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Chapter 1
Introductory Chapter

1.1 General Background

This project aims to provide an analysis of the portrayal of mankind's complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment and how it shapes the characters through the use of ecocriticism in Hayao Miyazaki's animated film Princess Mononoke.

1.1.1 Hayao Miyazaki

Born in Tokyo, Japan on January 5, 1941, Hayao Miyazaki is considered to be one of the greatest animators in the Japanese animated film industry. He started his career as a budding animator in 1963, at the Toei Douga Studio, with his signature style of drawing, now known as the Studio Ghibli Art Style and the seemingly endless stream of movie ideas. Miyazaki's career took a turn in 1971, when he transferred to the A Pro Studio with his partner, Isao Takahata, then to Nippon Animation in 1973. In 1979, he directed his first movie, titled The Castle of Cagliostro. Today, Miyazaki boasts numerous notable works such as Spirited Away, Ponyo, Porco Rosso, etc. which conveys his preoccupation with mankind's relationship with the environment, feminism, and anti-war stance. (IMDb)

1.1.2 Princess Mononoke

Of all the works that Miyazaki has produced in his lifetime, one-piece that can be considered a classic due to its breakthrough as the highest-grossing animated film in Japan's box office when released is Princess Mononoke. Princess Mononoke was released in the USA on 19 December 1997. It earned about $ 144,446 on 31 October 1999, the opening weekend of its limited release in the USA. Currently, Princess Mononoke has a cumulative worldwide gross of about $159,375,308. As for the film itself, Princess Mononoke incorporates Miyazaki's well-known themes of environmentalism along with the conflict between mankind's need for development and the preservation of nature through the storyline. (IMDb)

1.2 Rationale

Ecocriticism can be employed as a lens to analyse Princess Mononoke, as it mainly addresses the issues caused by humans towards the environment and how nature and humans are both interconnected (Mishra, S. K, 2016), providing us with the understanding of mankind's complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment and how it shapes the characters of the film.

With the rise of pollution, the surge of developmental projects, and the exploitation of the earth's natural resources due to industrialization in our present day, the deterioration of the environment due to mankind's need for improvement and development in the sector of industries and businesses have become increasingly pressing. Although there has been the call for the increased use of green energy, we still see the persistent use of fossil fuels and non-renewable energy sources being utilized by big companies, being the main cause of pollution, making the transition towards a greener earth an idealistic dream as of now.

Miyazaki's works frequently reference the state of destruction surrounding our environment. Through the works of Miyazaki, we see how he expresses his strong support for environmentalism, how he expresses a strong voice against ecocide, how he usually portrays a strong female lead and how his characters are connected to the environment, playing a role in its conservation and protection (Scott. L, 2012). We see these recurring themes in Miyazaki's films being reflective of Miyazaki's stand against the environmental destruction of our world, making these concerns relative to our time and day.

Thus seeing as how the film engages itself with current environmental issues, by showing us a reflection of how humans are harming the environment, it makes it worthwhile to consider ecocriticism as a lens to analyze this film.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does Miyazaki convey the complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment between human, animal, and spirit through the use of oikopoetics (Edwin, M. J., & Frederick, D. 2015)?

2. With reference to the concept of ecofeminism (Reuther, 2012), how does San (the main female lead) break away from stereotypical female portrayal and how does her connection with the environment undermine conventional representation?

3. What role do anthropomorphic characteristics displayed by the non-human characters in Princess Mononoke play in shaping San's breaking of the conventional female stereotype?

1.4 Thesis Statement

In Princess Mononoke, the destructive actions of characters arise because of their reliance on the provisions of the environment, while San's offspring relation towards the anthropomorphic non-human characters around her allows them to break from this commonly perceived matriarchal stereotype of a caregiver and emerges as a masculine defender of the environment.

1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)

The paper will reference the film Princess Mononoke. It will employ ecocriticism as a lens to analyze the film and provide a deeper understanding of mankind's complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment and how it shapes the character, as portrayed by Miyazaki. The paper will reference scholarly articles regarding the concept of ecocriticism and its branches to form discussions and a conclusion.

