

# TRANSFORMING THE JATAYU SYMBOL INTO CONTEMPORARY TYPEFACE DESIGN: A PRACTICE- BASED APPROACH

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## Abstract

This study examines the visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol in contemporary typeface design as an effort to translate cultural symbols into a communicative and character-driven letterform system. Jatayu was selected because of its strong symbolic meaning as a representation of bravery, sacrifice, loyalty, and struggle, as well as its rich visual potential for typographic development. The study responds to the limited integration of cultural symbols into typographic systems, as culture-based design practices often remain at a decorative level rather than being conceptually and structurally embedded in letterform design. It aims to explain how a cultural symbol can be transformed into a coherent and communicative typeface with conceptual legitimacy in contemporary design practice. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a practice-based design orientation. Data were collected through document study, visual observation, and artifact analysis of the “Jatayu” typeface and were analyzed using descriptive visual analysis. The findings show that the Jatayu symbol, particularly its wing element, was transformed through formal abstraction into pointed accents, dynamic curves, and rhythmic strokes that construct a heroic, firm, and elegant visual character while maintaining readability and systemic consistency.

**Keywords:** Jatayu, Visual Transformation, Contemporary Typography, Cultural Symbol, Type Design.

## INTRODUCTION

Typography in contemporary visual communication design is no longer understood merely as a device for arranging text, but as a medium that shapes meaning, identity, and visual experience. Current design practice shows that letterforms operate simultaneously as forms to be read and forms to be seen, meaning that typographic decisions are never entirely neutral. In this context, a typeface is required not only to be legible but also to construct a visual character that is relevant to the communication setting in which it operates. Carter et al. (2015) argue that typography encompasses the entire process of designing letterforms as visual communication, from structural formation to application across media. Typographic inquiry, therefore, cannot remain confined to technical matters alone; it must also address questions of meaning, identity, and visual strategy.

This broader perspective is reinforced by the semiotics of typography, which positions letterforms as carriers of meaning beyond the verbal content of text. In many visual contexts, audiences tend to perceive the qualities of type through weight, direction, proportion, rhythm,

and visual construction before fully processing linguistic meaning. Letterforms thus function as active sources of visual information rather than neutral containers of words. Frisk & Pauwels (2026) maintain that typography can, under certain conditions, function as a primary semiotic resource in relation to semantic meaning. This position confirms typography as a legitimate object of inquiry within cultural and visual communication frameworks.

Contemporary typography has moved far beyond the notion of letterforms as static and uniform shapes. Formal transformation, structural modification, and the enrichment of visual character have become integral to modern type design across both print and screen-based media. This shift has opened space for designers to develop letterforms that are not only functional but also more specific and expressive in visual identity. Brownie (2020) explains that typographic transformation requires a renewed understanding of the relationship between form, change, and visual perception in contemporary practice. Such conditions provide a strong foundation for the design of typefaces based on cultural symbols.

The need for visual identity differentiation has encouraged designers to reconsider culture as a source of design ideas. In a global context, cultural symbols function as markers of specificity, depth of meaning, and contextual proximity that generic forms do not possess. The use of cultural elements in design cannot be regarded as valid when it remains limited to decoration or superficial quotation. Barnes & Harland (2025) show that typography contributes to the formation of graphic heritage and sense of place, allowing letterforms to articulate identity at a deeper level than surface ornamentation alone. The transformation of cultural symbols into typography must therefore be understood as a strategy of visual identity design rather than an act of aesthetic nostalgia.

In practice, however, culture-based design still often stops at the superficial borrowing of forms. Local symbols are frequently attached merely to evoke an ethnic or traditional impression, without being developed into a coherent visual structure that can be defended in design terms. As a result, the relationship between culture and letterform weakens because the symbol does not operate as a formative principle within the typographic system. Puertas & de la Ros (2025) argue that cultural signals in typographic systems should be read as active visual constructions rather than automatic reproductions of meaning. This gap is precisely what makes research on the visual transformation of cultural symbols into typefaces both relevant and necessary.

