**Adam Mannheim**

**Designer Statement: Animation Project**

**Production quality animation from 0:17 to 0:53**

The song I chose for my kinetic typography assignment is “Back Against the Wall” by Cage the Elephant. I chose this song partly because I like Cage the Elephant a lot, and this is one of my favorite songs by them. Also, the lyrics lend themselves to be used for this type of assignment because words referencing location are used a lot. For example, with the lyric “Behind the T.V. screen I’ve fallen to my knees” allowed me to rotate a screen of text revealing more text behind it. Another example is the text “I’m stuck here in between the shadows of my yesterday”, where I squeezed the text between two other lines of text.

In the beginning, I experimented with shape effects for the text by converting the title of the song to a shape. The lyrics drop at around 20 seconds in, which is where the “production quality” segment of the song begins. I started off simple, with words dropping in in sync with the song. I found syncing the words with the song to be one of the most difficult parts. I thought I would have a visual cue to go off of by looking at the wave of the sound, but the vocals were hidden by the other instruments, so I had to keep replaying the same parts of the song to get the timing right. I continued working through the rest of the first verse and chorus in a similar manner. I didn’t do anything too complicated, and I group together objects with null objects as needed, and grouped a couple of lines into precompositions.

The production quality animation finished around 55 seconds in, when the first chorus ended. I then experimented with 3D. I created a box with lyrics on each side, and then rotated it in 3D to display lyrics as they were available. Then, for the second chorus, I copied the precomposition for the previous chorus and maneuvered it so that it looked like the lyrics were spilling out of the box. After the second chorus, I tried different shape animations as part of the outro.

This was my first time using After Effects. The most similar experience I had was messing around with Adobe Flash when I was in middle school. They both are similar, and involve several layers with keyframes that can be animated between. One of the main differences is that After Effects has the cluttered UI that a lot of adobe products have. This is probably because it is more powerful and capable than flash, which means it could be better for professionals. It also meant there was a steep learning curve. Another issue I had was that After Effects is a very resource intensive program. I tried closing all my programs, and it still wouldn’t always run smoothly on my computer. Once I got the hang of it, though, I really enjoyed working on this project. I can now understand why animation is so time consuming, though.