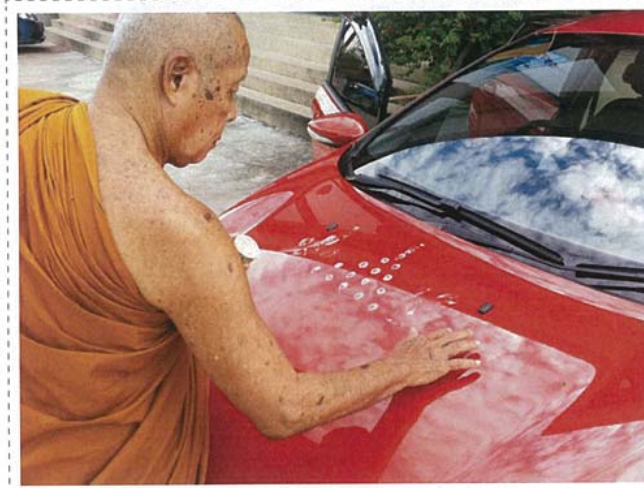

Figure 9 : Ford Fiesta Club (2011)

Figure 4. Ford Fiesta Club, 2011. Buddisht blessing.

Loop 1.3: In the Political Sense *"With the14 years of the political crisis that happens in Thailand, the conflict between "Thai fighting Thai" are significantly high and the internal damage that has been done because of the incidents are remained for others*

to see nowadays" (fig.5).

Figure 5. Supanun, K. (2014, February 20). My dad has been attacked my Thai protestors during Thai political conflict in Bangkok, Thailand in 2014

With a political conflict that's currently happening in Thailand, metaphorically, *"Thai fighting Thai"* is a concept that's understood by the rest of the world. Loop terminology in this case can be implemented as a thinking method to redirect the cynical nature of Thai culture and Buddhism (fig.6).

Part2: Industrial Revolution:

The second part of this thesis explores the next generation of letterform after it was found to specifically examine cultural value maintained in letters during this new era, investigate a period of "Industrial Revolution", the time, where cultural value and traditional knowledge are abandoned.

While having a discussion of the machines that produce western type, like in the 1450; Gutenberg's invention revolutionizes how type can be re-arranged for printings & publication or mass-producing. Several rules and methods are invented to accommodate the readability & legibility purposes for example: the ascender line and descender line in typography rules are created to define the height of each letter to improve reader's capacity to understand *(Dodd 2006). "From Gutenberg to Opentype"*, Robin Dodd describes a revolution of western typography introducing a new way of how type can be utilized differently from what existed previously. This was a transition from handwritten copying and wood block copying processes to the mechanical copying producing volume using moveable type (fig.5).

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In art and design field including typography, Gutenberg's printing invention, — text is used as a key component to create a form of communication through print-making technique—not only that an information has been "movable", but Gutenberg's contribution to letter pressing has also developed a method in print-making — setting up a process of mass producing movable text to be re-produced over and over. Casting mould and a type metal alloy are implemented to create an original template for mass-producing purposes; traditional medium *(ink)* is used to transfer data information from the mould onto papers*,* since then, the uses of machinery in conjunction with typographic creation are needed *(Dodd 2006).* Manufacturing processes takes charge on the making of publication*.* Mass production becomes the method of making. Accuracy and precision are maintained by the use of gridding and marking techniques *(Dodd 2006).* Grid system and the digital format create the restriction and limitation to the type creation in the modern era. Other word, the printing revolution in Western typography has removed typography from its traditional origin.

This creates negative Impact on traditional knowledge such as punch cutters, type casters, typesetters and printers were losing their jobs as the result of new mechanized methods of type casting and printing. Paper makers began producing paper from wood pulp – creating an acidic paper prone to yellowing and foxing. Bookbinding was mechanized and cheapened.

The loss of the professional book craftsmen had a detrimental effect on print and type design. James Watt's improvements to be the steam engine, and its subsequent application to manufacturing in the late 18th and early 19 century, resulted in a major societal shift. Traditionally manual laborers learned their trade by progressing through stages of apprenticeship under a master craftsman.