Jatayu was selected as the object of this study because it possesses a clear narrative and cultural identity rather than functioning as an abstract symbolic figure. In the Ramayana tradition, Jatayu is portrayed as a great bird who attempts to rescue Sita during her abduction by Ravana and is ultimately killed after fighting to uphold truth and protect the vulnerable. This narrative positions Jatayu as a figure closely associated with bravery, sacrifice, loyalty, and struggle. The symbolic identity of Jatayu is textually grounded in the Ramayana tradition, where Jatayu is consistently recognized as the bird who tries to stop Sita's abduction, while Adiani et al. (2023) also describe Jatayu as a tritagonist figure in the Ramayana whose heroism remains relevant to be reintroduced through contemporary visual media.

Jatayu also holds strong relevance within the cultural context of the Indonesian archipelago. The Ramayana tradition has long been present in Java and Bali through textual transmission, visual representation, and performative adaptation. (Robson, 2018) shows that the Ramayana has a long literary history in Java and Bali, indicating that its characters are not detached mythological references but part of a cultural narrative that has been repeatedly reinterpreted in local contexts. This continuity strengthens the rationale for selecting Jatayu as the conceptual basis of a culture-based typeface design.

The relevance of Jatayu to the present research lies in two principal dimensions, namely meaning and form. In terms of meaning, Jatayu embodies heroic, protective, loyal, and sacrificial qualities that can serve as the basis for constructing the visual character of a typeface.

In terms of form, Adiani et al. (2023) identify recurrent visual features in Jatayu representations, including a bird form, strong wings, and other distinctive character traits derived from wayang and digital reinterpretation. These features provide a concrete formal basis for transformation into letterform anatomy. This study therefore does not treat Jatayu as a narrative ornament, but as a conceptual and formal source that can be developed into a coherent, legible, and culturally grounded letterform system for contemporary visual communication practice..

Research on typographic perception further strengthens the relevance of this study. A typeface can evoke particular character associations in readers, meaning that letterforms do not simply convey words but also suggest impressions such as strength, elegance, firmness, warmth, or seriousness depending on their visual structure. Jordan et al. (2017) demonstrate the existence of print personalities in typefaces, while Sheen et al. (2025) show that typefaces carry additional semantic information beyond linguistic content. The construction of visual character in a typeface based on cultural symbols can therefore be discussed scientifically rather than remaining a purely aesthetic claim. The attempt to transform the Jatayu symbol into letterform anatomy thus rests on a strong theoretical foundation in research on typographic perception.

The research problem addressed in this article concerns how the visual symbol of Jatayu can be transformed into a contemporary typographic structure without losing its communicative function as letterform. The study is not intended to evaluate Jatayu merely as a cultural narrative, but to explain its role as a conceptual basis, its transformation into a formal system, and the relevance of the resulting typeface within contemporary typography. This article positions typography as a bridge between cultural discourse in design and type design practice, which is often reduced to purely formal concerns. More specifically, the study aims to analyze the visual symbol of Jatayu as a design foundation, explain its transformation into typeface structure, and assess its relevance as a visual identity in contemporary visual communication design. This framework is consistent with Beier & Thiessen (2025) view that typeface selection and formation must take perceptual, cognitive, and communicative goals into account.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a practice-based design orientation. The selection of this approach is based on the nature of the research problem, which does not aim to test causal relationships, but to explain how the visual symbol of Jatayu is transformed into a contemporary typographic structure. The main focus lies in describing the design process, interpreting visual form, and examining the relationship between a cultural symbol and the resulting letterform system. This formulation positions typographic analysis not merely within the formal domain, but in relation to the symbolic dimension and the cultural context underlying it. Nassaji (2015) argues that descriptive qualitative research is oriented toward the direct and naturalistic presentation of phenomena, making it appropriate for explaining visual processes and design decisions without experimental intervention. The relevance of this approach lies in its capacity to read typographic artifacts both as visual data and as outcomes of a creative process. In this sense, typography is treated not only as a medium of linguistic representation, but also as a legitimate object of inquiry within cultural and visual communication frameworks.

