Miyazaki's graphic novels: patterns in design

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Miyazaki’s graphic novels: patterns in design

by

James Rothschild Ewald

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major: Graphic Design

Program of Study Committee:
Debra Satterfield, Major Professor
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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2010

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Abstract

This thesis examines patterns in the design choices of Hayao Miyazaki in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. It addresses a gap in the research about graphic novels by focusing on patterns that relate to comic art as a genre, patterns that recall various design principles, and patterns that reflect design strategies. The analysis recognizes that looking at these aesthetic choices involves discussion of the function of each design choice and the relationship of that function to content. Overall, patterns in the design often accounted for issues involving time, character, and change. In addition to analyzing the patterns in Miyazaki’s design choices, this thesis also explores sample audience responses to Miyazaki’s work. In doing so, the thesis reports the results of a survey given to Asian and American students regarding selected images from *Nausicaä*, and what these images told readers about character and theme. The survey did not quiz participants on Miyazaki’s design choices, but invited them to comment on what was the result of those choices, the graphic novel panels, themselves. The thesis then explores participant responses in terms of cultural differences between Asian and American readers as well as for shared interpretations. Finally, this thesis examines the significances of the findings and discusses possibilities for future research.
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Chapter One: Introduction

In 2000, an anthology appeared that was based on talks given at a 1998 international conference on comics and culture held at the University of Copenhagen. This anthology, *Comics & Culture: Analytical and Theoretical Approaches to Comics*, addressed a wide range of issues, including arguments for the cultural legitimization of comics, discussions of different purposes for comics such as propaganda or parody, and analyses using differing theoretical approaches, including semiotics and postmodernism. Underlying the selections in this anthology is the conviction that comics both reflect and create culture.

As did the participants in the Copenhagen conference, this thesis assumes that sequential art, particularly graphic novels, are legitimate expressions of culture. This assumption reflects the growing respect that graphic novels have achieved in recent years. For example, Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, a non-fiction graphic novel ten years in the making, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for its representation of Nazi Germany. Such recognition runs counter to earlier assessments that equated graphic novels with comics, which are conventionally expected in American culture to provide light entertainment for their readers. Stereotypically, comic books are often associated with simple, even innocent, representations of the world and are not generally associated with sophisticated ideology. Graphic novels, more lengthy than individual comic books, are characteristically known for complex storylines. Many times these complex storylines draw upon a range of cultural sources, including mythologies as well as folk and fairy tales. They also in their graphic representations draw upon images that have iconic significance that is cultural and often cross-cultural.

Although the cultural status and ideological complexity of graphic novels have
been increasingly recognized by critics, it is harder to find discussion of the design that helps to convey that complex content. This thesis intends to focus on design by looking at various patterns in the structure and use of images and of images and text in the narrative of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*.

**Miyazaki and Nausicaä**

I have chosen to focus on Miyazaki’s work because he is well known and respected internationally as an artist, screenwriter, filmmaker, and character designer. I have chosen *Nausicaä* because it has the cultural complexity that has recently generated respect for graphic novels. *Nausicaä* draws from a myriad of cultural sources including Japanese tales, such as the Japanese story about the Princess who loved insects (*Mushi mezuru himegimi*), as well as from Greek mythology, specifically the *Odyssey* with the Greek princess of the same name (Nausicaä) as portrayed in Bernard Evslin's Japanese translation. In the process, Miyazaki’s graphic novel draws from a diverse ideological spectrum that ranges from militaristic nihilism to environmentalism to classic ideals concerning hospitality.

Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* itself originally appeared as a manga series in *Animage* magazine starting in 1982. Manga are Japanese comics. *Nausicaä* was inspired by “a real disaster in Japan, the mercury-poisoning of Lake Minamata” (Gravett 115). Miyazaki’s work developed into the seven-volume graphic novel that focused on environmentalism as it told the story of efforts of Princess Nausicaä to restore the eco-system as she “comes of age” as a leader of her people.

In *Nausicaä*, the narrative is set in an apocalyptic landscape where, as noted on the cover of volume one, the earth is submerging beneath an expanding Sea of Corruption, where various kingdoms are at war for control of the dwindling resources, and where a
young princess Nausicaä, who has an empathic bond with giant Ohmu insects and animals “of every creed,” fights to create “tolerance, understanding and patience” in the world. Underlying Nausicaä’s fight are patterns that become significant both in identifying the types of problems faced by the characters and their communities, and in proposing—and even testing—various responses to those challenges. In addition, underlying the portrayal of the characters and their actions in Miyazaki’s Nausicaä is the sense that new possibilities not only exist, but also must be developed for the future. Certain patterns of graphic representation Nausicaä uniquely support and sustain Miyazaki’s narrative.

Definitions

Before analyzing Nausicaä as a graphic novel, I would like to distinguish between manga, American comics, and graphic novels. Manga are Japanese comic books. The Japanese word manga, translated metaphorically as “whimsical pictures” (Shimizu), is a term “composed of two ideograms: man (meaning executed rapidly, thrown off) and ga (meaning drawing)” (Koyama-Richard 7). Outside of Japan, the term manga refers to graphic works, including graphic novels. Comics are sequential art. According to McCloud in Understanding Comics, comics are a medium that can hold any number of ideas and images (6).

Any definition of comics needs to distinguish between sequential art and animation. Animé is the term commonly associated with Japanese animation. Animation is art that is sequential in time; comics are sequential in terms of space. Comics use spatial juxtaposition to get their work done (McCloud 7).

Japanese and American comic books are comparable in richness. John Ingulsrud and Kate Allen claim that, “From a structural perspective, there are more similarities
between manga [Japanese comics] and comics in North America and Europe than there are differences” (23). Some basic structural similarities that they point out include the fact that both manga and American comics have the panels containing graphics and print, both use caricature, and both are “cultural products where attitudes, taste, and ideology intersect” (Ingulsrud and Allen 25). Tom and Sara Pendergast, on the other hand, state that manga and American comics operate “on a different set of conventions and with a different history” (Volume 2, xxi). Manga conventions include drawing characters with huge expressive eyes that are good at conveying emotion and feeling. Today’s manga emerged after World War II and were influenced by postwar American comic books. In Japan, manga are read for fun and education and are a part of everyday Japanese life (Koyama-Richard 6). Educational manga are “among the least known” in the West, but are ranked “among the most interesting” and feature a range of subject areas from science to history, and literature to biography (Koyama-Richard 162).

In Japan, almost all manga are initially published in manga magazines (Pendergast and Pendergast, Volume 2, xxii). There are over 280 manga magazines published in Japan, and these are generally cheap enough to buy everyday and short enough to be discarded after a quick reading (Gravett 10). Manga magazines or periodicals (mangashi) are published for different specific audiences. Shonen manga, targeted at boys, is “focused on action and adventure, sports, and high-tech robots and other vehicles”; shojo manga, targeted at girls, tend to focus on relationships and romance; josei manga (for women) and seinen manga (for men) feature more mature stories, while kodomo manga is created for very young children. (Pendergast and Pendergast, Volume 2, xxiii). Hentai are manga that focus on sexual perversion; although such manga involve gender issues, one of my interests, this erotica is not included for discussion in this thesis.
As internationally read texts, manga provide insights into how different cultures construct and perceive texts visually and ideologically.

Graphic novels are more extensive than either individual manga or comic books. Graphic novels can involve a variety of genres and can be fiction as well as non-fiction. Sometimes the term “graphic novel” is applied to works that have been serialized and later brought together in comic-book format. This is what happened with Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. Whether or not manga that have appeared individually in a series and later gathered together as one longer work can be called a graphic novel is a matter of debate in some circles. But for the purposes of this thesis, I am regarding Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* as a graphic novel.

**A Focus on Patterns**

In focusing on patterns, this thesis analyzes patterns in the graphic representations of character and action in the narrative. Such a focus on patterns in discussing manga is not unique to this thesis. Ingulsrud and Allen, for example, note patterns in the shapes of speech balloons, noting that the shapes of the balloons “provide pragmatic information, indicating the nature and intensity of the message” (6). More specifically, Ingulsrud and Allen discuss various patterns in the symbols and techniques called “emeneta” that enhance the speech balloons (6-7). In so doing, they cite a study by Takemuma Kentaro that examines the denotations and connotations of drops of liquid (water, sweat, tears, saliva, nasal discharge) in manga. In “Visual Language and Ideology in Hayao Miyazaki,” I focus on some basic patterns in the way ideological themes are represented visually in *Nausicaä* and single out the pattern of the juxtaposition of discordant iconic images for discussion. I discuss how Miyazaki’s use of iconic juxtaposition suggests certain ideological positions in the narrative.
In this thesis, I am interested in the nature of the world that Miyazaki creates through various patterns of image and text in the narrative. Basic to this world is its apocalyptic landscape. In “What if the Apocalypse Never Happens: Evolutionary Narratives in Contemporary Comics,” Abraham Kawa asserts that apocalyptic landscapes not only make life a struggle-for-survival for graphic novel characters, but also allow for a “sweeping cross-cultural structure” and create a climate that inherently asks for cultural change; that is, because the apocalyptic landscape is stripped of familiar cultural artifacts and long-established institutions, it invites visionary possibilities that promise to expand “our evolutionary capabilities” (216-219). This landscape suggests, in theory, that this world does not initially have a recognizable cultural identity. An overall interest of mine is in extent to which the patterns in Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* provide insight into how graphic novels both reflect and create culture.

My main research questions in this thesis are “What are the patterns in the design of *Nausicaä*?” and “How do these patterns in the design of the work function?” In addressing these questions, I will be looking at basic patterns in the design of the comic genre itself, patterns in the use of design principles in Miyazaki’s graphic narrative, and patterns in the design strategies used to establish character and theme in *Nausicaä*. From this examination, I hope to understand how design can work to convey complex concepts in sequential art in general and in the world Miyazaki has created in particular.

While I am interested in the nature of the world that emerges during the course of the narrative, I also recognize that audiences for Miyazaki’s narrative are not stripped of their own cultures when reading his tale. Therefore, to augment my analysis of patterns in design in Miyazaki’s work, this thesis will include a look at a sampling of response patterns of Asian and American readers in a brief electronic survey concerning
Nausicaä’s narrative and heroine. In gauging any reader responses to Nausicaä, it is important to note that there has been a Japanification of the popular culture of young Americans. As Mark West points out, American popular culture is awash in Japanese images, from the monstrous (Godzilla) to the cute (Hello Kitty and Pokémon). The patterns of audience response in my survey will help answer one remaining question in this thesis: “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world as it is portrayed in the design of the sequential art of Nausicaä?”

**Methodology**

The methodology for the textual analysis and online surveys used as the basis for this thesis research is briefly described below and is further established in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

The textual analysis in this thesis takes advantage of methodologies developed from sources that provide a type of “grammar” of comics and graphic novels including Will Eisner’s *Sequential Art*, Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* as well as McCloud’s *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels*. It also draws inspiration from Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein’s *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*.

The survey itself includes three types of information. The first entails demographic information, including age, gender, nationality, and educational level of the participant. The second type of information involves an evaluation of perceived personal expertise. A third type of information gathered by the survey entails participants reading excerpts from Nausicaä and coming to conclusions about sequences, characters, and themes from looking at the images and text from selected pages. A limitation of this survey is that the entire graphic novel cannot be presented. However, the selected
excerpts in the survey have been chosen based on their representative nature.

**Chapter Outline of Thesis**

This thesis proceeds as follows. The next chapter, Chapter Two, is a literature review. This literature review focuses on three main areas of research: research on comic books and graphic novels, research on manga, and research on narratology and narrative across media and culture. The review also notes sources that discuss cultural issues, those that focus on gender, and those that inform my methodology, specifically pattern language. This literature review does not proceed chronologically but is organized according to subject. Chapter Three contains an analysis of “pattern language” that informs Miyazaki’s design of images and text *Nausicaä*. It discusses patterns that relate to comic art as a genre, that recall various design principles, and that reflect design strategies. Chapter Four contains the presentation and analysis of survey data. The survey explores specific differences in how Asian and American students perceive the narrative sequences and ideological content in *Nausicaä*. Chapter Five explores selected significances of my study that could lead to future research.

This thesis is relevant to those interested in the design of sequential art as well as to those more generally interested in various patterns of visual representation and their relationship to theme, ideology, and character.
Works Cited: Chapter One


Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter is a literature review that includes several types of sources important to exploring the questions, “What are the patterns in the design of *Nausicaä*?” and “How do these patterns in the design of the work function?” This review surveys relevant research in three main categories:

- comic books/graphic novels
- manga
- narrative

Within the manga category is brief coverage of gender and ideological issues in the genre. In the narrative category are several sources that discuss both coming-of-age narratives for girls, and Asian mythology and folktales that add to the cultural context of manga storylines.

The literature review ends with mention of a select number of graphic novels that can be seen to contextualize Miyazaki’s work, as well as with a select number of works focusing on methodology useful in analyzing this work. It also ends with the observation that there are few sources that discuss design patterns in graphic novels in general and in Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* in particular.

**Comic Books/Graphic Novels**

Providing both general background on comic art and analysis of current developments, Roanne Bell and Mark Sinclair state in *Pictures and Words: New Comic Art and Narrative Illustration* that modern comic art can perhaps claim William Hogarth’s eighteenth century etchings and engravings as precursors (10). Bell and Sinclair further note that graphic novels may have ancestors in the silent narratives of Frans Masereel’s “woodcut novels” from the early twentieth century. Both Natalie Avelia
in *Graphic Japan: From Woodblock and Zen to Manga and Kawaii* and Thomas Mann in “Introduction to Frans Masereel, *Passionate Journey: A Novel Told in 165 Woodcuts,*” *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium,* provide extensive discussion of this comic art-woodcut link.

In any case, Bell and Sinclair’s emphasis is on the iconic imagery of contemporary single-panel silent narratives written by artists like Anna Bhushan, a British water colorist, and Jim Woodring, a Seattle-based comic artist working in pen and ink as well as paint. Bell and Sinclair relate these silent narratives to the image and text single panels of such comic artists as Barry Blitt, designer of satiric cartoon covers for the *New Yorker* magazine, as well as to the multiple panel narratives of such artists as Jordan Crane, a comic artist and originator of the anthology *NON,* and Jeff Fisher, creator of “Mutt and Jeff.” The narrative value of doodled images by Jochen Gerner, creator of the comic strip “Nancy,” is also addressed, as well as the narrative of Singh & Dunning’s ongoing series of the psychedelic descent of their comic hero, Salem Brownstone, a charismatic magician. In their discussion, Bell and Sinclair are particularly interested in how the illustrator or comic artist “might choose to exploit the use of silence in a narrative” (10).

As an interesting complement to Bell and Sinclair, Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (mentioned briefly in Chapter 1 as a source of comic book grammar), explores the “dance of the visible and invisible” in comics. Whereas Bell and Sinclair focus on what they call “silent narrative,” McCloud focuses on the invisible in comics as it includes emotions and their visual representations. He discusses the visible aspect of comics in terms of iconography and abstraction. He also relates comic art to various sequential art forms in history, including cave paintings and
tapestries. Told in graphic novel format, McCloud’s work both discusses and illustrates the aspects of comics as a genre: their idea/purpose, form, idiom structure, craft, and surface components.

In a more traditional format, Roger Sabin in *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels* covers graphic art pioneers. He sees comics as a private reading space for children and teens negotiating adult power and authority. In this vein, he discusses gender issues in comics. He also categorizes the development of comics in terms of readers from the 1930s to 1960s and in terms of alternative comics of the 1980s and 1990s. He mentions Japanese comics and *Nausicaä* toward the end of his work, providing a comic book context for the graphic novels that are the focus of this study. Similarly focusing on younger readers, Sarah Stanley and Brian W. Sturm in “Sequential art books and beginning readers: can the pictures help them decode words?” cover the use of graphic novels to teach reading in elementary and middle schools. These authors see “picture” sequences as helpful to scaffolding, which helps younger readers in their development of print and visual literacies and in their ability to decode iconic images. Stanley and Sturm quote McCloud (2006) in terms of the type of sequencing that can be learned from comics, “Sequential artists must make five primary decisions in creating their work: choice of moment, frame, image, word, and flow.” They note, however, that the use of “flashbacks” was not effective for beginning readers. In “So Long as They Grow Out of It: Comics, the Discourse of Developmental Normalcy, and Disability,” Susan M. Squire addresses the role of comics in the education of a specialized young audience. Drawing on two emerging fields—graphic fiction and disability studies, Squire argues that graphic novels unsettle the categories of normalcy and disability, and challenges assumptions about children with disabilities as well as about the comic book genre itself.
Providing a historical perspective on the comic book genre is Paul Lopes in *Demanding Respect: The Evolution of the American Comic Book*. Lopes notes that during the heyday of comics in the 1940s and 1950s, there was “deep suspicion” of the cultural value of comics and their social impact (x). Later, in the 1960s, comics were engaged seriously as an art form (xii). Lopes observes that from the 1960s to the early 1980s, a subculture of comic-book readers emerged, creating a new direct market for shop owners. In addition, a new “liberalized” Comic Code was introduced in 1971 to “supposedly allow for more socially relevant content” (68). During the 1970s, the superhero and horror genres dominated the market, although the sword and sorcery genre also was popular (71). In the 1980s, a new generation of artists emerged, using a “pulp strategy” of rebellion against traditional mainstream comics (111). Many rebel artists “expressed their autonomy in making their graphic art stand out more clearly as personal styles reflecting their talents and visions as graphic artists” (111). Finally, in the 1990s, after the appearance of Spiegelman’s *Maus*, comics were even seen as “some of the most inventive expressions of literature” and as “serious art” (133). Lopes observes that during the 1990s, comic books saw an effort “to expand the field in terms of gender, sexuality, and race” which articulated the politics around these topics in American culture at the time (135). Lopes further notes that in 2006, DC and Marvel publicized “a concerted effort on their part to make the superhero universe a more multicultural universe” (145).

A basic historical look at the comic book genre that focuses on gender is Maurice Horn’s *Women in the Comics*. Horn’s book “provides a panoramic view of the changing roles of American women as captured in the pages of the country’s most enduring and fun-filled medium” (back cover). Appearing in three volumes, this series covers the appearance of women in the comics by decade, starting at the turn of the century,
provides short synopses and images of the various female characters staring in the most popular strips. Because this book is mainly descriptive rather than analytical, it is of minor academic value, but it still points to a topic that relates to my study of *Nausicaä*, the development of the female “hero.”