The new stream engine replaced the craftsmen system with faster and cheaper production but often greatly inferior results. The critical eye and artistry of the craftsman was sacrificed for speed. The worker now served the machine, feeding it raw materials and allowing it to determine the final product *(http://www.designhistory.org/Arts_Crafts_pages/IndustrialRevolution.html).* While the loss of traditional skills value effected, the use of new machinery for mass-production to populate a large segment of the same information, to transmit information to a much larger group of receivers through the mass media ranges, has also challenged the need for traditional skills in many ways, forming the most important absentee in the world of design arts & crafts *(Cole 2005).* In this context, the study of typography is described as the arrangement of letterforms designed for metal print or computer. Visual representations are being used purposefully to create a range of variation most often occurred in symbolic and pictorial forms. A term of knowledge used in visual communication often involves considering the used of letterform as graphic elements. This term of knowledge is known as *"typography".* The later transition in the twentieth century from Gutenberg's mechanical analog to the introduction of digital publication technology suggests an improvement in publication and printing production.

If the new method in technological reproduction becomes more focused than an emphasis on craft and workmanship. What does this means to its origin, route, history, and culture?

Other letterforms may be discussed wherever letters appear stylistically in graffiti for example. These summaries of how typography is categorized basing on:
1). Type for communication 2). Type for sensing or as an aesthetic

In one sense, letterform applies strictly to the design of individual letters. In typography, "letterforms" is often used to describe the study and design *of* individual letters while typography applies to the design and use *with* letterforms. As such, "letterform" applies not only to letters but also to any graphic elements of a script, typeface or font (including numbers, symbols and punctuation).

In the western Hemisphere, early Greek letters were originally drawn freehand, other word, the results of freehanded letter causing a readability and legibility issues for readers, non-constructed letters were pointed to be improved with proper rules and methods *(Erlhoff & Marshall, 2008).*
Karen Cheng addresses the relationship between reading text and publication format to be more than just a making of message for legibility. Cheng demonstrates that an expression of typographic shapes and forms can emotionally be characterized - engaging the readers by its distinctive visual aesthetic. Several rules and methods of typography then have been developed to create the flexibility to accommodate the changes of its shape and form aesthetically. The Specific vocabulary is also created to define parts of the letterform also known as the *"anatomy of type" (Cheng, 2006).* With Cheng suggestion, it should not be any official nomenclature for the unique structural features of type *(Cheng, 2006, p.12).*

Philip Meggs and Rob Carter also demonstrate a range of typographic styles with use of different typefaces and spacing to create the variation of distinctive styles to improve the reading purposes and the art of arranging type of the west *(Meggs, Carter 1993).*

In other word, it means, *"this is no correct process for the creation of typeface".*

In another sense letterform applies to the individual shapes of letters that gives a text an aesthetic. In this way, medieval scholars, for instance, may discuss the particular features of a script that give it distinction and definition among other scripts.

The twentieth century, the modernist era, where common movement in graphic design, typography, and architecture became one of the most influential design movements of the twentieth century.

With regard to a specific *"design aesthetics",* yet to be formulated into a method, this implies that it would have to overcome the split into first, a theory of beautiful object and second, a reflection based on the power of judgment. It would also have to accept an aesthetic theory that abides by that which appears as aesthetic

perception and experiences. It has to surrender its fixation on the object, in order to have a broader view of the design process and allow for individual, social, economic, ecological, political, and cultural aspects of production and reception *(Erlhoff & Marshall, 2008).*

Levi-Strauss also suggests that modern art since Cubism is in many ways a form of *"primitivist"* art in the Levi-Straussian sense – it is an art of the signifier, one that is conceptual rather than perceptual. With Levi-Straussian description above, perceptual can be referred to "aesthetics" and there should be a new knowledge to resolve and conceptualize a missing cultural value rather than just relying on "

