

# Filmanalysis

/fɪlm/

a story or event recorded by a camera as a set of moving images and shown in a cinema or on television.

/ə'nalɪsɪs/

detailed examination of the elements or structure of something.

By  
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スタジオジブリ作品  
STUDIO GHIBLI

# PRINCESS MONONOKE







# General Information



Directed by	<i>Hayao Miyazaki</i>
Written by	<i>Hayao Miyazaki</i>
Produced by	<i>Toshio Suzuki</i>
Starring	<i>Yōji Matsuda</i>
	<i>Yuriko Ishida</i>
	<i>Yūko Tanaka</i>
	<i>Kaoru Kobayashi</i>
	<i>Masahiko Nishimura</i>
	<i>Tsunehiko Kamijo</i>
	<i>Akihiro Miwa</i>
	<i>Mitsuko Mori</i>
	<i>Hisaya Morishige</i>
Cinematography	<i>Atsushi Okui</i>
Edited by	<i>Takeshi Seyama</i>
Music by	<i>Joe Hisaishi</i>
Production company	<i>Studio Ghibli</i>
Distributed by	<i>Toho</i>
Release date	<i>July 12, 1997</i>
Running time	<i>133 minutes</i>
Country	<i>Japan</i>
Language	<i>Japanese</i>

# Princess Mononoke



***"See with eyes unclouded by hate"***

This analysis is about the movie "Princess Mononoke". Released in 1997 by Studio Ghibli and made by Hayao Miyazaki.

Princess Mononoke follows the journey of Ashitaka, a young prince that gets cursed while fighting a demon. He sets out to remove this curse with the help of a forest spirit. Instead, he gets involved in a conflict between forest spirits, who are led by gods, and an industrial town named Irontown.

Central in this story is the conflict between nature and humanity.



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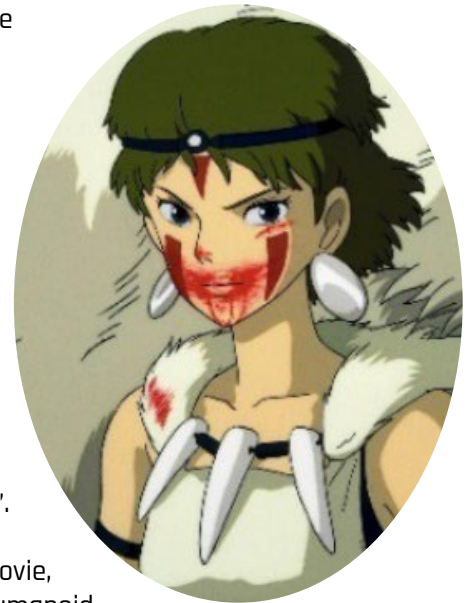
# Question 1

**What is the title of the film? Explain the title.**

The movie is called: "Princess Mononoke", the title refers to a character in the movie also known as "San" or "Wolf girl". The name "Princess Mononoke" is only mentioned a few times by Lady Eboshi, she explains she is the: "Princess of spirits of ghouls, beasts and ancient gods." A quick google search reveals that in Japanese, the term 'Mononoke' is not a name, but a word for supernatural, shapeshifting beings. Which is probably a referral to the supernatural gods we see in the movie and most importantly the Great Forest Spirit changes form when the day turns into the night, and thus becoming the nightwalker. Another take on the term 'Mononoke', might be the way gods change into demons. When this happens, their physique literally changes into another form.

However, the peculiar thing about the name for this movie is, you expect "Princess Mononoke" to be the protagonist of this story, however she is not. Instead, the audience follows a story of a young Prince boy called "Ashitaka".

You meet princess mononoke for the first time about 20 minutes into the movie, however the audience doesn't yet know that it's her. At that point she's a humanoid creature wearing a mask and riding a white wolf, a few minutes later you get to see she's actually a human girl.



