

An Investigation into Audience Perception of *Mononoke Hime*: Construction and reconstruction of contemporary Japanese identity

Michie Akahane Suparman

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
Of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts (Honours)

School of Modern Language Studies

University of New South Wales

30 August, 2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES**Thesis/Project Report Sheet**

Surname or Family name: SUPARMAN

First name: Michie

Other name/s: Akahane

Abbreviation for degree as given in the University calendar: Master of Arts (Honours)

School: Modern Language Studies

Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences

Title: An Investigation into Audience Perception of *Mononoke Hime*: Construction and reconstruction of contemporary Japanese identity

Abstract

This exploratory study follows existing theory and analysis of mass media product and its audience analysis. It aims to analyse how audience members utilise a popular *anime* in Japan for their construction and reconstruction of sense of self, which is referred to as socialisation. Academic research has increasingly shed light on audience members' socialisation by utilising mass media products in encompassing academic fields such as media studies, communication studies and cultural studies. It is widely agreed that the content of mass media products play a significant role in their socialisation.

This study takes up a Japanese *anime*, *Mononoke Hime* as a sample case for investigating audience members' socialization. Through the analysis of reactions of audience members to *Mononoke Hime*, it will be investigated how audience members interpret the *anime* reflecting one's experience in the society relating the experience to the content of *Mononoke Hime*. It will be clarified that the audience members of the *anime* construct and reconstruct their sense of self, morals and values in the society, that is, they utilize the *anime* as a facility for their socialization.

The data of this study are collected comments which are compiled in a published magazine and private comments posted on Internet sites. 133 comments in the magazine and 32 comments on Internet sites are selected for the analysis. The data were analysed by two analytical approaches. The first analysis is to see how the consulted viewers established their relationship with the *anime*, while the second analysis is to see how the viewers depicted and interpreted the content of the *anime*.

This study concluded that the consulted audience members show high level of ideological involvement with the *anime*; they depict parts of the *anime* relating to their experience in the real life and talk the *anime* seriously rather than playfully enjoy it as an entertainment. By analysing the comments of consulted audience members, it is also revealed that the audience members take characters of the anime as a role model both in cross gender and gender based ways.

Declaration of thesis

I am fully aware of the policy of the University relating to the retention and use of higher degree project reports and thesis, namely that the University retains the copies submitted for examination and is free to allow them to be consulted or borrowed. Subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, the University may issue a project report or thesis in whole or in part, in Photostat or microform or other copying medium.

I also authorise the publication by University Microfilms of a 350 word abstract in Dissertation Abstracts International (applicable to doctorates only).

.....
Signature	Witness	Date

The University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances requiring restrictions on copying or conditions on use. Requests for restriction for a period up to 2 years must be made in writing to the Registrar. Requests for a longer period of restriction may be considered in exceptional circumstances if accompanied by a letter support from the Supervisor or Head of School. Such request must be submitted with the thesis/project report.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Date of completion for Award:	<u>Registrar and Deputy Principal</u>
---------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Abstract

This exploratory study follows existing theory and analysis of mass media product and its audience analysis. It aims to analyse how audience members utilise a popular *anime* in Japan for their construction and reconstruction of sense of self, which is referred to as socialisation. Academic research has increasingly shed light on audience members' socialisation by utilising mass media products in encompassing academic fields such as media studies, communication studies and cultural studies. It is widely agreed that the content of mass media products play a significant role in their socialisation.

This study takes up a Japanese *anime*, *Mononoke Hime* as a sample case for investigating audience members' socialization. Through the analysis of reactions of audience members to *Mononoke Hime*, it will be investigated how audience members interpret the *anime* reflecting one's experience in the society relating the experience to the content of *Mononoke Hime*. It will be clarified that the audience members of the *anime* construct and reconstruct their sense of self, morals and values in the society, that is, they utilize the *anime* as a facility for their socialization.

The data of this study are collected comments that were compiled in a published magazine and private comments posted on Internet sites. 133 comments in the magazine and 32 comments on Internet sites are selected for the analysis. The data were analysed by two analytical approaches. The first analysis is to see how the consulted viewers established their relationship with the *anime*, while the second analysis is to see how the viewers depicted and interpreted the content of the *anime*.

This study concluded that the consulted audience members show high level of

ideological involvement with the *anime*; they depict parts of the *anime* relating to their experience in the real life and talk the *anime* seriously rather than playfully enjoy it as an entertainment. By analysing the comments of consulted audience members, it is also revealed that the audience members take characters of the anime as a role model both in cross gender and gender based ways.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank to my four supervisors; Dr Chihiro K. Tompson, Dr James Roberson, Dr Julia Yonetani and Dr William Armour. Dr Tompson and Dr Roberson gave me a significant and crucial kick-start. Dr Yonetani instructed and supported me to build up a base for the study. Dr Armour guided, instructed, supervised and supported me in writing this thesis at the most important and crucial moment. Without his highly professional and dedicated instruction, this study would have never been completed.

I would like to thank all the staff of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences who supported me regarding administrative issues in particular, and library staff who are always helpful to search for reference, colleagues of the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies who supported me mentally and often gave me useful information relating to the issues in this study.

Last but not least, I also would like to thank my family for their help throughout the years of writing the thesis.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vii

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

1.1 Research background	1
1.2 Need for the study	5
1.3 Purpose of the study	6
1.4 Research questions	7
1.5 Limitation of the study	8
1.6 Overview of the Chapters	9

Chapter 2: Literature Review 11

2.1 Overview	11
2.2 The meaning of <i>Anime</i> for the contemporary Japanese	11
2.2.0 Preamble	11
2.2.1 Contemporary Japanese <i>Anime</i> : setting the scene	12
2.2.2 Meaning of <i>nime</i> for the contemporary Japanese	15
2.3 Comments on <i>Mononoke Hime</i>	21
2.3.0 Preamble	21
2.3.1 An outline of issues in <i>Mononoke Hime</i>	22
2.3.2 Criticisms and appraisals of <i>Mononoke Hime</i>	26

Chapter 3 Research Methodology 34

3.1 Introduction	34
3.2 Theoretical background	35
3.2.0 Preamble	35
3.2.1 Text analysis of mass media products	35
3.2.2 The Encoding/Decoding model	37
3.2.3 Audience analysis in relation to the audience's interpretation	41

3.3 Data collection method for the analysis of the audience's interpretation	52
3.3.1 Preamble	52
3.3.2 Comments posted on Internet sites	53
3.3.3 Selected data from published <i>kansoobun</i> (感想文 Viewers' comments)	55
3.3.4 Age groups for this analysis	59
3.4 The analytical framework for audience's interpretation	60
3.5 Validity and reliability	64
3.6 The choice of the topic and subjectivity	65
3.7 Summary	66
Chapter 4 Analysis of interpretations of <i>Mononoke Hime</i>	68
4.0 Preamble	68
4.1 Audience members' relationships to <i>Mononoke Hime</i>	68
4.1.1 Distribution of comments	68
(1) Referential comments	70
(1-1) Cognitive comments	70
(1-2) Real Keying comments	72
(1-3) Play Keying comments	72
(2) Critical comments	73
(2-1) Aesthetic comments	75
(2-2) Criticism comments	75
(3) Personal	75
4.1.2 Summary	76
4.2 Depictions and interpretations of the film by the audience members	77
4.2.0 Preamble	77
4.2.1 Referential comments	78
4.2.1.1 Cognitive comments	78
(1) Group 1: Relationship of human beings and natural environment	79
(2) Group 2: Life and lifestyle	82
(2-1) Reflection on one's life	83
(2-2) Hope and/or encouragement for living	84
(3) Group 3: Change of scenes in the film	84
(4) Group 4: Other	85
(5) Summary	86

