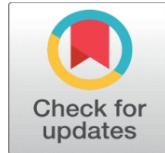


CONFLICT AND COEXISTENCE: AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF PRINCESS MONONOKE

Basheer V. P. 

¹ Assistant Professor of English, Kunnamangalam Government Arts and Science College, Calicut, Kerala, India



Corresponding Author

Basheer V. P.,
basheervp.veluthaparambath@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Hayao Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke* presents a compelling narrative that foregrounds the complex relationship between humanity and nature. This ecocritical study explores the film through the lens of environmental literary theory, analyzing the ideological tensions between industrial progress and ecological preservation. The film's portrayal of characters such as Ashitaka, San, and Lady Eboshi illustrates the nuanced moral positions that defy simple binaries of good versus evil. Through its rich symbolism, animistic worldview, and interwoven human and non-human agency, *Princess Mononoke* offers a powerful commentary on coexistence, environmental ethics, and the consequences of ecological imbalance. This paper examines how the film reflects deep ecological concerns while also proposing a model of symbiosis rather than dominance. It also discusses how Miyazaki critiques anthropocentrism and advocates for a more sustainable, interconnected worldview.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Environmental Ethics, *Princess Mononoke*, Hayao Miyazaki, Human Nature Relationship, Deep Ecology, Anthropocentrism, Coexistence, Industrialization, Environmental Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the study will examine how *Princess Mononoke* depicts the struggle between industrialization and nature, diving into its themes of destruction, survival, and fighting for balance. The movie doesn't offer a clear good-versus-evil story, nor does it provide an easy answer. Rather, it presents a world in which humans and nature are both struggling to survive, leaving the audience with tough questions. From an ecocritical perspective, this discussion will focus on how Miyazaki uses storytelling, symbolism, and world-building to challenge the ways in which people perceive their relationship with nature. By looking at key moments, character development, and visual elements, the study will explore how *Princess Mononoke* presents a strong message regarding human greed and the ecological balance that continues to be destroyed. Studio Ghibli was founded in Tokyo, Japan, in 1985 by Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, with the help of producer Toshio Suzuki. The studio came to life after the success of Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), a film that wasn't originally made by Ghibli but is now considered a key part of its history. From the very beginning, Ghibli stood out not just for its breathtaking animation but for the kind of stories it told. Unlike many mainstream studios, it explored deeper themes like war, loss, and humanity's relationship with nature. Over the years,

Ghibli's success increased, reaching audiences far beyond Japan. Eight of its films are within the top 15 highest-grossing anime movies in Japan, with the lead being *Spirited Away* (2001) with \$274 million globally (Fordham). It won the 2003 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature and a 2002 Golden Bear, breaking the record for being one of the most acclaimed animation films in history. But aside from the awards and the box office figures, what sets Ghibli apart is the way it gets people to feel. Its movies don't merely narrate; they construct whole worlds that stay with you long after the credit rolls.

Miyazaki, specifically, has always been extremely conscious of environmental destruction, and it is highly reflected in his films. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* was only the start of it all, the foundation for the exploration of themes that *Princess Mononoke* would later tackle in even greater intensity and violence. His films do not merely show nature as something lovely and pure; they make nature come alive. Heavily rooted in Japan's Shinto traditions, Miyazaki presents nature as holy, something not just to serve man but as something that demands respect. Over the years, Ghibli has had the impact of making people view the world in its own ways through works such as *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Spirited Away*, and *The Wind Rises*, which have made unarguable impacts on worldwide viewers both in terms of animation and ecological impact. But *Princess Mononoke* is the exception to that rule as one of its toughest films. Where most of Ghibli's films dip into nostalgia, fantasy, and childlike wonder, this does the reverse. It is raw, harsh, and refuses to sugarcoat its message. It doesn't merely show the harm done by human intervention and industrialization; it makes sure we fully experience its impact. Ecological conflict in *Princess Mononoke* is a Japanese animated historical fantasy film that was written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki in 1997. Unlike most stories where nature is portrayed as something fragile that needs to be saved, this film flips the narrative. Nature here is fierce and powerful; it doesn't hold back or show mercy; it fights back. The story follows Ashitaka, a young prince who is cursed by a dying boar god after it is driven mad by an iron bullet. In search of a cure, he journeys west and finds himself caught in a brutal war between the people of Iron Town, led by Lady Eboshi, and the spirits of the forest, who are fighting to protect their home. Along the way, he meets San, a girl raised by wolves who sees humanity as the enemy. As violence erupts on both sides, Ashitaka struggles to mediate, searching for a path toward peace in a world consumed by hatred. There are no clear villains in this story; the characters that may be seen as villains by some have an equally good side to them. This contrast and imbalance between good and evil make the characters more dimensional and complex, adding depth to their humanity. The humans who are destroying the forest are not entirely wrong for wanting to survive, and the forest spirits aren't completely forgiving either. Instead, the film gives us insights from both perspectives and from an outsider's view as well; it tells a story of the fight between both sides while trying to survive. *Princess Mononoke* makes us question which side to take and where we draw the line. It makes us wonder whether coexistence is truly possible. In this paper, the study will dive deep into how *Princess Mononoke* portrays industrialization, war, and the destruction of nature. Through its captivating visuals, complex characters, and beautiful landscapes, the film doesn't just tell a story; rather, it makes the audience feel the weight of every action. It combines themes of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism through harsh truths, conflict, survival, and balance. This analysis will explore how Hayao Miyazaki challenges viewers to rethink their relationship with nature and whether harmony is something humanity can still hope for, or if it is already too late.