In *Faster than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel*, Stephen Weiner keeps track of politics as he gives an account of the development of the graphic novel genre. Talking about the first comics, Weiner notes that by the end of the 1940s, interest in superheroes waned, and on the rise in the 1950s were Harvey Kurtzman’s *Two-Fisted Tales* and similar strips that “unflinchingly depicted the horrors of war rather than glorifying it” (5). Weiner states that the 1950s also saw the comic book industry invest in other genres such as funny animal stories, romance stories which “reinforced conservative social values,” and horror and crime books that were transgressive and invited the questioning of authority (6). Weiner sees the 1960s as a time for troubled heroes like Spiderman and the Thing that complicated the comics-protagonist’s character. Interestingly, Weiner sees a turning point in the development of graphic novels as when, in the early 1970s, Will Eisner met Art Spiegelman (*Maus*) at a comics conference, and Eisner subsequently dedicated himself to making comics “a vehicle for personal and political statements rather than as a medium restricted to regurgitated genre stories” (19). This resolution is reflected in the work of later comic artists like Frank Miller and Alan Moore, with both comics artists creating extended graphic novels featuring complex protagonists and themes with political significance (32). Weisner notes that this development of graphic novels along with the explosion of Japanese manga has made comics into the often politicized, international phenomenon it is today. Such a history contextualizes the political and social messages of Miyazaki’s work.
Jan Baetens’ anthology, *The Graphic Novel*, provides both a thematic and technical understanding of the graphic novel genre. The anthology is divided into two parts: trauma and violence representation in the graphic novel, and contemporary graphic novels and practices. Part one has several articles about Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and the holocaust as a traumatic memory. This section also includes Ed S. Tan’s article, “The Telling Face in Comic Strip and Graphic Novel,” which diverges slightly from talking about the holocaust narrative to focus on the more technical side of the graphic novel genre: on the recognition of emotional expression in graphic novel characters and exploring the idea that facial expression is universal across cultures and that “comic strips exploit universal cues for recognizing character emotion” (31). Tan claims that comic strip characters “look like personifications of the basic emotions, comparable to emblematic personifications of the passions of the soul in seventeenth century literature and art” (37). Tan then applies his observations to the facial expressions in Spiegelman’s *Maus*, where there seems to be a lack of expression in Spiegelman’s mice. Tan concludes that this might be explained that in cases of extreme suffering, victims often do not show any emotion at all; in addition, he concludes that functions of facial display may extend beyond expressing emotions, “leaving more room for cultural differences and control by situational context” (45). In any case, he concludes that the complexity of certain comic strips and graphic novels may require the presentation of emotions that go beyond the basic. Tan’s focus on facial display is interesting in light of my findings where close-up shots in Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* alert the reader to the character’s thought processes.

Part two of Baetens’ anthology contains two articles of special interest. The first is Jeffrey Lewis’ “The Dual Nature of the Apocalypse in *Watchmen*,” a graphic novel that
features panels so packed with detail that “there are constant subtexts to every image” (139). Lewis points out that the graphic novel characteristically juxtaposes visual narrative and “a seemingly disconnected verbal narrative” to achieve a third meaning, as when the iconic image of a smiley face with a drop of blood covering its right eye is juxtaposed with the statement “this city is afraid of me; I have seen its true face” to yield the third meaning of the bloodied smiley face being the true face of the city (140). Lewis argues that such juxtaposition of presentation characterizes the dualist apocalyptic vision in this graphic novel series, where hope fights for a footing against despair. Lewis’ article suggests how the placement of particular visual and verbal components can contribute to the conceptual narrative of graphic novels. The second article of interest is Mario Saraceni’s “Relatedness: Aspects of Textual Connectivity in Comics.” Saraceni is similarly concerned with how graphic novels develop and maintain narrative storylines and how creators provide connectivity among their panels. Saraceni argues for a linguistic approach to the visual language of graphic novels, and sees repetition, collocation (word association) and closure (inference) as three linguistic principles active in establishing continuity in graphic novel texts (170). Both of these articles establish strategies used to establish conceptual and thematic connectedness in the visual/verbal content of graphic novels.

The Saraceni study indirectly relates to my work on visual narrative, which studies the narrativity of visual sequences and the content of graphic novel frames that establish conceptual connectedness for readers. In “Animé and Manga Graphics as Visual Narrative of Concept,” I discuss how Japanese manga as narrative characteristically moves from back to front and right to left, and thus structures plot lines and action sequences in a way that challenges the reading expectations of American
audiences. I also show how other patterns in the *Nausicaä* narrative, however, help structure the narrative for all audiences through the systematic use of different types of “framing,” with long shots contextualizing the subject; medium shots showing the relative positions of characters both physically and psychologically; close-up shots indicating the focus of the narrative and thus the main character or action driving the sequence; and extreme close-ups calling attention to the thought processes of the characters featured in such shots. I further show how the narratives in manga establish concepts through the use of alternative structural components, such as characters as avatars, visual foreshadowing, and allusions to mythological content drawn from a range of cultural sources.

A good number of sources focus on the cultural aspects of comic books and graphic novels. For example, *Comics & Culture*, edited by Anne Magnussen and Hans-Christian Christiansen, contains a range of articles discussing such topics as why comics are still in search of cultural legitimization to the possibilities the internet has for preserving the currency of modern American and British comics. This anthology also discusses the narrative sophistication of works by Frank Miller, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons that demonstrate maturity in exploring philosophical, cultural and political themes, and that include a revisionist treatment of the apocalyptic threats that dominated the comic storylines of the 1980s. For instance, “What if the Apocalypse Never Happens?” an article in this collection by Abraham Kawa, focuses on how these comics creators were inspired to “use, recycle and recapitulate cultural themes, motifs and images from both the rich history of comics and the entire cultural spectrum available to them,” including in their visual collage “samples of brand names, media identities, and cultural icons” to move to a contemporary version of the future that gets away from the “pessimistic eschatology” of previous apocalyptic themes in comic book art (210).
Also commenting on cultural themes, Elizabeth K. Rosen in *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination* devotes one of her chapters (“Sentient Vegetable Claims End is Near!”) to the apocalyptic framework as it appears in Alan Moore’s graphic novels, including *Swamp Thing* and *Watchman*. Rosen observes that it should come as no surprise that the mythology of the apocalypse that “hovers in the cultural background” has been “part of the comic and graphic novel medium almost from the beginning” (1). Rosen observes that in Moore, there is a natural overlap between eschatological themes and environmentalism (5) and there is faith that the creativity of humans is what makes human kind “most worthy of being saved” (38). This same concern for environmentalism informs apocalyptic elements in Miyazaki’s work and is strongly present in *Nausicaä*, where at one point poison spores fall on the landscape like snow and humans can’t walk in the “forest of death” unmasked.

With a focus on the relationship between cultural trends and the nature of comic book protagonists, the History Channel’s video “Comic Book Superheroes Unmasked” discusses how comics “continually reinvent themselves in order to avoid annihilation.” The video demonstrates how, in the process of retaining currency, comic books have “kept pace with their cultural climate, offering cutting-edge critiques” of their times, from the Depression to Vietnam, from the 1950s feminist movement to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The video includes interviews with Michael Chabon, Will Eisner, and other experts regarding the production and reception of comics while “highlighting their brilliance as social commentaries.” Although this source does not discuss the gendering of comic book protagonists, important to this thesis, it does establish their evolution from squeaky-clean good guys to more complex, problematic characters.
**Manga**

Two recently published retrospectives are a good place to start when researching manga. Paul Gravett’s *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* (2004) provides a brief chronological timeline before launching into a thematic timelines of manga as a genre. Gravett discusses both manga’s storytelling (narrative) roots as well as its attention to gender and to boys and girls’ separate manga fiction. Gravett also observes that while “developing maturity” is a theme for manga protagonists, it is also a characteristic of the genre itself. Gravett cites Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* as demonstrating such maturity with its ecological and spiritual themes and with its heroine who communicates with plants and animals in trying to understand how the ecosystem can recover from current devastation (115). Gravett also talks about manga as a medium of various subcultures as well as a globally influential Japanese export that has effectively insinuated itself into Western culture. The second retrospective, Brigitte Koyama-Richard’s *One Thousand Years of Manga* (2007), focuses on a chronological survey of the development of the genre from early Japanese caricatures to comic strips to modern manga. Koyama-Richard’s work also includes portraits of several famous manga artists as well as discussion of the move from manga to animé. Both retrospectives are lavishly illustrated.

Christopher Hart’s *Manga Mania: Fantasy World* provides a step-by-step look at how to draw primary elements in the manga genre, including the knight and other common characters, such as mutant worms. Hart also shows how to effect various techniques, such as turnarounds and pulses and bursts. Hart’s book is a good introductory guide to visual representation in graphic novels. Also introductory, Timothy R. Lehmann’s *Manga: Masters of the Art* uses interviews with well-known manga artists to provide access to the artists’ thoughts and ideas. The artists discuss
where they get their ideas, as well as the creative process and specific influences; they also provide tips and techniques. With his interviews, Lehmann provides insight into purposes and agenda of graphic artists. Lehman also provides commentary on their art with extensive annotations of the artists’ selected drawings. Lehmann includes a Japanese manga historical timeline, as well as a story genre chart that positions the artists according to surrealism, memorable characters, humor/satire, sensitivity, realism, fantasy, horror/ violence, and eroticism. Lehmann also adapts Scott McCloud’s chart for visualizing comics styles to the styles of artists interviewed in the book. (McCloud’s Understanding Comics, mentioned later in this chapter under methodology, is a classic text dealing with traditional components of the American comic book genre.)

Focused on the reading of manga as an aspect of literacy in Japan, Ingulsrud and Allen’s Reading Japan Cool notes that manga plays a large role in the literacy practices of Japanese college students. Reading Japan Cool is especially important to my study in that it focuses on various patterns in manga as a discourse. For example, it notes how the shapes of speech balloons can indicate the “nature and intensity of the message,” with balloons with sharp edges indicating, for example, shock or surprise (6). The book also mentions other patterns, such as those that involve denotations and connotations associated with “drops of liquid” (water, sweat, tears, saliva, and nasal discharge); drops of nasal discharge, for example, almost always indicate the character’s loss of control (7). Ingulsrud and Allen point out that age and gender are major categories for manga, but that these categories are “becoming increasingly blurred” (7). Related to their focus on literacy, they note that the Japanese language (script) itself has “shaped manga” as part of the graphics, and thus manga is not only part of Japanese popular culture but also part of Japanese writing practices (29).
Two additional sources important to understanding cultural aspects of manga are Sharon Kinsella’s *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* and Mark W. MacWilliams’s anthology, *Japanese Visual Culture*. Kinsella’s study focuses on Japanese social life and customs as well as the issue of power in manga written specifically for adults. In so doing, Kinsella discusses 20th century life and customs in present day Japan and in this way helps situate manga as a genre. Kinsella includes a bibliography for further research. MacWilliams provides an introduction that helps situate manga as part of Japanese visual culture, which also involves animé, television, and other mass media (*masu komi*). MacWilliams emphasizes that both manga and animé are hybrid genres that blend the visual and verbal into a unified whole, and both are examples of “mass art” (6). Both genres partake in mass-media technologies and Western new media culture. This anthology includes articles on manga in Japanese history, on patterns in the manga of legendary manga artist Osamu Tezuka, and on manga discourse. It also includes articles on gender issues in manga.

**Gender and Ideology**

There are a number of sources that indicate that both gender and ideology play a role in graphic novels. Important to the discussion of gender are two articles on *shojo manga* (girls’ comics) in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Animé*: Mizuki Takahashi’s “Opening the Closed World of Shojo Manga” and Deborah Shamoon’s “Situating the Shojo in Shojo Manga.”

Takahashi’s article examines how *shojo manga* developed from prewar magazines to its postwar generic form. Takahashi points out that the female heroes of prewar magazines personified desirable feminine virtues and expressed their feelings in a “flowery, emotional prose style” (115). The postwar manga genre built on the emotive
power of the images in this style. Takahashi points out that while a shojo protagonist may have been mature physically, she was in prewar manga “socially considered sexually immature” (115). The shojo gender role “offered girls few resources to negotiate the adolescent process of identity formation” (116). These girls’ large shining eyes “became the key visual marker for identifying a comic as *shojo manga* (116). Takahashi points out that the focus of this manga tends to be on the psychological development of the characters, and this focus affects the panels and page layout, which are designed to “illustrate complicated inner feelings” (124-25). Takahashi emphasizes that the distinctive emotional power of *shojo manga* come from the fact that readers must in their minds integrate the words and images on the individual, fractured panels to understand the story (134). To aid such integration, Takahashi notes that *shojo manga* uses many “visual idioms, including the full body image, large sparkling eyes, and flower backgrounds” as a type of code shared by the community of girl readers (135). Takahashi argues that this code “developed out of the ideology behind state education policies of the late nineteenth century” but have come to take on the psychological problems of women readers in modern Japanese society, dealing with topics demonstrating women’s changing values and including love, sex, family and employment (136).

Similarly, Shamoon’s article claims that recent *shojo manga* “recycles the sameness and flatness of the genre into a story that speaks to adult readers and redefines shojo identity to accommodate contemporary social realities” (137). Shamoon notes that instead of evading heterosexual romance, as does prewar manga, current *shojo manga* uses “fragmented narration” to express “the passions of teenage girlhood” (145). Moreover, Shamoon calls attention to the alternative *shojo manga* of Kiriko Nananan,
who uses “closed panels, rather than splintered, opened, or layered ones,” who deliberately hides the girls’ faces, and who “reorients the body of the *sohjo manga* character so that all body parts can be equally expressive” (151). As a corollary to this development, Kiriko makes extensive use of interior monologue, shown in balloons. Shamoon notes that because these changes in showing interiority are joined with “harsh realities” in events portrayed in Kiriko’s work, Kiriko is able to be relevant to older readers who have outgrown the *shojo manga* stories of their adolescence (153).

A similar subversion of conventional *shojo manga* expectations represented in Kiriko’s work is the topic of Fusami Ogi’s article, “Gender Insubordination in Japanese Comics (Manga) for Girls.” Located in John Lent’s anthology, *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books,* Ogi’s article explores whether the gender representations in *shojo manga* “are subversive or whether they preserve the gender status quo” (171). Ogi sees the 1970s as a turning point where Japanese women “developed a clear self-identity though changes in labor practices, introduction of new ideas from the western feminist movement, and the development of mass media” (173).

Ogi reports that *shojo manga,* increasingly written by women, has altered the typical representations of women to “destabilize the traditional codes of heterosexuality” and has introduced taboo subjects, such as the libidinal agency of males (180). Ogi also observes that this new *shojo manga* also uses Western settings to allow women to enjoy the “exotic” (183). Ogi remarks that, today, *shojo manga* can be divided into two categories, “ladies comics” and “yaoi manga,” which are clearly subversive in their purpose and which raise questions about gender itself (185).

In “Shojo and Adult Women: A Linguistic Analysis of Gender Identity in Manga,” Junko Ueno assumes that language symbolizes social identity and discusses the portrayal
of gender in popular print media, especially in Japanese manga. In this study, Ueno reports that young Japanese women in the culture “have increasingly discontinued the use of feminine speech” and have come to use masculine speech; they identify their use as demonstrating playfulness and youthfulness (18). Ueno quotes Fujimoto’s opinion that heroines in manga have shown a parallel development, from “self-sacrificing stock characters to free, carefree, and slightly self-centered individuals” (19). In this study, Ueno confirms that the language use of young girls in shojo manga diverges from traditional use, which may emphasize the characters’ youthfulness but also shows that their projected characters do not conform to social norms. Ueno proposes that it might be fruitful to examine how the social and cultural values associated with gender have changed the linguistic practices reflected in popular print media such as manga.

Also concerned with gender roles, Timothy Perper and Martha Cornog in “Eroticism for the Masses: Japanese manga comics and their assimilation into the U.S” summarize the erotic themes and visions of manga with sexual content. They find that manga functions as an art form “by mobilizing the reader’s involvement with the characters, especially female characters, in a complex narrative framework in which sexuality is a positive virtue for men and, especially, for women” (3). Perper and Cornog also point out that Westerners raised in the Christian tradition often misread meanings of sex in manga, which draws on “very old cultural and aesthetic principles” that see life and sex as unified (5-6). As Perper and Cornog state, “different Japanese words exist for the modalities of visual beauty, especially of women—kawaii, bishojo, kdrei, utsukushii, and tsuya/ yoen,” and these words “have a developmental axis from childhood to sexual maturity” (58). Perper and Cornog also note that in manga, the reader never is allowed to forget “that sexuality involves physical, emotional, and social risks” but these
risks are different in that readers are invited “to imagine worlds in which women's sexuality is no longer circumscribed by marital duty, by procreation, or by sexual service to dominant men, but is free, independent, and autonomous” (87).

Rather than focusing on gender, other research on graphic novels looks at ideological issues as they involve politics. Research on Spiegelman’s *Maus* makes up one category of this type of research. In “Comics as Serious Literature: Cartoonist Spiegelman has seen Change since Pioneering *Maus.*” Linda T. Ryan discusses Spiegelman’s *Maus* with Spiegelman himself. In her conversation, Spiegelman restates his opinion that comics can function as “high art” rather than “low art” and that comics can, indeed have “serious intent” (268). Spiegelman also points out that the production of graphic novels is itself serious business that takes years, and the reception of graphic novels requires attentive readers to make sense of the complexities (299). There is a lot of literature available discussing the ideological component in Spiegelman’s *Maus*, including Naomi Mandel’s *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* and Hillary Chute’s “’The Shadow of Past Time’: History and Graphic Representation in *Maus.*” However, there are also less-recognized ideological components to other graphic novels as well. For example, Mina Cheon in “Japanimanga and techno-orientalism: Racism against Koreans in Japanese Manga” covers ways author sees Japanese manga as racist, demonizing and highlighting rivalries between certain cultures. Cheon sees Japan’s violent occupation of Korea as an undercurrent in some manga, and sees the hyper-machoism as a dangerous ideological value in Asian culture.

There are also a number of sources that focus on American politics in graphic novels. Such politics go well beyond the intentionally and overtly patriotic Captain America, introduced during World War II and continuing in various incarnations to this
day. Two of the most recent of these sources include Julian Sanchez’ “The Revolt of the Comic Books: America’s Superheroes Take on Preemptive War, Torture, Warrantless Spying, and George W. Himself” (2007) and Bradford Wright’s “From Social Consciousness to Cosmic Awareness: Superhero Comic Books and the Culture of Self-Interrogation” (2008). Sanchez writes that during the George Bush presidency, a superhero killed the U.S. President in the comics as a protest against the real-life “use of torture by elected officials” and other actions associated with the “War on Terror” (43). In fact, Sanchez points out that the problem of modern terrorism—“how to deal with small groups of individuals who can wreak the kind of destruction that once required an army—is familiar territory for comics” (45). However, Sanchez notes that although recent comics have currently been serving as voices of dissent, comics do not always succeed as modern political allegory, especially when they “simply transplant” real controversies into their fictional worlds (47). Wright also sees comics as “vital purveyors” of popular culture (155). He argues that comics often reflect national politics, as with the polarization of national politics during Nixon’s first term where comic heroes such as Spiderman, Captain America, and Daredevil confronted authoritarian right-wing villains (160). In the 1970s-1980s, comics and their heroes similarly reflected the “dawn of a new age of irony in American culture” that was self-referential and self-mocking (171).