She is the first face we see that 'leads' the attack against a caravan on its way to Irontown. Later on, she infiltrates Irontown on her own to try and kill Lady Eboshi, the leader of Irontown. She does this out of revenge for the forests Irontown cut down. In short: she represents the resistance of the forest.

# Question 2

**Which basic conflicts are represented in the "meta story" of the film?  
How does the director adapt the meta story?**

The core story of "Princess Mononoke" is about a battle between nature and industrialisation/culture and the multitude of ways in which this battle presents itself.

This movie deals with topics that we, in our time and day, are sadly all too familiar with. But it uses elements of fantasy or magic to make this battle and its consequences ever clearer. It gives physical embodiments to many of the emotions that spring forth. Anger seems to turn the gods evil, while what is actually turning them evil is human greed. This might be embodied by the iron musket balls that are embedded in all of the gods that turn into demons.

"Princess Mononoke" has ways to call out its viewers in subtle ways. Like having humans in the movie be overly oblivious to how the world works around them: "I didn't know the Forest Spirit made the flowers grow". So that we understand that maybe that's what's going on in real life as well.

Looking at the basic conflicts in this movie, we've determined that there's a mix of three: passion vs. reason, Beasts, humans, and gods and inside vs. outside.

### Passion vs. Reason

First there's Passion vs. Reason. Even as he battles the curse in his arm that tempts him to give in to greed, Ashitaka seems to be the literal embodiment of reason, never giving in to the curse. All of the other humans act almost purely on greed and emotion. One way that this is displayed in is the way that humans are changing nature. As far as we can tell the wolves and the forest spirit are the embodiment of reason. They do not act on emotion, but they simply act because their situation is how it has always been and should be.



While the humans are the embodiment of passion. They act purely based on greed, their emotions and are willing to clear out any and all obstacles they might run in to. We see this human greed literally infecting gods when they are shot because of it. The more the gods turn into demons, the more they start to act on emotion. However, it is worth mentioning that neither side is completely perfect either. We see animals, like the boars, that act on impulse and without thinking things through. Lady Eboshi takes in different groups of people that are outcasted by society like, brothel girls and lepers, even though she still profits from their hard work, she seems to show sort of care for their well-being. However, it is worth noting that she does not choose to go back to the town when it's under attack.

### Beasts, humans, and gods

The second basic conflict we've found to be present in this movie is beasts, humans, and gods. "Princess Mononoke" literally uses the interactions between beasts, humans, and gods to delve into deeply complex moral and philosophical questions. The movie explores the interaction that happens when gods and beasts get in the way of human greed. Whether either side is good, bad, or somewhere in-between, is left up to the viewers discretion. Although "Princess Mononoke" does have its biases at times. What, at least to us, clearly shines through is the respect that the Japanese have for nature and the disgust they sometimes show towards human greed, industrialisation, and expansion. Nevertheless, the movie does explore both sides of this conflict and gives valid reasons why both sides believe they are in the right. Though the viewer may not always agree or have the same point of view.



### Inside vs Outside

Thirdly there's Inside vs Outside. In "Princess Mononoke" we see a clear inner conflict between Ashitaka's inside and what is literally on his outside. He controls his emotion and does what he has been told by the wise woman: "It's your fate to go there and see what you can see with eyes unclouded by hate". While on his outside we see the emotional, impulsive demonic infection which Ashitaka tries, and mostly succeeds, to control.

However, he also fights an external conflict against the humans (society) and the forest (nature) at the same time. His goal is to eventually make peace between the two sides. Lastly, Ashitaka leaves the safety of his hometown (inside) and travels to the unknown 'east' (outside).