4.2.1.2 Real Keying comments	87
(1) Value-Free comments	87
(1-1) Comments on the characters	89
(1-1-1) Comments on Feelings about the characters	89
(1-1-2) Comments on Roles of the characters	92
(1-2) Comments on other scenes	94
(2) Normative comments	95
(2-1) Normative comments on the characters	96
(2-2) Normative comments on the last scene and other scenes	101
(3) Summary	102
4.2.1.3 Play Keying comments	103
4.2.2 Critical comments	104
4.2.2.1 Aesthetic comments	104
4.2.2.2 Criticism comments	105
(1) Appreciation of the <i>anime</i>	107
(2) Characteristics of the film	107
(3) Contrast / comparison with other films	109
(4) Negative appraisals	111
4.2.3. Personal comments	113
4.3 Summary of findings	114
Chapter 5 Conclusion	116
5.0 Preamble	116
5.1 Answers to Research Questions	116
5.2 Issues coming out of the data and recommendations for further research	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121
APPENDICES	129

List of Tables

Table 1: Appraisals of <i>Mononoeke Hime</i>	27
Table 2: Criticism on Mononoeke Hime	30
Table 3: Three Decoding positions (adapted from Hall, 1983:136-138)	39
Table 4: Young's Three Developmental Film-Viewer Relationship (Young, 2000:457-459)	46
Table 5: Groups and site numbers of 1000 <i>Mononoke Hime</i> related sites	54
Table 6: Distribution by age and gender	57
Table 7: Contributors' distribution by prefecture	58
Table 8: Contributors' distribution by gender and age	60
Table 9: Categories and Definitions of the Analytical Framework	62
Table 10: Total proportion of comments in each category	69
Table 11: Issues that appeared in Cognitive comments and distribution	78
Table 12: Distribution of Value Free	88
Table 13: Distribution of "Feeling" and "Role" comments	89
Table 14: Distribution of comments on the characters' Feeling by gender	90
Table 15: Distribution of comments on the characters' Role by gender	91
Table 16: Distribution of Normative comments	96
Table 17: Distribution of Normative comments by gender and age	97
Table 18: Distribution of Aesthetic comments	104
Table 19: Distribution of Criticism comments	106

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research background

Contemporary Japan is widely recognised as “a country of *manga*” (漫画の国、日本, Berndt, 1994:8). A large amount and variety of *manga* (漫画, Japanese comics) have been published for people of almost all ages and backgrounds in Japan since World War II (Schodt, 2002:7, 17-18). It did not take long for *manga* printed on paper to be transferred into a broadcasted medium, that is, through nationwide television, thus creating the popular form of entertainment known as *anime*.

Anime became popular with the rise of video in the mid 1980s in Japan. Moreover, Japanese-made *manga* and *anime* are widely distributed all over the world (Berndt, 1994; Befu, 1999). Typically, students and young people outside of Japan recognise Japan more as “a country of *manga*” than as a country of exotic places and people, of miraculous economic growth, or any other defining aspect (Kato, 1996; Christine, 1997; Kitano, 1998; Befu, 1999).

Contemporary Japanese *anime* as well as *manga* are produced for people of all ages, genders, and social backgrounds. They seek to meet the needs and interests of people’s everyday lives, spanning a variety of diverse topics and genres (Schodt, 1983 & 2002; Kinsella, 1998; Drazen, 2003; Poitras, 2005). These products are primarily consumed for entertainment, providing both children and adults with a temporary escape from their everyday lives. They give people time and space to relax. However, some *manga* products are also produced as educational tools to assist readers to learn in a relaxed manner, while other products are consumed as pseudo-compensation for

the consumer's unfulfilled desires (Schodt, 1983 & 2002; Berndt, 1994; Yomota, 1999; Kinsella, 2003).

Given the enormous quantity and wide variety of *manga* and *anime*, from both the production and the consumption perspective, academics agree that it is impossible to categorise *manga* and *anime* under a conventional framework, such as high or popular (low) culture (Tsurumi, 1983; Berndt, 1994; Kato, 1996; Kinsella, 1998; Napier, 2001; Schodt, 2002). Contemporary discussions regarding *manga* and *anime* define it as a contemporary phenomenon which performs a significant socio-cultural function.

Despite their popularity, *manga* and *anime* were not discussed by mainstream academics or in the mass media until the early 1980s (Tsurumi, 1983; Yomota, 1999; Ishigami, 2000; Hasegawa, 2001). It appears that this reluctance was due to a perception that *manga* and *anime* were merely a fun distraction for children. This academic taboo was eroded during the 1980s by the growing popularity of *manga* and *anime*, both within and outside of Japan. The death of Tezuka Osamu in 1989, a pioneer of contemporary Japanese *manga* and *anime*, marked the beginning of serious academic discussion, innumerable essays, critiques, analyses and studies regarding the *manga* and *anime* culture of Japan.

Early academic and journalistic accounts on *manga* and *anime* focused mainly on plots, character settings and stories, in terms of the filmmakers' ideological backgrounds (Natsume, 1998; Hasegawa, 1999; Yomota, 2002). Such accounts attempted to reveal the ideologies and messages of the filmmaker. Alternatively, others focused on aspects of *manga* and *anime* culture as a reflection and representation of

‘Japanese’ culture and society (Tsurumi, 1986; Berndt, 1994; Kinsella, 1998; Befu, 1999; Napier, 2001).

However, those early studies often did not necessarily refer to issues such as who actually reads or views those media products; how an audience interprets the products; and whether this audience interprets the product as its producer intended, or as researchers and critics have claimed. The reader or viewer cannot be considered simply as a number in a ratings survey (Ang, 1991; Lewis, 1992; Lull, 1995; Martinez, 1998; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003): readers’ and viewers’ perceptions do not always act in accordance with the producers’ and distributors’ intentions, even though it is widely agreed that mass media products wield a considerable influence over viewers’ conduct (Hall, 1980; Ang, 1991; Martinez, 1991; Turner, 1992; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). A reader or viewer is situated somewhere between two ends of a continuum. At one end is the ‘ideal’ position, whereby the audience follows precisely what is presented in any given media product; while at the other end is a perception which is totally autonomous of the intended representation (Hall, 1980:135-136; see 1.5.2 in this chapter).

The reader and viewer may actively and spontaneously diverge from the creator’s intended meaning, participating in another phase of activity through which audience members¹ fulfil their own socio-cultural needs. They may also seek information and knowledge to use in their daily lives, review and confirm the morals and values embedded in the product, and/or use the product to reconstruct their own worldview

¹ The term “audience member” is used in this study to mean actual viewers who read and/or watch media product with their own intention.

(Heath, 1983; Lull, 1995; Young, 2000; Baily, 2005).

Readers of *manga* and viewers of *anime* are usually serious, and often very discerning, consumers. They know what they want from such products, and often enthusiastically engage in activities related to *manga* and *anime* (White, 1998; Schodt, 2001; Patten, 2002; Kinsella, 2003). People also absorb information about the society of contemporary Japan by reading *manga* or viewing *anime*. Based on the information that is derived from the *manga* or *anime*, some of the readers and viewers start to think differently about themselves (Kinsella, 1998; Ishigami, 2000; Saito, 2001). These readers interpret such products introspectively, and the products influence them in their perception of what they consider to be good or bad, right or wrong, and what they are or are not allowed to do. In this sense, they construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their values and senses of self through these media.