The word *"aesthetics"* when used in a design context is usually loosely understood to be synonym for "beautiful", or "styling". If aesthetics specific to design was to be developed, it would need to avoid being split into, first, a theory of beautiful object and, second, a critique of aesthetic judgment, but that process has yet to begin *(Erlhoff & Marshall, 2008).*

The term "aesthetics" has become a catchphrase in almost every area of life since postmodernism. The radical pluralism that followed the reassessment of the modernist movement traced diverse paths leading out of modernism, with many subsequent political, social, technical, and aesthetic upheavals. In the process, the standard definitions of aesthetics as an objective discipline and a branch of philosophy themselves changed. It became essential to reformulate the semantics of the word because of significant changes in the status of differing forms of knowledge, ways of life, and behavioral *(Erlhoff & Marshall, 2008).*

Today, aesthetics appears in various contexts with different meaning and emphases; even the plurality and scope of the word has become the subject of prolonged debate. Nevertheless, the most evident thing now about aesthetics is that there is no longer anything self-evident about it. Expanding the scope of aesthetics beyond the arts to include fields like design from the original Greek word. Yet, because a specifically formulated design aesthetic is lacking, the term is usually used in its colloquial sense in the context of design. That is to say: in advertising, marketing, branding, and even elementary design criticism, aesthetics is a loose synonym for *"beautiful", "tasteful", or "inoffensive".* Many who use the term *"aesthetics"* actually mean *"styling",* or to identify what are assessed as the beautiful or ugly features of a certain object. The word "aesthetics" also implies an important aspect of the product's effect in relation to its material, social, political, ecological, and symbolic contexts.

Put into simply terms, *"aesthetics"* deals with question of whether words such as "beautiful" or "ugly" can be applied to specific object, or whether it is perhaps the sum or our personal and social idiosyncrasies that interprets something as beautiful or ugly. The aesthetic value of an object is determined either by terms and definitions, or its particular sensory quality and what it represents in conjunction with the object's system of symbols *(Erlhoff, M., & Marshall, T. (Eds.) 2008).*

If previous conversation states how letterforms appear as Type for communication and Type for sensing or as an aesthetic. Problems that happened as a result of the revolution movement without awareness in cultural and traditional value. The loss of arts and crafts professions and the outcome made by machinery are critical.

With those issues are being concerns, *"The Bauhaus",* modernist art school of the twentieth century, introduced teaching philosophy to design students, it clearly emphasis on the distinction of creative practice engaged by creativity and manufacturing when the idea of understanding art's relationship to society and technology. Examining the Bauhaus's teaching philosophy demonstrates thinking method, which potentially regain a lack of cultural and traditional value during the industrial era completely.

Part3: Western Post Modernism:

During postmodernism, in an age characterized by emotionalism, renames aesthetics as a "science of aesthetics" in order to defy rational objectivity and the pragmatics of a rational that is tailored to the logic of making money. The lack of cultural perception has caused a design issue, when approaches to using visual language *(typography)* in a cultural context, struggling occur in postmodern typography design communication.

To produce good work, graphic designers need to be familiar with the topic and context, as well as the culture that they are working in. Because of each culture has its own value and it's fair to say that most often graphic designers have to confront the topic that they don't know anything about. This writing would analyze issue and identify how graphic designers who are working in a culture that is not their own can produce good visual work an engage in good practice by familiarizing with unfamiliar topic and context. *Cal Swan*, author of *Language and Typography* mentions his points describing the two distinct areas often come together in graphic design practice. Cultural context is the same, in practice; graphic design also needs to reflect the value of the culture to be effective. While typography rules and methods used in graphic design to achieve a certain design aesthetic based on a highly demand from a society, for most of its existence, graphic designers and typographers have been criticised for their role for not using their knowledge of their trained practice effectively.