* The scope of research will be limited to the use of the United Kingdom's concept of ecocriticism, which seeks to warn of the negative impacts of the destruction towards the environment. (Mishra, S. K, 2016).

1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness

This research hopes to prove useful in analyzing a modern piece of animated film such as Princess Mononoke, as most works on ecocriticism are mainly focused on classic literature (Glotfelty, C. 1996). This research also hopes to prove useful by employing the use of ecocriticism, to understand the presentation of mankind's complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment and how it shapes the character, shedding some new light on one of Miyazaki's notable works of art.

1.7 Limitations

It is to take note that ecocriticism is a fairly new concept that is currently being studied in depth. As such, there is currently a lack of ecocriticism studies done on modern media forms such as animated films (Glotfelty, C. 1996). Besides that, it must also be taken into account that ecocriticism Eurocentric in nature. Therefore while analyzing this eastern piece of animated film, we must note that most of the theories presented mostly originate from the United States or the United Kingdom.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is defined as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies, and it takes its form from 19th-century writers whose work center around nature, life force and the wilderness (Glotfelty, C. 1996). According to the article titled Ecocriticism: A Study of Environmental Issues in Literature. There are two forms of ecocriticism, one which ideas originate from the United States of America and seeks to appreciate the beauty of nature around us. Another form of ecocriticism originates from the United Kingdom and seeks to warn us of environmental threats (Mishra, S. K. 2016). Mishra also highlights that ecocriticism does not simply mean nature study. Ecocriticism distinguishes itself from conventional nature writing through its ethical stand and commitment to the natural world, and then makes a connection between the human and the non-human world (Mishra, S. K, 2016). This shows us how ecocriticism considers the morality in actions towards the environment and draws judgment from the relationships between humans and non-humans. Therefore in the case of Miyazaki's film Princess Mononoke, we see how Miyazaki employs the British concept of ecocriticism, where his work is depicted as a reflection of how mankind's exploitation of nature's provisions lead to a destructive relationship between both human and non-human, seeking to warn us of an inevitable war between mankind and nature if mankind were to continue down this destructive path.

It is also to take note that there are two waves of ecocriticism. First wave ecocriticism focused on nature writing, nature poetry, and wilderness fiction. The wave aimed to preserve the "biotic community", which refers to nature and its living organisms. First wave ecocriticism had an initial aim of promoting the preservation of the earth and holding nature in its glorified position as a provider towards human beings. Second wave ecocriticism, however, is inclined towards environmental justice issues. It seeks to locate the vestiges of nature in cities and expose the crimes of eco-injustice against society's marginal section. Second-wave ecocriticism analyses the principles and customs of our society in relation to nature, often the result is a critique of how our culture devalues and degrades the natural world (Buell, L., Heise, U. K., & Thornber, K.

2011). With reference to the definition of the waves of ecocriticism, we see how Miyazaki's film combines the ideas of both waves of ecocriticism in his film. Miyazaki's ultimate goal of the film builds on ideas from the first wave of ecocriticism as the film's ending shows us the characters living together in tandem, promoting a sense of earth preservation through the harmonious existence of living beings. Whereas, Miyazaki's female character development reflects ideas from second wave ecocriticism, as we see how female characters are portrayed to be of equals to the male characters due to exposure to the harsh surrounding environment.

There is an agreement in Mishra's and Buell's journal articles. In Mishra's article, it states that "Ecocriticism distinguishes itself from conventional nature writing through its ethical stand and commitment to the natural world, and then makes a connection between the human and the non-human world", showing us how there is a form of moral judgment in the actions made by living organisms towards the environment that is to be made when we take into consideration ecocriticism as a lens. Whereas in Buell's article it states how first wave ecocriticism considers the preservation of nature, while the second wave of ecocriticism is inclined towards environmental justice issues, allowing us to see how ecocriticism leans towards morals and ethical judgement for the good of nature and our surrounding environment. Therefore showing us how both Mishra and Buell share similar ideas of how ecocriticism is built on by moral and ethical judgement in living organisms towards nature and the environment.