Manga and *anime* don't only entertain – they also allow people to understand more about their society and their place within it. Therefore, an analysis of the interpretations of a media product such as *manga* and *anime* by the readers and viewers consists of what individual viewers or readers can derive from a product; why she or he focuses on specific points; her or his specific interpretation of the anime; and the manner in which she or he uses the medium to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct her or his value and sense of self.

1.2 Need for the study

There is much contemporary discourse regarding *anime*, both in the academic field and in the mass media. These accounts offer insights into the ideological

background behind the *anime*. They show what the *anime* represents in a contemporary socio-cultural context for the audience, and how it assists them to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their worldviews, values and senses of self.

From birth, people are trained and educated as members of a society in a variety of ways. As members of a society, people observe and internalise the social roles, attitudes, morals, values and norms as prescribed by their society through education, training and experiences. They thus establish and develop a sense of self, values, worldview, and identity (Ang, 1991; Kellner, 1995; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). Through this process, individual member of a society connect themselves to others, and the society attempts to integrate itself as a whole. The term “socialisation” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003:173) is used to define this process of connectivity between people and society.

In contemporary society, the mass media plays an increasingly powerful role in socialisation. Thompson (1995) argues that the mass media forms an additional facility for consultation with, and negotiation of, one’s attitudes towards society, and also one’s place within that society. He states that

“individuals’ horizons of understanding are broadened; they are no longer limited by patterns of face-to-face interactions but are shaped increasingly by the expanding networks of mediated communication” (Thompson, 1995: 211).

Mass media is one of the systems that contemporary society uses to instruct its

members on how to gratify their needs. From this perspective, the audience appears as active members who consciously and actively seek to fulfil their needs by utilising the mass media (Turner, 1992; Kellner, 1995; Garnham, 2000; Moor, 2003; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). People acknowledge the functions of the media and utilise its facilities to deliver and receive messages in order to fulfil their needs. The media surrounds people, and people rely on the media in their daily activities.

However, in contemporary accounts of *manga* and *anime*, there appears to be limited research utilizing actual audience members and their interpretations of what they have seen (Wells, 1996; Napier, 2001). In everyday experience, people receive a variety of information and messages via various media. As common practice, people read, watch and hear and interpret the information and messages in the media according to their needs and interests. From a sociological viewpoint, these acts form a process which creates an individual's connectivity with, or distance from, other individuals and society on the whole. Therefore, research is required in relation to audience interpretation of *manga* and *anime* to accurately address how actual audience members in contemporary Japan read *manga* and watch *anime*, what they interpret from these experiences; and how they use these media to construct their sense of self.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how contemporary Japanese people use *anime* as a facility to help form a sense of self. This study will undertake exploratory research to analyse particular reactions of audience members to *anime*. This study is content-based, as it focuses on the audience members' interpretations

which were collected soon after they had viewed the *anime*. It focuses specifically on how the audience members relate themselves to the media product; and the role that their interpretation of the media product plays in the construction and reconstruction of each individual's sense of self.

Nevertheless, considering the huge amount of *manga* and *anime* products in Japan, it is realistic to utilise one product as a case study to analyse the audience members' interpretations. With this aim, *Mononoke Hime* (『もののけ姫』, Princess *Mononoke*, director Hayao Miyazaki, released in July 1997) will be the example of *anime* used for this study. The main reason that this *anime* has been selected is that it is one of only a few *anime* for which viewers' documented comments are readily available.

1.4 Research questions

There are three research questions.

- 1) How have audience members perceived and accepted what has been represented in the *anime* in terms of its maker's intentions and/or the depictions and interpretation of the *anime* as outlined in the research literature?
- 2) Continuing on from research question 1), how have the consulted audience members in this study interpreted *Mononoke Hime*?
- 3) How have the consulted audience members utilised the *anime* to construct their sense of self?

1.5 Limitation of the study

The discussion in this study of the ways in which contemporary Japanese people use *anime* is limited in a number of ways. Firstly, the analysis relates only to *Mononoke Hime* and its audience in Japan. The number of viewers of *Mononoke Hime* is estimated to exceed more than 10% of the Japanese population. At the end of 1997, after its release in July 1997, *Mononoke Hime* attracted 12,600,000 cinema goers.³ It was therefore unrealistic to conduct participant observation or direct interviews with the entire audience in Japan.

Secondly, the reliability of the consulted contributors of *Mononoke Hime* could be questioned. The data in this study can be classified as second-hand data, as they consist of a published magazine which contained audience comments, and comments available on the internet. There is a high possibility that the publisher selected comments of the contributors according to the publishing policy of the magazine. The data from Internet sites of this study are limited to those which identify the contributors' genders. However, the true identity of contributors of the comments on Internet sites, and the authenticity of the comments, were not scrutinised. Therefore, the results and discussion of this study cannot be extrapolated to the Japanese population as a whole. Only a small number of the comments of *Mononoke Hime* viewers are analysed in this study.

Another reason not to draw generalisations from these results relates to a more theoretical concern as raised by Gray (2000). Gray argues that those who are defined

³ <http://www.renya.com/ghibli/mononoke.htm>, downloaded 6/4/04

as the audience in the majority of audience analyses are mainly fans of the mass media products. Fans are nearly always willing to talk about the product, and tend to comment positively about it. However, Gray argues, that “from empirical data, anti-fans and non-fans often have in-depth inflection and perspectives and express their views and moralistic perspective in their [own] way” (p.73).

People sometimes react more enthusiastically to television programs, films and novels which they do not like or with which they disagree than they do to a media product which they like. It is necessary to characterise the audience members in terms of their attitudes toward a mass media product: that is, whether they like or dislike the product. As such, it is not possible to make generalisations from any of the conclusions reached.

1.6 Overview of the Chapters

Chapter Two is a literature review; a related study of contemporary Japanese anime. It also includes a brief history of Japanese *manga* and *anime* after World War II, and the meaning of *manga* and *anime* for the Japanese people. The content of *Mononoke Hime* and examples of criticism on the film will be described in this chapter.

Chapter Three will explain the research methods used in this thesis. Method of selection of data and background of consulted audience members will be described in the chapter. Analytical framework which is used in this study will also be explained in this chapter.

Chapter Four will present the results of the analysis of the audience’s interpretation of *Mononoke Hime*. Audience members’ letters and comments from the

internet will be analysed using an analytical framework in order to determine which topics are described by the audience and how the audience engages with the content; and how they involve themselves with, or distance themselves from, the product.

Chapter Five is the conclusion of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The first part of this chapter reviews English and Japanese literature from the last ten years relating to contemporary Japanese *anime* and its meaning for the Japanese people. The second part of this chapter then presents an outline of the topics featured in *Mononoke Hime*. This part also presents some positive and negative appraisals by professional critics which appeared in the mass media, and act as a contrast with results discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

2.2 The meaning of *Anime* for the contemporary Japanese

2.2.0 Preamble

Contemporary Japanese *anime* is a hybrid art form comprised of pictures, stories and technology.⁴ It forms a major socio-cultural and economic sphere which provides everyday entertainment, creates a space for the expression of ideologies, and inspires audience members to socially interact, as well as bearing profit for the business institutions that produced it.