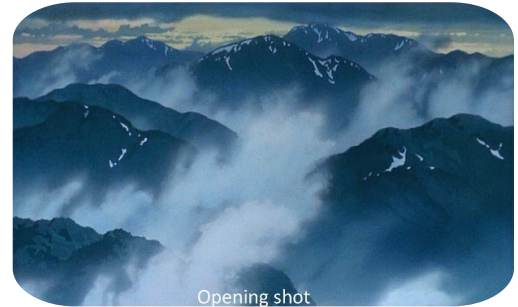




## Question 3

**Which story events are directly presented to us in the plot, and which must we assume or infer? Is there any non-diegetic material given in the plot?**

In terms of story events, all are eventually presented and shown to us. We have the same information as our protagonist. Which means that, while we don't know everything straight away, we do find out about the entire story mostly about the same time as Ashitaka. We do have to guess at the specific time and place. While we are told that it takes place in "ancient times" we do not know what time that is. We don't get a specific location either, the only information we get about location is 'east' and 'west'. It is heavily inferred that the story takes place in ancient Japan. But we are not specifically told whether it does.



Opening shot

In terms of (non-)diegetic elements, visually there are almost none, non-diegetic elements. Except for the title screen, first intro shot and credits. All story plots and scenes are diegetic.

Looking at the auditory aspect of the film almost all the music is non-diegetic. The only time you hear diegetic music is when the Irontown women are singing as they work the bellows. All other sounds when people talk, objects move or effects take place, are diegetic.



However, one notable thing happens with sound: every time the Forest Spirit enters the scene, there is none. If there was sound or music playing, it stops. Even if the Forest Spirit grows plants or walks on water, there is no sound. Even after the spirit has entered the scene, sounds and music are more peaceful or muffled in the background. This effect is reinforced every time the spirit is in the camera shot.

## Question 4

**What is the earliest story event of which we learn?  
How does it relate to later events through a series of causes and effects?**

The earliest story event we learn of, which sets the whole story in motion, is when the iron in the sand beneath Irontown runs out. The villagers try to dig up the mountain to find more iron ore. To do this, they have to cut down the forest, but the boar god 'Naro', the ruler of the forest, chases them away. The villagers have nothing to do for months until Lady Eboshi arrives and takes control of Irontown. It's she who shoots down Naro, turning him into a hateful demon.

Naro runs off to the east full of rage and hatred. He is the beast we meet in the first shot and plot event of the film. Our protagonist, Ashitaka, stops and kills the beast, but not before being cursed by it. He has been sent out of town by the 'wise woman' of his town to follow his destiny and find a way to lift the curse.

This event basically acts as a domino effect for the rest of the story. The iron ran out, which caused the villagers to dig into the mountain and cut down the forest. This caused Naro to attack them, which caused Eboshi to show up and kill Naro. That caused Naro to turn into a demon, and so on. Had Eboshi not shown up, or had Naro gone in a different direction as a boar, the story would have ended in a completely different way.



# Question 5

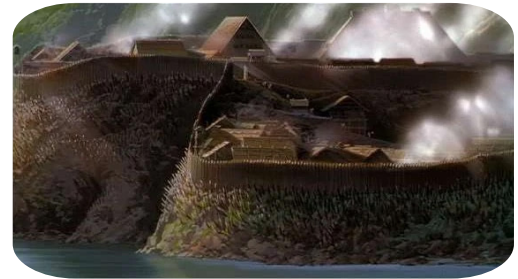
**What is the temporal relationship of story events? Has temporal order, frequency, or duration been manipulated in the plot to affect our understanding of events?**

There are some story events that happened before our current point in the story. We do learn about these events along the way, at the same time as our protagonist. But before then, we can only guess at what happened. Temporal order has been used as flashbacks to go back to past events so that we, along with the protagonist, understand what is happening and why it is happening. For example: we gradually learn more about the boar called "Naro" and what happened to it, when an Irontown villager tells the story of Irontown to Ashitaka. The movie keeps us guessing, so that we learn about who killed them at the same time as the protagonist, which lets us understand his way of handling it. All other story events are told in chronological order.

Temporal duration is used to mainly to show the difference between the 'human world' and the 'nature world'. When the audience is shown scenes in the forest, everything seems to slow down and be more at peace. This is effect is emphasised each time the Forest Spirit enters the scene. This is always a very long scene, and it encapsulates the mysterious and calm aura surrounding the Forest Spirit. It makes you wonder what it thinks, what it stands for and why it acts in certain ways.