2. LADY EBOSHI AGAINST NATURE

At the core of *Princess Mononoke* is a conflict that mirrors what we see every day: the struggle between industrialization and nature. It is a struggle that continues to define the contemporary world, where progress and survival are often at the expense of the environment. Miyazaki does not reduce this struggle to good vs. evil. He does not tell us to abandon progress and return to the Stone Age. Rather, he makes us consider both sides, to see "with eyes unclouded by hate," the reasons behind the conflict, and question whether coexistence is possible.

Lady Eboshi and Iron Town are symbols of human persistence and aspiration. She is different from the archetypal greedy industrialist, who is just evil for the sake of being evil. She is a revolutionary who has established a successful society, taking in lepers and providing women who were former brothel workers with autonomy in a world that will otherwise not give them power; they are empowered, and they have jobs, which makes them a part of a society. They are no longer outcasts during her reign; they have a place where they can live with dignity. Eboshi is revolutionary in this sense. She defies the social conventions and creates a world in which those who were once ignored or rejected are now able to survive and thrive. Lady Eboshi is both destruction and mercy, which makes her character seem more human and leaves us unable to pick sides.

Iron Town is not shown as something completely separate from nature; rather, Miyazaki shows that it's just a society of ordinary people who are trying to find their way in life by doing what they deem is best. They are warm and welcoming, the women are employed, and the lepers are also a part of society, though they remain somewhat ostracized, perhaps due to the era they live in and the limited understanding of their condition. The former outcasts are the heart and soul of the industrial advancement that is very evident; the women are the ones who work with the extracted iron in the iron bellows, and the lepers are the ones who craft the guns and bullets for her warriors. One other thing that sets the town apart is that everyone knows how to use the weapons, including the women and the lepers. When Ashitaka first arrives in the town, he is welcomed with open arms, given food, and offered a place to stay. Despite everything, the people of Iron Town are still humans. This allows the audience to see the town not as an unnatural place but as a real functioning community trying to survive.

There is a cost, however, to this advancement. In order to develop Iron Town, she annihilates the surrounding forest, cutting down ancient trees and killing the spirits and animals that previously occupied the land, almost sucking the forest dry of its resources. She kills the Deer God not out of spite but to secure an alliance with the emperor, even at the cost of her own men. In her mind, she is not a villain but merely a guardian who is only looking out for her people and guaranteeing their survival, securing them from the samurais who attack her town constantly. She doesn't care if the nature around her crashes and burns or if a god has been murdered, if it gives her benefit. "Now watch closely, everyone. I'm going to show you how to kill a god. A god of life and death. The trick is not to fear him." (Princess Mononoke). is what Eboshi says before she kills the deer god, not an ounce of empathy. This is the essence of anthropocentrism, the belief that human needs are far above everything else. On the opposing side of the war the forest and its spirits fight back representing an ecocentric worldview where nature is not just a resource for human exploitation but a living, breathing entity that should be respected. The boar god Nago, once the proud guardian of the forest, is transformed into a seething demon after he is hurt by human weapons. His curse is not only a result of it but rather a direct cause of industrial development. Due to the curse, he is consumed with anger and hatred; his agony and anguish are an echo of what has been destroyed in his home forest.