Aesthetically and socio-culturally, *anime* shares common characteristics with live action films and *manga* in terms of their shared popularity, format, style of expression and meaning for society. Critical and academic writings on *anime* often focus on its

⁴ The term 'animation' includes clay animation, animation film of drawings and other animated film objects (Wells, 1998). In this study, the term '*anime*' is used for cell-pictorial and/or computer graphic animation films which are the dominant styles of contemporary Japanese animation.

aesthetic and ideological aspects, in a similar manner as they often do in relation to live action films. However, despite its popularity, academic accounts in relation to Japanese *anime* and research on its viewers are limited. This section presents a few examples of Japanese *anime*-related literature closely related to this study to explore the meaning of *anime* for contemporary Japanese people.

2.2.1 Contemporary Japanese *anime*: setting the scene

Western animated films were introduced to modern Japan in the early 1900s, and the first Japanese animated film was produced in 1915 (Napier, 2001:16). Both Western and Japanese *anime* were only shown at the cinema before television was available in every household. Theatrical animation was the dominant form of *anime* in Japan until *Astro Boy* (Tetsuwan Atomu, 鉄腕アトム) was first broadcast on television in 1963. The domestic theatrical animations were so unpopular and unprofitable for production companies that it was no surprise they were never “a big hit” (Shibuya, 1998).

Television broadcasting started in Japan in 1953. Together with Japan’s economic growth, increasing consumptive economy and expanding technology in the early 1960s, the television set became one of the major consumer goods present in every household; the so-called “*sashu no jingi*” (3種の神器, the Three Divine Goods: the refrigerator, washing machine and black and white television).

Soon after Japan’s first television *anime* series was broadcast in 1963, television *anime* series soon gained the dominant position over theatrical *anime*. In 1997 there were approximately 60 separate *anime* series broadcast every week (Animage, July,

1997) and by 2000 there were more than 150 *anime* series on eleven satellite channels (20 Seiki Anime Taizen, 2000). *Anime* studios produce 50 animated series every year (Napier, 2001:7). The number of television *anime* series in the early 2000s remains similar to the number in 2000 (Schilling, 2002).

It was more than two decades after television *anime* became popular that a cinema *anime* was considered a “big hit” – this was in the late 1970s. *Space Battleship Yamato* (Uchuu Senkan Yamato, 宇宙戦艦ヤマト) which was originally broadcast as a television series from 1975 to 1976, was the first popular theatre *anime* in 1978 (Kitano, 1998; Minamida, 2000). For the 20 years between 1981 and 2000, a total of 82 *anime*, an average of over 4 per year, were released at movie theatres in Japan (*Za 20 Seiki*, the 20th Century⁵). More than ten *anime* films were released at cinemas every year in the 1990s (Schodt, 1998; Patten, 2004), and many of them were subsequently sold as videos and/or DVDs. In addition, the new direct to video and DVD *anime* were irregularly but continuously released. In the late 1990s, there were more *anime* movies than live-action films showing at theatres in Japan (Natsume, 1998; Misono, 1999). In 1997, Miyazaki Hayao’s *anime* film *Mononoke Hime* became the highest grossing Japanese film of all time. This record was rewritten twice by two subsequent Miyazaki *anime* in 2001 and 2004.

Anime was rapidly and widely absorbed by Japanese society after World War II and forms a significant and major part of contemporary Japanese culture, economy and society. *Anime* found a niche in new domestic and international markets, through utilising new media technology and responding to the diverse socio-cultural needs and

⁵ www001.upp.so-net.ne.jp/fukushi, downloaded September 9, 2003

interests of viewers.

Anime are produced to meet the various interests of different groups of people according to age, gender, education and socio-economic backgrounds. However, some anime, particularly theatrical *anime*, are produced with the aim of appealing to the interests of a majority of the general public. There seems to be an agreement between commentators that one reason for the popularity of *anime* is that *anime* products contain adult themes, which consequently require the products to have long and complicated storylines (Natsume, 1998; Schodt, 1998; Ishigami, 1999; Napier, 2001). Some of these types of *anime* gain popularity amongst both children and adults.

Anime with complicated storylines with adult themes often contain serious and tragic endings which are shocking to small children. Adult themes are literally issues concerning adults' lives that are considered not suitable for children. Such issues include human relationships, psychological, ideological and political issues. The idea of dealing with adult themes in Japanese *anime* was pioneered by Tezuka Osamu, who, in the late 1940s successfully incorporated adult themes in children's *manga* (Lent, 1989; Natsume, 1998; Schodt, 1998; Ishigami, 1999; Napier, 2001; Poitras, 2002). Tezuka states,

“I believe that comics are capable of more than just making people laugh. So, in my themes, I incorporated tears, grief, anger and hate, and I created stories where the ending was not always happy” (Schodt, 1986:63).

These adult topics and themes are extremely diverse. Schodt asserts that this

characteristic is almost unique to Japanese *manga* and *anime*, and he describes it as “an admiration of the lives of the general public” (Schodt, 2001). Adult themes and topics are a part of the daily lives of the general public, and characters in the *anime* are also described as lifelike people. No matter how fictional the background of an *anime* story, the audience members find a connection between the topics and themes of the *anime* and their daily experiences, and then emotionally and/or ideologically relate to and resonate with the characters as a part of their daily lives.

2.2.2 Meaning of *anime* for the contemporary Japanese

By the early 1990s, phenomena relating to *anime* became so prominent as to invite more academic research and criticism in relation to *anime* as a contemporary Japanese socio-cultural phenomenon. Researchers and critics, both Japanese and non-Japanese, such as Kitano (1998), Napier (2001)⁶ and Minamida (2000), discuss contemporary *anime* as a socio-cultural phenomenon which presents aspects of society. These critics also attempt to reveal the meaning of *anime* for the Japanese.

Napier (2001) analyses major *anime* films of the 1990s. She defines Japanese *anime* as a socio-cultural phenomenon which needs to be analysed both sociologically and aesthetically. Napier states that,

“essentially, anime works include everything that Western audiences are accustomed to seeing in live-action films: romance, comedy, tragedy, adventure,

⁶ The revised version, “Anime: from *Akira* to *Howl’s Moving Castle* – Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Anime” was published in 2006.

even psychological probing of a kind seldom attempted in recent mass-culture Western film or television” (p.6).

Contemporary Japanese *anime* is a mainstream cultural phenomenon which entertains the audience, reflects socio-cultural aspects of society, sometimes problematises existing values and norms, and also functions as a “cultural staple” (Napier, 2001:7). *Anime* cuts across generational lines to be embraced by everyone from children to grandparents. By analysing contemporary, major *anime*, such as *Barefoot Gen* (1983), *Akira* (1988), *Sailor Moon* (1992), *Ranma ½* (1989-92) and several of Miyazaki’s films, Napier discusses Japan’s changing national, historical and gender identities as three expressive modes of *anime*. She refers to these three modes as “apocalyptic, festival and elegiac” (p.12).

The apocalyptic mode is not only concerned with material catastrophe, such as an image of total world destruction, but also with a “spiritual or even pathological catastrophe” (p.14). In *anime*, traditional notions of body, norms, values, authority and cultural constraints are often challenged, problematised, and sometimes even rejected and destroyed. For example, *Akira* is full of images of major destruction: Tetsuo destroys New Tokyo, the government uses force and Tetsuo attacks his friends with his new power which he obtained through metamorphosis into a mutant creature, forming his new identity.

The festival mode is an atmosphere, perceived in a moment of temporal destruction or conversion of the ‘normal’ moral or hierarchical order. The momentary release from existing, societal norms is often described as comedic, violent and sexual,

such as in *Ramma 1/2*. Unlike the apocalyptic mode, the festival mode will usually cease, and the *anime* will revert to normal social values.