To gain perspective on the ideologies behind certain manga and graphic novels, research into differences between Eastern and Western thought can be helpful. Richard Nisbett’s The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why provides a good introductory basis for understanding these systems of thought. Nisbett outlines the nature of human thought as understood by Westerners from Hume to Locke and Mill to modern cognitive scientists. Nisbett then discusses differences with
Asian thought in general and with the Chinese emphasis on harmony versus conformity, and its orientation related to Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Nisbett states that Westerners depend on categories while Easterners depend on relationships. Nisbett then discusses possible convergences in these characteristic ways of thinking. What is interesting is that manga as a global phenomenon might embody certain convergences.

**Narrative**

Research into narrative provides a body of research that supports an exploration of storylines in graphic novels and manga. Dealing specifically with graphic texts, Will Eisner in *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative* talks about storytelling in print as opposed to storytelling in images. Eisner discusses images as tools and the totally graphic story. Also focusing on graphic novels, the anthology *The Education of a Comics Artist: Visual Narrative in Cartoons, Graphic Novels, and Beyond*, edited by Michael Dooley and Steven Heller, provides recommendations for how to draw characters, expressions, ideas and emotions in comics and graphic novel narratives. These authors also show a history of how to represent certain basic emotions, such as anger, in purely visual form.

Christopher Hart in *Manga Mania: Fantasy World* similarly provides a step-by-step look at how to draw primary elements of the manga genre, as well as how to effect various techniques, such as turnarounds and pulses and bursts. As an introductory guide to visual representation in graphic novels, Hart’s book correlates physical traits with character traits (e.g., an evil duke should not have barrel chest which would imply heroism but should have a slightly curved back which implies a less-than-forthright character). Hart’s book does for manga what McCloud’s books do for American comics. Such sources that discuss narrative strategies in graphic novels are complemented by
research on narrative in general.

Of the large body of research on narrative in general, only a few relevant sources are noted here. In *Narrativity: How Visual Arts, Cinema and Literature are Telling the World Today*, Rene Audent, Calude Romano, Laurence Dreyfus, Carle Therrien, and Hugues Marchal discuss the move away from story toward “eventness” in various media. They see action, teleology, temporality, voice and subject as five important components of narrative. They then focus their attention on how temporality is distinct in various media. The attention to various media is interesting in regard to manga and graphic novels, which have been called a hybrid genre.

In “Graphic Devices: Narration and Navigation” Johanna Drucker discusses aspects of layout and composition that provide means of hierarchy and organization to narratives. She then discusses narrative as it relates to online navigational devices, and analyzes several sample stories with “illustrated text.” She also discusses headers, page numbers, spacing, and margins, font size in terms of the cultural history of reading practices, and relates these devices to comic book spacing and chunking. Covering visual narratives ranging from the Bayeux Tapestry to interactive game environments, Drucker provides an interesting take on how viewers understand the narrative of a text. Also covering a range of media, the anthology *Narrative across Media: The Languages of Storytelling*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, represents a theoretical approach to narrative as it talks about frames and boundaries. This anthology has an article on Spiegelman’s *Maus*, as well as an article on literary film adaptation The move from text to film is important in my thesis as it relates to manga and animé.

A highly theoretical work, Mieke Bal’s *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* articulates the traditional elements of narrative, like fibula, and criteria, like
change, choice, and confrontation. Bal discusses the narrative cycle and other principles of structure, including: the misstep, the creation of an obligation, the sacrifice, the endured attach, and the endured punishment. Bal also discusses sequential ordering, and relationships between primary and embedded texts. In addition, he presents a systematic set of generalized statements or a theory about narrative texts. He believes narrative involves an agent relating a story, a fabula or series of logically and time-based related events, actors (which are anything or person performing an action), and arrangement (7). Bal’s work provides a theoretical understanding of the elements of narrative.

Mary Flanagan in “Navigating the narrative in space: gender and spatiality in Virtual Worlds” discusses the alternate space that technology allows narrative as well as unique methods of telling stories, forming identities, and remembering. Flanagan also discusses online navigation and how it affects narratives, and points out dangers of interaction online from a feminist perspective. Flanagan claims that technology has brought us new forms of narrative and scripting as well as spatialized thinking. Even though this focuses on online spaces and navigation, this brief article provides a perspective that might be important when analyzing the move from manga to animé. The focus on gender and enactment relates to the female heroes of Miyazaki.

In “Reading Visual Art, Making—and Forgetting—Fabulas,” Emma Kafalenos briefly discusses visual memory and visual scenes as they construct events from verbal descriptions. She defines fabula as a chronologically ordered sequence and asserts viewers can construct a number of interpretations from a scene with a number of fabula. She provides a brief theoretical support for having different interpretations of the same visual text.

Research on a special type of narrative, the coming-of-age novel, has relevance to
my thesis in that the narrative underlying Nausicaä has similarities to this type of narrative. Two sources that I have located that might be helpful here include Idette Noome’s “Shaping the Self: A Bildungsroman for Girls?” in Literator: Journal of Literary Criticism, and Christy Rishoi’s From Girl to Woman: American Women’s Coming-of-Age Narratives. Coming-of-age novels, also called bildungsroman, show a sensitive protagonist seeking experience and knowledge. In the coming-of-age narrative, the protagonist often goes on a journey of some sort, experiences various conflicts with society and its goals, and ends by achieving a hard-won maturity and self-actualization.

Because Miyazaki’s Nausicaä relates, in part, to a Japanese tale about the Princess who loved insects (Mushi mezuru himegimi), research into folk tales and mythology is also relevant to Miyazaki’s work. The following sources dealing with Japanese mythology, and folk and fairy tales provide an introduction to Japanese fairy and folk tales: Japanese Fairy Tales, compiled by Yei Theodora Ozaki, and The Yanagita Kunio Guide to the Japanese Folk Tale, translated by Fanny Hagin Mayer. The Ozaki collection has 22 tales, but none are of the tale that underlies Miyazaki’s Nausicaä. The Kunio guide talks about folk tale types, such as those dealing with propitious births, the life of unusual children, unpromising marriages that become happy, overcoming evils, and cleverness at work. The Kunio guide then focuses on stories about destiny and those featuring humor.

In addition, Hayao Kawai’s The Japanese Psyche: Major Motifs in the Fairy Tales of Japan provides a critical commentary on a number of Japanese tales. Kawa notes that only a small number of Japanese fairy tales end with a “happily ever after marriage” (84). Rather, tales do present Otohime or the Eternal Girl (98). There are also many instances of tales with non-human wives, such as snakes, fish, birds, foxes, and cats (105). Where
happy marriages exist in Japanese tales, they feature women of endurance, like “The Handless Maiden” (125). Also interesting in this regard is Bill Ellis’s article, “Folklore and Gender Inversion in Cardcaptor Sakura,” which discusses retellings of the Western fairy tale, “Sleeping Beauty.” The way Sakura pokes fun at some of the male-dominant elements in the Western tale seems to echo some of the gender inversion found in Nausicaä, where both the heroine, Nausicaä, and her antagonist, Kushana, seem to transgress gender boundaries (see Ellis 261).

Specific Graphic Novel Texts

There are a number of graphic novels that are important to my thesis. Of course, the focus of my study is Hayao Miyazaki’s Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, a seven-volume series that features a cross-pollination between Eastern and Western cultures and introduces young women as protagonists.

Several sources focusing on Miyazaki are important to note here. Tom and Sara Pendergast in Volume 2 of U X L Graphic Novelists provide basic information about Miyazaki and his work. They note that, as a small child, Miyazaki with his parents moved to a safer district in Japan during World War II and did not return their home in Tokyo until 1950. His family owned Miyazaki Airplane, where the famous “zero fighters” were made. The Pendergasts point out that Miyazaki remained intrigued with flying and was especially influenced by the bravery of his mother, who had spinal tuberculosis (344). In terms of Miyazaki’s characters and themes, the Pendergasts note that Miyazaki’s manga and films often depict people “struggling for justice and show a deep concern for the environment” (347) and that Miyazaki’s characters “defy stereotypes of good and evil” and are not “fixed symbols” (347). Finally, they note that many consider Nausicaä to be Miyazaki’s masterpiece.
In “Un Disney,” John Canemaker discusses Miyazaki’s achievement in terms of the film *Princess Mononoke*, which he calls “mystical,” “mature” and “operatic in scope” (98). Canemaker points out that Miyazaki avoids all the formulaic methods common to Disney films in telling his stories: no one sings, the background music is subdued and avoids manipulation, and the audience is adults. Furthermore, Canemaker remarks that the characterizations are multidimensional and complex; in short, there are “no saintly heroes or heroines or dastardly villains” (98). Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* is a similarly complex heroine.

Although focused on Miyazaki’s animé, Dani Cavallaro’s *The Animé Art of Hayao Miyazaki* points to social, psychological, political and economic themes that occupy Miyazaki’s work as a whole (7). Cavallaro’s book identifies several themes as most prominent in Miyazaki: “the fate of the ecosystem, the ever-present phantom of war, the evils of totalitarianism and the vicissitudes of self-development” (7). Cavallaro also points out that manga “constitute a much more influential cultural force in Japan than comics are in any Western society” and the visual style of manga is based on specific, repeated codes and conventions (15). More specifically, Cavallaro recounts the history of *Nausicaä* as a manga-turned-animé work based on the real-live event of the pollution with mercury of Minamata Bay and the folktale *The Princess Who Loved Insects*, as well as on fiction and fantasy works by Homer and J.R.R. Tolkein and on the post-apocalyptic text by Frank Herbert (*Dune*) (48). Cavallaro notes that in the manga version of *Nausicaä*, life characteristically “overflows and squanders itself” and only occasionally is “fruitful” (57).

Although my focus is on the graphic novels of Miyazaki, other graphic novels provide specific insight into this genre. Such graphic novels include *Batman: The Dark*
**Knight Returns** and **Kingdom Come**. These graphic novels are important in graphic novel history because of their production, illustrative techniques, themes, and storylines. The Batman novels are important because their superhero is an American cultural icon that has undergone significant changes in his long history. Frank Miller’s *The Dark Knight Returns* is a 1980s graphic novel that features a middle-aged Batman coming out of retirement to help rid Gotham City of its crime. During his return Batman faces opposition from both the city and the United States governments. In the process of making Gotham City the safest city in the United States, Batman must overcome new challengers (The Mutants) as well as old foes (Two-Face, and The Joker). The Batman storyline continues in the 2001 sequel, *Batman: The Dark Knight Strikes Again*, suggesting the popularity of this superhero, who originated in the 1940s, starred in comic books in the 1950s, was the subject of a television series in the 1960s, and was the focus of films in 1986 and, finally in 1989, when the character’s portrayal returned this cultural icon to his dark roots.

The Mark Waid’s *Kingdom Come* is important stylistically, in that it is produced with painted cells, and not drawn in pen and ink. This graphic novel is as influential with the current generation of readers and has received many awards, including five Eisner and Harvey Awards, and best limited series and best artist. The story, written by Mark Waid and painted by Alex Ross, has an apocalyptic narrative with complementary imagery. The series is set twenty years in the future. In the story we discover there is a growing conflict between the traditional superheroes (the Justice League) and the growing population of new superhuman vigilantes. In between these two powerful factions is Batman who forms a team who is trying to prevent the escalating world-ending superhuman war between the two factions.
Also important thematically are the graphic novels of Alan Moore, *Swamp Thing*, and *Watchman*, which infuse apocalyptic themes/environmentalism into their visual narratives. Two additional graphic novels are important because of the gender of their intended audiences. Targeting young male readers, Yoshito Usui’s *Crayon Shinchan* is current graphic novel that features a simplistic illustrative style and has an anti-hero as a protagonist: an obscene little boy. Targeting young female readers are the exceedingly popular graphic novels of Natsuki Takaya, *Fruits Basket*, which combines comedy, drama, romance, and magic. The *Fruits Basket* series topped the manga sales in Japan in 2001, and quickly spread to the United States in 2002.

The *Fruits Basket* series makes an interesting comparison to Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä*. They both feature a young female protagonist. The heroine of *Fruits Basket* is a high school student, Tohru Honda. After her mother dies in a car accident, Tohru begins living in a tent and supporting herself, until she finds a home with her classmate Yuki Sohma and his cousins Shigure and Kyo. The Sohmas, however, live with a curse. Thirteen members of the family are possessed by spirits of the Chinese zodiac and turn into their zodiac animal when hugged by the opposite gender. When Tohru finds out, she promises not to tell and is allowed to keep living with them. The Sohma’s curse, however, is deeper and darker than Tohru realizes, but her presence soon becomes a positive influence on those possessed by the zodiac. She sets out to break the curse, and ends up changing the Sohma clan forever. Like Nausicaä, Tohru is engaged in saving members of her community. The scale of the problem is much smaller in *Fruits Basket*, though, than it is in *Nausicaä*. The characters in *Fruits Basket* seem more juvenile, and the settings have a familiar domesticity. The characters appear and dress like typical high school students. Perhaps this familiarity functions in a way to make the magical curse more threatening.
Worthy of special note here for ideological reasons is Art Spiegelman’s *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*. *Maus*, a non-fiction graphic novel ten years in the making, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for its representation of Nazi Germany. *Maus* suggests that although graphic novels as a genre are often associated with comic books that might characteristically be expected to provide simple entertainment for their readers, graphic novels can also provide complex representations of the world and can be associated with sophisticated ideological agenda. This fact is important to keep in mind when reading Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä*, which frequently features ideological positions on such generalizable themes as good versus evil, the importance of family and community, habits of individual ethical (pacifist) behavior, and the importance of environmentalism. Miyazaki, in fact, frequently uses characters as avatars for ideological positions— with young women as action heroes and villains as morally ambiguous.

A complete sense of the range of graphic novels available can be found in D. Aviva Rothschild’s *Graphic Novels: A Bibliographic Guide to Book-Length Comics*. Rothschild’s work provides titles of graphic novels in a range of categories, including action/adventure, crime and mystery, fantasy, fiction and non-fiction, funny animals, horror/occult, mythology and folklore, science fiction, westerns, and superheroes. Her bibliography also includes a glossary of comic book terminology and slang. Rothschild’s goal is “to alert mainstream readers to the variety and quality of material in graphic novels” (xviii). Another bibliographical source, Martha Cornog and Steve Raiteri in *Graphic Novels: Bibliography* provide information about graphic novel availability. They offer a list of graphic novels for classroom use and a list of the best graphic novels of 2008.
Methodology Sources

There are several sources that offer analytical approaches to different types of texts or artifacts that are helpful to a textual analysis of Miyazaki’s graphic novels. More specifically, there are several sources about pattern language that are helpful in that this thesis recognizes in the graphic narratives a “pattern language,” distilled from the actions of characters in the narrative. Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein discuss such pattern language in terms of issues in architectural building and planning efforts (A Pattern Language (1977). In A Pattern Language, Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein show how pattern language itself can deal with recurring problems in environments. They look for solutions for problem cores and assert the “intertextuality” or interrelatedness of such problems. Moreover, they look for common properties of problems and consider the role of language in problem solving. Their approach is important to a discussion of manga in that manga narratives present problems common to the characters but each character’s reactions differ and certain patterns help define character and establish ideology in the narrative.

“Anatomy of a Pattern Language” further discusses pattern language in terms of a hierarchy of parts. Like Alexander’s A Pattern Language, this article talks about pattern language and how it helps in understanding structured planning and problem elements. Significantly for my study, this article also talks about pattern language in terms of visualization, partsgetContexts, keywords, predecessor and successor patterns, and problem solving. This article provides a focused application of Alexander’s anatomy of patterns; this thesis, in turn, analyzes patterns in the design of the visual narratives of Miyazaki’s work. Of minor importance to the methodological approaches in this study is Michael Ball and Gregory Smith’s Analyzing Visual Data. This work focuses on methodology
for analyzing visual data, like charts, graphs, and drawings, but also does have potential for analyzing iconic images in manga.

Another aid in my analysis of the graphic novel as text is *Comics & Culture*, previously mentioned in this chapter for its focus on the cultural aspects of comics and also mentioned in the first chapter for its attention to the cultural significance of apocalyptic landscapes. This collection calls attention to a number of different analytical approaches for analyzing comics, including Marxist and Cultural Studies perspectives, structuralist and psychological perspectives, and postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives. For example, Chris Murray’s article in this anthology, “*Popaganda: Superhero Comics and Propaganda in World War Two*” provides a good example of a poststructuralist analysis of the ideological function of American superhero comics and thus provides insight into how graphic texts can be analyzed for their ideological elements. An additional source providing helpful background for my analysis is Richard Howells’ *Visual Culture*. In the first part of this book, Howells discusses how iconology, form, art history, ideology, semiotics, and hermeneutics can function as methods for analyzing and discovering meaning in visual texts. In addition, Howells alerts the reader to the fact that often what is not seen in a visual text can be as important as what is seen (29). Howells also points out that the visual world is “not only a modern world. In returning to visual literacy, we are in many ways rediscovering the skills which our cultural predecessors knew better” (5).

There are three additional sources that provide a type of “grammar” of comics and graphic novels that are important to the analysis in this thesis. Will Eisner’s *Sequential Art* analyzes comics as “sequential language based on a codification of gestures and facial expressions (see Murray 13), and Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics* focuses not
only on elements of graphic texts but also on the reader’s participation making meaning of these texts. Also by McCloud, the third book, *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels*, provides advice on such aspects as choosing the right moments for panels, and selecting what to include and exclude in those panels. McCloud in *Making Comics* also covers choosing words and images that are to appear together in a panel. In addition, McCloud discusses “varied and compelling characters” as well as creating the body language and facial expressions that effectively represent these characters. Finally, McCloud talks about guiding readers’ eyes through framing the action in particular ways and creating “rich and believable worlds” for readers to explore. McCloud’s advice not only addresses “storytelling secrets,” but also provides a methodology for discovering the methods of graphic novel narratives. Beyond methodology, sources about comics and graphic novels in general provide a good context for exploring Miyazaki’s graphic work.

**Summary**

This literature review shows that there has been a good amount of basic research published about comics, manga, and graphic novels as generic forms. The work on sequential art as a genre features discussions by McCloud, who develops a comic-book grammar and talks about the few sequential art conventions that are culture-specific before spending a great deal of time talking about the cross-cultural generic features of sequential art. This literature review also shows that some of the work published about sequential art focuses on the roles that gender and ideology play. This review also suggests that there is theoretical interest in comics, manga, and graphic novels, all of which are now considered legitimate cultural artifacts. There is also a large body of research on narrative, an important aspect in the design of graphic novels and graphic art.
There are far fewer works, however, that examine design strategies in comics, manga, and graphic novels. These include research on the patterns in the shapes of word balloons in sequential art and into patterns in the use of drops of liquid in manga. Otherwise, the subject of this thesis, patterns in design in Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä*, is not directly addressed in the research.
Works Cited: Chapter Two


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Chapter Three: Analysis of Design Patterns

This chapter entails a close textual analysis of Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* using pattern analysis. This chapter recognizes that, in graphic novel and manga narratives, there exists a “pattern language,” distilled from the actions of characters in the narrative and expressed in various image choices as well as image-and-text choices. Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein discuss such pattern language in terms of issues in architectural building and planning efforts. “Each pattern,” they assert, “describes a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then describes the core of the solution to that problem, in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over” (x). An analysis of the design patterns in *Nausicaä* suggests that problems in graphic representation recur in the graphic novel and that the overall effect of this pattern language is to solve certain issues in design and to generate an ideological commentary on the problems and solutions that characters and communities face in the narrative.