His story is a warning that when nature is pushed too hard it will strike back. The spirits that inhabit the forest are seen as vengeful and evil by the villagers; they are both on two ends of a scale; they have been away from each other for too long that they have forgotten that at the end of the day, we are all part of nature too. The forest spirits only want to exist without harming the people, but they are pushed to their limits; it is evident in the sentient animals and animal gods. The apes are so desperate that they are willing to kill humans and the boars too, but they know for a fact that they cannot win. Still, they fight, making one last attempt to restore the peace and harmony they once had even though they are doomed to fail and then there is the deer god a god of life and death. He represents the delicate balance of the natural world, one that lies outside human control. Unlike Eboshi, he is not power-hungry. Unlike Nago, he is not driven by anger. He just keeps the cycle of life going, unaffected by human desires; he seems neutral and uncaring of what anyone wants and does what he thinks is right. When he is killed, nature itself suffers, and the land begins to decay. This moment is a turning point in the film, showing that disrupting this balance has consequences far greater than anyone could have imagined. And in the end, all the sentient animals and the primordial gods are dead, while humanity is set loose and left unchecked.

Miyazaki's portrayal of this battle mirrors real-world environmental struggles. From the cutting down of the Amazon rainforest to the destruction of sacred indigenous lands for industrial developments, history has witnessed countless instances where human growth has been at the cost of nature. The Industrial Revolution, similar to Iron Town's rise, was an era of great progress but also one of unimaginable destruction. Forests were cut down, rivers were poisoned, and whole ecosystems were eradicated, all in the name of progress. Even now, we find echoes of this conflict in arguments about climate change conservation and sustainability. But Princess Mononoke is not providing simple solutions. It does not advise us that nature must never be touched, nor is it telling us that industrialization is bad. It simply poses a question. How much are we prepared to do in the name of progress and at what point does survival turn into destruction.

Ashitaka, who is stuck between these two worlds, represents this conflict. He does not think that humans should control nature like Eboshi, but he also does not think that nature should be left alone like San. He sees the beauty and destruction in both, and he fights not to win in the battle but to find a path forward. He represents an ideal man who is perfect and is not ruined by hatred and anger, but rather someone who wants balance and harmony. Miyazaki leaves us with an uncomfortable reality. Humans and nature could forever be at war. If we choose to listen, if we recognize the cost of our actions, perhaps balance is still possible. Harmony they once had, even though they are doomed to fail. San against

Humanity San is unlike any other princess. She wears no crown, nor does she rule a kingdom, and she does not belong to the people who call her one. She is a child of the wild, raised by three wolves; the name "San" simply means "three" in Japanese, as she is considered the third "child" of the wolf spirit Moro, who raised her after she was abandoned by her parents when she was just a baby, essentially making her the "third cub" in the wolf pack. She wholeheartedly believes that she's a wolf and hates humans. She rejects the fact that she's a human. To her, humans are invaders, destroyers, and parasites feeding off the earth without care for the damage they leave behind. Though she walks on two legs and speaks their language, she refuses to see herself as one of them. Instead, she fights against them, dedicating her life to protecting the forest from their greed. But beneath her hatred lies a deeper conflict, one of identity, belonging, and the struggle between nature and civilization. San's hatred for humans is deeply personal. She was abandoned as a child, left to die in the forest, only to be saved and raised by the wolf goddess Moro. From the very beginning, her existence is defined by rejection and survival. Unlike Ashitaka, who sees both sides of the conflict, San does not seek peace. Instead, she fights fiercely, convinced that humanity is the enemy. She does not hesitate to attack Iron Town, nor does she flinch at the idea of killing Lady Eboshi. To her, this is a duty she must fulfil. She is willing to eliminate humanity if it means the forest will be left in peace. Her hatred can be seen in her refusal to acknowledge any connection to humanity. She wears a mask to separate herself from them, runs alongside wolves instead of walking among people, and even after Ashitaka shows her kindness, she resists the idea that she could ever coexist with humans. When he calls her beautiful, she does not respond. When he offers her a future outside of the war, she rejects it. To San, there is no world where humans and nature can exist together because she has only ever seen destruction at their hands.

But even with her hatred, the irony is present; she is human. Regardless of how much she attempts to deny it, her body, her feelings, and her struggles all connect her to the same people she hates. This makes her character so interesting, for unlike the wolves that raised her, she can question doubt and change. While she battles humanity she is battling herself as well. San's battle reflects the battle of indigenous people who have been displaced, erased, or forced to fight for their lands against industrial expansion. Like San and the forest spirits, indigenous peoples across the globe have battled deforestation mining and urbanization that threaten their homelands. The deforestation of the Amazon is similar to the fate of the forest in Princess Mononoke, where the greed of industrial powers results in irreversible harm. Like San, indigenous communities are viewed as barriers to progress when, in reality, they are the ones fighting for their home.