The elegiac mode is “an important element in both *anime* and live-action films in Japan” (p.13) and includes feelings of loss, grief and absence, often indicating an acute consciousness of a waning of traditional culture. A sense of fear and agony that Japan’s traditional norms and values are weakening, or nostalgic recollection, appear in many *anime*.

The analysis by Napier of major *anime* hits is a ‘text’ analysis (see Chapter 1, section 1.5) in nature. By studying *anime*, she analyses characteristics and attributes of the *anime* as viewed on the screen. Napier argues that those apocalyptic, festive and elegiac images reflect images of contemporary Japanese society: for example, the ugly and disgusting images of a mutated baby in *Akira* represent the anxious and frustrated feelings of adolescence; and the female characters in *Urusei Yatsura*, who are aliens and therefore free from the codes and norms of this world, provide temporary escape for repressed female viewers. These images are interwoven and combined with other facets of *anime* and exposed to the audience. In short, Napier analysed *anime* by paratextualising its content within Japan’s contemporary and historical framework.

Napier sometimes refers to audience members’ reactions, such as in her analysis of the festival modes of an *anime*. Napier’s references to audience members’ reactions are most directly related to the present study. Napier referred to the viewers’ reactions to the *anime* as their perceptions of contemporary Japanese society. For example, the young female viewers of Takahashi Rumiko’s works see the characters of the *anime* as expressions of temporary escape from a norm which prescribes their daily activities as

girls (p.31). Young female viewers of Miyazaki's films often took the characters as their role models (p.126).

Napier suggests that contemporary Japanese *anime*

“entertains audiences around the world on the most basic level, but equally importantly, they also move and provoke viewers on other levels as well, stimulating audiences to work through certain contemporary issues in ways that older art forms cannot” (p.4).

The above reference suggests that Napier considers the effects of the *anime* on the audience as significant, along similar lines as the theories espoused by Wells (1998) and Young (2000) (see Chapter1, p.1-5). However, Napier does not present any empirical data in relation to audience reaction.

Minamida (2000) focuses on a characteristic of *anime* that Napier referred to as “stimulating audiences to work through certain contemporary issues” (Napier, 2001, p.4). Minamida terms this characteristic “intellectual representation in contemporary Japanese *anime*”. From an ideological perspective, and with reference to the producers' intentions, he attempts to present a history of Japanese *anime*. Minamida argues that contemporary Japanese *anime* contain ideological representations, and that over time the style of conveying those representations has transformed from their delivery as simple dominant messages to an inquisitive mode of expression. In accordance with the shift in the style of delivery, the content of *anime* has developed, incorporating

increasingly profound and discursive topics such as the meaning of life and socio-political and environmental issues.

In accordance with the development of a variety of settings and characters, *anime* has also developed as a medium for narrating producers' "intellectual thoughts or philosophy" (p.10). The theme of *anime* has shifted from "sentence" to "question[s]" (p.10); that is, according to Minamida, "sentence" includes such concepts as "love" and "justice" which members of a society are expected to value, whereas, "question(s)" is when a maker poses questions to the audience, such as "why do people die?" or "why do we have to fight?" Minamida states that "*anime* with a philosophical theme leads the viewers to the same question as the producer, and they work through the theme with the director" (p.10). He says that the above shift is observable in the 1980s, and that this era marked the decline of "authority and increasing permeate boundaries of previous notion[s] of morals and virtues", an era described by academics as "post-modern" (Kellner, 1995; Azuma, 2001).

If Minamida's analysis is referred to as a discussion regarding the intellectual representations of *anime*, Kitano (1998) shows the viewer's personal experience in reacting to those intellectual representations. Kitano recounts his experiences with *anime* and its meaning for him. He divides, roughly chronologically, the development of *anime* into four sections and discusses the characteristics of *anime*, including the settings, characters and backgrounds of the products. His chronological division of *anime* and his examples overlap with Minamida's discussion as outlined above.

Kitano's comments, which are often in relation to his personal viewing experiences and interpretations, are significant for this study. Kitano was born in 1967,

thus belonging to a generation which has been accompanied by *manga* and *anime* since birth. His statements regarding contemporary *anime* are first concerned with the *anime Space Battleship, Yamato* that he watched at the age of seven. It was the first *anime* Kitano saw that he felt was 'real'. The *anime* presented a history of World War II, a detailed and realistic illustration of outer-space, and a story in which an adolescent, with whom Kitano could relate, mentally develops. Kitano states that the *anime* provided him with insight and perspective from which to view the people and social and historical events in Kitano's real life. For example, his recollection of his experience viewing *Space Battleship, Yamato*, typically presents his relationship with the *anime*. The *anime* inspired him to learn about Japan's history, and particularly about World War II. He also interprets the story in the *anime* and the conduct of the characters as a description of the socialisation process, of mental development, and of adolescence.

When Hall's encoding/decoding model, which dictates that communication of mass media is a continuum of meaning construction at an end and meaning perception on the other, is remembered, then it appears that *anime* in contemporary Japan perform the social function' of the socialization process. That is, producers of *anime* present socio-cultural values and ideologies at one end of the continuum; and audience members of *anime*, such as Kitano, perceive these values and utilise *anime* in order to position themselves in society at the other end. This process suggests that audience members utilise the anime as 'equipment for life', in Young's words.

2.3 Comments on *Mononoke Hime*

2.3.0 Preamble

This section presents an outline of issues presented in *Mononoke Hime*⁷ as well as more critical (negative) appraisals regarding the *anime* to examine the differences and/or similarities (connectivity) between the targeted audience members' reactions in this study. Commentators pointed out that there was an exceptional amount of criticism relating to *Mononoke Hime* in comparison with Miyazaki Hayao's previous works (Sugawa, 1997; Kataoka, 1997; Saitani, 1998; Kiridooshi, 2001). Accounts and comments presented in this section are those comments which were published at about the time of the film's release in July 1997.

The *anime* created by Miyazaki Hayao are some of the most popular of all contemporary Japanese movies, including live-action films. Miyazaki's creations have carried the label of "Miyazaki Brand" (宮崎ブランド, Miyazaki Burando) since *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* in 1984 (Kiridooshi, 2001:21-23). This label means many things: his films are free of cruelty, violence, and sexual scenes; high in quality; contain an interesting story; and demonstrate an emphasis on intellectual thought, especially humanism and ecological concerns. Miyazaki's *anime* entertain a wide range of people

However, although *Mononoke Hime* received enthusiastic support on release (Kunihiro, 1997; Sato, 1997; Kanae, 1997), there was also much criticism levelled against the *anime* (Nagase, 1997; Murayama, 1997; Kiridooshi, 1997; Murase, 1997). This highlights a contrast between the reception of *Mononoke Hime* and the reception of Miyazaki's other work by the general public. Takahashi (1997) describes this

⁷ The story of *Mononoke Hime* is in Appendix II (page 135-136).

phenomenon as follows:

“Miyazaki was one of those people who is absolutely adored and almost never criticised....Miyazaki with *Mononoke Hime* became an ordinary person, whose works and ideology became susceptible to criticism” (p.90).

2.3.1 An outline of issues in *Mononoke Hime*

Mononoke Hime is quite different from Miyazaki's previous *anime*. For example, *Mononoke Hime* is a period drama set in Japan's past. Within the first fifteen minutes, the story takes the audience back to a point in Japan's history just before a symbolic destruction of nature, which is referred to as “Kami goroshi” (神殺し, killing of a deity). Miyazaki set this significant turning point at some time in the Muromachi period (14th to 16th century). The Muromachi period marks the beginning of human-inspired environmental degradation, consequently linking the *anime* to the contemporary world.