The practice-based design orientation is adopted because this study is grounded in design practice as a means of knowledge production. In design research, artifacts are not positioned merely as illustrations of outcomes, but as integral parts of the investigative process through which visual decisions are tested, revised, and formulated reflectively. Vaughan (2020) places practice-based design research as an approach that connects practice, artifact, and critical

reflection in the production of design knowledge. This position is particularly important in the present study because the transformation of the Jatayu symbol cannot be explained solely through conceptual description, but must be demonstrated through the actual process of letterform development and the reading of its visual results. The methodology is therefore designed to examine simultaneously the conceptual, formal, and applicative dimensions of the resulting typeface.

The research framework is explicitly organized in an input–process–output sequence. The input consists of the visual symbol of Jatayu, the “Jatayu” typeface design artifact, and scholarly literature on typography, semiotics of typography, typeface perception, and practice-based design. The process includes symbol identification, formal element analysis, form transformation exploration, character system analysis, visual application analysis, and reflective synthesis of findings. The output consists of an explanation of Jatayu as a conceptual foundation, a model of visual transformation from symbol to typographic structure, and the relevance of the resulting typeface within contemporary visual communication design. This framework clarifies that the study moves systematically from symbolic source material toward the formation of a letterform system and the interpretation of its meaning.

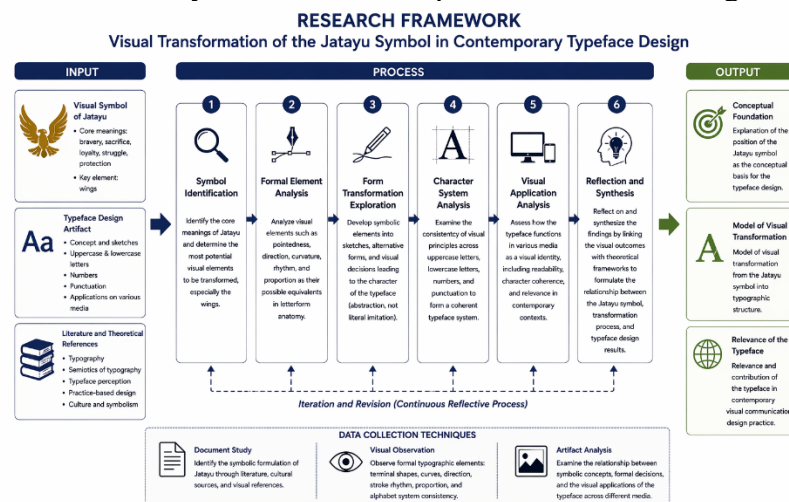


Figure X. Research Framework of the Visual Transformation of the Jatayu Symbol in Contemporary Typeface Design.

**Figure 1.** Research Framework of the Visual Transformation of the Jatayu Symbol in Contemporary Typeface Design Source: Author’s documentation, 2026.

The object of this study is the visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol in contemporary typeface design. Primary data consist of the “Jatayu” typeface design artifact, including symbolic concepts, uppercase and lowercase letters, numerals, punctuation marks, and several visual applications across different media. These materials are treated as primary visual documents for tracing how a cultural symbol is translated into a system of letterforms. Secondary data are drawn from scholarly literature discussing typography, semiotics of typography, typeface perception, and practice-based design. In design research, the artifact is not limited to descriptive status, but is placed in dialogue with relevant theoretical frameworks so that it can be interpreted reflectively and contextually.

Data were collected through document study, visual observation, and artifact analysis. Document study was conducted to identify the symbolic formulation underlying the design, particularly the interpretation of Jatayu as a symbol of bravery, sacrifice, loyalty, and struggle, as well as the emphasis on wing elements as the main source of visual ideas. Visual observation was directed toward formal typographic elements, including terminal shapes, curves, directional movement, stroke rhythm, proportion, and consistency across the alphabetic system. Artifact analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between symbolic

concepts, formal design decisions, and the visual applications of the typeface across different media. This procedure is consistent with Van Leeuwen (2006) view that letterforms carry potential meaning through formal features such as weight, expansion, slope, curvature, connectivity, orientation, and regularity.