San's personality also depicts the strong spiritual bond that most indigenous societies share with nature. The manner in which she addresses the forest, her faith in the gods that inhabit it, and her readiness to battle for its existence all resonate with the beliefs of societies that regard the land as holy. As San resists being integrated into human society, numerous indigenous individuals have also resisted forced integration, holding onto their culture despite external pressure to fit in. San is a princess in name only, not in the way traditional stories define one. She does not live in a castle, she does not have royal blood, and she does not seek to rule. Instead, she is a warrior, a protector of the wild. She is not passive like the traditional fairytale princesses, who are damsels in distress. She fights and does not need a man to 'save' her. She defies every convention of what a princess is supposed to be. She is neither polite nor feminine; instead, she is wild and free. Her name, Princess Mononoke, is ironic. The name "Mononoke" isn't exactly a title; rather, it is a derogatory name by which the villagers of the Iron Town call her by. In a traditional definition of the term, it instead means vengeful creatures or spirits that are supernatural and can shapeshift. She is the princess of the vengeful spirits, the worst nightmare of those who harm the forest. Her existence itself challenges the expectations placed on women in both traditional and modern storytelling. She is not gentle or soft-spoken. She is fierce, violent, and harsh in her anger. She does not seek love, nor does she let it define her. Even when Ashitaka offers her the chance to live with humans, with him, she refuses, choosing to stay in the forest where she belongs instead. San's story does not end with a clear resolution. Unlike many heroes, she does not undergo a dramatic transformation where she suddenly sees the good in humanity and embraces her place among them. She does not forgive or forget. Even after the Deer God is killed and the war reaches its tragic end, she does not leave testation, doubt, and change. While she battles humanity, she is battling herself as well forest. She acknowledges Ashitaka's kindness, but she still cannot live in his world. Her final choice is to stay in the forest, where she feels she belongs. San's struggle is not just about revenge or hatred.

It is about identity, survival, and the painful realization that sometimes, no matter how much we wish for harmony, some worlds are not meant to be reconciled. Yet, in her resistance, she remains a symbol of nature's enduring spirit, a reminder that even in the face of destruction, there are those who will continue to fight for the land they call home. A Bridge between Two Worlds Ashitaka was caught between two opposing forces, not fully belonging to either side but

striving to bring them together and find balance. He is an outsider, watching the conflict between humanity and nature as someone who doesn't take sides. Unlike San, who sees all humans as the enemy, and Eboshi, who wants nothing but the industrial progress of her town, Ashitaka tries to find harmony. His quest to find the origin of his curse is about viewing the world with compassion; he is told not to view the world with eyes clouded with hatred. Even though the film is named after San, the princess Mononoke, Ashitaka is the main protagonist; he is the bridge between humans and nature. He presents a third perspective, not fully influenced by any side but rather as someone who finds both sides equally necessary and wants to bring balance to the world again. Ashitaka follows the classic hero's journey archetype from the very beginning. His exile from Emishi Village forces him into a world at war with itself. His home was an ideal community where people lived in peace, following traditions that respected both humans and nature. Isolated from violence and cruelty, they lived in harmony with their surroundings. But that balance is destroyed when Nago, the cursed boar god, attacks the village, driven to madness by the curse, which amplifies one's anger and hatred, driving them to madness and destruction. The attack was undeserving; it resulted from actions beyond their control. This mirrors reality, where the poor and marginalized pay the price for the greed of the rich. While trying to protect his people, Ashitaka becomes a victim of the curse himself, leaving him with no choice but to set out on a quest in search of understanding and with little hope of a cure. He is forced to leave behind his home, a world that valued harmony, only to enter one where that harmony has already been lost.