While the story is a fantasy, it contains fictional settings. However, unlike other Miyazaki *anime*, *Mononoke Hime* does not allow the audience to escape from reality and engage in an adventurous project of rebuilding the world. His previous films, such as *Laputa- Flying Castle* (1986) and *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), were set a long time after the period of massive destruction. The destruction itself was displaced outside of the contemporary world of the *anime*. In these films, the audience may stand with the characters left after the destruction; they may fight with these characters against whatever would cause similar destruction again; or they may battle

for some future construction. In a sense, the audience is free from the guilt of destruction, and it is able to enjoy the adventures and the prospect of a better future together with the characters.

In contrast, the audience of *Mononoke Hime* is forced to witness destruction, conflict, hatred and killing among the characters of the *anime*, who are depicted as possible ancestors of the audience members. In Miyazaki's fictional setting (although based in Japanese history), the audience is caught up in the middle of fierce collisions between different groups. They see reflections of themselves on the screen as victims of those conflicts in some scenes, and as perpetrators or assailants in others.

These tragic collisions are a result of reasonable and justifiable motives, stemming from the characters' desires to survive. As a consequence the audience can find no salvation. McCarthy (2002) wrote that "The film is a series of dazzling contradictions, reflecting its central theme of the tensions and strivings of different creatures with different aspirations forced to fight for their share of scarce resources in the world that is growing more complex and dangerous every day" (p.199). Sawano (1997) wrote that the characters of this story are "those who were extradited and kicked out from the mainstream history of Japan. They are marginals of our history and the film is the story of these minorities" (p.96).

The story of *Mononoke Hime* is the narration of the story of those lives. It chronicles the encounters of many lives, the tragedy of conflicts and the struggle among those who were excluded from history. The characters "who are extradited" (Sawano, 1997:96) appear on the screen as Ashitaka, San, Eboshi, Shishi Gami, the animals of the forest and so on. They are all suppressed by the approaching power,

which subsequently becomes dominant.

Miyazaki does not stand for any particular group involved in these conflicts. Itoi (1997) commented that “Miyazaki does not judge things and issues with a good-or-bad dichotomy. Nature and human beings, or nature and civilization are not oppositional components. Everything exists as it is” (pp.38-39). Miyazaki shows examples of beauty in each group: humanism, idealism, pride and various types of affection, such as the affection of the wolf mother, Moro, for San. In Miyazaki’s previous films, the audience saw the evil power as an enemy against whom the hero and heroine fought for the sake of beauty.

Unlike Miyazaki’s previous films, there is no apparent enemy that applies pressure to or causes the suffering of the characters, against whom the audience can righteously stand. Therefore, the story of *Mononoke Hime* does not develop in a conventional manner. The characters are not struck by, nor do they suffer at, the hands of bad people; and the story does not finish with a triumph of the characters over evil. Instead of describing the defeat of evil, Miyazaki presents tragic conflicts between elements of the good, and attempts to indicate an alternative victory over those conflicts. Sawano (1997) stated that “Miyazaki did not describe a negation to obtain an affirmation. He affirms and accepts those contradicting minorities, and leads to the higher level of affirmation of all existences through describing collisions of ‘the good’” (p.94).

The characters of *Mononoke Hime* are involved in fierce and cruel exchanges. A battle causes not only suffering and pain to those who are directly involved in it, but also harms those not directly involved. McCarthy (2002) notes that:

“The problems of modern life are presented as timeless; pain, loss, fear, change, and complexity are not twentieth-century constructs. Miyazaki grounds the metaphysical question of man’s relationship with the numinous in the physical struggle between men and gods, and shows us that this too is a twentieth-century issue” (p.201).

It is not only the exchange between humans and deities which is left unresolved, but so is the struggle and tension between humans. Miyazaki appears to demonstrate two facts. Firstly, that these collisions of individuals fighting for survival do not result in victory for any particular group. Secondly, that attempts to search for alternative solutions can often fail, as Ashitaka’s actions demonstrate in the film. Nonetheless, Miyazaki asserts that such attempts are significant and meaningful.

Miyazaki (1997) states in his appraisal of the film that, “in the midst of killing and loathsomeness, there is still a reason to live, as beauty can exist and wonderful things can happen”. Miyazaki’s intention for *Mononoke Hime* is to counsel audience members that as the natural environment is protective of human life, humans should in turn protect and preserve it.

McCarthy (2000) cites Sertori (1995) who read *Mononoke Hime* as a ‘gentle reminder’. Sertori states that “in a thousand years, no-one will care who we were or what we did, and that we should concentrate on making a difference where we can, with each other” (cited in McCarthy, 2000:200).

Rather than a “gentle reminder”, it is Miyazaki’s passionate and determined

desire to present something worth living and searching for; the beauty of life. Miyazaki has repeatedly expressed his intention to make *anime* films which reflect such notions as that “no matter how troubled and chaotic the real world is, I believe that everybody, children and young people, want to live vigorously and heartily (Miyazaki, 1986. Cited in Eureka, 1997:141)”; and “I believe that all human beings want to be good and dignified” (Shibuya, 2003:156, original interview was in 1989). Miyazaki created the film according to his belief that “*Princess Mononoke* is a beautiful evocation of the dogged, determined, and wholly unconquerable persistence of life and love, an epic movie about ordinary people adrift in confusing times, with a core of power and passion rarely seen in modern works of art” (McCarthy, 2002:203).

2.3.2 Criticisms and appraisals of *Mononoke Hime*

Miyazaki (Studio Ghibli) spent approximately ¥ 2,000,000,000 in producing *Mononoke Hime*. Suzuki Toshio (producer) stated before its release that he targeted approximately ¥6,000,000,000 profit for the film (Uratoshi, 1998; Kiridooshi, 2001). The common prediction that this profit target would not be reached was based on two premises: 1) that period films were not as popular in contemporary Japan as they used to be; and 2) that *Mononoke Hime* contains issues which were too serious for a young audience (Kiridooshi, 2001:81). However, the *anime* was so successful that the release was extended until July 1998. It became the highest grossing Japanese film of its time, and Miyazaki gained a reputation as a creator-producer of films as well as a representative intellectual in contemporary Japan (Kanae, 1997; Kunihiro; 1997, Komatsu, 1997). The examples of appraisals are summarised in Table 3.

Table 1: Appraisals of Mononoeke Hime

Authors ⁸	Author's profile ⁹	Point of appraisal	Details
Siji Kanae	Institute of Takahata-Miyazaki film studies	Mononoke Hime reveals that Miyazaki is not merely a producer of entertainment films.	Miyazaki's anime reflect contemporary thoughts of political and socio-cultural movements of Japan.
Masao Kunihiro	Scholar, Former TV Japan announcer, Interpreter, former member of the House of Councillors	Mononoke Hime is the most appropriate guide for eco-literacy.	Mononoke Hime represents a thought that human and nature should live and let live.
Tadao Sato		"Period drama discussion released from the spell of Seven Samurai to make the period action/drama Princess Mononoke" ¹⁰	This anime provides other perspectives onto history of Japan than a dichotomy of heroic Samurai and servile peasants in the previous period dramas of feudal era.
Kazuhiko Komatsu	Cultural anthropologist	Relationship between human and nature	This anime asserts that modern human must retrieve soul and right mind as well as rebirth of forest (nature).
Masaki Sawano	Historian (Japan's intellectual thought)	Description of marginalized people in the Japanese history and negation of good-bad dichotomy	The anime portraits out positive acceptance of marginalised people in Japanese history.

