

I believe Miyazaki uses four core values to create drive in his stories.

1. Work: The act of providing service. A tangible demonstration.
2. Passion: What matters most. An inward demonstration.
3. Morality: The quality of wanting and doing what is right for nothing other than the sake of righteousness.
4. Love: The quality of wanting and doing what's perceived as best for a specific party regardless of consequence.

The interaction of these elements bring forward a didactic look on a variety of societally impacting abstracts. I will define a few recurring terms I've assigned to those ideas below.

1. Value: A product, process, perception or piece of knowledge deemed worthy of pursuit.
2. Manifest Destiny: The nature of society. The way of the world.
3. Magic: The intangible will of a thing demonstrating itself with independence from the things practical abilities.

I intend to further explore these ideas through thorough dissection of motivating figures' actions throughout Miyazaki's stories.

I've tried to use *Italics* any time I insert an opinion I'm not capable of backing up tangibly. That may or may not be consistent.

I've also included where I believe the message of the films land on the world of the films environment after the story being told is over. This is inobjective and a measure taken only for my own reference.

→ Kiki's Delivery Service

- ◆ Adaptation
- ◆ Project given to him after another director started
 - Magic is a character on its own that develops
 - "Work" and "Passion" are everything
 - All points of conflict are relative to effect on "value" of "work"
 - "Passion" above all
- ◆ Shortsighted vs **grounded**

→ Ponyo

- ◆ Miyazaki ground up
 - "Magic" expands tangibly relative to character growth
 - Love above all
- ◆ There is a ton to explore here. I won't do it. Miyazaki says all his films are for kids but this one stands alone in making me feel wholly childish. The purest voice of fantasy and adventure I've ever heard.

→ Nausicaa

◆ Miyazaki ground up

- Mysterious spirit of Protag but no “Magic”
- Hard SciFi Film
 - No implication of “work” directly, *but displayed parallel as commitment to “morality”*
 - “Antagonists” confuse “Passion” with “Morality”
 - ◆ “passion” as Antagonist across factions/World
 - “Morality” above all
 - *Semi hopeful place setting of the development of the modern world when it considers history*
 - ◆ **Shortsighted** vs Grounded

→ Wind Rises

◆ Adaptation + semi fictional biography by Miyazaki

- Distinctly non “magical”
- Fantasy, “Dreams” serve as “Journal”
 - “Value” and “love”/“passion” are conflicted,
 - “Value” constructed is a source of internal conflict/drive, “value” perceived is a source of external conflict/drive
 - ◆ *Being paid exorbitantly vs their struggling community*
 - ◆ *Planes as war machines vs <3<3<3<3<3*
 - “passion” > “Value”
 - “Love” and “Passion” are symbiotic, even when at odds
 - ◆ **Shortsighted** vs **grounded**

→ Porco Rosso

◆ Miyazaki adaptation of Miyazaki

◆ Airline ordered film of comic Miyazaki did as a short film. Miyazaki insisted in full feature

- “Magic” exists? Minimally acknowledged allegory
 - “Love” and “work” are at odds and unresolved
 - “Passion” and “Morality” are explored and justified
 - Most complicated in terms of closure/message
 - ◆ Protagonists “work” towards “Morality” is greatest source of conflict
 - *Short(I think)sighted vs grounded??????*

→ Mononoke

◆ Miyazaki ground up

◆ “Opus”

- Powerfully “magically” driven. “Magic” is its own “character”. Characters develop based on their relationship to magic.
 - Grounded exploration of “moral” relativism
 - Complicated antagonists
 - “Passion” [vs(+)] “value” = “Greater Good”
 - ◆ “Greater good” vs. “morality” = “relativism”

- “Morality” > “relativism”
 - ◆ Traditional “values” vs “Modern world” = Manifest Destiny/salvation
- Redo? No.
 - *Semi hopeful place setting of the development of the modern world when it considers history*
 - *Shortsighted vs **grounded***

→ Spirited away

◆ Miyazaki ground up

- If everyone is special no one is. Massively “magical” from the call to adventure to the return home
 - Existential exploration of “work” “morality” and “Value”
 - *Rules of world feel intuitive regardless of lack of or muddled explanation. IE Contracts.*
 - *I believe “love” means “morality” in the spirit of this film, regardless of the use of the word “love”*
 - ◆ Protag is a rare example of universal empathy in a Miyazaki character. *Rivalled only by Ponyo’s Mother*
 - ◆ Antagonists demonstrate “value” as being weighted relative to “work”
 - Perceived “Value”: No-Face gold turns to dirt. Its worthless because it’s unearned
 - Constructed “Value”: Yubaba is under her own contract to ensure fulfillment of contracts she’s obligated to create. Fulfillment of contracts is done through “Work”
 - (Shortsighted vs grounded) is like this whole ass movie
 - Shortsighted vs **grounded** though

→ Cagliostro

◆ Adaptation

◆ Previous work on projects under IP in various roles

◆ Full creative control directorial debut (Feature)

- Fantastical but no “magic”, *Scooby Doo relationship to paranormal*
 - The preexisting franchise brings themes of loyalty, compromise and confidence to the forefront in a way that will be seen throughout Miyazaki’s catalog, but lacks the cohesive vision of his original projects and less faithful adaptations.
 - Lupin is “passionate” but lacks agency in his participation a la Mr. Magoo
 - *Sure is fun tho*
 - **Shortsighted** vs grounded

→ Castle ITS

◆ Miyazaki original adapted from Miyazaki series

- “Magic” development relative to character growth. Distinct reversal from all other “magical” relationships
 - *I see this as one of the clearest evils that exist in Miyazaki.*
 - *“Morality” is the foremost drive of all respectable characters*
- ◆ I need to watch this again(again) before expanding on it
 - Shortsighted vs **grounded**

→ Totoro

- ◆ Miyazaki ground up
 - Incredibly “magic”. “Magic” is the main character with agency
 - (Traditional) “values” above all
 - A more nuanced, specific and mature work on the nature of childhood than Ponyo. Conflict is real outside fantasy
 - The opposite path to Kiki’s message.
 - ◆ Focus on finding help in those more capable than you.
 - ◆ *I can see so much comfort in this message and I like it more visually and thematically than I do as a rounded watching experience*
 - ◆ **CATBUS IS HORRIFYING**
 - **Shortsighted** vs grounded

→ Howls

- ◆ Adaptation given to Miyazaki after another director started
 - Full fantasy throughout
 - “Magic” traded for fulfillment. Both ways.
 - *War sure is bad*
 - *Mindfulness is good*
 - *I think this is a “love” above all story*
 - *This one was built up for me way too much and having seen everything else in his catalog beforehand it didn’t live up at all. I need to rewatch with some time and probably the sub version before I try to dig in to any serious exploration.*
 - Shortsighted vs **grounded**

CHARACTER STUDIES COMING SOON