In contemporary computer graphic design & publication, the terms *"design globalization"* appears at the national and ethnic lines, due to the business & commercial demand. Contemporary graphic designer Stephen Eskilson questions whether contemporary graphic design from Europe and the United States is globally dominant. In his book, *"Graphic Design a New History"* he describes this issue of contemporary Western graphic design the integration of the Western Style within a diverse set of cultural tradition- The effects of cultural unfamiliarity effecting graphic design globalization is also stated by Eskilson *(Eskilson, 2012, p. 410).* In 1964, Ken

Garland's *First Things First Manifesto* condemned an industry wasting talents on "trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity". He proposed "a reversal of priorities" and challenged designers to stop congratulating themselves for work done to sell "slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons" and focus more on "more useful and more lasting forms of communication" (1964, n.p.).

This part of the examination is to look at the influences of the western consumerism on Thai culture effecting graphic design practice in Thailand using the range of examples, from Western corporate identity design that involves typographical elements from other cultures and also an example of a combination of international style of typography that miscount cultural value as a case study. Since the issue of the integration of the Western Style within a diverse set of cultural tradition is still being discussed, variation of western design research - and the ranges of cultural & traditional design are being examined to form a better understand of these aspects in relation to graphic design context - such as establishment, development, and its current stage to reflect globalization issues in graphic design landscape *(Eskilson, 2005, Anuthin2007).* Thailand has been challenged culturally, economically and politically in many ways, the arrival of Western consumerism in the Twenty-First Century, Western global culture has rapidly infiltrated the life of Thai people, which includes modern typography as a model for Thai typographers and graphic designers to be influenced by. The elimination of the loop terminal is an example of how the speed and dominance of western influence has broken a traditional connection between modern Thai people and their past. An adoption of Western aesthetic by the modern Thai typographers forming a new form of the Thai script without considering the importance of the loop terminal in the Thai culture has effectively disconnected Thai typographers from an idea of cultural exchanging in relation to typographical contexts, separating tradition between western forms and written Thai language, unusual hybrids develop where most of these neglect the loop terminal (fig.7).

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A B C D E F G H I J
K L M N O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z

Figure 6. Puudthai (2014). 44 letters of Thai Alphabet. Retrieved from http://www.puudthai.com

Clever graphic designers love to use typography to explore the interaction between the look of type and what type actually says. In communicating a message, a balance has to be achieved between the visual and the verbal aspects of a design.

The expansions of the businesses from one part of the world to another also carry their corporate identity with them. In order to spread the brand across the world, the mix of two unique identities-has challenged graphic designers to find the balance to both design aesthetics and not misjudge any important content that require compulsory executions. The design problems commonly appear to the elements that carry some cultural & historical traditions with them *(Eskilson, 2012, p. 410).*

In many design cases, tie deadline, budget, and clients demands have become design restrictions limiting designers from what designers could have done to the graphic design output, ideas of re using existed elements are also introduced to save production times – variation of content including cultural content has challenged the graphic designer in many ways, so cultural unfamiliarity might re interpret the outcome. For example, the mix of Latin alphabet and the Arabic alphabet creates a contrast between the two elements, with a significant impact on the design aesthetic and requires the reconciliation process to success *(Eskilson, 2012, p. 410).*

Anuthin Wongsunkakon (2012) describes the lack of background research could cause a major mistake. He explains how Thai typography has cloned Western typography context without the awareness. *"Anuparb"* Thai custom typeface inspired by Helvetica typeface being used to demonstrated that missing of the loop terminal in Thai typography- might cause the definition of the character to be unidentified **(fig8).** Thai glyphs are culturally and traditionally characterized, without the glyphs, they would lose their Thai identity. After all, this has been the standard design "wisdom" to follow when it comes to crafting Thai body-text glyphs. So if we are to come up with a no-loop version of Helvetica Thai, we would certainly need some good reasons for doing so. In this case, *Wongsunkakon* shows that the familiarity of how Helvetica typeface in western context becoming unfamiliar typeface when it is cloned with Thai tradition.