While in the human world there's an almost constant pace to uphold. Even more so in when Ashitaka is in Irontown, it feels like there is always work to do, it creates a feeling of stress. There are a few longer scenes in the human world as well, these are used to build tension or show a deeper connection. The tension build-up happens when Mononoke infiltrates the camp, the process of infiltration is very fast, getting only short cut scenes. However, after the camp readies themselves and Lady Eboshi set up an ambush, the scenes slow down again.



There are a few events that repeat themselves. The most obvious one is the Forest Spirit entering the scene. This is shown multiple times in the movie. The second is samurai attacking towns, this is shown at the start of the movie when Ashitaka is on his way east. When building up to the climax the samurai, under command of Lord Asano, also attack Irontown. Thirdly we see a boar turning into a demon twice, the first one is Naro, the one that cursed Ashitaka and set the story in motion. The other one is the boar god Okkoto after his fight with the humans he is badly wounded. When his 'warriors' (humans wearing dead boar skin) return to him, he slowly starts to lose his rationality while becoming a demon and leads them to the forest spirit.

## Question 6

**Does the closing reflect a clear-cut pattern of development that relates it to the opening? Do all narrative lines achieve closure, or are some left open?**

The movie infers a clear pattern of development between nature and humans. However, this conflict wasn't so clear at the beginning of the movie. When Ashitaka is cursed by the demon, the conflict of the story at that point seems to be more superficial: getting rid of the curse. But when following Ashitaka on his journey through the forest and to Irontown the audience, together with him, learn of a bigger meaning behind all of this. The reason he was cursed, originated from the conflict between humans and nature, connecting the dots. He makes it his goal to ensure peace between the humans and nature. Princess Mononoke helps him achieving this goal, they each represent both sides in different ways. Ashitaka on the outside, stands for the human side, but on the inside, he is rational like the nature gods. Princess Mononoke stands for the nature on the outside, but on the inside, she reacts mostly out of impulse and emotion.

In the end Ashitaka and Princess Mononoke both go their own ways. She cannot live amongst humans after what they did to the forest (spirit) and our protagonist stays behind to rebuild a "better" town along with the townspeople, they do say they will stay in touch. But if any of these things happen, we don't know.



When looking purely at the visual opening and closing scenes you see kind of the same shot. At the start of the movie, the camera pans down showing you a forest where plants and trees are uprooted by some kind of creature. In the last scene the camera again pans down on a forest however this forest is healing, and another creature is seen, a tree spirit, which is a sign the forest is healthy.



The big narrative lines do achieve closure; Ashitaka's curse is lifted in the end by the Forest Spirit, the forest and humans seem to be at peace for now. One might even suggest that Ashitaka's curse symbolically stands for the peace between the two sides, his curse gets bigger during the movie. When the movie climaxes, his whole body is covered with it. We learn something about most characters in the movie, even minor ones. But whether they do the things they say or not is left open to the imagination.

## Question 7

**How does narration present story information to us? Is it restricted to one or a few characters' knowledge, or does it range freely among the characters in different spaces? Does it give us considerable depth of story information by exploring the characters' mental states?**

There is no clear-cut narration in this movie. The audience rarely knows more than the protagonist, but this information is not drastically changing the opinion or viewpoint of the audience. It mostly serves as insight into the world and relationships between other characters. Most of the time we learn the information at the same time as the protagonist does. And when the audience does learn more information, the protagonist learns about that same information a few minutes later. Concluding that the narration is restricted.

As an audience we have no insight in what any of the characters think or feel, including the protagonist. We can only see their external behavior, making this movie an objective framework. This is done to emphasize his role of being rational. However, we do see and hear the same things as the protagonist, giving the audience perceptual subjectivity. There are a few moments where the audience gets a glimpse inside Ashitaka's head: the first one is when the villager tells him the story of Naro, the boar that cursed him. Here the audience gets visual flashbacks of that story. It is implied Ashitaka sees them to because the visuals slowly crossfade to his face, as if he looks at the event unfolding and slowly getting back into reality while the camera zooms out of his face.