A focus on patterns when analyzing sequential art is not unique to this thesis. Ingulsrud and Allen, for example, note patterns in the shapes of speech balloons, noting that the shapes of the balloons “provide pragmatic information, indicating the nature and intensity of the message” (6). More specifically, Ingulsrud and Allen discuss various patterns in the symbols and techniques called “emeneta” that enhance the speech balloons (6–7). Ingulsrud and Allen claim that, “From a structural perspective, there are more similarities between manga [Japanese comics] and comics in North America and Europe than there are differences” (23). Some basic structural similarities that they, for example, point out include the fact that both manga and American comics have the panels containing graphics and print, both use caricature, and both are “cultural products where attitudes, taste, and ideology intersect” (Ingulsrud and Allen 25). However, Ingulsrud and
Allen also points out distinctive features of manga as a genre, including the fact that cells are drawn with gutters or borders that stand for actions and events that the reader must infer (5).

In *Understanding Comics*, McCloud notes that there are a few patterns in comic art specific to certain cultures. Japanese graphic artists, for example, have a history of using “the masking effect,” which entails drawing iconic characters against a very realistic background; this effect allows readers to take mask themselves in a character (43). Japanese art also tends to use horizontal lines extensively to indicate motion (113).

Finally, because its evolution took place in relative isolation, comic art in Japan includes a number of unique approaches, including expressionism, collage, and subjective motion (210). In addition, McCloud notes characteristics particular to other cultural graphic traditions: Egyptians (zig-zag narrative sequences), Europeans (clear-line style), and Americans (avoidance of photographic trickery) (14, 43, 113).

Nevertheless, McCloud is primarily interested in the generic (cross-cultural) visual and verbal patterns that inform graphic/comic art. In this book, McCloud presents his “universe of comics,” a frequently cited triangle with “the picture frame,” “reality,” and “language” at the triangle points, and with a fourth point that extends the original triangle and represents “meaning” in the reader’s mind (51-53). Into this triangle McCloud draws the portraits of a range of comic heroes, national and international. Despite differences, these heroes occupy the same universe. In short, McCloud clearly sees comics/graphic art as having universally recognizable patterns.

**Method of Analysis**

In defining the substantive characteristics of sequential art as a genre, McCloud first does “a little aesthetic surgery” and separates “form from content” (5). Ultimately,
however, content does play a role in the definition of any genre. Narrative genres, for example, are defined by the nature of their content. Also, the use of design principles and strategies is tied to content issues. To say, for example, that comics can be defined as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in a deliberate sequence” (McCloud, 9) assumes, I think, that something beyond the design of the images themselves tells the writer how to sequence them. So in my analysis, I discuss content in terms of the meaning made by patterns in Miyazaki’s design choices.

In this chapter, I focus on three main types of patterns as they appear in *Nausicaä*:

- patterns that relate to comic art as a genre
- patterns that recall various design principles, and
- patterns that reflect design strategies

The patterns that relate to comic art as a genre include the design of page layout, panel sequences, and word bubbles. In terms of patterns that recall various design principles, I consider evidence of repetition, similarity, contrast, anomaly, direction, radiation, and focal point as they help Miyazaki solve certain problems in the narrative. Finally, I discuss patterns related to design strategies. These strategies involve elements of character design, the visual representation of abstract ideas, and the use of iconography to convey concepts.

My talking points for patterns involving comic art as a genre were drawn primarily from patterns noted in McCloud and Eisner, although Inglesrud and Allen also were helpful in suggesting certain patterns that carried over from manga to graphic novels. My knowledge of graphic principles comes from my academic training, and, to a minor extent, from Richard Neutra’s concept of physiological design studied as part of my work for a class about sensory design. (Looking at sensory design in *Nausicaä* is the subject of
a different study that will be presented at SECAC, Fall 2010.) My attention to design strategies was informed by many of the readings included in my literature review. Particularly helpful here was Baetens’ *The Graphic Novel* and Gravett’s *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics*. Also important in identifying design strategies to look for in graphic novels were two collections. The first was the *Comics & Culture* anthology mentioned earlier. This anthology includes Kawa’s “What if the Apocalypse Never Happens?” The second collection was *Japanese Visual Culture* edited by MacWilliams.

My methodology for locating and analyzing possible design elements and strategies is related to my original methodology for analyzing *Nausicaä* according to Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein’s *A Pattern Language*. That is, I had created the chart in Figure 3.1 for taking notes, which had the listing of “graphic strategy” as an option in one column. The chart columns dealing with problems and solutions in the narrative yielded me a lot of information that was plot-oriented. This information was valuable in contextualizing the graphic strategies. When I decided that I should be focusing only on graphic strategies, I focused on the data from the “graphic strategy” column for analysis. I coordinated each data entry from that column with the categories of comic art, design principles, and design strategies and then selected what I felt were good explanatory examples from *Nausicaä* for my discussion. The examples obviously represent only a very small fraction of the data gathered from the novel.

I selected volumes 1, 3, and 7 from *Nausicaä*’s seven-volume series to analyze because I thought that picking books from the beginning, middle, and end was a logical way to start. I admit that I also had a content issue in mind when I selected these volumes. This content issue related to my research on narrative. I thought that if *Nausicaä* were viewed as a quest narrative or as a coming-of-age novel, then the start, the midpoint, and
the end point of her journey or development should be represented.

In presenting my findings in this chapter, I am going to put all the figures for Chapter Three in Appendix A. This arrangement is far from ideal. In fact, it was an agonizing decision to separate image from text in my analysis. Ideally, this thesis should present its analysis much like graphic novelists present information, with the type and image occupying the same space. However, the size of the computer files that contained over thirty large graphic images eventually made the in-text inclusion of figures impossible in thesis format. The image files needed to be separated out from the text files to make printing possible. Thus, readers will have to flip back-and-forth between the analysis in this chapter and the figures in Appendix A.

Patterns Related to Comic Art as a Genre

In the sections below, I discuss distinctive patterns in the design of Miyazaki’s work in terms of page layout, panel sequence and word bubbles.

Page Layout

Although there are many aspects to page layout in Miyazaki’s Nausicaä, his use of gutters is an interesting design feature, not only because it reflects Nausicaä’s manga roots, but also because of how this feature represents a way that time can be managed in a genre that is spatially oriented. Ingulsrud and Allen point out that one of the distinctive features of manga as a genre is the fact that cells are drawn with gutters or borders that stand for actions and events that the reader must infer (5). The example in Figure 3.2 shows how gutters imply the passage of time, from the point when the warrior princess Nausicaä charges into battle against the advice of her mentor, Yupa, to the time when she engages her challenger on the battlefield (I, 55).
Gutters also help convey action (movement in time). Figure 3.3 shows how gutters enable the juxtaposition of three images: the first of a figure flying away, the second of a figure approaching from a farther distance, and the third of the same figure being close enough for the viewer to see her features (III, 23). This juxtaposition creates the notion of time passing quickly. In terms of design principles, direction, radiation, and size contrast also contribute to the idea of speed in the action.

In Figure 3.4, gutters suggest a change in perspective. In this sequence, the gutters indicate changes in perspective from seeing men moving forward, to understanding that these men are disembarking from a transport ship, to realizing that Nausicaä is viewing the maneuver through a spyglass. The contrast in size of the men here is interesting, since the men disembarking in the first image are larger, and therefore closer, than when seen in Nausicaä’s spyglass. Objects viewed through a spyglass are generally larger. This size difference may imply that the viewer knows what is going on (men disembarking) before Nausicaä recognizes the nature of the threat from her perspective. In any case, the gutters seem to stand for changes in points-of-view. Gutters, then, provide transitions between the juxtaposed images that help define sequential art as a genre.

Panel Sequences

McCloud defines graphic art as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence” (Understanding Comics 9). Building on McCloud’s definition, I discuss two types of sequences in “Animé and Manga Graphics as Visual Narrative of Concept” (SECAC 2008). The first involves the overall structuring of manga narratives. Manga narratives move from back to front, and right to left (see Figure 3.5). This right-to-left sequencing reflects the manga roots of Miyazaki’s graphic novel Nausicaä.

Additional patterns can be discovered by looking at the sequences of the panels
themselves. For example, I discovered that long shots generally contextualize the subject in *Nausicaä*. Medium shots characteristically establish relations among characters and, at times, dramatize differing ideological positions. Close-up shots, which tightly frame a person or object, essentially announce the focus of the narrative at any given point. And extreme close-ups alert the reader to the fact that “thought” is the primary action featured in the text at that moment (SECAC 2008). Thus, an extreme close-up often signals that revelations regarding the ideology underpinning the situation, action, or character are at hand.

In an early shot of *Nausicaä*, an extreme close-up (Figure 3.6) even represents communication with others inside Nausicaä’s head. This communication involves voices that Nausicaä hears through telepathy: “They killed us! They *killed* us!” (I, 26). As discussed in the next section, the telepathic nature of the communication is also indicated by the hash-marked outline of the word bubbles. Here, the extreme close-up alerts the reader to the character’s internal thoughts, and, in terms of design principles, provides a focal point on the page. Gutters separate the various shot sequences of the panels.

**Word bubbles**

An important part of sequencing in graphic novels is the sequencing and design of word bubbles to convey the storyline. Graphically speaking, these word bubbles have different shapes. Miyazaki uses a rich variety of bubble shapes, including curved lines, straight lines, jagged lines, and hash-mark lines. For example, in Figure 3.2–mentioned previously–the wisdom and commanding tone of Yupa’s comments to Nausicaä are indicated by the straight-line word bubbles in the top frame, his surprise at her reaction is indicated by the empty jagged word bubble that appears in frame two (reading right to left), and his discussion with himself that articulates the reason for his surprise appears in
subsequent rounded word bubbles. Interestingly, the little circles indicating thought are not used here; the thoughts that are conveyed in a frame are about Nausicaä, who is pictured in the frame. A more conventional presentation of “thought” bubbles, however, can be seen in Kushana’s private reflections about her brothers in Figure 3.7. Here, tiny round bubbles lead to the larger round thought balloon. Thoughts that involve strong emotion are indicated by jagged-lined bubbles, as in Nausicaä’s shocked surprise and anger at the appearance of wormhandlers on her land (Figure 3.8).

Overall, Miyazaki’s differing shapes for the word bubbles to indicate the tone and nature of what is being revealed in the type. Word bubbles change depending on language and emotion of the characters, and include hexagonal, star-shaped, round, as well as other shapes that indicate intensity and tone. This range of shapes can be seen in Figure 3.9, when Nausicaä hears the Ohmu talking in her head (I, 8). These shapes indicate directness (straight-lines), distress (jagged lines), prophesy (hash-marked lines), thoughtfulness (large and small round shapes), routine observation (round shape), anger or forcefulness (jagged shape), prophesy (hash-marked lines), the disappearance of speaker (bubble text without lines forming a bubble shape), and internal thought (small round bubbles leading to larger round bubble shape).

Cells in the panels containing the bubbles are also individually darkened at times, to indicate that what is being presented in the bubbles involves memories or dreams or deeply internal thought. In one example (Figure 3.10) the shape of the rounded hash-marked word bubbles in a darkened cell mimicked the rounded eyes of a character who was shocked to realize that he may have seen a prophesied blue-clad hero. The rounded shape having similarities to the rounded eyes here closely associates the thoughts expressed in the bubble with the shock the character is feeling. The graphic composition
of word bubbles in Figure 3.10 is an anomaly, as a word bubble shapes go, in the novel. Most word bubble shapes follow a predictable pattern in line with the discussion regarding word bubbles as represented in Figure 3.9.

The predictable pattern in the outline of word bubbles is, in design terms, a type of repetition. In fact, the patterned use of gutters and shot sequences previously discussed in this section also represent repetition in design. The next section focuses on such the patterns that recall design principles in Miyazaki’s graphic novel.

**Patterns that Recall Design Principles**

When I looked specifically for the use of design principles in the images of Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä*, I took notes of what I considered good examples of repetition, similarity, contrast, anomaly, direction, radiation, gradation, and focal point as they helped solve certain problems for the Miyazaki in the narrative. These principles have, in fact, already been mentioned in my previous discussion of comic art graphic strategies.

Certain design principles, for example, enable graphic art in *Nausicaä* to account for time, action (or movement in time), and thought. Design principles also help Miyazaki reinforce the nature of the meaning of the images in the narrative.

*Using repetition and radiating and directional lines to account for time*

Various design principles inform patterns in the presentation of images in *Nausicaä*. For example, in Figure 3.11, repetition becomes a way of signaling the arrival of a military delegation, which has appeared in time plane by plane.

Other design principles, like radiation and direction, can be seen to represent action, or movement in time. Figure 3.12 shows cells recording Nausicaä’s encounter with outsiders threatening the Valley of the Wind. She jams her sword into the ground to indicate “the invasion stops here” and has air support from Teto, flying low over the
enemy. This cell sequence uses the principles of radiating and directional lines to graphically represent force and speed in the action. This sequence also shows the spacing and gradation of lines indicating the strength of the downward movement of the sword thrust in the first cell. In the next cell, radiating lines, with the plane as the focal point, indicate the suddenness of the dramatic appearance of the low-flying fighter. This combined use of radiation and focal point supports the idea that the plane both is coming in fast and is the center of the invaders’ attention. Miyazaki’s attention to such design principles as the repetition, radiation, and focal point in Nausicaä often involves accounting for time and movement in time (action).

*Using contrast to indicate prophesy and vision*

Miyazaki makes use of an unusual type of contrast when indicating that what is being pictured involves prophesy or visions. It is a contrast between crisp and fuzzy images. In Figure 3.13, the first image represents a known and present entity (the Sea of Corruption) and is presented in sharp relief. In the second image, the future for humans, which is not as clear, is represented by a fuzzy image.

The fuzzy-crisp contrast in the next figure (Figure 3.14) works two ways. First, Nausicaä and her ally emerge into the present in as blurred figures and speak prophesy. Second, the audience that is presented as fuzzy, while the speakers are presented as sharp. The fuzziness alerts the viewer to the presence of prophesy regarding the future of the smudged forms. The fuzziness in these panels is not the same as the fuzziness in the next figure, Figure 3.15, which pictures figures fighting in a haze. Although the fuzziness in Figure 3.15 does denote the past, it also represents the miasma used by the Doroks as a weapon in battle.

In another instance in Nausicaä, the use of extreme detailing calls attention to the
impending presence of mythical beings, which are prefigured in an abstract or fuzzy way on the inside cover of the volume (Figure 3.16), and which later appear in person and in detail as God Warriors (Figure 3.17), controlled by the stone that Kushana is seeking. So the level of detail corresponds to the emergence of the God Warriors: the more detail, the closer they are to emerging.

*Using similarity and contrast to account for character*

In addition to contrasts based on fuzzy and crisp, Miyazaki uses another method of contrast to generate an understanding of character. It involves the use of parallel scenes. Nausicaä and Kushana make sense of themselves differently, and Miyazaki highlights this difference in parallel scenes. In these scenes from Volume I, both Nausicaä and Kushana, who are arming themselves, are surrounded by young followers. But whereas Nausicaä is being given chiko nuts and prayers by the children around her (Figure 3.18), Kushana is being handed a helmet and gauntlets by her young pages (Figure 3.19). The visual similarity and contrast in these scenes help establish the similarities and differences in their characters.

Parallel scenes also show similarities in the character of the princesses as reflected in their influence on others. Figures 3.20 and 3.21 show the loyalty both Nausicaä and Kushana generate. Both images demonstrate the leadership ability of these two princesses. However, while Kushana is pictured with her loyal troops (III, 66), Nausicaä is pictured with loyal rank-and-file members of her community (I, 22; VII, 223).

*Using focal point to account for expression and thought*

Design principles are used in Miyazaki’s graphic representations not only to indicate time and action in time, help define the nature of what is happening in time, and help define character, but also to indicate thought. Specifically, the eyes repeatedly
become a focal point that alerts the reader to the idea that the character is likely to be expressing his or her thoughts.

A focus on eyes, seen in extreme close-ups throughout *Nausicaä*, is a significant graphic convention that Miyazaki has inherited from manga. The female characters that are at the center of manga targeted at girls have large shining eyes. These eyes in shojo “became the key visual marker for identifying a comic as *shojo manga* (116). Takahashi points out that the focus of this manga tends to be on the psychological development of the characters, and this focus affects the panels, which are designed to “illustrate complicated inner feelings” through the eyes (124-25). The huge eyes of manga characters can be seen in the example from *Fruits Basket* in Figure 3.22. At this point in *Fruits Basket*, the main character, Tohru Honda, is both embarrassed and is thinking about how to be her best and also be herself at all times.

Focusing on a character’s eyes is a graphic strategy used by Miyazaki in his graphic novel, but he reduces the size of the eyes. In Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä* the eyes are not as huge as in manga, but are still significant in signaling expression and internal thought (SECAC 2008). Eyes in *Nausicaä* are important in determining emotional state. For example, when an Ohmu’s eyes are blue, they are sad; red, angry (I, 14); and aflame, ready to attack (I, 109). Eye shapes also help distinguish between Nausicaä, whose eyes are generally wide, even in concentration (I, 92), and Kushana, whose eyes are more narrow in shape, often because of a straight-line eyebrow (I, 96). Eye shapes also reveal character in *Nausicaä*. For example, when Kushana discovers that Kurotowa is not only affable but also dangerous, her eyes do not widen in surprise but narrow in strategic consideration, which is in line with her character. In *Nausicaä* Miyazaki uses the conventional focus on eyes in a number of ways, as suggested in Figures 3.23-3.26.
The function of the eyes as a focal point is different in each of these examples. The function of Kurotowa’s eyes (Figure 3.23) can be said to be conventional: they express his character in his concentration and his unflappability during combat as he steer through the smoke of his own crashing plane to down the enemy. The focus on Kushana’s eyes (Figure 3.24) brings an added element: the jagged star and the Japanese characters at the right of her head reinforce not only her intensity but also her anger. The two versions of the Crypt eye as a focal point on separate pages (Figure 3.25) show it under attack and after an attack, the two separate images suggesting its invulnerability.