In these cases, the visual language does all the talking. Anuthin Wongsunkakon (2012) addresses these issues mentioning the missing of the *"conceptual and visual"*, the two major aspects in design, in Thailand as Thai graphic designers mistakenly see the visual aspects of corporate identity as a mere combination of a logo, a color scheme, a font, and some auxiliary graphics *(Wongsunkakon, 2012).* Correspondingly, this same issue also occurs in typography context, visual elements of typography speak louder than words; any sophisticated typeface could be chosen to combine with the image as long as it fits. In fact, each typeface has some potential to become an image itself *(Wongsunkakon, 2012).*

Creative Roots Design forum demonstrates the visual identity using the two of the world recognized visual identities "Coca-Cola & Carlsberg"" with the appropriate writing system of the country. The visual aesthetic of each typeface is restricted to the original Coca Cola & Carlsberg logo. It works in some cases and in some cases, it doesn't.

Figure 7. Creative Inspiration (2012, November, 22). Branding identity. Retrieved from http://www.creative-inspira

The sense of how type can be expressed and communicated through narrative a show called *Goodbye Helvetica*, a unique typographic installation, and love letter of sorts, with the various pieces relating to what I did and didn't like about Helvetica **(cite).** My critical analysis of *Goodbye Helvetica*, inspires my typographic deconstruction work. "WE" shows a comparison as a case study of visual aesthetics in both Western and Eastern letterform, to demonstrate these similarities between Latin and Thai using deconstructed method.

As a result, having no a loop terminal applied to the Thai initial design is intentionally my deconstructing method to force the aesthetic of the Thai initial to be recognised as western type. Base on how both design are formed, they can be read as the initial design for the word "New York", but for Thai version, it can be read as something else in Thai. My typographic experimentation demonstrates my points about understanding cultural value in creative process, Typographer in this case would have a range of option to response to creative enquiries and industry demands **(fig9).**

Figure 8. Supanun, S. (2015) WE: Western and Eastern typography deconstruction

Since the use of western typographic rules and methods, typography methodology using gridding system and sets of type rules are globally dominated, the series of these typefaces appears in this book also suggests an absence in applied the Western typography rules and methods, to any other letterforms apart from the Roman and Latin script **(fig.10).**
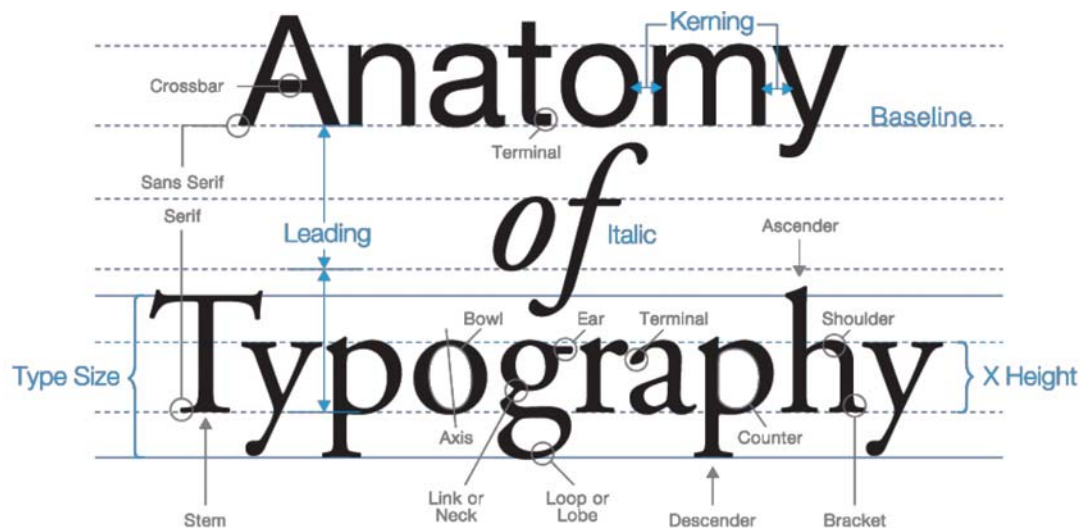
Figure 9. Supanun, S. (2015) *"Anatomy of Western Typeface"*: Demonstration of western typographic structure