Kanae (1997) asserts that Hayao Miyazaki is a rare film maker who always reflects contemporary movements of political and socio-cultural thoughts in Japan. He explains and comments on the anime techniques and ideological background of Hayao Miyazaki's anime in 『もののけ姫』を読み解く (Read and Understand *Mononoke*

⁸ In Tables 3 &4, authors' names appear in Western order with first name then family name

⁹ Data for 'Authors' profile' are form *Eureka – Vol. 29-11* (1997), *Comic Box Vol. 2* (August, 1997) and *Comic Box Vol. 3* (January, 1998).

¹⁰ This sentence is on page 139 as a translation of title of Sato's account.), *Comic Box Vol. 2* (August, 1997)

¹¹ Institute of Takahata & Miyazaki's film studies:

www.yk.rim.or.jp/~rst/rabo/miyazaki/miyazaki_inter.html

Hime, *Comic Box Vol.2*, August 1997) and on his institute's internet site.¹¹ Kanae (1997) argues that Miyazaki uses 'lost possibility' repeatedly in his anime citing settings of his previous works such as *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*, *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Porco Rosso* (p.159). Including *Mononoke Hime*, Miyazaki sets his *anime* immediately before a period of massive change in a society; making his settings particularly magnificent and complex. In these desperate periods, the characters are in the process of losing the possibility to improve their lives. The loss of this possibility is metaphorically described as the loss of native forests suffered by marginalized people such as minorities in Japan, women working as merchants or craftsmen, and the like – people who have been left out of the accepted history of Japan. Descriptions of these scenes contain strong parallels with modern Japanese society, and draw attention to problems with 21st century Japanese life. In *Mononoke Hime*, Miyazaki expressed his message that one must strive to avoid losing one's history, despite the contemporary doomed situation (Kanae, p.159). Kanae asserts that Miyazaki is a sincere and honest artist; and that this *anime* proves that Miyazaki is not a mere entertainment filmmaker.

Komatsu (1997) and Kunihiro (1998) also appraise Miyazaki's ideological expression in *anime*, stating that *Mononoke Hime* teaches people not to be arrogant towards nature. Komatsu asserts that Miyazaki attempts to persuade contemporary people of the necessity of returning Shishi Gami's head (another representation of nature), which leads to the healing of the wandering souls of contemporary Japanese people (p.53).

Sato (1997) points out that *Mononoke Hime* gives us a different perspective of Japanese history by describing marginalized people: the anime released viewers from

the mainstream historical view that Japan was formed purely by a power relationship between samurai and peasants. The *anime*, Sato states, describes the fatal conflicts between the conquerors the conquered. The conquered and marginalized people such as Emishi and/or the people who were not peasants were not represented in mainstream period drama in Japan. The success of *Mononoke Hime* proved the possibility of constructing another image of Japanese history (pp.140-141).

Sawano (1997) also pointed out that the *anime* deals with people who often lost out in the history of Japan, as they were excluded from the samurai-peasant dichotomy. He also states that the *anime* does not describe conflicts between humans and nature, or among human groups by good-bad dichotomy. Sawano relates this point to the fact that that the *Mononoke Hiime* does not provide any solution to the conflicts described in the story. The question then becomes, what is the solution when the conflicts takes place not between ‘good and bad’, but between ‘good and good’? (pp.93-95).

Despite of the popularity of the anime and appraisals such as above, commentators and publishers, such as Kataoka (1997), Sugawa (1997) and Saitani (1997), were concerned about the negative criticism attracted by *Mononoke Hime* at the time of its debut in July 1997. The negative criticism which appeared in newspapers at that time focused on the tactics for the promotion of the film. Kiridooshi (2001) reported that “commentators attributed the success of the film merely to the large scale advertising campaign” (p.81). Kataoka, an editor of “Pop Culture Critique” (July, 1997:174), commented on the early criticisms of *Mononoke Hime*, stating that many of them implicitly undermined the film by positively appraising Miyazaki’s previous works. Sugawa (1997) and Saitani (1997) expressed serious concern that such criticisms of the

anime would inhibit Miyazaki's future creations in much the same way as Akira Kurosawa's was affected after he directed *Ran* in 1985 (Sugawa, 1997, Saitani, 1997, Schilling, 1999). Critical examples are summarised in Table 4.

Table 2: Criticism on *Mononoeke Hime*

Authors	Author's profile ¹²	Point of criticism	Details
Risaku Kiridooshi	Writer Born in 1964	Audience involvement with the anime	lacking opportunities for the audience to become involved in the story
Atsuo Okunaka	Film producer Born in 1930	Anime as entertainment	not moving or entertaining
Shohee Chuujoo	Scholar (French literature)	A charming film to attract viewers	lack of pleasurable images to fly and lacking the power to draw the viewers into the film
Chizuru Miyasako	Painter, essayist	Emphathy with the characters and involvement in the film	not empathetic with any of the characters or not emotionally involved into the film
Hiroki Murase	Postgraduate school Born in 1966	Realistic description of sexuality	any reference to sexual issues is deliberately excluded
Hiroko, Yamamoto	Historian (Japan's intellectual thought)	Historical facts in the anime	not describing the "real" Muromachi iron mining society

Kiridooshi (1997) argues that there are two reasons why the film does not induce post-viewing exhilaration in the audience. Firstly, the characters do not maintain their initial motivations and determinations, and consequently they do not follow the basic story lines. Secondly, there is no solution offered for any of the problems presented in the story. Kiridooshi argues that audiences of Miyazaki's previous films were given the opportunity to share in the characters' determination, shown through their physical endeavours. For example, in *Nausicaa*, the protagonist Nausicaa allowed a small

¹² Data for 'Authors' profile' are from *Pop Culture Critique 1* (1997) and *Eureka – Vol. 29 – 11* (1997).

animal to bite her to gain its trust; and she kept pushing a baby Aum away from poison to protect it. Through these scenes, the audience vicariously shares the same feelings of endurance as the characters, and thus become involved in the film alongside particular characters. Kiridooshi criticised *Mononoke Hime* for lacking such opportunities for the audience to become involved in the story.

Miyasako (1997) similarly states that she did not empathise with any of the characters, nor she did not experience any nostalgia for the fantasy world of *Mononoke Hime*. She states that she strongly empathized with a character of *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*. She was also moved nostalgically by *My Neighbour Totoro*. She saw fragmented reflections of herself as a modern person in the various characters in *Mononoke Hime* (p.136).

Okunaka (1997) criticises *Mononoke Hime*, stating that he felt dissatisfied with the *anime*. By contrasting it with *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*, Okunaka states that *Mononoke Hime* is not moving because the *anime* is a product of compromise: the story of the *anime* derives from Miyazaki's intention to promote a ceasefire between human beings and nature. Okunaka asserts that viewers of film, particularly the viewers of *anime*, demand dreamlike and moving content in it. (p.83) In Okunaka's perspective, a film is a fictional entertainment: for him, *Mononoke Hime* is not satisfactory because it is not entertaining.

Chujoo (1997) also makes a comparison between *Mononoke Hime* and *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*. He points out the similarities of topics and character setting in both *anime*, yet he criticises *Mononoke Hime* for its lack of power to attract viewers to the story. He states that viewers like him wanted to see San flying in the sky like

Nausiccaa (p.109).