In her video titled Ecocriticism, Carmen states that ecocriticism branches into four aspects. The first is deep ecology, which examines the inclusive roles of humans in nature. It portrays humans as a connected part of the living earth and seeks to understand humans' role in protecting the planet. The second is ecofeminism, which is the feminist approach to environmental ethics. It is the interconnection between the oppression of women, the oppression of other humans and the domination of nature. Ecofeminism sees social justice issues as linked to environmental issues. The third is oikopoetics, which outlines the oikos that houses the harmonious relationship between human and nonhuman. It includes a third dimension which is the spirit, it is something that integrates time and space, nature, cultural and human elements. Oikopoetics is all about the

spiritual relationships between humans and the land. The last one is ecocide, which is the extensive destruction, damage to and loss of ecosystems of a given territory. Through ecocide, it is believed that human beings are the primary cause of the destruction of nature (Carmen, 2017). This focus of ecocriticism is supported in Mishra's article, when she lists down the recurring focuses of ecocriticism being "Nature, Anthropocene vs Biosense, Nature vs Culture, Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice" (Mishra, S. K. 2016), allowing us to conclude that ecocriticism as a whole tends to focus on similar ideas surrounding mankind and the environment.

Looking at the sources, there is not much contradiction amongst them. Instead, we see how the concept of ecocriticism is generally revolves around the environment and the impact caused by living organisms. We see how the sources have a largely similar definition of ecocriticism providing us with the idea of 'green literature' which is literature centered around nature and living organisms.

Seeing as how ecofeminism and oikopoetics as mentioned in Carmen's video are relative to the ideas of Miyazaki's film, these branches of ecocriticism will be further used to provide an understanding of Princess Mononoke.

2.1.1 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is defined as the study of the interconnections between the domination of women and the domination of nature (Reuther, 2012). It relates natural environmental issues to the equality and self-empowerment of women. It also considers how changes in the environment can affect the well-being of women, such as pollution having a particular effect on female reproductive health. These effects include the growing incidence of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and the increase in breast cancer (Puleo, 2017). Thus we can see how in both sources the focus of ecofeminism relates impacts on the environment to women and their status in the world, it considers both the environment and women to be marginalized, therefore, providing both women and the environment with a voice.

In her article titled What is Ecofeminism? Puleo argues that certain forms of ecofeminism undermine the feminist aspiration of motherhood as a free and personal choice. She states that these forms of ecofeminism usually emphasize women's role as a maternal caregiver to the environment. This is due to the involvement of historical context, where women have traditionally been stereotyped for taking care of the vulnerable and maintaining domestic material infrastructure, instead of taking up masculine roles such as picking up arms (Puleo, 2017). Such forms of ecofeminism are however negative for both women and environmentalism, as it only cements the stereotype of women as an effeminate provider which in turn also links to the stereotype of the earth as the mother of living beings. Puleo advocates that the future of ecofeminism needs to strike a clear stance in favor of women's access to free decision-making on reproduction and that women must be recognized as subjects with decision-making power in demographic matters (Puleo, 2017).

Besides that, in her article titled Ecofeminism as a way of resolving some environmental issues, ĆORIĆ references the works of Karen Warren (1991) to present the 8 different forms of connections between women and nature to provide an insight to a variety of positions of ecofeminism, and consequently to ecological (feminist) ethics. The 8 connections are as follows:

1. Historical (casual) connections
2. Conceptual connections
3. Empirical and experiential connections
4. Symbolic connections
5. Epistemological connections
6. Political (Praxis) connections
7. Ethical connections
8. Theoretical connections

(ĆORIĆ, 2014)