Secondly, when the boars fight the humans, Ashitaka was on his way back home. But as he travels, he hears explosions in the distance, the audience sees snippets of explosions, boars and Princess Mononoke fighting. If he saw these visions too is not totally clear. He stops to listen to the explosions and when he does, he notices the sounds are coming from Irontown.



Lastly when he is under water and the audience hears: "Ashitaka, can you save the girl you love?" this causes him to regain consciousness and swim to the surface. You have no information where this voice came from. Apart from these scenes there's never a moment when you get any mental subjectivity information from the protagonist.

## Question 8

**How closely does the film follow the conventions of the classical hollywood cinema?  
If it departs significantly from those conventions, what formal principle does it use instead?**

The movie does not follow the classical Hollywood cinema. Firstly, it's not a movie that takes place between 1910-1960. Secondly a key element to Hollywood cinema is that it is character based, which means that the story is mainly focused on the protagonist's decisions and goals. On top of that, there is a conflict that forces the protagonist to adapt, to achieve his goal. We see almost no noticeable change or character growth occur in our protagonist. Even though the goal of the protagonist is central to the story, we have no idea how he's planning to achieve that goal or why he makes certain decisions.

The story somewhat follows a three-act structure in the sense that there's a clear introduction, inciting event, rising action, climax, and a resolution. Of course, there are obstacles along the way, but there are no clear plot points causing the protagonist to change his behavior.

Princess Mononoke is a Japanese film, so one would expect it to follow the Kishōtenketsu structure. The story has some elements, like the introduction (ki) of the characters and era, as well as the development (shō) where no major changes occur. But there seems to be no unexpected twist in the story. Of course, the story leads to a shocking climax, where the Forest Spirit is eventually shot down by Eboshi. But not an unforeseen one as she states very early on, she plans to kill it. Obviously, the story does end with a conclusion (ketsu) that wraps up the story.



# Question 9

**Describe how the 12 stages of the hero's journey and the 8 archetypes are represented throughout the film.**

**The 12 stages of the hero's journey are described below:**

1. The protagonist is introduced in his hometown (ordinary world) where he is the prince of a dying clan.
2. In the process of killing a demon, the protagonist is cursed. This gives him a reason to visit the wise woman (call to adventure).
3. The protagonist does not refuse the call. He also shows no reluctance whatsoever.
4. The protagonist is told to leave the town by the wise woman (mentor) to find a cure for his curse.
5. They cross the first threshold into the unknown world, where we see grand and impressive landscapes.
6. The first obstacle he runs into is a town overrun by samurai. He aids the town in fighting these samurai. The second obstacle presents itself when he tries to buy some rice, using gold. At first this is a problem, but a man in the crowd recognizes the worth of gold. Ashitaka has gained an ally for a short time that tells him about the Forest Spirit. When travelling, he stumbles upon a river and sees 2 men lying unconscious on the riverbank. As he's helping them out of the water, he sees Princess Mononoke and the wolves on the other side. He decides to approach them from afar, making it the first short contact between the two.
7. He then travels with the two injured men through the forest, as it is the fastest way to their home. This way they enter the realm of the Forest Spirit.

From this point on the story does not follow the hero's journey any further. There are multiple challenges and obstacles along the way but there's no reward at the end of the road. No boon to take back, he doesn't return to the ordinary world because he can't.

**The 8 characters are described below:**

**The villain:** There's no one clear villain, but both the human world and the natural world struggle against the hero.

**The donor:** There's no stereotypical donor in this story. The hero is not seen packing or getting ready to leave. One moment they cut off their hair and the next they are packed on their red elk. However, the hero does get a small trinket from his 'little sister' before he leaves, which is a crystal dagger.

**The helper:** Again there's no one person fulfilling this role, however there are different characters taking up this role. The monk that leads him to the realm of the forest spirit, the forest spirits leading him through the forest and Princess Mononoke also cares for the hero.

