



The Story

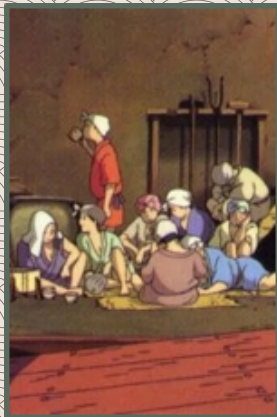
The story begins with the attack of the Emishi village of Ashitaka.



He discovers during his journey two distinct clans: first, the humans, in the village of the forges of Lady Eboshi, who creates a shelter for lepers.



A cursed injury caused by a mad beast forces him, the prince of the Emishis, to find answers about it to the west.

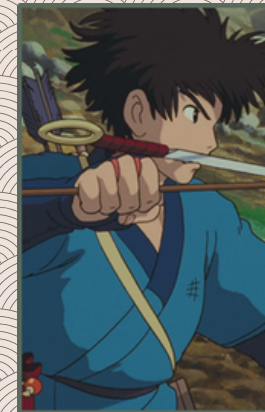


Get spirited away watching

PRINCESS MONONOKE



However, the village is destroying the forest to extract iron, which is driving the spirits crazy.



The war is therefore unavoidable, and both clans go to their ruin only to be victorious.

Secondly, the spirits of the forest, which include the human San, raised by wolves.



Later, San infiltrates Irontown trying to kill Lady Eboshi. Ashitaka prevents them to kill themselves, but he gets shot by a woman.





スタジオジブリ
STUDIO GHIBLI

Presentation

Princess Mononoke is an animated movie produced by the Studio Ghibli and directed by Hayao Miyazaki.

The visible genres are adventure, drama, and fantasy.

It released in theaters the 12. of July 1997 in Japan, and from 2000 in Europe.

It's the first animated movie to use 3D graphics with a « cell-shading » effect (this gives 3D objects a “hand-drawn” effect) and it generated \$169,7 M at the Box Office.

The film was a big success worldwide before Spirited Away and introduced many people to the Japanese Animation and to an original Japanese style that can only be seen in Studio Ghibli's productions.



Analysis



Groups only « good or bad »:

The spectator discovers the conflicting situation at the same time as Ashitaka because the spectator is in some sort Ashitaka. He is neutral and has no backstory with any of these opposite clans, enabling him to discuss with both. The situation is difficult as they don't communicate due to their nature. It shows how we must always stay back from the conflict to see the solutions that can exist, and Ashitaka succeeds at doing it, as it makes at the end both clans change their minds.



In reality, both clans try to do what is « good » for them: Lady Eboshi helps women and lepers, and San helps the spirits protecting their home. But there are consequence that go further than what they think: the madness of the boar attacking Ashitaka's village come from the gun shot from Lady Eboshi. The clans act with their own interest without thinking of the consequences, and Ashitaka is here to tell the truth and witness their actions.

A call to protect nature:

The nature in this movie is very powerful and beautiful. It is differenced from the brown Irontown using pastel colors. Depicted with the help of spirits and personified animals, the movie shows how it has the right of death and life on beings. They can express sadness, fear and anger... Nature always wins, because it's pacifist: we see this in the scene when Lady Eboshi tries to shoot at the Great Spirit of the Forest: her shotgun covers itself in vegetation, preventing her from shooting.



The ultimate goal of Ashitaka in the movie is the search of a weak balance hard to maintain. It is unfortunately found only after the war between the clans. Irontown wants to expand without caring about the nature and therefore makes the spirits mad. The message is that people must find a balance so that the others have the same rights. It's weak because every individuum can change something, and every action, even small, has consequences.



Themes and visible Japanese Traditions

A story set in Japan:

The story is set during the Muromachi Period (1336-1573). It is often described as politically chaotic because there were many conflicts. The difficult period is depicted with the war between Irontown and the samourais from the lord Asano too. The fact that they have two enemies shows how many conflicts there were. The Emishis form a community that really existed at that time, and they were against the emperor. They were seen as great warriors and archers, and we see this characteristic clearly with Ashitaka.



The characters mention a fictive anonymous emperor too: he is criticized as having way too much power and wants therefore the head of the Great Forest Spirit for an eternal life. Finally, the movie depicts the exclusion of the lepers and prostitutes at that time. Even if prostitutes and lepers were not directly discriminated against because prostitution was legal, their situation often led them to misery. Lady Eboshi in this movie helps them live in a society and give them a job.



A mysterious nature with spirits...

There is a depicted god (a Kami) which decides the death or life of beings. It's the great forest spirit. It is very mysterious and mythical because it appears only rarely and for very specific purposes. He is therefore respected and wears a traditional Japanese theater mask to show his neutrality: even after being shot by Lady Eboshi, he keeps his smile.

The movie features characters that are very similar to those from Japanese stories. Ashitaka follows the advice of the wise and respected village shaman to find a solution to his curse. San looks like the goddess Kanagayo, because she rides a wolf, and carries on her the gem that Ashitaka gave her.



The wolves that accompany San look like foxes (Kitsune) that have multiple tails. Each tail represents a century of age for the animal.



To sum up

Princess Mononoke depicts a story full of meaning (characters that aren't just good or bad, and a nature that needs to be protected) that includes many references to plenty of different Japanese traditions and themes (gods, powerful spirits) and incorporate real historical elements (the Muromachi period, the Emishis, the conflicts) that make the movie expressive and original in a drastically different way. All this makes this movie very refreshing and different from the western productions



Thanks for reading !