In both ĆORIĆ's and Puleo's articles, we see the mention of how women's roles in nature are defined through historical context, suggesting to us that patriarchal stereotypes over women are deeply rooted in the world. However, Miyazaki's film Princess Mononoke challenges this belief through the portrayal of a female lead with masculine characteristics. Linking ĆORIĆ's presentation of the 8 different forms of connections between women and nature to the film Princess Mononoke, we see how the film is built upon the concept of empirical and experiential connections between women and nature. In ĆORIĆ's article, the third connection is when women, who are divided into different social groups, are shaped by the environment surrounding them. This can be seen through the portrayal of San, which is one that breaks the conventional stereotype of women's role as a vulnerable caregiver and caretaker of domestic infrastructure (Puleo, 2017). San's character instead takes up a masculine role when she chooses to fight alongside Ashitaka to defend the forest. San also bears a masculine warrior identity, due to her role as a feral child raised by wolves, causing her to retaliate against the inhabitants of Iron Town when they try to take over the forest, showing us how ĆORIĆ's third connection between women and nature is present in Princess Mononoke.

2.1.2 Oikopoetics

Oikopoetics is viewed as the Indian version of ecocriticism as it was derived from native Tamil literature and developed by Dr. Nimal Selvamony. The concept of oikopoetics is derived from the concept of Oikos, where it states that the sacred, humans, nature and culture stand in an integrated relationship, showing us how all fates and actions are intertwined (Edwin, M. J., & Frederick, D. 2015). The oikos refers to the relationship between the human and the non-human. It is the blend of human, nature and the spirit (Carmen, 2017).

In the article titled An Oikocritical Study of George. K Matthew's The Wind and The Rain, Edwin Edwin and Frederick both state how oikopoetics is divided into the three branches of integrative oikos, hierarchical oikos and anarchic oikos. According to the article, integrative oikos is defined when "[t]he oikos forms an integrative society where the sacred, nature, culture

and the humans are bound in a kin-like relationship" Hierarchical oikos is however defined when "[t]he oikos is based on a political relationship where the society is organized in a hierarchic relationship with the sacred at the top followed by humans and nature at the last in the order. Humans are superior to nature" Whereas anarchic oikos is defined when "[t]he human and non-human life forms were looked upon based on their utility value" (Edwin, M. J., & Frederick, D. 2015). This shows us how the relationship between the sacred, man and nature in a society can be categorized into three different forms of oikos, given the importance of the role they play in an environment.

Scariah and Joseph also build on this concept of the three divided branches of oikopoetics in their article titled The concept of oikos and ecological identity in Sarah Joseph's Gift in Green, by arguing that this relationship of the sacred, man and nature gives rise to an ecological identity. They suggest that ecological identities seem to emerge from experiences that provide individuals with a purpose or a connection to society or the natural world. The identity centered on a particular place can be acquired through the development of shared values, beliefs and interests of the people, which are built through collective experiences Scariah and Joseph then further expand this concept of ecological identity by also saying that it is birthed through emotional connections to one's surroundings, which is in turn built by these collective experiences (Scariah, R. S., & Joseph, D. P, 2017).

Through Princess Mononoke, Miyazaki brings out a vexed relationship between the human and the non-human characters in the film. The three branches of oikopoetics can be usefully deployed to sharpen into view Man's complex/layered relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment (Edwin, M. J., & Frederick, D. 2015). This in turn brings about each character's ecological identity and demonstrates the role each character plays which contributes to the defending or destruction of the environment (Scariah, R. S., & Joseph, D. P, 2017), allowing us to see how mankind, nature, and spirits are all linked in a relationship of reliance and destructiveness. It also shows us the detrimental effects brought about when mankind steps too far and defies their ecological identity.

2.2 Anthropomorphism

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 9th Edition (A S Hornby, 2015), Anthropomorphism is defined as "the treatment of gods, animals or objects as if they had human qualities." Anthropomorphism has been widely used in classic children's literature with examples ranging from Aesop's Fables, The Sick Lion, where moral judgement is passed when animals make fun of an ill and dying lion to the Brothers Grimm Little Red Riding Hood, where a wolf with the ability to talk is shown (Vogl, S, 1982). Even today, anthropomorphism continues to be widely utilized in modern media, with animation industries such as Disney and Pixar producing a wide range of films that portray characters with anthropomorphic traits. Examples include Zootopia (2016), Ratatouille (2007), and many more. (IMDB).