**The princess:** Even though they don't get married, Princess Mononoke is clearly a love interest of Ashitaka. However, at the end of the story it isn't clear if they will live happily ever after.

**Her father:** This is a clear role fulfilled by the wolf god "Mono". He and Mononoke are both the embodiment of the forest and its fight against the humans.

**The dispatcher:** In this case the wise woman of the hero's hometown tells him to go look for a cure outside of the town.

**The hero:** The hero is clearly the protagonist Ashitaka. He presumably gets together with the princess and seems to have a strong connection with the donor at the time of saying goodbye.

**False hero:** This role is not being fulfilled by anyone in the story. Nobody tries to marry the princess or takes credit for the actions of the hero.

# Question 10

**How do typically filmic elements enhance the story? Think about the mise-en-scene, the camera work, special effects and the lighting, sound and editing.**

"Princess Mononoke" is an animated movie, which means that the creators had great freedom in how they wanted to portray their movie. There are two different camera shots that we see being used a lot. Close-up action shots and shots coming from above, as if we're a monkey looking down from a tree.

Close-up shots are used when the audience is expected to pay attention to a certain event or person on screen. This is done a lot in this movie. It's helpful in making the audience pay attention to what's on screen. In an animation it also makes displaying emotions a lot easier due to the fact that the audience can see subtle changes more easily.



While travelling through the forest, the camerawork makes it feel as if we're a monkey (or a spirit) sitting in the trees above Ashitaka. Outside of the forest, most if not all of the camerawork is very close up and personal. Once we're inside the forest and the forest spirit comes into play, the camerawork starts to make everything feel grander. Especially during scenes where the forest spirit turns into its "big" form. Suddenly we rise above the forest and can see for miles around. This reinforces the feeling that this "forest spirit" is somewhat alien and above humans. An element that also accomplishes this is that we never hear the "forest spirit" speak.



A scene that sticks out from the rest of the movie is when Ashitaka sees the "forest spirit" for the first time. Here the spirit is presented as something almost otherworldly. The camera zooms past a bunch of trees to show us the forest spirit surrounded by yellow, almost golden, light. Our protagonist gets distracted by his infected arm and, once he has it back under control, the spirit has disappeared. This also aids the otherworldly feeling and leaves us guessing at what it actually is that we just saw.



# Question 11

**Can you apply the different stages of freytag' triangle to the film?  
Try to schematically represent the film accordingly.**

## Exposition

The audience gets a quick introduction to the type of world that the story is in through text on the screen. We also briefly see the demon, without any context. We get introduced to Ashitaka and Yakul as they encounter 3 girls from the village. A villain shows up in the form of a possessed boar and Ashitaka has to stop it from reaching the village. During the exposition we mainly learn that Ashitaka is the hero of the story. He does anything to protect the people/ village he loves.

### **Conflict/ inciting incident**

The conflict/ inciting incident is the battle between Ashitaka and the demonic boar. His arm gets infected, and he's basically forced to follow his fate. Then he has to leave the village and go on his adventure.

### **Rising Action**

The rising action spans from the moment that Ashitaka has to leave his village up until the final battle between nature and man. Ashitaka goes on his adventure, meets new people and discovers more about the world he's in. He gets involved in the main conflict and slowly unearths more and more about what had happened before his arrival. Ashitaka meets all the key players, whether he knows it or not, in this already ongoing conflict.

### **Climax**

The climax starts when the boars attack Eboshi and her men. It goes on until the forest spirit's head is returned to it. Everything that happens in between these events includes practically all of the characters that we've got to know. Their stories collide, many narrative lines come to a conclusion and the main conflict of the story is resolved.

### **Falling Action**

Once the forest spirit has got its head back, the falling action starts. The consequences of the climax are shown. The forest spirit falls down, disappears and destroys Irontown. But it also returns nature to what once was part of the forest.