Approaches to using visual language in a cultural context can be placed on a Approaches to using visual language in a cultural context can be placed on a continuum, with global *(universal)* on one end and culture-focused on the other. Each approach reveals contrasting assumptions about three central design issues: perception, aesthetics and pragmatics. The global approach is characterized by attempts to invent an objective, universal visual language or to define such a language through perceptual principles and empirical research. The culture-focused perspective is founded on the principle that visual communication is intimately bound to experience and hence can function only within a given cultural context, to which designers must be sensitive. While the modernist, universal approach has been losing ground to the postmodern, culture-focused approach, the two complement each other in a variety of ways and, depending on the rhetorical situation, offer pragmatic benefits and drawbacks *(Kostelnick 1995).*
With Kostelnick's demonstration above, to design letterform which involves cultural context, I would argue that design aesthetic is not only a strategy that designer could base their design on.

Calligraphy has been defined as an art of line by both Japanese calligraphers of different schools and the Chinese *(Flint Sato, C. 1999).* These are comparison of cultural value associated with letterform of South East Asia. The importance of cultural value here is in the choice of traditional containers specifically relating to Japanese culture. In Thailand, the loop terminal in writing performs a similar role. Tom Paulin states in his book called "walking a line" that cultural and traditional values are the main factors that influence the look of the letterforms. He says that "These traditional styles of written script using brushes to create the two formal calligraphy elements, which are the black line and the white space expressing Japanese tradition through written script". Both formal and material, is created an art of infinite depth and subtlety, which has held the Eastern imagination captive for

centuries. It is a simplicity, which has given birth to a plethora of expressive line. It is a strong line linking the present day heart to the beginnings of written language in the East" *(Fulford, 2002).*

Calligraphers attest, prove to be a profound record of the soul man, charting the energy of life and the many faceted aspects of the self.

The line is a sensitive dynamic, an energetic expression that is completed and, in a certain sense, defined by the white space through which it runs. The relationship of line and space is as intimate as form and space in sculpture, the spaces between dancers and their gestures in ballet or the silences in a stream of music. The space is an almost palpable presence, interacting positively with the line and contributing its own beauty to the piece. This awareness of space within Japanese art of calligraphy is, I feel, particularly acute and articulated *(Flint Sato, C. 1999).*

The scripts have certain conventions that should be followed, but the lines themselves are unique to the person writing them. This may imply that the analysis of script forms and their historical development is unimportant to calligraphers, which would be misleading. Much of their time is spent tracing and studying variations of script forms and developing an individual style *(Flint Sato, C. 1999).*

The relationship between type creator and how the letter is created, rely on each other truly. Notice how the shape of the character is now almost completely unrecognizable as the same kanji in print on the right. It is now more a stylized work of art than a vehicle for conveying information **(fig11)**

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Figure 10. InternetSupport Co (2015). About Japanese Calligraphy.

Japanese artist Riusuke Fukahori engaged the online art scene recently with his three-dimensional goldfish paintings created by pouring resin. Each of his fish works are found inside common Japanese household items like bowls and cups

As he states, "I didn't invent resin and not the first to use resin. I am not a resin artist. I am a goldfish artist. I think it's obvious which pieces are Riusuke Fukahori

pieces because the imitators use the wrong containers. They will never understand goldfish the way I do. They are only copying the craft, not the soul."**(fig12)**

Figure 11. My Modern Met (2015). New Layered Resin Goldfish Paintings by Riusuke Fukahori.