Vogl suggests that anthropomorphic traits displayed by animals in literature or media can be classified into three categories. This first category, complete anthropomorphism, is the most straightforward, where animals are presented to act and behave like human beings. The second category, partial anthropomorphism, is where animals usually still behave like animals, except for the fact that they are presented to talk. The third and last category of anthropomorphism is limited to literary works where animals are presented to act and behave like animals; however, they are still attributed with traits that are admired and associated with human beings (Vogl, S, 1982). With reference to Vogl's definition of partial anthropomorphism, we can see that Miyazaki employs its use in Princess Mononoke, when he presents to us animals such as wolves and boars that can talk, however as mentioned by Vogl, they still retain the characteristics displayed by normal animals.

Vogl also brings to us the argument that the application of anthropomorphism presents to us humans false implications of animal characteristics (Vogl, 1982), causing humans to misinterpret the real-life characteristics of animals. For example, one could view squirrels as furry and cuddly, as presented to us by Disney's Chip and Dale, however in real life, squirrels can still inflict scratches or bodily harm towards humans. However, Geerdts's elaboration of the purpose of anthropomorphism, contradicts Vogl's argument. Greedts suggests that "anthropomorphism

promotes a human-centered view of the biological world" (Geerdts, 2017), allowing humans to understand the characteristics and behaviour of animals. However, although Geerdts's suggestion is applied to child psychology, we can also interpret this in literature, which suggests to us that humans and animals are of the same hierarchical tier, making this purpose relevant to Miyazaki's Princess Mononoke, as the use of partial anthropomorphism in the film sets the human and the non-human on the same level, allowing for the main protagonist to understand the plight of the non-human characters of the film in a humanistic sense.

Thus, we can see how Miyazaki builds on Vogl's definition of partial anthropomorphism, however, his application of partial anthropomorphism directly contradicts Vogl's argument. Miyazaki's application of partial anthropomorphism is in line with Greedts elaboration of the purpose of anthropomorphism, as we see how the use of partial anthropomorphism allows the character to understand the non-human in the setting of the film, building on to the relationship hierarchy between both human and non-human as presented through the concept of ecocriticism.

Chapter 3
Methodology

Ecocriticism and oikopoetics will be the main focus of the research to provide a deeper understanding of the display of mankind's complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance on the environment. Ecofeminism will be used to analyze how San's offspring relation towards the anthropomorphic non-human characters around her allows for her to break the commonly perceived matriarchal stereotype of a protector and caregiver.

The anthropomorphic details of the film will also be taken into consideration to build on to interpretations made in the discussion and analysis chapter.

Besides that this paper will reference a series of online journal articles or online books in PDF form to draw a conclusion. The analysis will be done based on reference to the research and findings.

Scenes in Princess Mononoke related to the two branches of ecocriticism will be analyzed using the above theoretical framework. These scenes will range from the abstract of the film, up to the end of the film where a lone forest spirit is seen to be walking through the growing grass.

Chapter 4
Discussion and analysis

4.1 The complex relationship of destructiveness and reliance towards the environment between human, animal, and spirit

Fig.1 the boars pledge their determination to end the destruction of the forest

In fig 1, we see the boars claiming that they will "kill for the forest of the Deer God", pledging their loyalty and determination to end the destruction brought about by humans. Miyazaki includes this scene as a reminder of the damage humans have brought about towards the environment. With reference to the purpose of anthropomorphism as stated by Geerdts, we see how the use of anthropomorphism is employed by Miyazaki in order to allow humans (the main characters San and Ashitaka), to understand the plight faced by the inhabitants of the forest, which in the case of *Princess Mononoke*, is the destruction of the forest, the uprooting of their (the animals) homeland, caused by the exploitation of iron for the survival of the residents of Iron Town, showing us how anthropomorphism in the film is used to convey the effects of this destructive relationship brought about by humans. From the quote "we kill for the forest of the Deer God", we are able to understand that Miyazaki presents the Deer God as a symbol of nature, and thus, through the action of pledging their determination to save the forest, it gives birth to the ecological identity of the boars being defenders of the forest, as they now share an

emotional connection towards the forest as their homeland (Scariah, R. S., & Joseph, D. P, 2017).