The focus on the eyes also can function thematically. The juxtaposition of Nausicaä’s eyes and the eyes of the Ohmu in Volume I (Figure 3.26) suggest a shared vision. This shared vision emerges as an explicit theme in Volume VII. At the end of Volume VII, eyes function to mark the death of the God Warrior. At this point, Nausicaä uses the God Warrior as a weapon against her enemies. She has him destroy them, but in the process he not only destroys his progenitors but also himself. At the end, the main feature remaining of the God Warrior after he has saved Nausicaä is his eye (Figure 3.27 and Figure 3.28). The mother-son connection between Nausicaä and the God Warrior, whom she named Ohma, is established earlier through Ohma’s eyes (Figure 3.29). Eyes sinking into the brine symbolize the God Warrior’s impending death.

**Using anomalies to highlight character**

There are two anomalies in the presentation of eyes in *Nausicaä* that I would like to mention. The first involves the masking of eyes. This anomaly in the reference to eyes comes when Kushana hides her eyes behind a visor. As part of her character, Kushana exercises tight control over her emotions. Kushana is clearly upset when she loses soldiers in battle. At one point, she talks to one of her dying warriors, saying, “You
made a shield of your own bodies to protect me—I will never forget your loyalty.” Then, Kushana, with her war visor now pulled down over her eyes (Figure 3.30), tells her father’s military attaché that they will bury the dead before continuing on the mission. Her effort at emotional control is suggested by the lowered visor; her eyes are now masked and not available for revealing emotions.

A second anomaly occurs in the final volume when Nausicaä is thinking over a difficult decision in the close proximity to another character, the guardian of the garden, who comes to represent one of Nausicaä’s alternatives (Figure 3.31). In the series of images in Figure 3.31, the image at the top left (reading right to left) represents the safety that her mother initially gave her (previous set of cells at top of page) and that the guardian now offers. It is interesting here that although Nausicaä and the guardian are embracing, neither face can be seen. Nausicaä is seen from the back, and the viewer, therefore, cannot see what she’s thinking. The guardian’s face is blacked out, masking his expression and giving his eyes a startling appearance. When Nausicaä makes her decision, her face can be seen in profile and then immediately face-on. Her decision, like her eyes, is now clear.

*Using sensory design to account for orientation*

An additional type of design principle is at work in the graphic strategies in Nausicaä and this relates to sensory design. One type of sensory design involves physiological orientation. Neutra discusses this design in his chapter, “Physiological Space.” Figure 3.32 shows examples of physiological orientation from the comic book *Dragon Ball Z*. Sometimes physical orientation involves the design principle of size contrast. The physiological orientations in this example involve above and below as well as back to front. The effect of these orientations in Figure 3.32 is to show the hero as
larger in size, given the perspective necessary to effect the orientation, than the other characters in the frame. This size difference suggests that the here is more significant than the other characters in the frame.

Similar physical orientation occurs throughout *Nausicaä*, commonly when characters pilot aircraft and engage in air battles. An interesting version of this orientation can be seen when Nausicaä is flying over what appears to be the ruins of a town. Although the town below looks like nothing but ruins, it is on the ground a lush place where Nausicaä is renewed (Figure 3.33). The physiological orientation in this case contains deception and disorientation.

Miyazaki pairs this sense of physiological orientation with that of mental orientation in other places in *Nausicaä*. Figure 3.34 shows this duality. In this sequence, Kurotowa realizes the truth about the connection between a valuable stone and God Warriors of the past. This puts him mentally off balance at first. His realization is indicated by a shot sequence that features an extreme close-up where the character’s eyes are the focal point and where the audience is “brought close” to the character’s thoughts. In this sequence also are hands behind Kurotowa representing a second physical orientation/presence, prepared to push Kurotowa off the edge of a cliff. Kurotowa moves out of the assassin’s way just in time (“Whups!”), as he continues to think about the emergence of the God Warrior, represented in subsequent cells by abstracts of features of the God Warrior coming to life (its parts are coming together visually). Kurotowa’s apparent ability to dodge an assassination attempt without a break in his ongoing thoughts about the God Warrior also establishes something about Kurotowa’s character. The extreme close-up of Kurotowa’s eyes again alert the reader to the fact that a character is thinking.
Patterns that Reflect Design Strategies

In this section, I look at patterns that reflect design strategies in terms of character design, the visual representation of abstract ideas, and the connection between iconography and ideology.

Character Design

In *Making Comics*, McCloud spends time discussing generic aspects of characterization when he talks about facial expressions and body language. His discussion builds around the idea that there are similarities in facial expressions and body language that occur across cultures. McCloud discusses six basic facial expressions that appear to be universal—anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise (83). Symbolic expressions, such as “Xs for eyes” representing that the character is “dead,” and “hearts drawn for eyes” representing that the character is in love, are also shared across cultures (96). McCloud also discusses how the portrayal of body language in comics and graphic novels relies on stereotypical patterns, such as “bent, lowered posture will be identified with the weak and dispossessed,” (106) and a fetal-like posture representing grief (111). At the same time, McCloud warns that expressions and symbols can still be cultural.

Miyazaki is well known for using cultural constructs in character design. In *Nausicaä*, I noticed that posture, costume, as well as body language and relative positioning of characters in a frame provide good indications of characters and their relationships.

The similarity in the princesses’ situations—they are both young and are expected to provide for their people in a hostile environment—is reflected in the similarity of their graphic representations. At first glance, Nausicaä and Kushana look very much alike. Both are light-haired young women with eye or face-coverings always at-hand, including
aviator goggles, masks, and visors. The two princesses are created through visual portrayals that show them taking on the iconic trappings of action heroes, usually associated in Western culture with male characters. The iconography of the following sequence where Nausicaä is wielding a sword and is “drawing a line in the sand” is a visual representation of her responsibility as a leader; the image for certain audiences might also reflect the idea of role reversal in gender expectations (Figure 3.35). Kushana is another warrior princess. She is in command of a force from another kingdom near the Valley of the Wind, is a fierce warrior and experienced leader, as indicated by her ever-present headdress. She sits on a throne shaped like a nest of serpents (66). The serpent iconography suggests that her character involves danger, deception, and destruction, as well as sensuality and seduction. The latter associations reinforced by Kushana’s lounging on the serpent throne upon a luxurious leopard-skin (Figure 3.36).

The fact that Miyazaki sees a correlation between appearance and character is confirmed in his collection of watercolor impressions, *The Art of Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. This collection includes commentaries by Miyazaki on his graphic representations. For example, regarding a drawing he produced for a cover, Miyazaki comments, “I knew as I was drawing that Nausicaä would never pose like this (Figure 3.37). There are a lot of pieces I drew despite such contradictions” (86).

Miyazaki continues such commentary throughout the art book, making such statements as, “I know I’m the one who drew this, but I don’t really like this picture. The Nausicaä inside me would never pose like this” (70) (see Figure 3.38). For a similar drawing, Miyazaki comments, “Nausicaä looking forward and smiling seemed extremely unlikely to me. Occasionally I was required to draw something like that for the covers or posters, but she’s just not that kind of character” (26). However, Miyazaki also points
out when he has gotten it right graphically. Of his drawing shown in Figure 3.39 he says,

One of my favorites, and I worked very hard on it. I never liked drawing standard
heroine pictures of Nausicaä looking cheerful. I couldn’t draw her disconnected
from the story. Nausicaä looking out of the picture and smiling just seemed wrong
to me. When she’s alone, I always imagined her looking very unapproachable.
Not because she was intimidating, but because of a quiet isolation, like she wasn’t
part of her surroundings at all. (80).

While Miyazaki is especially concerned with representing Nausicaä accurately in his art,
he shows the similar concern for his drawing of other characters in the novel. Paying
attention to more than facial expression and posture, Miyazaki extends his concern
regarding the graphic representation of character to other aspects, such as clothing.
Miyazaki, for instance, is very much concerned with getting the texture of Kushana’s
cape right. Regarding one drawing (Figure 3.40), Miyazaki remarks, “The cape here is
too cheap looking for her.” Miyazaki clarifies, “Not so much the design as the fabric”
(28). Miyazaki wanted to make the cape look substantial, in line with Kushana’s
character.

While character design is revealed in various design choices, posture provides a
good clue to the relationships between characters in Miyazaki’s work. For example,
Nausicaä is shown hugging her advisor, Yupa, on various occasions indicating a close
relationship (I, 17, 22, 77). On the other hand, Kushana has an ambivalent relationship
with her military advisor, Kurotowa, who was sent to spy on her by her father. Similarly,
she also has ambivalent relationships with delegations sent by her family. When verbally
sparring with Kurotowa, Kushana sets up her ambivalence with her statements: “You’re
not welcome here,” and “but I acknowledge your posting” (67). Her conflicted attitude
toward delegations sent by her family is represented visually as she appears standing with her hands on her hips or lounging on her throne with her face averted in dismissal (68) (Figure 3.41).

In another case, Nausicaä’s emphatic relationship with plants and animals is graphically expressed in Figure 3.42 where she is held in the coils of the Ohmu’s tentacles as communication between them takes place (105-106).

In Nausicaä, the female protagonist and antagonist are designed to represent gender equity and still to be in tension with each other. The princesses are pictured as basically different at the beginning of the novel, as seen in the two armoring scenes. As shown earlier in Figure 3.18. Nausicaä dons magic mail aided by the women but then the scene immediately switches to one focusing on her interaction with the children, who offer her simple gifts. As shown earlier in Figure 3.19, Kushana simply receives her helmet and her gauntlets from her pages. The scene after her armoring, pictures Kushana thinking less-than-charitable thoughts— and probably rightly so— about her family. However, the images of the two women later in the saga, as seen in Volume III, emphasize their similarities. Figure 3.43, for example, shows the two women exchanging jibes as they fight on the same side in battle.

**Visual representation of abstract ideas**

McCloud’s *Understanding Comics* has the subtitle, *The Invisible Art*. Part of the challenge faced by the writers of graphic novels is to represent the invisible in sequences of images and text. The invisible in texts often entails abstract ideas that are the problems and themes in the narrative. In this section, I will discuss how images help represent such abstract concepts.

The main recurring problems identified through the textual analysis of Nausicaä
include:

1. threats from neighboring empires or kingdoms
2. conflict among members within each respective kingdom
3. conflict within self
4. threats created by a hostile environment

These problems are represented graphically throughout Miyazaki’s narrative. Both threats from neighboring kingdoms and conflicts among members within respective kingdoms are commonly represented visually through battle or assassination scenes. Conflicts within self are frequently represented through the design element of eyes as focal points. As established earlier, a focus on the eyes alerts the reader to a character’s internal thoughts. These thoughts often involve internal debates that involve conflict within the self.

An image of conflict that is worthy of note here is Kushana’s family crest. This crest is visually represented earlier in the shape of Kushana’s throne (as seen in Figure 3.36). However, midway through the 7-volume series, Kushana reveals the meaning of the family crest from her perspective in the cell seen in Figure 3.44. She comments, “It’s there in the imperial crest of our imperial family—the double-headed serpent, intwined and fighting, spilling its own blood.” She then asks, “Is this our destiny, parent killing children, children their parent?” (III, 17). The image of the dueling serpents in Figure 3.44 indicates how Miyazaki can use graphic design to indicate conflict in relationships among members of the same kingdom as well as conflict within self, since Kushana is questioning her destiny as a member of the family that has dueling serpents as a crest.

A problem that underlies the action in Nausicaä is the hostile nature of the environment. A visual representation of the overwhelming nature of the problem of the
environment in the novel can be seen in the image of the Sea of Corruption in Figure 3.45. Here, a huge, amorphous sea is presented in contrast to a lone, tiny figure, Nausicaä. The enormity of her challenge is visually represented by this image. But the graphic novel also makes it clear that Nausicaä will not have to solve the problems presented by the apocalyptic landscape alone. The prophesy at the end of Volume VII says that nature will play a crucial role in its own recovery (Figure 3.46), and humans may even lag behind in the healing process (Figure 3.47)

Miyazaki’s work embodies general themes such as good versus evil, the importance of family and community, habits of individual ethical behavior, and the importance of environmentalism. Miyazaki’s ideology can be captured in the following statements:

1. Industrialism precipitates environmental disaster.
2. Women are capable of traditionally male heroism and leadership.
3. Community values are complex and involve grey areas that represent this complexity. (IVLA 2009)

These points are constantly being made in the novel through graphic design. Environmental disaster can be seen in the apocalyptic landscape. The heroism of women can be seen in the visual sequences involving Nausicaä and Kushana fighting battles with swords and other weaponry, and with them being cheered by their troops and community members. The complexity of the community can be seen not only in the various kingdoms in the novel, but also in the similarity and differences in how Nausicaä and Kushana are pictured.

Underlying these ideological points is an appeal for unity, despite the differences and dangers of the post-apocalyptic world that is presented in Nausicaä. In the words of
the Ohmu speaking to Nausicaä, the “little one”: “Our race is as one. Each of us in the whole. The whole in each of us. Our hearts speak across time and space.” (I, 121). The juxtaposition of Nausicaä’s and the Ohmu’s eyes seen in Volume I and discussed earlier in this chapter represents the fact that Nausicaä and the Ohmu share this same vision of unity. This vision is also promoted by the complex presentation of characters in the novel. By populating his panels with a complex collection of characters, Miyazaki promotes a holistic vision of community (IVLA 2009). Such a vision, centered not on individuals but on relationships between characters, ideologically matches what Nisbett labels an Eastern approach to life (146-47).

**Iconography and concepts**

The use of iconic images as pictorial vocabulary is an important basic pattern that McCloud discusses in *Understanding Comics*. McCloud asserts that iconography allows us as readers to “assign identities and emotions,” and to “see ourselves” in the graphic images (33). By deemphasizing “the appearance of the physical world in favor of the idea of form, the cartoon places itself in the world of concepts”; the icon symbolizes a recognized idea or concept (41). McCloud further claims, “Visual iconography may finally help us realize a form of universal communication” (58).

In “Visual Language and Ideology in Hayao Miyazaki,” I show how the pattern of the juxtaposition of discordant iconic images promotes ideological positions:

1. The pairing of discordant images often reinforces a commitment to gender equity as with the image of Nausicaä, simultaneously wielding a sword and crying visible tears of compassion for her enemy.
2. The similar pairing of discordant images promotes the importance of environmentalism. In a post-apocalyptic landscape *Nausicaä*, toxic spores fall like beautiful snowflakes as characters wear gas masks for protection.

3. The juxtaposition of good, bad and morally ambiguous actions in the portrayal of all the characters in *Nausicaä*, protagonist and antagonist alike, makes the characters avatars of complex value systems. The multifaceted juxtaposition represents a holistic vision of the community at large and serves to emphasize both the complexity and value of community.

Thus, Miyazaki’s use of iconic juxtaposition suggests certain ideological positions in the narrative.

Miyazaki’s iconography suggests a wealth of associations. Images of the serpents on Kushana’s throne, for example, might first be, using a Judeo-Christian cultural framework, associated with qualities like deception and even evil. Kushana upgrades this association when commenting on the appropriateness of the family crest, in Volume III. The double-headed serpent means for her that it is the destiny of her family to fight, spill blood, and have parents killing their children and children killing their parents (III, 17). But serpents are also associated with medicinal powers or rebirth in Greek mythology. Double-headed serpents as an icon taken from the rod of Asclepius represent the American Medical Association, and Kushana ends up being known the “restorer” at the end of the saga. In short, there is a duality to the images that forces multiple associations.

The mixing of iconographic images is part of the apocalyptic landscape that is the background for everything that happens in Nausicaä. Apocalyptic landscapes are common in graphic novels. In “What if the Apocalypse Never Happens,” Kawa asserts that apocalyptic landscapes not only make life a struggle-for-survival for graphic novel
characters, but also allow for a “sweeping cross-cultural structure” and create a climate that inherently asks for cultural change; that is, because the apocalyptic landscape is stripped of familiar cultural artifacts and long-established institutions, it invites visionary possibilities that promise to expand “our evolutionary capabilities” (216-219).

In graphic novels, such evolutionary capabilities have often been embodied by superheroes that “may be seen as psychological manifestations of an evolving human consciousness” (Kawa 219). But such evolutionary capabilities extend beyond developing X-ray vision or telepathic communication or other futuristic traits. The complex evolution of graphic novel landscapes and the cultures that occupy them suggests a creative array of possibilities for this and other worlds. It is important to recognize, however, that representations of these possibilities in graphic novels not only project a fantastical future, but also reflect the past.

The presence of the old is discussed in Hart’s *Manga Mania*. This book classifies fantasy manga characters into categories that involve familiar character types. These include knights and faeries, which are appropriately equipped with medieval weaponry and gossamer wings, respectively. The main evolutionary component in these depictions is the fact that knights and faeries alike are both male and female. All characters in fantasy manga have the potential to be warriors. This broadened potentiality is juxtaposed with visual recollections of the past in these characters’ personal effects.

Applied to *Nausicaä*, the observations of the critics recall certain image juxtapositions. For example, the heroine’s sleek glider shares visual space with a prehistoric, tribolite-like Ohmu, as the heroine herself wears a streamlined gas mask looking at the fatal snow-like spores. Such a mix of iconography, according to Kawa,
embodies a framework for interpretation that is both cross-cultural and representative of “psychological manifestations of an evolving human consciousness” (219). For Magnussen and Chirstiansen, this mixing of images reflects postmodern aspects of sequential art that have comics “recycling, recapitulating and recontextualizing” cultural themes and images, resulting in extremely complex forms that reveal “chaotic and contradictory visions of society” (24).

The mixing of images in Nausicaä also points to one of the main ideas of Miyazaki’s work: solutions to problems often become problems in themselves. The spirit guide in the garden remarks on solutions to problems devised by humans in general, “You humans tread the same paths over and over again.” No one can escape “from the cycle wherein karma gives birth to karma, sorrow gives birth to sorrow” (122). The garden represents release from this cycle. But the fact that solutions are often problems in themselves is often represented visually in the novel as new wars are being constantly fought with old technology: medieval swords and dilapidated-looking aircraft.

One page early in Nausicaä is, for me, iconic of the entire graphic novel series. It is the page where Nausicaä sits with the Ohmu and wonders what sort of world it sees through its fourteen eyes (1, 7). This page, as seen in Figure 3.48, involves a major source for the saga, a Japanese tale about a princess who loved insects. In the images on this page, we have a small princess and a giant life-form resembling an insect. The page also represents the environmental theme and ideology in the novel. The landscape that is the result of an environmental disaster is represented with mixed iconography: gently falling snow is really the release of death-dealing toxic spores. The toxic nature of the spores is indicated by the mask, which serves as a “gas mask” here but earlier served as an oxygen mask in flight. Former combatants (Nausicaä and the Ohmu) are now joined in the same
environmental battle. And communication between Nausicaä and the Ohmu is urgent, as indicated by the content and shape of the word bubbles. This image, therefore, represents conflicts and iconography basic to the novel.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed three main types of patterns as they appear in *Nausicaä*:

- patterns that relate to comic art as a genre
- patterns that recall various design principles, and
- patterns that reflect design strategies

The patterns I discussed realing to comic art as a genre show that gutters enable changes in time. These changes involve actual time, such as past, present, and future. They also help the portrayal of time involved in movement or action. Finally, they help convey mental changes over time in perspective and knowledge. Panel sequences often help focus the reader’s attention on the characters’ eyes and, in this way, on ideas and thoughts in the narrative. These ideas and thoughts are conveyed in word bubbles that vary in shape to show emotion and tone.