But rather than letting this exile drive him to violence and revenge, it opens his mind. Instead of seeing the world through hatred, he learns to treat people with kindness and compassion, becoming someone who seeks understanding rather than conflict

Ashitaka's curse is not just a physical wound; it seems almost sentient and feeds on the anger, hatred, and frustration, slowly consuming the bearer. It gives him strength; it also threatens to consume him, just as hatred consumes Nago and the other forest spirits. This is why he is told to see the world "with eyes unclouded by hate." Unlike those around him, who are blinded by anger and vengeance, Ashitaka observes, understands, and finds a different path. His struggle is not to defeat an enemy but to convince others to look beyond their rage and see that violence is a cycle that will only continue unless broken. His conflicts with both San and Eboshi highlight his position as a bridge. San rejects him at first, unable to understand why a human would help her. She sees only the destruction caused by humanity and believes coexistence is impossible. Even though she never gets rid of the hatred she has for her own kind, she eventually begins to trust him after he risked his own life to save her. On the other hand, Lady Eboshi represents everything Ashitaka is against, yet he does not treat her as an enemy. He acknowledges her strength and her desire to protect her people; he sees the good in her as well, but he refuses to accept the destruction that comes with her plans. He tries to show her a different perspective, one of empathy and compassion for beings that aren't human but she doesn't budge.

In the very end, Ashitaka is the key to restoring balance. As the Deer God is beheaded, nature begins to decay; both humans and animals begin to die. As Ashitaka and San reclaim the Deer God's head and return it, they put an end to the destruction. The ending is not perfect; the returning of the deer god's head doesn't magically fix the chaos. The great god of the forest is dead, but before he dies, he removes the pollution and gives life a chance to heal itself again. The Iron Town is destroyed, and many lives are lost, but it is also a new beginning. The forest starts breathing again; trees and flowers begin to grow, covering the land in green once more. In the final scene, a leper is shown as healed, and a kodama reappears in the forest, symbolizing that the forest is healthy once again. Eboshi learns from her mistakes and promises to rebuild her town differently this time. San chooses to remain in the forest since she is unwilling to forgive humanity for what they have done, but she acknowledges Ashitaka's role in saving both worlds. And Ashitaka, still caught between two sides, chooses to live near the forest, helping the people of the town rebuild their homes, continuing to bridge the gap between nature and humanity. In the end, Ashitaka does not win a war or defeat a villain. Instead, he changes the course of events by refusing to be consumed by hatred. He proves that understanding and compassion can make a difference. While he doesn't fix the world or bring ultimate balance, he brings change that has opened up people's hearts to see the world as something we belong to, and not something we are separate from.

Progress Nature and Balance the battle between industrialization and nature is something that has been going on since forever. At first it was a movement towards progress and betterment of society, to uplift the community, but it got corrupted along the way like all ideologies do. In contemporary contexts, industrial progress is often critiqued for disproportionately benefiting the wealthy while marginalizing lower-income communities. Princess Mononoke presents this conflict through three different perspectives: Eboshi, who represents human progress at any cost; San, who fights for nature's survival and rejects humanity entirely; and Ashitaka, who seeks to find balance between the two very opposing forces. Each character represents a different way of seeing the world, and their interactions shape the film's

exploration of anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and the possibility of coexistence. Eboshi is the representation of human ambition and industrial advancement, but her vision of progress comes at a cost. She built the Iron Town into a successful society where outcasts, including lepers, former prostitutes, and laborers, who were once rejected by society get a second chance at life. But her success is built on the destruction of the forest and the exploitation of natural resources. She does not see nature as something to be protected or preserved, but as a thorn in her way, something that has to be discarded. This mirrors the mindsets of industrialists and multinational corporations, who care about nothing but economic growth over the environment. The disconnect between humanity and nature can be seen in our contemporary society as well, where urbanization, deforestation, and climate change are direct consequences of the same mindset that Eboshi represents. Her willingness to sacrifice lives for power is also a reflection of the horrors of war. She provides guns and explosives, creating conflicts that result in mass destruction. In her alliance with Jigo, she follows the emperor's quest for the Deer God's head, who believes that the head would make him immortal; he guarantees her security from the constant attack of the samurais. In doing so, she helps Jigo's army in the war against the boar clan, leading to their complete annihilation. Her men die in battle, which were deceived and were used as nothing but bait to lure in the boars and were in turn killed because of the explosives that were buried under their feet. It is unclear whether she knew about the explosives, but it highlights fights or wars are never truly about survival but about gaining political power. This mirrors real-world conflicts driven by the need for power and wealth, where wars are waged not out of necessity but as a means of control, hatred, and for resources, and in the end, the price is paid by the powerless civilians. San, on the other hand, embodies nature's retaliation against human exploitation. She was raised by wolves and considers herself a part of the wild; she rejects her own humanity and fights for the forest as the princess of the spirits that inhabit it. To her, humans are intruders, spreading destruction wherever they go. Her hatred is not without reason. She has seen the destruction caused by Iron Town. She believes that the only way to save the forest is to get rid of its enemies entirely. This mentality of San coincides with the beliefs of radical environmentalists who think that direct action is the only way to stop the ecological destruction. Just as real-world movements like the Extinction Rebellion, Earth First!, and The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) resort to violence to draw attention to environmental crises, San wages war against humanity in an attempt to drive them out of the land.