Fig. 2 Moro's claim of how the Deer God possess power over life itself

Through the quote "The Deer God gives life and takes it away", we see how the Deer God in the film is presented as a sacred being, seeing as how this Deer God has control over life itself, allowing it to take or give life as it pleases. Referencing Edwin and Fredrick's definition of a hierarchical *oikos*, we see how a hierarchical *oikos* is presented in the film, where the sacred is placed at the top of the hierarchy. Edwin and Fredrick's definition of hierarchical *oikos* is challenged by Miyazaki through the use of anthropomorphism as identified in Fig.1. While Edwin and Fredrick present man to be more superior compared to animals in their definition of hierarchical *oikos*, Miyazaki's use of anthropomorphism allows the animals to adopt human traits, challenging Edwin and Fredrick's definition by allowing both humans and animals to share the same tier in the hierarchy. Miyazaki's twist towards Edwin and Fredrick's definition of hierarchical *oikos*, allows us to theorize that Miyazaki presents this as criticism towards how humans have taken nature and its beings for granted, exploiting and destroying the environment, without giving back to it, even though humans are reliant towards the provisions of the environment. This placement of both humans and animals on the same hierarchy, suggests how Miyazaki conveys the message of how humans and nature should exist in tandem.

Fig. 3 Moro refuses to let go of her hatred towards Lady Eboshi even until her death

Fig. 4 Nago declares that the boars are willing to sacrifice everything as a show of power towards the humans

In Fig. 3 we see how Moro, is defeated by the curse of the Deer God. She then says "And here I was saving my last bit of strength for that woman [Lady Eboshi]..." The use of anthropomorphism is present once again in Fig. 3, as we see how Moro the wolf is attributed the human-like trait of a warrior. With reference to Vogl's classification of anthropomorphism, we see how the anthropomorphic traits are presented when the admirable warrior trait of never

giving up till the very end is attributed to Moro. Whereas in Fig. 4, we see how anthropomorphic traits are attributed to Nago. As Nago is presented with the traits of confidence and determination. Besides that , Nago is also presented as a general of an army in Fig. 4. In Fig. 4, Nago mentions, "Should we die even to the very last, we will leave the humans in awe." Showing us how he is presented as a general calling the shots and determining the fates of his subordinates. Nago is also shown to be confident and determined, as he will do whatever it takes to provide his tribe freedom from the destruction of humans. This cements the use of anthropomorphism in Princess Mononoke to present nature and its beings as equals. As the use of anthropomorphism to attribute desirable human traits to animals, adds on to Miyazaki's suggestion of how nature should be a force to be reckoned with. In Fig. 4 anthropomorphism is used to highlight Nago's capabilities as a leader, presenting to us how an animal society functions similar to a human society, where there are leaders and followers present building on to Miyazaki's argument of how nature and all beings exists as equals.

Fig. 5 Lady Eboshi vows to abandon the previous way of living in Iron Town

Fig. 6 A lone forest spirit is seen appearing in the barren clearing, which is sprouting new life

Another interesting thing is that this relationship of hierarchical *oikos* actually morphs into a relationship of integrative *oikos* when nearing the end of the film. This is shown in Fig. 5, where the humans of Iron Town swear to change their destructive ways and reliance on nature as a provider of economic means. It signifies that humans, nature and the sacred are now able to exist in tandem without conflict, which is the definition of a relationship of integrative oikos (Edwin, M. J., & Frederick, D. 2015). Fig. 6 supports this reading, where we see a lone forest spirit wander into the barren clearing, which is sprouting new life, signifying that humans, nature and the sacred possess the hope of co-existing with one another. This hope is also implied to the viewer when we take notice of the lighter tones being cast upon the forest spirit in the shape of a spotlight, once again signifying a glimmer of hope for an integrative oikos between the characters of the film. The gradual shift from the relationship of a hierarchical oikos to an integrative oikos shows us that Miyazaki views this as the ideal relationship between man and nature. However, he still portrays this relationship to be one that is idealistic and one that is just of hope and dreams in the film as we see that ultimately, San is unable to forgive and forget the destruction that people have done, telling Ashitaka that both of them are from different worlds.

