"THE GRIZ OF OZ" – AN EXPERIMENT IN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Hannah Foss and Miho Aoki
Art Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks,
505 South Chandalar Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99775

This film was conceived with the objective of creating an animation that could effectively convey a plot through non-spoken and non-written methods.
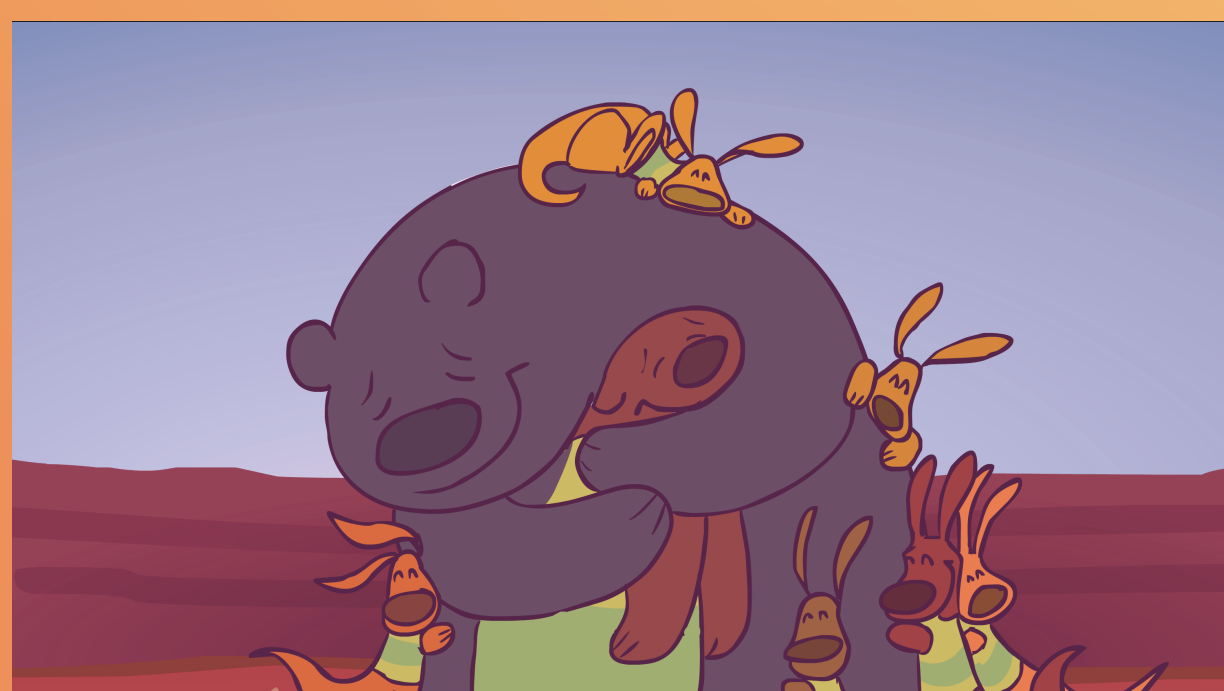
ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING CHARACTER

CHARACTER	PERSONALITY	MOTIVATION
Griz	Curious, enthusiastic, good natured, clumsy	To be accepted by the wallabies
Mama Bear	Tender, worried, loving	To help her son find happiness
Wallabies	Neutral party with no judgment or bias	None

It is important to establish, define, and maintain the personalities and behaviour patterns of the film's characters. This allows the audience to understand the actions and underlying motives of the characters.
This level of understanding invokes viewer empathy for the characters.

EMBRACING AND REJECTING CLICHÉ

One must have an awareness of cliché and implement educated decisions on which to avoid or embrace. Clichés can effectively comfort your global audience with familiar themes and situations, but must be used sparingly to avoid suffocating the originality of your film and your own creative voice.

Utilised clichés include the initially clumsy protagonist winning the sports game and the 'happy ending' embrace, consisting of the protagonist and his friends & family.

UNIVERSAL EXPRESSIONS

Sadness / Shame

Happiness / Excitement

Confusion / Doubt

Surprise/ Bewilderment

UNIVERSAL THEMES

Taciturn child / Anxious parent

Tearful farewell to close ones

Awkward silence with strangers

Comfort food when upset

UNIVERSAL SYMBOLLIC PROPS

Universally comprehendible props are, by definition and function, generalized and conceptual.
Therefore, a specific plane type is not drawn, but rather the concept of a plane that demonstrates properties which differentiate it as a plane.
Detail is ignored in the interest of essence and conveying its quintessential 'plane-ness', 'bear-ness' or 'tree-ness'.

COMPREHENSION AND ANTICIPATION

Humans thrill at finding patterns in their daily routine, because it allows them to predict or anticipate outcomes to similar situations. Establishing patterns in your plot encourages audience participation and anticipation.