But her perspective is flawed too. The possibility of coexistence between nature and humanity remains a central concern in environmental discourse. Her rejection of humanity reflects the view that the only solution to environmental destruction is for humans to remove themselves from the equation. However, the reality is more complicated. While San fights for the forest, she cannot escape the fact that she is human. Her struggle reflects the tension between wanting to protect the natural world and acknowledging that humans are inherently a part of it. Her hatred, though justified, is also a barrier to coexistence. While watching the movie, we can see ourselves in San. The fact that humans are responsible for this massive scale of destruction makes us wish humans never existed in the first place, but that cannot be possible, no matter how much you hate the situation now. Since we are responsible for the cause, we are also burdened with the task of fixing what we did wrong and restoring nature back to health.

Ashitaka stands between these two extremes, symbolizing balance and harmony. Unlike Eboshi, he does not believe in using nature selfishly, and unlike San, he does not see humanity as irredeemable. He carries the burden of his curse, a direct consequence of human destruction against the natural world, and he is told to see the world "with eyes unclouded by hate."

This is what sets him apart from the rest; while others are blinded by their beliefs, he seeks understanding. His role is not to destroy one side to protect the other but to show that there is another way, a third perspective, which provides a more plausible solution. The film's ending reflects this fragile balance; it is nothing more than a hollow victory. The Deer God is killed, nature decays, and chaos ensues. Yet, when Ashitaka and San return his head, life begins to heal. The destruction cannot be undone, but regeneration is possible. Iron Town is left in ruins but Eboshi acknowledges her mistakes and vows to rebuild it differently. San chooses to remain in the forest, unwilling to forgive humanity, but she recognizes Ashitaka's role in saving both worlds. Their final conversation is significant; while Ashitaka decides to live near the forest, working to help rebuild the town, San continues to fight for nature. They do not achieve perfect harmony, but they make a change. The message in *Princess Mononoke* is that the fight between progress and nature is inevitable, but it is about how we handle that conflict that decides the outcome. True balance does not come from the complete eradication of one side or the other but from learning to live in harmony with nature while recognizing the need for human survival.

The failure of the boar clan, the near destruction of Iron Town, and the tragic death of the Deer God all serve as warnings, and ignoring the consequences of human greed and destruction leads to ruin for both sides. In today's world, this message is more relevant than ever. Climate change, deforestation, increasing sea levels, ozone layer depletion, and habitat destruction all emerge from the same anthropocentric mind-set that Eboshi represents. At the same time, radical solutions that ignore the realities of human existence are often met with resistance, much like San's complete rejection of human society. The key to real change lies in Ashitaka's perspective, in seeing beyond the black and whites and finding a way to bridge the gap between human needs and ecological preservation.

In the end, Princess Mononoke suggests that the greatest barrier to balance is not nature or industry itself but human arrogance and blind resistance. Eboshi's ambition, San's hatred, and even Ashitaka's struggle all come from deep beliefs that are difficult to let go of. The film does not provide an easy resolution because, in reality, balance is never simple. It demands compromise, understanding, and the willingness to see beyond one's own perspective. Ashitaka's journey reminds us that while destruction is easy; coexistence is a choice. Only by recognizing our place in nature and our responsibility toward it can we hope to create a world that is not driven by conflict but by balance and respect for all living things.

3. CONCLUSION

The fight between progress and nature is never black and white. Princess Mononoke does not give us clear heroes and villains. It gives us people, spirits, and creatures all trying to survive in a world in their own way. Eboshi sees the forest as an obstacle, something that she must remove to achieve her goals. San sees humans as outsiders, destroyers of her home. And then there is Ashitaka, who is caught between them; he tries to find a way forward without letting the hatred of both sides consume him. But if there is one thing the film makes clear, it is that balance is not something that comes naturally. It has to be fought for. The world will always be in conflict because people will always have different perspectives, different needs, and different desires. But does this mean coexistence is impossible? Princess Mononoke does not give us an easy answer because there isn't one. What it does give us is a choice. To destroy, to resist, or to understand.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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