The research procedure was carried out in several interconnected stages in order to clarify the transformation of a cultural symbol into typographic structure. The first stage was the identification of the visual symbol of Jatayu by inventorying its core meanings and determining the visual elements with the greatest transformational potential, especially the wing. The second stage was the analysis of formal elements, in which visual aspects such as pointedness, directional movement, curvature, rhythm, and proportion were examined as possible equivalents in letterform anatomy. The third stage was the exploration of form transformation, in which symbolic elements were developed into sketches, alternative forms, and visual decisions leading toward the character of the typeface. The fourth stage was the analysis of the character system, focusing on the consistency of visual principles across uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numerals, and punctuation marks. The fifth stage was the analysis of visual application, aimed at assessing how the typeface performs across different media as a visual identity device. The sixth stage was reflection and synthesis, through which the outcomes of visual exploration were reconnected to the theoretical framework in order to formulate the relationship between the Jatayu symbol, the transformation process, and the formal result of the typeface in an argumentative manner. This final stage is added to strengthen the methodological clarity of the study as practice-based research, ensuring that the creative process does not end with the production of form alone, but generates knowledge that can be academically justified.

Data were analyzed using descriptive visual analysis. The analytical focus was directed toward the relationship between the visual symbol of Jatayu and typographic structure, so that the reading does not stop at a claim of inspiration, but traces which aspects of the symbol are actually present in the anatomy of the letterforms. Formal elements such as pointed terminals, line rhythm, curved movement, and character consistency were treated as indicators of visual transformation. This approach is in line with Carter et al. (2015), who understand typography as both form design and communication, and with Van Leeuwen (2006), who positions letterforms as carriers of potential meaning. Descriptive visual analysis is used to explain the relationship between conceptual basis, transformation process, and the formal outcome of the typeface in an argumentative way. Each stage of design is therefore understood not only as the production of form, but as the construction of a visual logic that can be defended within both academic and practical design contexts.

Data validity was maintained through the interrelationship among concept, artifact, and theory. Conceptual meaning was derived from the symbolic formulation of Jatayu in the design artifact, the artifact provided visual evidence of the transformation process, and theory was used to interpret the relationship between symbolic meaning and letterform structure. Validity was not based on the number of respondents or statistical measurement, but on the consistency of argumentation between conceptual sources, visual findings, and the theoretical framework employed. Nassaji (2015) emphasizes that descriptive qualitative research requires clarity in presenting the phenomenon under study, while practice-based design research requires the legibility of the relationship between process and artifact. The transparency of visual interpretation and the precision of the relationship between the Jatayu symbol and typeface anatomy therefore constitute the primary basis for the scholarly accountability of this study. Operationally, the methodology is designed to align directly with the objectives of the research, namely to explain the position of Jatayu as a conceptual foundation, to describe its visual transformation into typographic structure, and to assess the relevance of the resulting design within contemporary typography.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Visual Symbol of Jatayu as the Conceptual Foundation of the Design

The findings indicate that the visual symbol of Jatayu functions as the conceptual foundation in shaping the character of the letterforms. Based on the design artifact, Jatayu is positioned as a symbol of bravery, sacrifice, loyalty, and the struggle to uphold truth, so that cultural meaning is embedded from the outset as the source of the typeface's visual identity. This position is important because the cultural object is not used as an additional ornament, but as a foundation of meaning that directs visual decisions. Frisk & Pauwels (2026) argue that typography can, under certain conditions, operate as a primary semiotic resource, enabling letterforms to generate meanings that exceed the verbal content of the text. The use of the Jatayu symbol in this study therefore has a strong theoretical basis, since the relationship between symbol and letterform is constructed through the semiotic function of form.