My point of examination is that Gutenberg's invention draws together the histories of typography and printing, and how machinery convention delivers information that altered the structure of the Renaissance and European society *(Dodd 2006)*. Movable text of Gutenberg in this case helps to report and connect events, actual or imaginary, presented in a sequence of written or spoken words, or still or moving images in a form of publication. To refer to the meaning of how this movable text does in this case. It does work to bring narrative to the viewers to view information by using their imagination and thinking to form a result through reading. Other word, Gutenberg's "movable text" and printing invention-changed people understanding about religious, it shows that the process in type as a letterform is transformed into a "visual narrative" to people. The message now is no longer looked at as visual, but in fact it is being looked at as the visual element that helps communicate narrative. Information can be imagined freely depending on personal self-imaginative and self-visual interpretation and the message is no longer required "aesthetics" to deliver the message. The use of technology produces a culture of communication that is reflected in the way people use and consume it.

Part4: Introduction to Narrative Method:

In *"Aesthetics of narrative Performance"*, Claudia Breger argues that mapping the complexities of imaginative world making in contemporary culture occurs through the aesthetics of narrative performance, introducing the idea of using moving images to communicate narratives *(Breger 2012).*

Interactive, real-time technologies challenge our perceptions of liveness and the machine. They allow us to move beyond relying on text and performers to creating works through using technology itself. The digital stage machine therefore suggests a shift from performance as *object* to performance as *process*. This is a common thread of both digital and postdramatic performance. Lehmann suggests that in "contrast to other arts, which produce an object, [in performance] the aesthetic act itself (the performing) as well as the act of reception (the theatre going) take place as a real doing in the here and now" (2006, 17). Birringer sums up this ontological shift towards process by suggesting that "the techniques of interaction have begun

"Visual communication in this case can be generated from the use of narrative method to gain sense of the past to the present"

Summary of loop terminal that has several meaning to Thai history and culture to western history of Gutenberg*,* I could see Gutenberg's invention underline modern typography rules and methodology to create the distinct aesthetic in typeface. Gutenberg's aesthetic and process adaptions revolutionalised Western typography. These technologies and methods that were developed over centuries in Europe, continue to be seen within the ranges of different typography aesthetics being designed and made regularly. Thai type and publication continues to adjust and develop and where Thai designers draw on the aesthetic of the Western precedent. With the adoption of western aesthetic in Thai typography, Thai cultural perception is no longer considered to take part in the process of making. The third stage of my exegesis evolved my studio output more focused towards using of cultural value as a model of a distinct and trans-customary Thai typeface that contributes to a Thai typography.

Firstly, I compare the loop terminal with Ralph Hotere's use of the Union Jack symbol, in the graphic context. I will also discuss my own exploration of type and national identity by discussing my own work exhibited earlier in 2015. In 1979, "This Is A Black Union Jack" by Ralph Hotere (2001), a persistent feature of Hotere's work has been his extraordinary alertness to major movements in modern contemporary art, combined with deep and sophisticated ease with his tribal and religious traditions. Most importantly, typographic form acts as one of the many design ingredients to communicate values and cultural inheritance from his family, and iwi Te Aupouri through visual narrative in Hotere's work.

Figure 12. Hotere, R (1984). "This is a Black Union Jack"

My idea of *"the East meeting the West and the past informing the present"* is addressed in my research enquiry. Living in Aotearoa New Zealand but being a Thai national informs my understanding of what I think and refer to, as "the east meeting the west" is critical. My own past informing my present comes not only from being in Aotearoa New Zealand but also remaining strongly linked to my family context in Thailand. I would like to combine these aspects in a trans-customary knowledge base using my native DNA and my love of being in Aotearoa New Zealand to explore the relationship between the two and finding a way to re-connect my Thai identity through a personal narrative using my loop knowledge applied in typography (fig.13). Strong political censorship in Thailand controls what can or cannot be said publically in both AotearoaNew Zealand and Thailand that is challenging my approach to find a way to implement and apply Thai alphabet visually and creatively. Ideally, the use of traditional and non-traditional materials is metaphorically important to present a coded narrative from my cultural and historical perspective. The "gold leaf" is now used to communicate the sense of "healing". A Buddhist practice of applying gold leaf onto the body of the Buddha statue is refered to as 'a healing process' within the buddhist context. Its form also allows the viewers to be engaged metaphorically with the content as context) (fig.14).