4.2 Ecofeminism in Princess Mononoke

Fig.7 San protecting Nago against hunters dressed as boars

Fig. 8 San is revealed to be a feral child raised by wolves

With reference to fig 7, we see how San is portrayed to be a strong female lead that breaks away from the conventional female stereotype of being a caregiver as she is portrayed to be a defender of the environment, because she fights to protect her wolf tribe, the deer god and the forest from harm. We also see in the film how San is feared by the warriors of Iron Town, as she is also portrayed as a skilled fighter throughout the film. In fig 8, Moro the wolf reveals San to be a feral child raised by wolves. As anthropomorphic traits of masculinity are attributed to the

wolves, we can theorize that San's breaking away from these conventional stereotypes is due to the fact that she has been influenced by the living style of the wolves, causing her to adopt her warrior-princess traits, linking to ĆORIĆ's mention of empirical and experiential connections between women and nature, where a woman's environment shapes the way she reacts to different situations. Thus, through the concept of ecofeminism, we theorize that San's breaking away from the conventional female stereotype is linked to the surrounding environment in which she grew up in. Besides that, Puleo's statement on how certain forms of ecofeminism tend to place emphasis on women's role as the maternal caregiver is challenged by Miyazaki's portrayal of San. The portrayal of San is one that is shown to be a masculine defender of the forest and the surrounding environment. San's character takes up a masculine role when she chooses to fight alongside Ashitaka in order to defend the forest. This shows us Miyazaki expounding his take on ecofeminism, which is one where a character's surroundings causes her to take up a masculine role with the aim of breaking the commonly perceived matriarchal stereotype of a caregiver.

Fig. 9 San tends to Moro's wounds

Fig. 10 A bloodied San spots Ashitaka

In Fig. 9 we see San rush off to tend to Moro's wounds. As this is shown to be San's first instinct in this scene, one may argue that San, in fact does not break from the female stereotype of being a caregiver to beings (Puleo, 2017). However, the unorthodox manner of San rushing to suck out blood from Moro, which tends to be viewed as unhygienic and callous shows us how this argument does not stand, as these female caregivers are also stereotyped to be effeminate and dainty in nature. Therefore one may view this act as a form of aid after a battle, which is typically portrayed to be a masculine action related to war. Furthermore, in Fig. 10, we see a bloodied San, which further supports the fact that San does not adhere to the stereotype of a caregiver as she is not afraid to get her hands dirty. Instead, this adds on to the fact that San is a defender of nature, as her first instinct was to protect her wolf mother from further harm inflicted by the wound. Thus, the inclusion of this scene further emphasises Miyazaki's take on women as a defender of nature.

Fig. 11 San attacks Ashitaka with a dagger

Fig. 11 shows us how San is no doubtedlly skilled as a warrior. This character design of San in this scene which involves San wearing a mask and a wolf skin cloak adds to the intimidation factor of San as a warrior character. This brings to us the notion that San is a feared woman, and not one to be messed around with, further adding on to San's identity as a warrior, allowing her to break from the conventional female stereotype of a caregiver. The camera angle in this scene shows us how San is on the offensive, causing Ashitaka to back away. This shows us how San's strength and skill is on par with that of a male, once again breaking the female caregiver stereotype of being weak and effeminate.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Through his unique take on ecofeminism, Miyazaki is suggesting that no human being is different from another, and by providing San with masculine traits, Miyazaki is presenting men and women as equals. Miyazaki also goes one step further to add on to his take on equality through the restructuring of the hierarchical oikos, and the shift towards an integrative oikos.

By doing so, Miyazaki suggests that there should be equality and unity between mankind and nature as a whole, as ultimately we are all children of the earth. Therefore, we can theorize that Miyazaki employs the use of his unique take on ecofeminism and oikopoetics to suggest that all beings are to be considered equals as we are all inhabitants of the same earth.

*All images in this paper are to be credited to Miyazaki, Hayao, director. Princess Mononoke (1997)

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