The visual symbol of Jatayu serves as the conceptual basis of the design because it embodies heroic qualities and cultural representational value that are subsequently directed into the language of typographic form. The visual representation of this symbol is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Visual Representation of the Jatayu Symbol as the Conceptual Basis for Typeface Design  
(Source: Author's documentation, 2026)

Figure 2 shows that the figure of Jatayu is not treated merely as a narrative illustration, but rather as a source of visual qualities that are then processed into the structure of letterforms. Visually, the most dominant element selected for transformation is the wing. The wing is not treated as a figurative illustration, but as a source of formal qualities such as directional movement, breadth of span, pointed terminals, rhythmic layering, and a heroic impression. This finding indicates that the selected cultural symbol possesses formal potential that can be developed into the visual character of letterforms. Puertas & de la Ros (2025) explain that type design can carry cultural signals and function as an active agent in the construction of identity, rather than merely serving as a neutral container for text. For this reason, the symbol of Jatayu in this study does not remain at the level of narrative reference, but develops into a visual principle that structures the character of the typeface.

The wing element was selected as the most potential visual component for transformation because it embodies directional movement, pointedness, rhythm, and a heroic quality. The process of extracting this element into the basic form of typography is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** The Process of Extracting the Visual Elements of Jatayu's Wing into Basic Typographic Forms (Source: Author's documentation, 2026)

Through this extraction process, the cultural symbol begins to shift from a figurative form toward a more structural visual principle that is more appropriate for the needs of typeface design. The next finding shows that the meaning of the symbol shifts from the narrative level to the structural level. Jatayu is not presented as an epic story in the form of extended text or illustrative imagery, but is condensed into visual qualities that guide the formation of letterforms. This shift is important because design research cannot simply demonstrate a source of inspiration, but must also prove how that inspiration is translated into a formal system. Van Leeuwen (2006), in his study of the semiotics of typography, argues that letterforms possess ideational, interpersonal, and textual potential, meaning that formal decisions in typography can be interpreted as decisions of meaning. In this context, the symbol of Jatayu functions as a conceptual device translated into typographic structure, rather than merely as a visual theme.

The use of the Jatayu symbol as the basis of design within the field of visual communication design confirms that culture can be developed into a visual identity with conceptual legitimacy, rather than functioning as a merely decorative attachment. This approach demonstrates how a cultural symbol can be transformed into a coherent visual structure, so that typography functions not only as a linguistic medium, but also as a valid form of cultural representation. A cultural symbol becomes relevant when it is transformed into a coherent and communicative visual system. Frisk & Pauwels (2026) position typography as part of a broader semiotic network, while Puertas & de la Ros (2025) emphasize the capacity of type design to carry cultural identity. Based on these two positions, the findings of this study show that the symbol of Jatayu is not merely a source of formal inspiration, but a valid conceptual foundation for the formation of a typeface. The conceptual stage of this research has therefore fulfilled the primary requirement of culture-based typography design, namely the presence of a clear relationship between symbolic meaning and the direction of form development. This formulation confirms that the design process is grounded not only in formal considerations but also in the legitimacy of cultural meaning as the visual basis of typography.

### **Visual Transformation of the Jatayu Symbol into Typographic Structure**

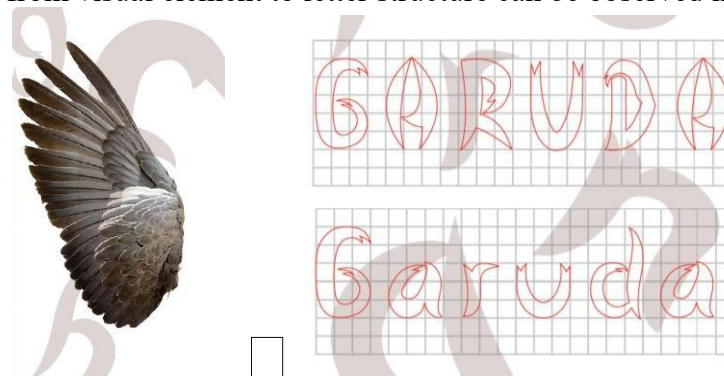
The findings show that the visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol takes place through a process of abstraction rather than literal imitation. The visual data indicate the use of pointed terminals, dynamic curves, and stroke rhythms reminiscent of feather layers and wing span. This strategy is important because effective type design does not directly copy natural objects, but processes their visual qualities into letter structures that remain legible. Carter et al. (2015) argue that typography involves the selection, arrangement, and manipulation of letterforms in order to produce precise visual communication. The visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol in this study can therefore be understood as a form of formal manipulation directed toward constructing a distinctive yet functional letter identity.