In terms of patterns that recall various design principles, I discovered that these principles often help Miyazaki to account for:

- time
- character development and difference, and
- change

In this chapter, I discussed how time itself was accounted for using repetition as well as radiating and directional lines. I also discussed how time differences were indicated through fuzzy-crisp contrast. And I discussed how the development and unveiling of
character over time was accounted for using similarity, contrast, and anomaly. I also noted how Miyazaki uses principles taken from sensory design involving physiological space to indicate differences in physical and mental orientation.

Finally, I discussed patterns related to design strategies. These strategies involved elements of character design, the visual representation of abstract ideas, and the use of iconography to convey concepts. Overall, these design strategies featured juxtaposition and iconography in the visual presentation of characters and concepts.


Works Cited: Chapter Three


Chapter Four: Survey of Participant Responses

With globalization, attention to how different cultures perceive texts visually and ideologically has become increasingly important to design. As internationally read texts, graphic novels provide important insights into such perception.

My methodology for gathering information on how readers from different cultures read graphic novels involves an online survey focusing on Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä*. The primary purpose of the survey is to explore the research question, “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world?” More specifically, the survey explores not only sequencing issues experienced by these audiences, but also judgments made by these audiences as they respond to the images involved in the complex contexts created in *Nausicaä*.

This research is based on the recognition that audiences from different cultures possess different culturally acquired textual formats and conventions when reading. This research also recognizes that audiences draw from culturally acquired contexts when viewing images. In exploring how culturally different audiences interpret excerpts from *Nausicaä*, this chapter explores specific differences in how Asian and American students at Iowa State University perceive narrative sequences and ideological content in *Nausicaä*.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the survey was identified to participants: that questions were being asked based on a very small sampling from the *Nausicaä* saga. Another limitation, the time available for the collection of data, developed as issues arose in the process of using a survey monkey to post the survey online. These issues involved the size of images that survey monkey could handle. In any case, these issues led to the fact that the
survey was posted around Spring Break, later in the semester than originally anticipated. The survey was online between March 10 and May 10, 2010. The later posting start reduced the time participants had to see the call for volunteers and to respond by participating. It also prompted me to extend the deadline for participating to the end of the semester. The reduced time available for data collection in turn affected the time available for responding to volunteers expressing an interest in follow-up discussions (Question 17).

Although the reduced time made contacting volunteers for follow-up discussions of graphic novels impractical in terms of the thesis deadlines, contacting those few (5 participants) who expressed an interest follow-up discussions will contribute to the future writing of a separate paper for publication. In any case, Question 17, an invitation for further discussion about graphic novels, does not necessarily address my research questions, and data from that follow-up, while it will be helpful to further research, is not essential to this thesis.

Another limitation of the survey involves the small number of actual participants that eventually completed the survey. This small return may relate to the fact that there was no external incentive offered for those participating. Fortunately, this small sampling did represent a roughly equal number of American and Asian participants.

A final limitation involves the way survey monkey tabulates its results. The percentages given regarding each response are based on responses entered by participants; these percentages do not take into account the skipped responses, although skipped responses are noted with each question. This means that if 5 of 5 responses choose option A, that response will get a 100% rating, even if there are 10 participants in all and only 5 of those chose to answer the question. If all participants were considered, the
percentage of those taking the survey and choosing for option A would be 50%. This limitation needs to be kept in mind when reading this chapter, because I am using the percentages provided by survey monkey in my reporting of the data.

The Survey

The survey received IRB approval in fall, 2009 (see Appendix B for approval and survey). The survey itself includes three types of information. The first entails demographic information, including age, gender, nationality, and educational level of the participant. The second type of information involves an evaluation of perceived personal expertise. It is understood that, as with all such information, the standpoint of the individual will affect the rating. For example, if the individual compares himself/herself to known “experts” in manga in Japan (Otaku), then he or she might rate themselves as “average” in his/her knowledge of manga, whereas his/her skill or familiarity level might, in fact, be “good” or “very good” compared with that of the rest of the participants. This is an identified limitation of the data gathered. The ratings scale used in this section involves Likert scale evaluations: very good, good, average, poor, very poor.

A third type of information gathered by the survey entails participants reading manga excerpts and coming to conclusions about sequences, characters, and themes. Although one limitation of this survey section is that the entire graphic novel cannot be presented, the selected excerpts had been chosen based on their representative nature. The featured excerpts are examined by participants in terms of the reader’s perception of Nausicaä’s character, her motivation, and her relationships with other characters. Excerpts also are evaluated in terms of themes, possible precedents in Japanese mythology, similarities to Western folk tales/myths, as well as parallels between Nausicaa’s character traits and those of heroes in American graphic novels. Finally, excerpts are evaluated in
terms of various established narrative types, including the coming of age story, the chaos narrative, the quest narrative, a springboard story, and an anti-story.

**Relationship of Survey Questions to Research Questions**

Although there is not a one-to-one match between the survey questions and my research questions, the relationship between the survey questions and the research questions is roughly as follows.

The demographic information gathered from the survey addresses the research question on audience: “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world?” This section provides information that indicates the cultural identity or identities of the college students taking the survey.

Questions involving the student’s knowledge of manga, and to a lesser extent animé (questions 1-5) provide a sense of the participant’s expertise. The participant’s perceived expertise is important to identify because of the limitation of the study announced in the welcome portion of the online survey materials: that only a few excerpts of the graphic novel *Nausicaä*, a seven-volume series, appear in the survey itself. Question 6, which involves cell sequencing, also addresses the familiarity of participants with manga as a genre, which reads from right to left and zig-zag down the page. (Much of *Nausicaä*, the graphic novel, was originally published as a manga series.)

Questions 7 to 11 ask the participant to make inferences about Nausicaä’s character, motivations, and relationships to other characters based on selected images. These questions relate to the research questions, “What are the patterns in the design of *Nausicaä*?” and “How do these patterns in the design of the work function?” in that participants are given pages from *Nausicaä* that involve patterns of design in the graphic novel’s art and asks participants to infer the function of the images in the cells presented.
Question 12 asks about the overall meaning or theme of the shot sequences shown in questions 7 through 11, while questions 13 and 14 ask about Eastern and Western cultural precedents to the characters shown in the sequences shown in questions 7 through 11. These questions also provide the opportunity for readers to provide their own input. These questions also relate to my overall interest in how graphic novels both reflect and create culture, as they address the question, “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world?” Questions 15 and 16 ask participants for genre-based responses about heroes and narrative types. These questions relate to the contexts that are important to interpreting the patterns in the graphic novel.

The extent to which the survey overall asks about patterns that result in character definition or that ask for cultural precedents is the extent to which the survey involves the idea that form and content seem inseparable in Miyazaki’s work. Question 6, which is about cell sequencing, directly addresses the actual graphic design of the novel.

My research questions about patterns in the actual graphic design of Nausicaä are, however, mainly addressed through the textual analysis in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Procedures

Participants were generated from student volunteers at Iowa State University, through international student organizations at Iowa State, as well as through contacts generated by Professor Sunghyun Ryoo Kang, who is on my thesis committee. Participants were at least 18-years-old and enrolled as undergraduate or graduate students at Iowa State.

Participants were contacted by flyer and/or by email. Flyers (see Appendix B for flyer) were approved for posting and were posted in campus buildings. In the College of
Design, flyers were posted on every floor, given that sequential art is a course offered in the Design College and that this is my home college. Ross Hall received multiple postings as well, given the fact that the English Department, which is located in Ross, teaches courses in various types of literature tangentially related to my subject, including fantasy fiction, science fiction novels, and environmental literature. In terms of the email, electronic invitations to participate (with the same language of the flyer) were posted to various appropriate listservs, including ones involving graduate students in my department, as well as ones involving various appropriate clubs, such as the Asian American Graduate Student Association, the Japanese Student Organization, and the Korean Student Association. The Animé Appreciation Club at Iowa State also had access to the survey.

The surveys, themselves, were available for completion on the specified website http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDKMWPiD. Participants were told at the outset that they were being invited to participate in the study because they were “either an undergraduate or graduate student who has been exposed to comic books, graphic novels, and/or animé; and who has an interest in cultural differences and in graphic texts and their interpretation.”

In terms of the survey monkey, I initially encountered problems in that the instrument did not allow for graphics that were large enough for evaluation purposes. Upon the advice of Professor Kang, I uploaded the images to a new web page, and created a link to that page on my survey. Participants did not have trouble matching the images to the survey questions, but did have trouble when they tried to zoom in on the images to see them better. The images would enlarge, but in the process, the links would be shifted, so Question 11’s link would move down and become a hidden link.
This problem was corrected if participants zoomed back out before continuing to the next question. (I had several participants contact me via email for this solution.)

The consent process was handled online for those responding to the listserv inquiries (see Appendix B for informed consent form). Volunteers checked a box online that confirmed: “Yes, I agree to participate in this study; I understand that my responses will remain confidential and anonymous.” Students that responded to the flyer similarly completed the informed consent form online as well.

In terms of time, participants spent between 15 and 30 minutes to complete the survey, or the time it took to answer the 17-question survey. Participants were assured in the informed consent document that “no specific level of expertise is either expected or required” and that they could “decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early,” and could “skip any questions” that they felt “uncomfortable answering.” Participants were also told, “Although this survey does not present an entire graphic novel, selected excerpts have been chosen based on their representative nature.”

**Results Regarding Participants**

The Asian participants in this study include Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students belonging to the targeted listservs as well as those responding to the flyer. The rationale for selecting Asian participants for comparison includes the fact that the text of the study is originally Asian, specifically Japanese manga. The American students also involve those belonging to the various targeted listservs as well as those responding to the flyer. The rationale for selecting American students includes the idea that manga are very popular among college students in the United States. The survey collected demographic information on all participants.
Demographics

There were 36 people who responded to the survey. Of these, the most (12 or 34.3%) were 19-22 years old, while ten participants (28.6%) were 23-26 years old. The remainder included 5 respondents apiece at 23-26 and 31-34 years old (14.3%), with two respondents who were older than 35 (5.7%) and one who was 18 (2.8%). There were 21 males and 14 females, with one skipping the question of gender. In terms of educational level, 19 (54.3%) identified themselves as college level, and 16 (45.7%) identified themselves as graduate level. One participant skipped the question regarding educational level.

In terms of nationality, 12 participants identified themselves as Americans (35.3%), with 9 participants identifying themselves as Chinese (26.5%) and 8 as Korean (23.5%). There was 1 (2.9%) Japanese participant. There were 3 participants who identified themselves as Korean-American, 1 as Chinese-American, and 1 as Vietnamese-American (noted in “other” category). The Vietnamese-American is not represented in the following graph in terms of her ethnicity, which is a limitation of the survey monkey. In addition, two participants skipped the nationality question and are also not represented in Figure 4.1. The question about time spent in the United States was not coordinated by survey monkey to the nationality of participants above, and so was discarded.
Questions involving expertise and familiarity with the graphic novel genre

In terms of rating their knowledge regarding graphic novels, manga, and animé, participants rated themselves as noted in Figure 4.2. Most participants rated their knowledge as graphic novels as “poor,” with a respectable number rating their knowledge as “average” or “good.” Most rated their knowledge as “poor” for manga, with a respectable number rating their knowledge as average or good. More participants were willing to rate their knowledge of animé as “average” or “good.”

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<th>Average</th>
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<th>Very Good</th>
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<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anime</strong></td>
<td>11.4% (4)</td>
<td>22.9% (8)</td>
<td>37.1% (13)</td>
<td>37.1% (13)</td>
<td>11.4% (4)</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: Pie chart representing nationalities of participants

Figure 4.2: Participant rating of personal expertise
In terms of familiarity with selected graphic novels, 19 participants claimed
familiarity with Nausicca, There were 12 who expressed familiarity with The Dark
Knight Returns, 11 with Crayon Shinchan, and 10 with Fruits Basket. Three participants
volunteered additional graphic novels: 宮崎駿, Neil Gaiman’s Sandman, and Ken
Akamatsu’s Love Hina, Negima. In addition, 7 claimed knowledge of Spiegelman’s Maus.
Nine participants skipped this question.

Regarding the question, “Have you ever seen an animé series that interested you
in the graphic novel that was the basis for the films, or the reverse?”, 20 participants
(57.1%) answered no, while 15 (42.9%) answered yes, with 1 skipping the question.

Those answering yes named the following series: Dragon Ball (2), Slamdunker,
Bleach (2), 涼宮ハルヒの憂鬱, Sakura Momoko, Crayon Shinchan, Doraemon,
Gundam, Ghost Hunt, Batman, Tsubasa Chronicles (2), Watchmen, Sailor Moon, Trigun,
and Ghost in the Shell.

Participants were also asked to sequence the frames, numbered randomly as seen
in Figure 4.4 to avoid telegraphing any particular sequence.
Figure 4.4: Image for cell sequencing

Regarding the sequencing of frames in this figure, participants preferred the following sequences in rank order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell Sequence</th>
<th>Participants preferring sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23, 57, 34, 89, 45, 12, 75, 66</td>
<td>Thirteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 34, 57, 89, 45, 66, 12, 75</td>
<td>Nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 57, 34, 89, 45, 12, 66, 75</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight other distinct sequences</td>
<td>One for each of eight separate ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5: Preferences for cell sequencing

The participant-preferred sequence is the intended sequence, representing an Eastern orientation moving from right to left, top to bottom. The second-ranked preference reflects American order, reading left to right, top to bottom. Other sequences were idiosyncratic.
Results of content questions

Content questions included those about Nausicca’s character and motivations; about theme, precedents, and character traits of heroes; and about narrative types.

Questions involving opinions about character based on selected pages from “Nausicca”

In the survey, there were a number of questions regarding Nausicca’s character and motivations. Figure 4.6 features Nausicca piloting her plane (I, 25). Choices of adjective included: prudent, courageous, impulsive, foolish, and decisive. A majority of those responding (19 or 70.4%) thought Nausicca courageous. The next largest number (12 or 44.4%) thought her impulsive. Then 7 (25.9%) thought her foolish; 6 (22.2%), decisive; 3 (11.1%), prudent, and 3 (11.1%) offered these adjectives: stubborn, confident, and “I don’t know her.” Nine participants skipped this question.

![Image for Question 07](image.png)

**Figure 4.6:** Image for first request for adjective describing Nausicca piloting plane
The next question regarding Nausicca entails what motivates her reaction to the Ohmu in Figure 4.7. In this image, Nausicca is being urged back to the ship as the Ohmu appears in the distance. Although Nausicca has previously been threatened by the Ohmu, she does not attack or flee, but instead notices that the creature has been crying for its dead. Most participants interpreted her behavior in this scene as motivated by empathy (24 or 77.5%). Other choices for motivation included: courage (6 respondents or 19.4%); confusion, 3 or 9.7%; naivety, 2 or 6.5%; and decisiveness, 2 or 6.5%. One participant commented that the question itself was confusing, and 5 participants skipped the question altogether.

Figure 4.7: Image with Nausicca reacting to the Ohmu

The survey question that followed featured an image has Nausicca reacting to a scene she is viewing through a spyglass: the unloading of troops from a transport (Figure 4.8). Unlike in the previous sequence where Nausicca takes some time in her reaction to
the scene, her reaction here is to determine “this is an act of war.” Most participants (19 or 63.3%) answering this question saw her actions as showing decisiveness. A lesser number (12 or 40%) saw her actions as showing anger, and slightly fewer (11 or 36.7%) thought she demonstrated courage. A small number (2 or 6.7%) found her to be showing naivete, and noone thought her to be demonstrating empathy. Six participants skipped the question.

**Figure 4.8: Nausiccä spots troops being unloaded from transport**

In judging Nausiccä’s relationship to the old man (Tito) in the next image (Figure 4.10), participants selected a number of adjectives to describe their relationship. Most participants (13 or 44.8%) thought the relationship was one of respect. A smaller number of participants saw Nausiccä as “loved” (10 or 34.5%), while others saw her as “inconsiderate (8 or 27.6%). A smaller number found Nausiccä to be “pampered” (6 or 20.7%) or “spoiled” (2 or 6.9%). One participant labeled the relationship as “teacher/student” and another was “not so sure.” Seven participants skipped this question.
Figure 4.10: Nausicca interacts with the old man (Tito)

Regarding the image showing Nausicca sitting with the Ohmu as toxic spores fall like snow (Figure 4.11), most found her behavior to be “empathetic” (15 or 51.7%). A good number (10 or 34.5%) found the Princess’s stance to be that of an “environmentalist.” Others identified her stance to be “defeated” (7 or 24.1%), “powerful” (3 or 10.3%), and “predatory” (2 or 6.9%). Other adjectives offered included “conflicted,” “curious,” and “after I read a little bit of the word, I would say defeated.” One participant skipped this question.
Questions about theme, precedents, and character traits of heroes

The remaining questions in the survey involved participants responding to longer questions about the theme (Figure 4.12), and about Japanese precedents for the Nausicaä story (Figure 4.13), as well as Western precedents for the Nausicaä story (Figure 4.14). In terms of theme, more that half of those responding to this question chose the theme “It is crucial to remember your responsibility to your community when you act” as the option the best describes the overall meaning of the images shown in the survey.
Q: Choose from the following options those that best describe what you think the overall meaning or theme is of the images shown earlier in this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is crucial to remember your responsibility to your community when you act.</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment will survive no matter what the destructive actions of men are.</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence is an acceptable way of solving problems.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softness and empathy are not good leadership traits.</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolish leaders lead to disasters for their people.</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12: Participant responses to questions about theme

In terms of Japanese precedents, most chose “The little princess who loves insects, especially caterpillars” as a precedent, with “The golden boy (Kintaro) who had terrific strength, who learned the language of animals, and who became a great warrior” as a strong second choice.