### **Resolution**

The resolution of the story starts immediately after nature has returned. We are shown that key players in the climax have survived. We are told what Ashitaka and San are going to do, now that this part of their story has been concluded. Finally, we see that the forest spirit(s) have not fully disappeared. At least one is still around.

## **Question 12**

**Write a comment on a specific topic that is typical for the film. You can choose your own topic that interests and inspires you. You can of course compare your film with other films or narratives.**

### **Jens**

"We can't coexist with nature as long as we live humbly, and we destroy it because we become greedy. When we recognize that even living humbly destroys nature, we don't know what to do(...)Unless we put ourselves in a place where we don't know what to do and start from there, we cannot think about environmental issues or issues concerning nature. It leads to the idea that the world is not just for humans, but for all life, and humans are allowed to live in a corner of the world."

That's the message that Miyazaki tried to bring across in "Princess Mononoke". I'm going to look at the multitude of ways in which he displayed that message. As well as comment on how other movies differ from, or use those same, techniques.

At the opening of the movie Miyazaki uses the demon "Nago" to introduce the movie's underlying danger, even though we don't recognise it as such yet. There's a scene in which we see that the demon gets confused for a short moment, because it walks into the light. It reels back and reveals Nago underneath. This, to me, represents the fact that Nago is still struggling against his emotional/ "evil" side.



Once Nago has been defeated, we see the boar that was inside the demon fall over and die. But the demonic outside slowly streams off its body, disappears and infects Ashitaka's arm. In my opinion that signifies the fact that, while this smaller danger has been defeated, the bigger underlying danger is still very much alive. Ashitaka may not have turned into a demon (yet), but he does have to now deal with what the demon signifies. Emotion vs rationality, or in other words, the natural world vs human greed.

We see emotion vs rationality represented quite clearly straight after this fight. While Ashitaka is now struggling to control his infected arm, he gets told that it's his fate to go forth without anger. Ashitaka stands out amongst the rest of the humans. Apart from his arm, he himself acts almost unnaturally rationally at all times. So much so that to us as the viewers, the fact that all of the other humans are so emotional stands out all the more.

Besides Ashitaka, the natural world vs human greed is also displayed literally in Princess Mononoke. Once we get to Irontown, we see that ongoing conflict is literally humans and their greed trying to fight against, and get rid of, nature. That nature is displayed in the form of gods that are completely rational in their way of thinking. Though we might not agree with how they think, they never differ from it.

That's what we believe at least. Until we see more gods get infected and turn into demons in real time. Miyazaki used human greed, in the form of iron musket balls, as the catalyst that turns gods into demons. Once a god has been shot with an iron musket ball, we never see one get removed. It's as if they are stuck in place. That, to me, signifies the fact that they represent human greed and emotion. Any time a god gets shot it's because of human greed and that ultimately turns them into demons. The more they give into their emotional side, the more demon-like they become.

We see this process most clearly in the form of Ottoko. Since we do not see him get hurt in the final fight of the movie. We do not know what it is that has hurt him when he is walking towards the forest spirit. Then humans arrive disguised using boar hides. We see them walk up to Ottoko and do something that we as the viewers cannot see. I interpret this as them infecting him with even more human greed and emotion. Once Ottoko has fully become a demon, it seems to lose the ability to speak and acts strictly on emotion.

Those are some of the ways that I see Miyazaki display the nature vs human conflict. But how do other movies attempt the same thing? I would like to have a look at The Lord of the Rings. Tolkien displayed nature vs industrialisation (humans) in a couple of ways as well. He, however, does not put all humans on the side of industrialisation. In fact, he puts most of the "good" humans we see on the side of nature. Gondor, Rohan, the elves, and clearly, the ents all represent the side of nature. While Mordor and especially Isengard represent evil and use industrialisation, or in general a lack of respect for nature, to achieve their goals. We see this conflict shown pretty much literally during the fight between the ents and Isengard. Here nature quite literally attacks and destroys a hub of industrialisation. Simply because they have grown too greedy in their conquest.