Anatomically, this transformation can be observed in the relationship between formal

accents and the basic framework of the Latin alphabet. The resulting letterforms retain recognizable structural features, yet are given specific visual treatments that construct a distinctive character. This finding indicates that the design process does not move toward extreme deconstruction, but toward measured modification. Brownie (2020) explains that the transformation of letterforms requires a re-reading of conventional assumptions about the alphabet, particularly when letters are treated as adaptive and dynamic visual objects. The findings of this study show that the Jatayu symbol is translated into the enrichment of letterform character rather than through the dismantling of the existing alphabetic system. This approach confirms that cultural transformation is carried out by enriching typographic form conceptually and visually without disrupting the alphabet as an established linguistic system.

To clarify the shift from symbol to typographic writing, this study formulates an explicit early transformation model consisting of five steps. The first step is the selection of the most dominant and transformable visual element of Jatayu, particularly the wing, because this element embodies directional movement, pointedness, rhythm, and a heroic impression. The second step is the extraction of its principal visual qualities, such as pointed terminals, dynamic curvature, visual span, and layered rhythm. The third step is the simplification of these qualities into more controlled and geometric basic forms so that they can be adapted to the logic of letterform anatomy. The fourth step is the translation of these simplified forms into typographic components, including terminals, curves, joints, and stroke rhythm, so that the symbolic element appears not as an attached image, but as a formal principle. The fifth step is the integration of these formal principles into the framework of the Latin alphabet and their testing on several initial characters before being developed into a more complete type system. This early transformation model shows that the formation of the typeface does not proceed merely intuitively, but through a structured visual sequence from cultural symbol to letterform anatomy.

The visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol is therefore not carried out through literal imitation, but through the abstraction of form applied to the anatomy of letterforms. The stages of transformation from visual element to letter structure can be observed in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Early Transformation Model of Jatayu's Visual Elements into Letterform Anatomy through the Stages of Selection, Extraction, Simplification, Translation, and Integration of Form (Source: Author's documentation, 2026)

Figure 4 shows that the visual qualities of the wing are translated into pointed accents, dynamic curves, and stroke rhythm, allowing the symbol to function as a formal principle rather than as an image attached to the letters. Through this model, the cultural symbol begins to shift from a figurative form toward a more structural visual principle that is more appropriate for the requirements of typeface design.

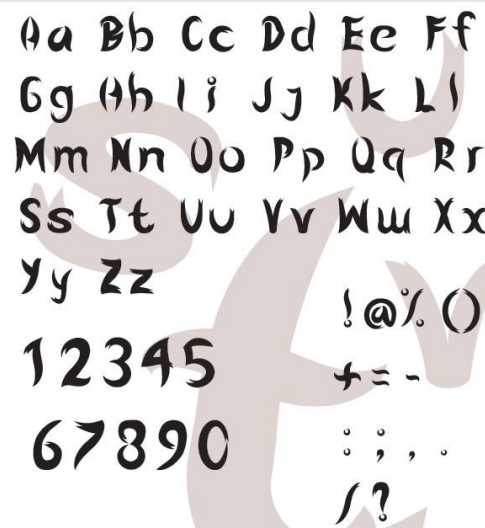
The next finding shows that the meaning of the symbol shifts from the narrative level to the structural level. Jatayu is not presented as an epic story through extended text or illustrative imagery, but condensed into visual qualities that guide the formation of letterforms. This shift

is important because design research cannot simply identify a source of inspiration; it must also demonstrate how that inspiration is translated into a formal system. Van Leeuwen (2006) argues that letterforms possess ideational, interpersonal, and textual potential, meaning that formal decisions in typography can be interpreted as decisions of meaning. In this context, the Jatayu symbol functions as a conceptual device translated into typographic structure rather than merely as a visual theme.