Q: Choose from the following options those that, in your opinion, best reflect the Japanese precedents for the story about the Princess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A little girl who dreams about toothpick warriors that come to life in her bedroom.</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The peach boy who fights against invading demons with the help of a dog, a pheasant, and a monkey (Momotaro).</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The little princess who loves insects, especially caterpillars (Mushi Meduru Hemegimi).</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The three strong women who teach a famous Japanese wrestler lessons about strength.</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The golden boy (Kintaro), who had terrific strength, who learned the language of animals, and who-as an adult-became a great warrior defeating a cannibalistic monster.</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.13: Responses to questions about Japanese precedents

In terms of Western precedents (Figure 4.14), almost half preferred “Pippi Longstocking, an unconventional, strong and assertive girl who lives with her horse and
her monkey and causes trouble for adults.” Slightly fewer preferred “Bella, whose father brought her to stay with a beast, which later turned into a handsome prince when she stated that she loved him.” Cinderella, Sir Gawain, and Jack (of Jack and the Beanstalk) were not popular choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q: Choose from the following options those that, in your opinion, best reflect the Western folktales/myths that have themes or characteristics in common with the Princess.</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sir Gawain, who promises to face the Green Knight but ends up facing temptation as well as a pseudo (fake) beheading.</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderella, who labors for her wicked step-mother, attends a ball with the help of a fairy godmother, and who meets a prince and lives happily ever after.</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pippi Longstocking, an unconventional, strong and assertive girl who lives with her horse and her monkey and causes trouble for adults.</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack, who traded the family cow for a handful of beans that grew into a gigantic beanstalk, which Jack climbed and found an ogre, who Jack tricked to gain riches and happiness.</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella, whose father brought her to say with a beast, which later turned into a handsome prince when she stated that she loved him.</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.14: Responses to questions about Western precedents**

Another question asked about characteristics shared by Nausiccă with such heroes as Captain America, Wonder Woman, Batman, Spawn, and Storm (Figure 4.15). The most preferred selection was “Wonder Woman, who is based on Greek mythology and who has superior strength, a natural rapport with animals and the lasso of truth.” A strong second was “Storm, a female human mutant in X-men who has the power to control the weather and fly.” Captain America, Batman, and Spawn received much less support.
Q: Choose from the following American comic book/graphic novel heroes those that, in your opinion, have many character traits in common with the Princess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hero Description</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Captain America, who aided the United States’ war effort in World War II, has an indestructible shield, and is at the peak of human physical development.</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder Woman, who is based on Greek mythology and who has superior strength, a natural rapport with animals and the lasso of truth.</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batman, who-with Robin-Tights crime in Gotham City using intellect, detective skills, and science and technology.</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spawn, a superhero that has turned into a more flawed anti-hero over time and who faces both supernatural and criminal enemies.</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm, a female human mutant in X-Men who has the power to control the weather and fly.</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.15: Responses to comparisons of Nausíccá and other heroes

Question about narrative types

A question about narrative types was the final content question and asked participants to make connections between the Nausíccá narrative and other narrative types involved matching story types to the Nausíccá tale: coming-of-age narrative, chaos narrative, quest narrative, springboard story, and anti-story (Figure 4.16). Definitions or extra information about the choices were embedded within each answer set. The most popular narrative comparison was “A quest narrative, where the hero departs, experiences adventures on the way to achieving a goal, and then returns.” The second most popular response selected “A coming-of-age story in which the author presents the psychological, moral and social shaping of the personality of a (usually young) main character.”
Q: Choose from the following story types those that best match the narrative that seems to be underpinning the Princess narrative represented in the images shown in this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Type</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A coming-of age story in which the author presents the psychological, moral and social shaping of the personality of a (usually young) main character.</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A chance narrative, which is a litany of suffering and dangers where nothing gets better.</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A quest narrative, where the hero departs, experiences adventures on the way to achieving a goal, and then returns.</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A springboard story, which enables an audience to understand how a community can change and which helps visualize at large-scale transformation.</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An anti-story, which is a narrative that arises in opposition to another narrative and tries to undermine it.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.16: Comparing the Nausiccä narrative and other narrative types

Discussion

There are several points worthy of discussion involving the demographics of survey participants and their skipping of survey questions, as well as involving the nature of participants’ responses to Nausiicca as a character and to other content issues posed by the survey. In addition, the relationship between the survey and the research questions is discussed here.

Demographics and participant responses

Several aspects of the participant responses overall were a surprise. One surprise involved the nationality of respondents. Only one Japanese student participated in the survey. Even though the small number of Japanese participants might relate to the correspondingly small number of Japanese students on campus, this number was a surprise, considering the popularity of graphic novels and manga in Japan and the fact
that the flyer announced that Miyazaki would be the focus of the survey.

Another surprise involved the number of times participants skipped questions. The only 100% response came to the question, “Do you agree to participate in this survey?” Otherwise, the remaining questions all had at least one skipped response, with some questions having even more. Asked to identify graphic novel authors/titles that were familiar to them, 9 participants moved on without answering. Ten participants skipped the question about having a related interest in animé series and graphic novels, with 22 not offering to name an animé series and graphic novel series that interested them. Other skipped responses were not as dramatic in number; there were, for example, between 6 and 9 participants skipping each of the various questions about Nausicca’s character. The skipping of questions represented the participants’ right not to answer questions, which was established at the outset of the survey. But it also might have entailed other factors, like the language itself of the survey (English) and the length of some of the questions. An interesting aspect of the language issue occurred when, at one point in the survey, one participant answered a question with 宮崎駿. According to a native speaker of Chinese, these ideograms simply spell out the name, Hayao Miyazaki. This response belonged to an American participant.

Yet another surprise entailed the specialized knowledge demonstrated in certain responses. For example, one participant questioned the current order of the images in the survey, implying that the images were offered out-of-sequence in terms of the novel and that this might affect the interpretation of themes. When asked about Western folk tales or myths that had themes or characteristics in common with Nausicca, another respondent commented: “The Celtic myth of Atlantis. The sinking of the island was due to the greed and power-hunger of the Alterans. The survivors were the first Celts who
vowed to stay loyal to nature.” This response shows advanced knowledge of mythology.

Although 12 participants skipped the question about the overall meaning or theme of the selected images, the remaining participants offered insightful observations, including: “Softness and empathy are good leadership traits,” a “destructive act such as war, regardless of who is right or wrong, destroy[s] the environment in which [it] is fought,” and a general comment about human beings not only needing to care about themselves, but also about the environment around them.

**Perceptions of Nausicca’s character and motivations**

Most participants accorded Nausicca strong characteristics, thinking of her as courageous, decisive, but also capable of empathy. For some participants, the combination of seemingly contradicting traits like courage and empathy was troubling. This difficulty arose in terms of comparisons between Nausicca and other comic book/graphic novel heroes, when one participant remarked that none of the comic book/graphic novel heroes share character traits with Nausicca because she is “not the heroin[e] as discussed in US or western culture.” Another participant saw similarities between Nausicca and a hero not listed as a possibility on the survey, Wolverine; the participant explained that Wolverine is “a hero who acts on emotion with little care of the consequences.” Both of these volunteered responses seem to suggest resistance to the notion traits such as empathy and emotion are an inherent part of courage and decisiveness.

Another interesting aspect here is participants’ relative resistance to selecting males as counterparts to Nausicca. While some participants did select the golden boy Kintaro as one possible Japanese precedent to Nausicca’s character, they identified female graphic novel heroines as those most having the same character traits as the
Princess. They also choose Western tales that featured female protagonists as precedents. In fact, even though a majority of the respondents saw *Nausicaä* as a quest narrative, few thought that Sir Gawain had characteristics in common with the Princess.

*The survey and the research questions*

The survey was designed to address the research question: “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world?” And the survey did reveal several characteristics about the participants as audience. For example, it revealed that most of the participants saw themselves as less than expert in terms of graphic novels, manga and animé. The survey also revealed that participants read the cells primarily in two main patterns: left to right, and right to left. What is interesting here is that over half of the 13 participants who read the selection right to left, or in Eastern order, were Americans. Among those reading right to left included one participant rating his/her knowledge of graphic novels and manga as poor, two as good, and the remainder rating his/her knowledge as average. Obviously, there is some learned reading pattern regarding manga associated with American participants who read right to left. What is interesting here is that half of those reading left to right, or with the Western orientation, were Korean. Another interesting aspect in regards to reading sequences involved the idiosyncratic readings. Two readers skipped over the first cell, which was all image showing a skyscape, and started reading at the first cell with text or figures. In one case, the participant started with the cell featuring Nausicaä, which was one-third of the way down the page.

The responses to questions 7 to 11—which ask the participant to make inferences about Nausicaä’s character, motivations, and relationships to other characters—offer insight into the how graphic design informs character design. What the survey revealed is
that many participants respected the way Nausicaä faced problems like piloting a fighter plane, dealing with the monstrous Ohmu, scouting wormhandler invaders, charging into battle, and enduring toxic spores. Overall, the problems faced in the images in the survey included interactions with both enemies and friends.

At the same time, some participants had mixed reactions to Nausicaä’s behavior. For example, while over 70% thought her actions as a fighter pilot were “courageous,” 25% thought they were “foolish.” Figure 4.17 captures participants’ responses according nationality, gender and number. Those finding Nausicaä courageous included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese-American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean-American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.17: Responses finding Nausicaä’s courageous by nationality and gender**

Those finding Nausicaä foolish included 1 American female, 1 Korean-American male, along with 2 American males. Those finding Nausicaä both courageous and foolish included 1 Korean-American male and 2 American males. This small sampling suggests that more men than women found Nausicaä foolish and that there did not seem to be a gender difference in those who found her courageous. In addition, there does not seem to be a marked cultural difference in the responses.

In addition, while most (77.4%) saw Nausicaä’s reaction to the Ohmu as demonstrating empathy, some found her to reaction to be angry. Those who described her to be angry tended to say she was *both* angry and empathetic. The following visual
captures the participants who found her to be simply empathetic, marked with a star; in addition, the visual indicates those participants who found her to be both empathetic and angry, with the number of participants thinking Nausicaä to be both empathetic and angry marked with a plus. The numbers in these categories do not overlap. Figure 4.18 captures participants’ responses according nationality, gender and number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>*3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese-American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>*3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>*3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean-American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>*2 and +1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>*1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>*2 and +6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Number of participants who found Nausicaä to show simply empathy
+ Number of participants who found Nausicaä to show both empathy and anger

**Figure 4.18: Respondents finding Nausicaä empathetic, angry, or both**

What seems particularly noteworthy here is the large number of American men who found Nausicaä to show both empathy and anger. This response was double that of Asian men.

In another aspect, while most (63.8%) found her declaration of war upon seeing the wormhandler invaders to be decisive, a smaller number (40%) found her reaction to be one of anger, and all participants thought Nausicaä to have lost the empathy that she had demonstrated earlier when she decided to declare war. Similarly, while most saw the relationship between the old man (Tito) and Nausicaä to one of respect, some also found Nausicaä to be pampered and spoiled. This evaluation is in regards to her actions when she ignores Tito’s caution about turning the valley into a battlefield and takes off, “like an Ohmu consumed with rage,” to challenge an opponent on the field. In short, her decision
to go against the advice of her advisor was not appreciated by all the participants as an adequate solution to the problem represented in the image. The survey thus revealed that participants had mixed reactions to certain solutions represented by Nausicaä’s actions as represented in the survey images.

In terms of my research question “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world?”, I would have to say that the small number of participants who took my survey more often than not did share perceptions about the Nausicaä, her character, her motivations, and her actions. This cross-cultural tendency could be found, for example, in the simple fact that those reading the examples from left to right (Western orientation) and right to left (Eastern orientation) were about even in number, and within both groups were a mix of Asian and American participants. In addition, response to Nausicaä as a character and as a problem-solver showed the same cross-cultural tendency. Even the six American men who saw Nausicaä as both empathetic and angry in one scene were balance by six Asian men who thought the same thing. It was also difficult to gauge the cultural significance of the responses from Chinese-Americans, Korean-Americans, and the one Vietnamese-American who took the survey. In this small sampling, there were no cultural differences that stood out as significant.

Questions about theme, precedents, and narratives

The last set of questions refers back to the images shown in Questions 7-11. These last questions deal with the overall meaning or theme of the sequences shown in previous questions, and with Eastern and Western cultural precedents to the characters shown in the sequences. These questions also provide the opportunity for readers to provide their own input.
What is interesting here is the similarities of certain judgments rendered by participants. In terms of Japanese precedents, a majority of participants identified “The little princess who loves insects, especially caterpillars” as a precedent for *Nausicaä’s* saga. Because no familiar insects were in the images provided by the survey (although the Ohmu may have looked like an insect), this identification was probably based on outside knowledge of Miyazaki and Japanese culture. Although Miyazaki’s work was inspired by “a real disaster in Japan, the mercury-poisoning of Lake Minamata,” he also draws from the Japanese tale about the Princess who loved insects (*Mushi mezuru himegimi*), a fact that would be known to Miyazaki fans. This response indicates a decent familiarity with *Nausicaä*, even though survey participants denied expert knowledge about graphic novels and manga. This familiarity would be another indication of a “flat world.” According to Thomas L. Friedman, the current trend toward globalization entails “a whole new form of collaboration and creating value horizontally, made possible by the flat world and flattening it even more” (169). Certainly, Miyazaki’s involvement with Disney would encourage world-wide knowledge and cross-cultural acceptance of Miyazaki’s work.

**Summary**

The survey was designed to provide insight into audience interpretations of various pages *Nausicaä* that, as appropriate to a graphic novel, have a high image and design content. These pages heavily involved patterns that reflected design strategies, although one page asked about patterns related to comic art as a genre. The responses provided by the participants showed the tendency to share interpretations of the images and sequences. The results did not show a correlation between the cultural identity of the participant, Eastern or Western, and the nature of his or her responses. This lack of correlation suggests cross-cultural tendencies in the participants’ interpretations.
Works Cited: Chapter Four

Friedman, Thomas L. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century.*

Chapter Five: Significance and Future Research

When I began this thesis, I focused on two main questions, “What are the patterns in the design of Nausicaä?” and “How do these patterns in the design of the work function?” Chapter Three answers the above research questions by selecting types of patterns suggested in the research and by using these patterns as a method of analysis.

As discussed, the patterns of design in Nausicaä include patterns that relate to comic art as a genre, that recall various design principles, and that reflect design strategies. The discussion of these design patterns revealed that the function of many of the design elements was to account for time. In addition, the function of these patterns in the design categories was often to aid the development both of character and of concepts.

In this chapter, I will talk about the significance of my findings in terms of the function of design elements in Miyazai’s Nausicaä. I believe that my analysis has genre, concept and cultural-based significances. As I discuss significance, I will also note the importance of text to concept in this graphic novel.

Genre-based Significance

In terms of comic book genre analysis, the patterns in Nausicaä reveal a culture-based sequencing of cells (right to left; zig-zag top to bottom) related to the overall structuring of earlier Japanese manga narratives. The use of gutters Nausicaä to separate identifiable cell sequences and to represent a passage of time is also common in culturally accepted conventions of the manga genre and, to a certain extent, of the graphic novel genre as well.

A major significance in the function of genre-based design elements in Nausicaä is the number of design choices related to time. The time accounted for by design choices in Nausicaä include chronological time, physical movement in time (action), and mental
movement or idea development over time. The importance of the latter is reflected in the constant use of shot sequences that serve to focus the reader’s attention on a character’s eyes and, thus, on the nature and development of the character’s ideas and thoughts.

The use of design patterns of various types to account for various aspects of time is interesting in light of McCloud’s definition of sequential art. According to McCloud, sequential art is “juxtaposed pictoral and other images in a deliberate sequence . . . Space does for comics what time does for film” (Understanding Comics, 7). In this respect, it appears that a common function of the design patterns in Nausicaä is to compensate for the fact that graphic novels are a genre fundamentally based on space, not time.

This fact suggests a number of areas for future research. One area, for example, might involve comparing graphic strategies in the narrative sequences of graphic novels (or manga, or comics) and animé. Such research might include re-arranging manga cell sequences and transforming them into a Western comic strip. Since manga and the comic strip are set up differently—the former holistically and the latter in a linear manner—how the frames were sequenced, what the frames contained, and how the frames were juxtaposed might be the subject of further research. A question that might arise could include: “Would the message be lost, remain the same, or be enhanced when the frames were re-arranged to conform to the genre conventions and cultural expectations?”

Another, and totally different, area of future research might take advantage of the huge eyes in manga, and using that graphic feature as part of an application in disability studies. That is, getting children with disabilities to focus on the eyes rather than the mouth is one strategy in teaching students with autism.
Concept-based Significance

If, as McCloud suggests, comics operate based on space, then how do the design elements in Nausicaä use space to make meaning? The analysis in Chapter Three notes a number of ways Miyazaki uses design choices that inform how the space in the cells and the cell sequences is used to create and support meaning. I believe two of the most important ways space in Nausicaä is used is concept-based involving the inclusion of certain visual traits or images within cells to define character and to develop ideas.

Developing character through design

Miyazaki is well known for his character design. The way his characters visually occupy the space in the cell sequences in Nausicaä helps effect that design. Miyazaki’s concern for the relationship between physical appearance and character is established in Chapter Three. It is clear that Miyazaki tries to find a perfect match between Nausicaä’s appearance on the page and his internalized conception of her character. Miyazaki recognizes that images that culturally suggest that Nausicaä is a glamorized “cover girl” or a shy ingénue are images that are wrong for the character. The development of Nausicaä’s very image draws upon a cultural understanding of what certain physical traits and body postures mean. Based on cultural associations, the reader is expected to understand the difference between the “not Nausicaä” and the “the essential Nausicaä” (see figures 3.37-3.39).

Miyazaki’s use of iconography in his graphic presentations in Nausicaä depends on culturally established associations. As Scott McCloud points out in Understanding Comics, comic book heroes, national and international, belong to the “same universe” and have universally recognizable patterns (51-53). In Making Comics McCloud also points
out the similarities of facial expressions and body language across cultures that allows for instant recognition of characters’ moral and emotional states (106-111).

Developing ideas through design

As suggested previously by the iconography of Miyazaki’s character design, images in *Nausicaä* are asked to carry a huge conceptual load. The God Warrior and the serpent are single images that are conceptually rich. The God Warrior is a monster. In *Nausicaä*, God Warriors are biomechanical beings created by man, and they were largely responsible for the Seven Days of Fire that resulted in the apocalyptic landscape that constitutes Nausicaä’s world. It is not surprising that Kushana’s father, the emperor, is seeking to acquire the God Warrior for its power. But the gargantuan God Warrior comes under Nausicaä’s control quite by chance, and that causes a change for the better. Nausicaä names him Ohma, which means “innocence” (VII, 97). In the end, the God Warrior is the weapon that enables Nausicaä to destroy the Crypt that safeguards the genetically altered human genes and the genes of the God Warrior’s progenitors. Ultimately the God Warrior also destroys himself (VII, 216). The embodiment of past mistakes of humankind, the God Warrior, although monstrous, is the instrument for saving humankind.