"K-Kon" is a trans-customary typographic installation which also engages conceptually in the political conflict of Thailand. The series of Thai traditional typography are designed in association with Thai culture and identity. The combination of the Thai traditional, non-traditional and contemporary elements are implemented inspired by trans customary methodology of Thailand. Explorations of contemporary materials are implemented forming the traditional aesthetics within the body of work. The narrative of this work develops the idea of cultural identification to re gain the cultural value and awareness truly reflecting the identity of Thai nation in the twentieth century.

"K-Kon" is a trans-customary typographic installation engaged by the political conflict of Thailand. The series of Thai traditional typography are designed in association with Thai culture and identity. The combination of the Thai traditional, non-traditional and contemporary elements are implemented inspired by trans customary methodology of Thailand. Explorations of contemporary materials are implemented forming the traditional aesthetics within the body of work. The narrative of this work is narrated to develop the idea of cultural identification to re gain the cultural value and awareness truly reflecting the identity of Thai nation in the twentieth century.

Figure 13. Supanun, S. (2014) K-Kon. Trans customary typography installation.

""Talumpuk" explores the human generated notion of fault as social and cultural phenomena. My artwork and typography design is designed to communicate a natural disaster that happened in Thailand using the Thai trans customary typography, but it also designed to reflect my Thai cultural perception as Thai typographer. The project includes two video interviews dealing with local natural forces; one looking at through the indigenous Māori perspective and the other through scientific lenses (new fig.15).

Figure 14. Supanun, S. (2015) Talumpuk. Fabricated Thai typography

"The narrative of new migrant": the subtle dynamics of crossing, moving through the respective national and cultural thresholds. A representation of Thai cultural identity is expressed through movement of loop terminal of Thai alphabet used in the context of immigration documentation. This use asserts a Thai-specific philosophical knowledge of Thai written communications through cultural experiences of the new immigrant Thai. This is also a reflection of how Thai type is restricted under a certain way of livin (new fig.16).

Figure 15. Supanun, S. (2015) The narrative of new migrant: Ink Press on Paper.

"Home that is not Home": A representation of Thai cultural identity through movement of Thai traditional performance: The aesthetic captured are my typographic experimentation to create a contemporary typography design inspired by my cultural and traditional value.

Figure16. Supanun, S. (2015) Home that is not home: Trans customary Thai based on narrative of Thai traditional performance.

Regardless of the technology used, however, the fundamentals regarding the use and handling of typographic conventions appears to have remained intact, and the theoretical underpinnings of historic typography are as valued today as they have always been (*Gill [1931] 1993; Stockl 2005; Lewis 2007; Lupton 2010).* Understanding traditional and cultural value in typography design practice would help the Tahi typographer and graphic designer in the 'modern' era to be more confident about approaching cultural elements in the contemporary condition. Most importantly, these method that I write about in my exegesis would help creative practitioners to maintain cultural identity through a continually developing visual communication contiuum.

As previously stated, regardless of the use of English language as an international language for international communication, it is not as flexible as the universal language that is being spoken across other countries with their own non-English language. The way English is being used in the written form of the alphabet, also different from how it is being used when it is spoken. These linguistic variations are uniquely personalized where aesthetics are wider and more adaptable. Literature professor, Vincent B. Leitch describes the word literature as a *"culturally relative definition".* All languages and alphabets can also represent the past, present, and future of its nation. Shapes, tones, and form of each alpha- bets and languages are well characterized of its own kinds - most often influenced from both cultural and historical discourses. All languages and alphabets can capture the cultural life of people and the movement of their nation through the range of linguistic variations. Their cultural identity is being expressed through this linguistic creation very significantly; it's fair to say that these innovations can trace the value of distinct nations historically through to contemporary iterations.

"You can imitate what people wear, you can imitate people hairstyle, but you can imitate their voice".

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