The symbolic transformation also does not stop at a limited number of letters, but is extended across the entire character system. The presence of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numerals, and punctuation marks indicates that the visual principles derived from the Jatayu symbol have developed into a relatively consistent system. This is significant because it distinguishes the findings of this study from merely decorative lettering or title-based experimentation. Carter et al. (2015) emphasize that a good typeface should be understood as a coherent system of forms rather than a collection of isolated characters. The cross-character consistency found in this study therefore indicates that the visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol has moved toward the development of a complete typeface.

Even so, the findings also reveal a characteristic field of compromise in the design of symbol-based letterforms. The stronger the stylization applied, the greater the possibility that readability will be disrupted; conversely, the more neutral the form is maintained, the weaker the differentiation of visual identity becomes. Sheen et al. (2025) show that typefaces can evoke personality associations and communicate information beyond the linguistic meaning of words, but such effects still depend on the viewer's visual processing of the letters. This finding confirms that the visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol in this study should be understood as an effort to maintain a balance between symbolic expression and reading function. The analysis indicates that the constructed letterforms do not literally resemble Jatayu, but rather radiate its visual character. This formulation confirms that culture-based typographic design is oriented toward the internalization of symbolic qualities into letterform structure rather than the imitation of surface appearance.

The visual transformation of the Jatayu symbol does not stop at a few isolated characters, but is developed into a relatively consistent letterform system. The complete character system is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** The “Jatayu” Typeface Character System Consisting of Uppercase Letters, Lowercase Letters, Numerals, and Punctuation Marks (Source: Author’s documentation, 2026)

The presence of a complete character set indicates that the design has progressed from the exploration of individual forms toward a more integrated and applicable typeface system. Pescatore Frisk and Pauwels (2026) emphasize that typographic meaning emerges from the relationship between form, context, and visual reading. This perspective is important in placing the findings at a structural rather than merely illustrative level. Pointed terminals, curved movement, and controlled organic rhythm function as the primary markers linking the Jatayu symbol to letterform anatomy. The visual transformation can therefore be considered successful because the cultural symbol is present as a formal principle that structures the identity of the typeface rather than as a decorative element. This formulation confirms the legitimacy of culture within typographic structure, allowing the design outcome to possess both conceptual consistency and representational strength. The findings suggest that symbol-based type design can remain communicative when transformation is carried out through disciplined structural abstraction.

The balance between visual identity and reading function can be examined more closely through the details of letterform anatomy. These elements are presented in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Visual Details of the “Jatayu” Typeface Showing Pointed Accents and Line Rhythm as Representations of the Wing (Source: Author’s documentation, 2026)

Through these details, it becomes evident that the visual character of the typeface is constructed through the controlled treatment of terminals, curves, and line rhythm within the framework of the Latin alphabet.

### **The Relevance of the Jatayu Typeface in the Context of Contemporary Typography**

The findings show that the designed typeface possesses contemporary relevance because it does not stop at the level of a letterform specimen, but is directed toward the possibility of cross-media application. The visual data demonstrate its implementation across print media, packaging, perfume bottles, matchboxes, and clothing, indicating that the typeface is positioned as a visual identity device. Within the framework of visual communication design, the relevance of a typeface is determined not solely by the novelty of its form, but by its capacity to function effectively in actual communicative contexts. This emphasis confirms that typography should be understood as a living medium, capable of adapting to the demands of contemporary discourse while remaining grounded in the conceptual legitimacy that underlies its design. Carter et al. (2015) argue that typography operates across media, from printed publications to packaging and other visual formats. The cross-media application presented in this study therefore indicates that the Jatayu typeface was designed as an operational visual communication system rather than as a purely formal experiment.

This contemporary relevance is further reinforced by research showing that letterform shapes influence audience perception. Sheen et al. (2025) demonstrate that typefaces carry additional semantic information beyond the linguistic content of words, while Jordan et al.