Another image asked to carry multiple concepts in *Nausicaä* is the serpent. The serpent icon traces the development of Kushana as the leader of her people. The serpent iconography associated with Kushana suggests a range of cross-cultural associations. As audiences will recognize, the serpent has many meanings that draw upon different cultural traditions. Sample discussions of these cultural associations regarding serpents can be found in *Ancient Objects and Sacred Realms; The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized*; and *The Road to Aztlan: Art from a Mythic*
The image of the double-headed serpent, for example, is an icon in Aztec/Mixtec art where it is associated with blood rituals and is connected to vengefulness. The serpent in Abrahamic religions stands for deceit. In certain Eastern religions, the serpent stands for guardianship. Although serpents can be associated with poison, they are in classical Greek culture associated with herbal knowledge and with healing. Among Greeks, the caduceus with two serpents entwined is associated with medicine. The full symbolic potential of the serpent is realized through a cross-cultural understanding of the image. In Miyazaki, the image of the serpent is used to represent the many aspects of Kushana’s heritage and character. Her character involves danger, deception, and destruction, as well as sensuality and seduction, all in line with Judeo-Christian frameworks. Her family crest represents blood and vengeance and conflict within families, in line here with the Aztec associations. But the serpent as an icon is transformed for the last time when Kushana ends up being known the “restorer” at the end of the saga, more in line with Greek cultural associations with serpents. Although Kushana’s battle flag has always featured a single serpent, her role as “restorer” invokes the positive Greek association of entwined serpents with healing.

Understanding the importance of text to concepts in the design

In discussing the patterns in design in *Nausicaä*, this thesis has, I believe, implied that form cannot really be separated from content. Understanding the functions of the various types of design choices in the graphic novel involved understanding how these choices affected what was going on in the narrative. Nevertheless, this thesis has not closely looked at the text conveying this narrative in *Nausicaä*, and the text is important to establishing the storyline and the contexts for the images. Graphic novels are not children’s picture books, and they require more than the presentation of images. An
example of how important the text is to the narrative can be seen in the case of the God Warrior. At the end of the saga, the dialogue reveals that the God Warrior, facing death, is concerned with what type of “person” he is. At his death, Nausicaä reassures him that he is “a brave warrior, proud and pure of heart. You are my son,” she continues, “and I am proud of you” (VII, 216). Nausicaä’s “absolution of the God Warrior and the earlier fact that the God Warrior’s name stands for “innocence” are both established by the text.

Understanding the serpent iconography is also linked to textual discussion in Volume III of *Nausicaä*. We discover the meaning of Kushana’s family crest in a textual discussion. It is a textual explanation that reveals the meaning of the crest to Kushana. For Kushana, the double-headed serpent means that it is the destiny of her family to fight, spill blood, and have parents killing their children and children killing their parents (III, 17).

Another example of the importance of text relates to the discussion of word bubbles. As discussed, the shape of the outline of the word bubbles often functioned to indicate prophesy. The content of the word bubbles, the prophesy itself, however, is obviously conveyed as text inside the bubble. Through such text, the audience learns that Nausicaä is the fulfillment of a prophesy. She is the blue-clad savior everyone has been waiting for. The text allows us to understand her role and, in this regard, to understand the significance of the fact that Ohmu blood is blue. At one point in the narrative, Nausicaä is covered in Ohmu blood and becomes “blue-clad.” It is through the text that Nausicaä even begins to sound messianic at the end of the series. She states, “The sympathy and love of the Ohmu were born from the depths of nothingness” (VII, 201). She also asserts, “Life is the light that shines in the darkness” (VII, 201).

It is also through text that the audience learns Namulith’s story, which helps
interpret his visual representation. The text informs us that Namulith was once an attractive young man and conscientious leader. He, however, is quite ugly at the start of the novel and degenerates to "quite a mess" by Volume VII (158). Namulith’s appearance reflects the end of an emotional journey that has led him from wanting to rescue his people to hating their stupidity and stubborness. In the case of both the God Warrior and Namulith, Miyazaki recognizes the cultural association between ugliness and evil, and builds on both a subversion and recognition of that connection to make ideological points. Namulith’s story, and thus the comparison between the God Warrior and Namulith, is dependent on textual revelations.

A key to the lessons being taught in *Nausicaä* is also conveyed in text. Given the long history of war as embodied in the images of weaponry and battle in *Nausicaä*, the spirit guide remarks: “You humans tread the same paths over and over again.” Nobody can escape “from the cycle wherein karma gives birth to karma, sorrow gives birth to sorrow” (VII, 122).

Opportunities for future research arise in looking at the design of image and text together. What happens, for example, when the graphic novelist chooses to use pages with image only or, on the other hand, shot sequences with a lot of text? And what does the nature of the interaction between text and image in the frames mean? How does this interaction function? Other opportunities for research would involve continuing to focus on design patterns associated with images. An interesting research topic here, for example, would be to look at the idea of sensory design and how it relates to manga and to graphic novels in particular. As designers we tend to be extremely visual and forget to portray our other senses. Graphic novels seem to do an extremely good job in portraying and implementing the plethora of senses in a two dimensional media. Analyzing such work
would help designers conceptualize the idea of taste, touch, smell, and space or orientation.

**The Culture Factor**

As indicated in previous discussion, Miyazaki’s use of design patterns related to the comic book genre is culturally based. Miyazaki’s character design also draws from cultural precedents. It is common knowledge that Nausicaä’s name is taken from Homer’s Odysseus, where Nausicaä is a Phaeacian (Phoenician) princess who rescues Odysseus from the sea. In Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä*, of course, the princess must discover the healing properties of the Sea of Corruption to rescue the world. Miyazaki remarks, “The strongest factor in [both] Nausicaä’s character[s], as the protagonist, [both in Homer’s tale and in Miyazaki’s graphic novel] is the sheer amount of responsibility that she has” (*The Art of Nausicaä*,148).

The visual presentations and iconic images in the cell spaces in *Nausicaä*, however, tend to highlight cross-cultural connections. This cross-cultural tendency has been discussed previously in this chapter in terms of associations connected to the serpent iconography. Throughout the graphic novel series, there is a mix of cultural artifacts within the cells. Images of prehistoric creatures, as with the tribolite-like Ohmu, share space with those of futuristic creatures, as with Nausicaä’s pet fox-squirrel and her mount, a horseclaw—a large flightless bird genetically engineered as a replacement for horses. Humans in medieval clothing share space with those in fantastic clothing. Medieval weapons characteristically share space with airplanes in the frames. Old technologies fight new wars.

Miyazaki also transforms old ideologies for the new situation in *Nausicaä*. Miyazaki’s work, for example, indirectly refers to Gaia philosophy, which proposes that
living organisms and inorganic materials are part of the Earth’s biosphere, which has its own regulatory functions. This philosophy has roots in classical thought, and appears early on when, in Volume I, Nausicaä explains that she is growing spores from the Sea of Corruption in her secret laboratory to test her hypothesis that the Sea of Corruption is the key to the earth healing itself (I, 76-77).

Miyazaki’s use of an apocalyptic landscape as a setting for Nausicaä inherently allows for a mixture of old and new, a mixture that essential creates a new culture featuring cross-cultural associations. The impressions of the characters first depend on given associations but often are transformed during the course of the narrative. The God Warrior, for example, is a monster, and monsters and monster-hunters have a long history in various cultures. Heather L. Duda associates monster hunting with the question, “What does it mean to be human?” (7). However, Miyazaki’s monster is transformed under Nausicaä’s command, and itself becomes a symbol of what it means to be human. And a big part of being human involves accounting for the environment. Environmentalism is a strong theme in Miyazaki’s work.

The participants of my survey also marked an environmental theme as crucial: 33.3% named “The environment will survives no matter what the destructive actions of men are” as the overall meaning of the images they saw. Only the theme “It is crucial to remember your responsibility to your community when act” received more votes. The focus on community is certainly a major element in the culture Miyazaki has created, and Nausicaä embodies this commitment.

My interest in the cultural and cross-cultural underpins my question, “To what extent do culturally diverse college students share perceptions of Nausicaä and her world as it is portrayed in the design of the sequential art of Nausicaä?” What I discovered
through my survey is that the interpretations of the students in my small sampling tended to be cross-cultural. That is, there were no patterns associated with participants from Eastern versus Western cultures that could be assigned to the cultural background of the participant.

A future survey could further the research how audiences from Eastern and Western cultures perceive certain design choices in graphic novels and maybe in manga and comics as well. Surveys could feature incentives and include an expanded participant base, involving students outside Iowa State. Such a survey might help strengthen my first set of data by reaffirming that no matter what the culture, people tend to share certain understandings of the message conveyed through both the images and body copy in graphic novels, manga, and comics alike.

McCloud says that, “understanding comics is serious business” (Understanding Comics, 197). I believe that to understand fully the serious nature of comics, the aesthetic surgery that McCloud performed when finding a definition for comics that separated form and content must be reversed. Accordingly, I believe a major key to understanding the design choices in Nausicaä involves the fact that Miyazaki is asking the reader to reconsider the future in terms of the past. The narrative and the corresponding iconography of Nausicaä and the Valley of the Wind asks us to consider old and new simultaneously, and in so doing, asks us to envision a new world.
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YOU SEE THEIR SKELETONS EVERYWHERE ABOVE GROUND... BUT THIS MONSTER COULD HAVE BEEN MADE YESTERDAY.

A.. A GOD WARRIOR...

SO OUR SPIES WERE RIGHT. THE PJITEI ENGINEERS TOOK OUT THE CONTROL STONE AND PUT IT TO SLEEP, AFRAID OF NEW DESTRUCTION...

IT'S HEART IS STILL BEATING... BURIED A THOUSAND YEARS, AND IT'S STILL ALIVE!

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IRB Approval Letter

DATE: September 30, 2009
TO: James Ewald
    158 Design
CC: Deb Satterfield
    277 Design
FROM: Roxanne Bappe, IRB Coordinator
      Office for Responsible Research
TITLE: Cultural Issues in the Presentation of Narratives in Visual Design
IRB ID: 09-418 Study Review Date: 24 September 2009

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed this project and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b). The IRB determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.
- You must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.
- Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuing Review and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please be sure to use the documents with the IRB approval stamp in your research.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.
Consent Forms

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT: LISTSERV PARTICIPANTS

Title of Study: Cultural Issues in the Presentation of Narratives in Visual Design

Investigator: James Ewald

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore how people from different cultural contexts read and interpret graphic texts differently. This study includes a survey that explores not only sequencing issues experienced by different audiences, but also judgments made by different audiences as they respond to the texts of Hayao Miyazaki in his graphic novel 7-volume series Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are either an undergraduate or graduate student who has been exposed to comic books, graphic novels, and/or anime; and who has an interest in cultural differences and in graphic texts and their interpretation.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for 15-30 minutes, or for the time it takes to fill out the 17-question survey. Volunteers might spend an additional 30 minutes or so in a follow-up discussion. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: you will be asked on the online survey to answer three types of questions; 1) demographic information, including age, gender, nationality, and your educational level; 2) information that involves an evaluation of perceived personal expertise regarding graphic novels (no specific level of expertise is either expected or required; the ratings scale used in this section involves Likert scale evaluations: very good, good, average, poor, very poor); and 3) the reading of graphic novel excerpts and coming to conclusions about sequences, characters, and themes. (Although this survey does not present an entire graphic novel, selected excerpts have been chosen based on their representative nature.)

RISKS

There are not foreseeable risks when participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you, although it is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing a better understanding of how people from different cultures understand and interpret graphic texts. With globalization, attention to how different cultures perceive texts has become increasingly important to design. It is hoped that this research will be important to the differential visual
design of a range of deliverables for audiences from cultures. Such deliverables might include web pages and sites as well as visuals matched with text in other types of documents.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study, nor will you be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may skip any questions that you are uncomfortable answering.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. To ensure confidentiality, the surveys will be completed anonymously. Subjects will be assigned a unique code and letter and the survey responses thus will not be identified by name. Moreover, the data will be kept on a personal, external hard drive, inaccessible to all but the researcher. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact James Ewald at jewald@iastate.edu or Deb Satterfield at debra815@iastate.edu.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your check mark indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. Because this is an online survey, please print a copy of the informed consent form for your own files.

✓ “Yes, I agree to participate in this study; I understand that my responses will remain confidential and anonymous.” _______________
Date: mm/dd/yy
Survey: Graphic Novels

Demographic Information

Age:  □ 15-18  □ 19-22  □ 23-26  □ 27-30  □ 31-34  □ 35+
Gender:  □ Male  □ Female
Nationality:  □ Japanese  □ Chinese  □ Korean  □ American
□ Japanese-American  □ Chinese-American  □ Korean-American
□ Other ___________________________

Time Spent in the United States:  Years ___  Months ___

Current Educational Level:
□ Secondary  □ College  □ Graduate School  □ Other _________________

Questions

1. How would you rate your knowledge of graphic novels?
   □ Very good  □ Good  □ Average  □ Poor  □ Very poor

2. How would you rate your knowledge of manga?
   □ Very good  □ Good  □ Average  □ Poor  □ Very poor

3. How would you rate your knowledge of anime?
   □ Very good  □ Good  □ Average  □ Poor  □ Very poor

4. Check the authors/titles you are familiar with from the following list:
   □ Hiyao Miyazaki (Naussica and the Valley of the Wind)
   □ Natsuki Takaya (Fruits Basket)
   □ Frank Miller (The Dark Knight Returns)
   □ Art Spiegelman (Maus)
   □ Yoshito Usui (Crayon Shinchan)
   □ Your choice: ___________________________

5. Have you ever seen an anime series that interested you in the graphic novel that was the basis for the films, or the reverse?
   □ Yes  □ No

If yes, name the series/ novel: ___________________________________________
6. a. In the excerpt below, number the frames in the order in which you read them.

b. Provide the number of the frame that is, in your opinion, the main focus of this sequence.

7. For the character, Princess Nausicaa, in the sequence below, choose from the following list of all those adjectives that best describe her.
prudent

foolish

courageous
decisive

impulsive

your word:
8. Choose from the following list words those that best describe the Princess's basis for motivation in the sequence below.

- naivete
- confusion
- courage
- decisiveness
- empathy
- your word: ____________________________

[Comic panels showing a scene with characters and dialogue bubbles.]

- You're crying.

- Oh... you're...

- Wait... his eyes are glowing blue... he's about to attack.

- Princess... to the spaceship... quickly...
9. Choose from the following list of words those that best describe the Princess's motivation in the sequence below.

- naivete
- courage
- empathy
- anger
- decisiveness
- your word:

Princess: They're landing on the east side of the valley, without warning our inspectors!

Intolerable! That's a newly mined field.

Now we'll have to burn off that entire area.

If we're not careful, this valley could become a second Pejite!...

Get my men! Roll out the guns! General! Everyone! I'll deal with this! This is an act of war!

Those fellow Marobren will roll the entire valley!
10. Choose from the following list words that best describe the Princess's relationship with the old man as indicated in the sequence shown below.

- spoiled
- inconsiderate
- respected

- pampered
- loved
- your word: ___________________
11. Choose from the following list select those words that best describe the Princess’s stance toward the events in the narrative as seen in the excerpt below.

- powerful  
- empathetic
- predatory  
- environmentalist
- defeated  
- your word: ____________________

---

This bloody forest must seem a warm and comforting place.

I wonder what sort of world Ohau sees through his fourteen eyes.

But humans can't walk here unashamed for even five minutes, or our lungs would decay. A forest of death...

Who...?!

He killed us!

They've stopped...
12. Choose from the following options those that best describe what you think the overall meaning or theme is of the sequences shown in this survey.

☐ It is crucial to remember your responsibility to your community when you act.
☐ The environment will survive no matter what the destructive actions of men.
☐ Violence is an acceptable way of solving problems.
☐ Softness and empathy are not good leadership traits.
☐ Foolish leaders lead to disaster for their people.

☐ Your suggestion: ____________________________

13. Choose from the following options those that, in your opinion, best reflect the Japanese precedents for the story about the Princess.

☐ A little girl who dreams about toothpick warriors that come to life in her bedroom.
☐ The peach boy who fights against invading demons with the help of a dog, a pheasant, and a monkey (Momotaro).
☐ The little princess who loves insects, especially caterpillars (Mushi Medaru Hime-gimi).
☐ The three strong women who teach a famous Japanese wrestler lessons about strength.
☐ The golden boy (Kintaro), who had terrific strength, who learned the language of animals, and who—as an adult—became a great warrior defeating a cannibalistic monster.

☐ Your suggestion: ____________________________

14. Choose from the following options those that, in your opinion, best reflect Western folk tales/myths that have themes or characteristics in common with the Princess.

☐ Sir Gawain, who promises to face the Green Knight but ends up facing temptation as well as a pseudo beheading.
☐ Cinderella, who labors for her wicked stepmother, attends a ball with the help of a fairy godmother, and who meets a prince and lives happily ever after.
☐ Pippi Longstocking, an unconventional, strong and assertive girl who lives with her horse and her monkey and causes trouble for adults.
☐ Jack, who traded the family cow for a handful of beans that grew into a gigantic beanstalk, which Jack climbed and found an ogre, who Jack tricked to gain riches and happiness.
☐ Bella, whose father brought her to stay with a beast, which later turned into a handsome prince when she stated that she loved him.
15. Choose from the following American comic book/graphic novel heroes those that, in your opinion, have character many traits in common with the Princess.

- Captain America, who aided the United States war effort in World War II, has an indestructible shield, and is at the peak of human physical development.
- Wonderwoman, who is based on Greek mythology and who has superior strength, a natural rapport with animals and the lasso of truth.
- Batman, who—with Robin—fights crime in Gotham City using intellect, detective skills, and science and technology.
- Spawn, a superhero that has turned into a more flawed anti-hero over time and who faces both supernatural and criminal enemies.
- Storm, a female human mutant in X-Men who has the power to control the weather and fly.

Your suggestion: ________________________________

16. Choose from the following story types those that best match the narrative that seems to be underpinning the Princess narrative represented in the excerpts shown in this survey.

- A coming-of-age story in which the author presents the psychological, moral and social shaping of the personality of a (usually young) main character
- A chaos narrative, which is a litany of suffering and dangers where nothing gets better
- A quest narrative, where the hero departs, experiences adventures on the way to achieving a goal, and then returns.
- A springboard story, which enables an audience to understand how a community can change and helps visualize large-scale transformation
- An anti-story, which is a narrative that arises in opposition to another narrative and tries to undermine it.

Your suggestion: ________________________________

17. Are you interested in having a brief follow-up discussion online with the researcher?

- Yes, I would like to talk with the researcher online. I understand that what I say will remain confidential and comments will not be identified by my name. Here is my email address: ________________________________

- No, thank you. I am finished with my participation in this project.
Email

Are you over 18 years old and of willing to spend 15 to 20 minutes participating in a survey studying your reaction to the graphic novels of Hayao Miyazaki?

If you are interested in participating in this survey, please contact:

James Ewald at 515.451.3767 or jewald@iastate.edu
Flyer

Volunteers Needed for Graphic Novel Survey

Are you over 18 years old and of willing to spend 15 to 20 minutes participating in a survey studying your reaction to the graphic novels of Hayao Miyazaki?

If you are interested in participating in this survey, please go to the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDKMWPD

or contact

jewald@iastate.edu