To summarise, we see a fairly clear distinction between Tolkien and Miyazaki. While Tolkien was influenced by western cultures and had participated in world wars himself. Miyazaki is more influenced by Japanese culture. That explains why Miyazaki created "Princess Mononoke", where the benefits of nature are displayed, and nature is portrayed as something beneficial. While Tolkien lays more emphasis on the fact that industrialisation and greed are inherently bad, whether humans are involved or not.

## Jessica

Princess Mononoke is an interesting film, with an unusual plot and storyline. It follows all plot structures, only partially, and yet manages to make an interesting, captivating, and entertaining story. It goes to show that you don't have to follow the cliché rules of storytelling to tell a good story, but they obviously help you in the right direction. However, writing a movie alone without showing any emotion or thought of the protagonist is not my thing. I find it difficult to understand and empathize with the character. I understand that it is done to make the audience form their own opinions about the situation. To make us think about our actions and the impact they have on our environment.

Although, in my opinion, emotions are a very helpful tool to show different points of view. It can help uncover the deeper layer of how people work and how nature works. We're all still human beings and use emotions to get through in life, it is programmed in our very DNA, we use emotions to survive. Which also begs the question for me: why was nature represented in such a rational way? In my experience this is not 'normally' the case. How can you enjoy life, nature and all its beauty, without emotion? This is a concept I cannot understand from this movie. Of course, there are also people who do not experience, or have trouble reading, emotions, like autistic people or sociopaths. These people do notice that, when they cannot adapt to a world driven by emotion, they will have trouble making friends and connections. For some this might be a problem, for others not so much. In this sense nature is both, rationality, and emotionality.

But, when looking at animals, they mostly rely on instinct and impulses. These things are not 'learned'. That makes it even more confusing as to why Princess Mononoke represents nature in such a rational way. It might have been done on purpose, because nature is, was and always will be, no matter what humans do, unchangeable and in constant motion. It will adapt to its situation. Just like the movie, the boars say they're declining in numbers and getting more 'stupid'. The only constant is, that there is no constant. Nature is chaos, humans try so hard to tame and understand that chaos, but in vain. This is literally shown when they try to kill the spirits who try to fertilize the land.

On the other hand, when nature adapts to its everchanging environment, the process of adaptation is slow. It can take years, decades, centuries or even eons. So, nature might appear stable and invincible (like gods), but at the same time it's always in motion and changing. Princess Mononoke shows us that however mighty, mysterious, and stable nature may (appear to) be, humans have the greed-fuelled desire to always wanting more, like Irontown wanting more iron. This passion makes us very powerful, smart, and creative, Lady Eboshi created firearms and was a smart leader. However, if we do not pay attention to this constant consuming greed, nature will perish because of it, and that will be our downfall as well. In the movie this was shown when the forest spirit was killed. Although not all is bad, we do show compassion and caring for others, but we always do it for our own benefit. Lady Eboshi cared for the lepers, bathed them herself, but they did make fireweapons for her. It feels good to make someone else feel good. This is not necessarily a bad thing, because if empathy did not exist this world would have looked a lot different.

So, I've been talking about nature for a while now. This is a very big concept; everyone has some sort of idea of what it means to them. There isn't one right or true answer, but I'd like to at least give my definition on this subject. In my opinion, there are two definitions of nature. The first one is: every plant and animal that lives in harmony in an ecosystem on a terrestrial planet, dead or alive. The second definition is: that nature is everything, not only on earth, but in space as well. Because if you think about it everything is 'nature', we got where we are from natural development, and using natural resources.

Even though I do not completely agree how nature and people were represented in the movie I do love the message at the end of the movie. We humans need to take care of nature, forests and every living being or else it will be our demise. I think this message even more so resonates in this day and age, with the climate crisis breathing in our necks, than when the movie was made.

One last underlying message in the movie that I want to mention is that "No-one is perfect", not the humans nor the spirits, everybody made mistakes and neither side was completely rational or emotional.