(2017) identify the presence of “print personality,” through which letterforms become associated with qualities such as strength, elegance, warmth, or seriousness. The heroic, firm, and elegant character attributed to the typeface in this study is therefore not merely an aesthetic claim, but one that has a psychovisual basis that can be perceived by audiences. The Jatayu typeface has the potential to actively construct visual image through the character internalized from a cultural symbol. Its relevance lies in its compatibility with the demands of contemporary typography, which require both identity differentiation and a strong visual character. In this sense, it functions not only as a linguistic medium, but also as a cultural representation capable of asserting a position within the field of visual communication.

The findings are also relevant to culture-based design discourse because they demonstrate that typography can function as a strategy of differentiation amid global visual homogenization. A typeface derived from a local symbol has the potential to strengthen visual identity, yet such a move becomes valid only when culture is processed through deep structural reinterpretation. This approach rejects superficial visual stereotyping and affirms conceptual legitimacy as the basis for constructing a typographic system. Barnes & Harland (2025) show that typography contributes to the formation of graphic heritage and sense of place, meaning that the relationship between letterforms and cultural identity must be understood as a serious construction of meaning rather than surface decoration. In this study, the symbol of Jatayu is translated through formal abstraction and a letterform system, so that its relevance lies in its ability to articulate cultural identity within the language of contemporary typography. This formulation confirms that culturally based typography functions not only as a medium of visual expression, but also as a conceptual strategy capable of integrating symbolic meaning into the structure of letterforms in a valid manner.

The contemporary relevance of a typeface is determined not only by the novelty of its form, but also by its capacity to operate across diverse visual communication contexts. The application of the “Jatayu” typeface across several media is shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Application of the “Jatayu” Typeface in Visual Communication Media as a Contemporary Visual Identity (Source: Author’s documentation, 2026)

Figure 6 shows that the designed typeface has operational potential as a visual identity, as it is able to maintain its distinctive character when applied across different media.

The scholarly contribution of this study confirms that type design can function as a vehicle for developing culturally based visual identity while remaining compatible with contemporary typographic practice. This emphasis shows that typography operates not merely as a medium of formal expression, but also as a conceptual strategy capable of integrating cultural symbols into a valid letterform system, thereby making it relevant to present-day visual communication needs. Its contribution lies not simply in showing that local culture can be “used” in design, but in demonstrating that a cultural symbol can be transformed into a coherent, legible, and applicable letterform system. Frisk & Pauwels (2026) position typography as a semiotic field capable of generating visual meaning, while Carter et al. (2015) understand it as an operational form of communication design across media. The Jatayu typeface can therefore be understood

as having the potential to expand the function of typography from a technical device into a medium for articulating culturally based visual identity. This position affirms its contribution to the development of contemporary visual communication design through the conceptual legitimacy and representational strength it embodies.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the visual symbol of Jatayu functions as a strong conceptual foundation in contemporary typeface design. The symbolic meanings of bravery, sacrifice, loyalty, and the struggle to uphold truth embedded in the figure of Jatayu are transformed into visual principles that shape the character of the letterforms. The wing element serves as the primary source of formal abstraction, translated into pointed terminals, dynamic curves, and rhythmic strokes that convey a heroic, firm, and elegant impression. The transformation of a cultural symbol into typography is not carried out literally, but through the structuring of form that preserves readability and consistency across the character system. The resulting typeface functions both as a medium of verbal communication and as a representation of cultural identity.

These findings confirm the relevance of culture-based type design within the context of contemporary visual communication. This relevance is reflected in the ability of the typeface to operate as a visual identity across multiple media while maintaining its distinctive visual character. The contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that local cultural symbols can be developed into a coherent, communicative, and applicable letterform system. Typography is therefore positioned not merely as a technical device, but as a medium for articulating culturally grounded visual identity. Future research may extend this work by providing more detailed documentation of the design exploration process and by conducting user perception studies to further evaluate the visual and communicative effectiveness of the designed typeface.

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