Scene premise   Reaction   Action   Outcome
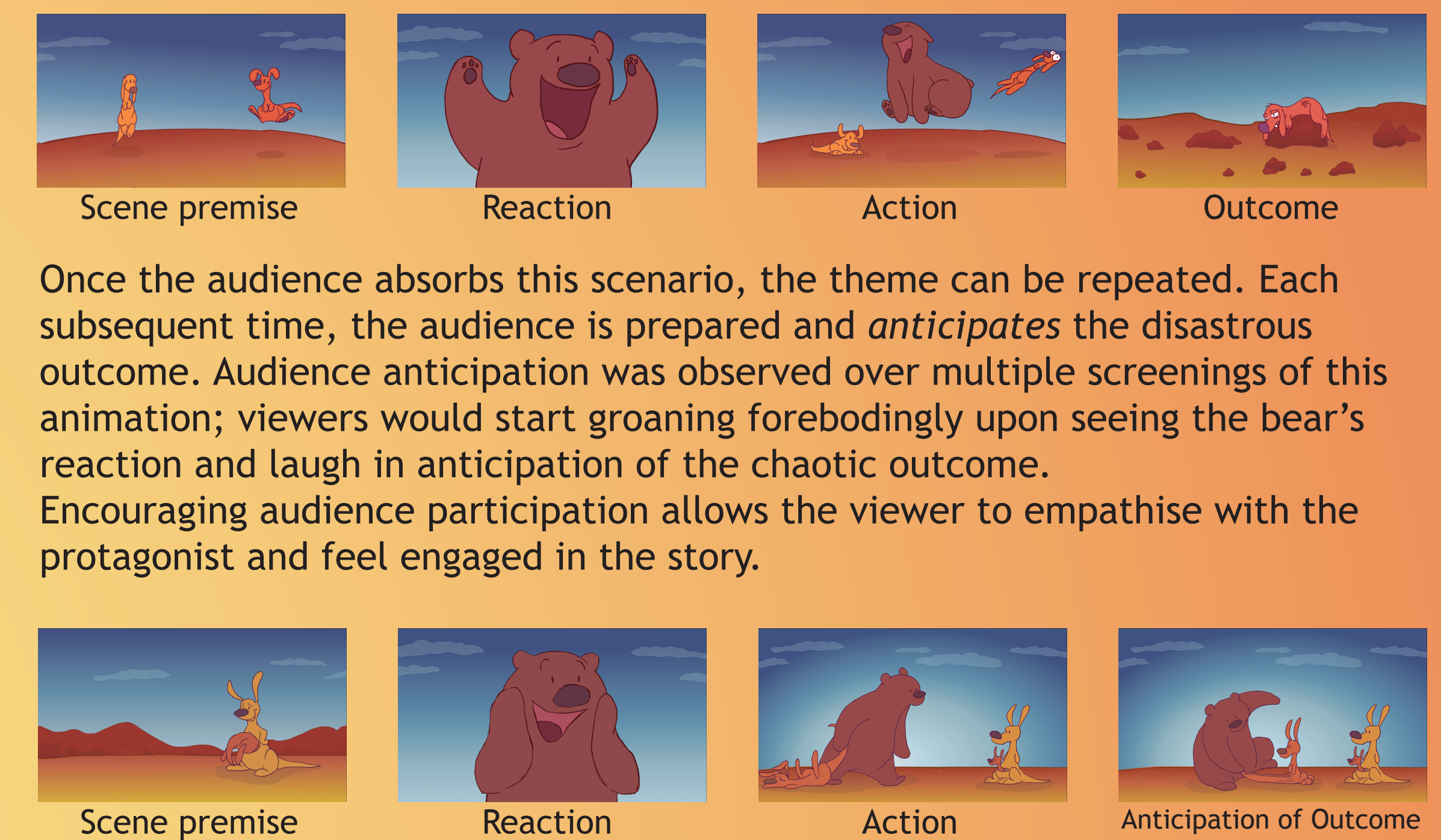
Once the audience absorbs this scenario, the theme can be repeated. Each subsequent time, the audience is prepared and *anticipates* the disastrous outcome. Audience anticipation was observed over multiple screenings of this animation; viewers would start groaning forebodingly upon seeing the bear's reaction and laugh in anticipation of the chaotic outcome.
Encouraging audience participation allows the viewer to empathise with the protagonist and feel engaged in the story.

Scene premise   Reaction   Action   Anticipation of Outcome

COLOUR AND DESIGN THEORY

It is important to establish a cohesive design for the duration of the film, concerning colour palette, narrative tone, levels of realism, abstraction and cartooniness in the film design and animation.

The Australian landscape displays a warm palette- conveying heat, happiness and excitement.

The Alaskan landscape displays a cool palette- conveying cold, sadness and calm.

The colour palette plays an important role in establishing mood and theme in each scene. It can help convey the geographical setting, atmosphere and physical temperature of a scene, as well as the mood or demeanour of the characters.
The 'narrative tone' concerns the silent narrative that the film expresses graphically- the message resonating throughout the film. Cohesive character and setting design ensures that the different screen elements amalgamate.

A plot can be effectively expressed non-verbally in film if universal emotions, themes and ideas are employed in addition to the story-telling elements of art, design and film theory.