Komatsu (1997) and Sawano (1997) state that historical accuracy in *anime* was not important because the *Mononoke Hiime* is a fantasy world created by Miyazaki as if he had built up a mosaic using facts and fiction, yet it has an enormous impact on the viewers. However, *Mononoke Hiime* has also been criticised as failing to accurately describe reality. For example, Murase (1997) criticised the story for its failure to contain a realistic depiction of young females, a shortcoming which could potentially confuse adolescent girls who are struggling to reconcile their sexual selves with other people's sexual perception of them (p.58). According to Murase, heroines and girls in Miyazaki *anime* are "absolutely innocent, having been brought up isolated from adults' sexual gaze" (p58). In Miyazaki's films, any reference to sexual issues is deliberately excluded. Thus innocent girls grow up as active and devoted women, then complete their lives as wise and helpful grandmothers without experiencing any of the negative aspects of sexuality. Murase states that young female viewers often find heroines such as Nausiccaa to be ideal yet distant characters with whom they "cannot empathise or identify" (p.56).

Yamamoto (1997) criticises Miyazaki for not describing the "real" Muromachi iron mining society, which was profoundly influenced by shamanistic values and a pre-industrialised labour system. Yamamoto argues that Miyazaki's setting is unrealistic, meaning that it is not based on a true mining village. Miyazaki borrowed freely from the Muromachi era without systematic observation, filling his modernised village with modern people (p.231). Yamamoto states that "the result of this easy combination of historical settings and non-compliant modern characters was to make the story flat" (p.234).

The listed criticisms/negative appraisals provided suggest that the commentators did not experience strong involvement in the *anime*, which they experienced in Miyazaki's previous films. Sawano (1997) commented that such criticism was due to an expectation amongst critics that *Mononoke Hime* would offer the same level of flying and adventure exhibited in Miyazaki's previous films (pp.13-14).

In summary, Kiridooshi, Okunaka and Chujo stated that the topics of the film, the character settings and the fact that the ending of the story lacked resolution made the film powerless to attract their attention as viewers. Murase and Yamamoto stated that the film is not attractive because the film does not reflect reality. However, considering the popularity of *Mononoke Hime*, it is likely that the general public did not share these opinions. General viewers may have focused on other aspects of the film and found personal significance in the film.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to analyse how an audience approaches and utilises media products for their own socialization by investigating the case of *Mononoke Hime*. The aim is pursued by seeking to answer four research questions which are outlined in Chapter One. The theory forming the basis for this study claims that people, as members of society, may utilise the content of media products to obtain information, reflect upon it and deconstruct it, and by so doing reconstruct their sense of self within society.

This chapter sets out how the study was conducted. It consists of the method of data collection and the analytical framework used for data processing. The section detailing the method of data collection includes information on the source and selection method for the data, the age group of the audience and the socio-cultural backgrounds of the audience members

The analytical framework used in this study is a modified version of Katz and Liebes (1986) and Sood and Rogers (2000). The section outlining the analytical framework introduces categories of the framework and explains points of departure from, and the reasons for modifications of, the framework applied in the model studies by Katz and Liebes, and Sood and Rogers.

3.2 Theoretical background

3.2.0 Preamble

This study has been influenced by three approaches to understanding media. I have divided this section into three parts in which I discuss salient features of each approach. The first approach can be characterized as a textual analysis of mass media products, which seeks to reveal an underlying system of meaning in the products in relation to the wider socio-cultural system (Kellner, 1996; Wells, 1996; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). The second influence is Hall's encoding/decoding model (Hall, 1980). In this model, Hall presents a relationship between producer, text and audience as a process of communicating a message that is encoded by a producer and decoded by a receiver (Rayner, Wall & Kruger, 2004). The third approach is referred to as audience analysis, since it considers how an audience interprets and utilises the media product in question. The aim of audience analysis is to investigate what people actually do with the media products (Liebes & Katz, 1986; Radway, 1987; Lull, 1996; Wells, 1998; Sood & Rogers, 2000).

3.2.1 Text analysis of mass media products

In media-related studies, a mass media product is referred to as a 'text' (Turner, 1991, Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). In media related-fields, such as communication studies, media studies, film studies, and cultural studies, the definition of 'text' contains two overlapping, yet differently accentuated concepts: the narrower concept of 'text' (lowercase) and the wider definition of 'Text' (uppercase). In the narrower sense, 'text' refers to the content of mass media products, such as a plot, episode, event,

or character of a film, drama, or performance. In a wider sense, the definition of 'Text' is expanded to include the institutions in which the mass media product is situated.

Turner (2003) defines 'Text' in the broader sense, covering the content of the product and the corresponding social institutions. He suggests that "the most recognisable and possibly the most important theoretical strategy cultural studies has developed is that of 'reading' products, social practices, even institutions, as text" (p.71). Examples of studies in this category are Morely's study on the ways people watch television in their living rooms (1982); Roseburg's definition of fandom (1996); Radway's ethnographic research on people reading romance novels (1987); and Wells' preliminary study of an audience's experience of viewing animations (1998). These studies focus on how audience members utilise the media products, yet the concrete content of the media is not given a primary focus.

In contrast, the focus can be placed on the *content* of mass media products. Lull (1995) defines 'text' as "the content of symbolic communication, often used in terms of what the mass media present" (p.192). Therefore, a 'text' "can be a TV program, movie, CD-Rom, or rock song, among many other publications" (Lull, 1995:192). Researchers such as Katz & Liebes (1987), Wells (1998), Sood & Rogers (2000), Young (2000), Watson (2003) use 'text' in this sense.

The content of mass media products does not stand alone, as it is inseparable from the specific time and place in which a society is situated. Therefore, a text consists of its contents, its senders (such as the producers, writers and reporters) and the socio-cultural context in which these components exist. A 'text' analysis from this perspective aims at interpreting both the content that the sender represents in the mass

media product, and what this content means to a society. Thus the content analysis inevitably discusses what is presented and represented in mass media product(s), together with what causes these specific representations.

For example, Croteau & Hoynes cite Susan Jeffords' analysis of a film similar to *Rambo*, arguing that the film forms a part of the "re-masculinisation" that was a key component of the Reagan years of America, during which American society faced dual threats from the defeat in Vietnam and the growth of feminism (pp.174-176). Croteau suggests,

"Americans did overcome the 'Vietnam syndrome' in the late 1980s, as symbolised by the willingness of the population to support military action in Panama, Iraq and later in the 'war against terrorism'. A part of the ideological work necessary for that transformation was performed by popular Hollywood movies" (p.176).

Kellner (1995) shares a similar perspective, suggesting that the audience may be affected by the representations in a film, and may form certain images, attitudes and opinions based upon them. He analyses other films in the same genre as *Rambo*, such as *Top Gun*, and states that these films assisted in creating and promoting Western antipathy against Arabs. Kellner strongly asserts that media products influence the formation of public opinion.

3.2.2 The Encoding/Decoding model

Hall (1980) conceptualises the process which covers the construction of meaning

and interpretations of meaning by the audience members (Nitinghale, 1996; Stokes, 2003). He names this process “encoding/decoding” (pp.128-138). Taking a television program and its audience as an example, Hall presents the process from “a moment of production (encoding)” through to “a reception moment (decoding)” (pp.128-129). These production and reception moments are constructed within common rules of signs and language in the society, yet they are not identical or symmetrical, because “each moment has its specific modality and conditions of existence” (p.129). During the encoding process, the program makers utilise raw events to construct communication events. Stories or narratives are then presented to the audience in a form such as a television program. Decoding, at the other end of this communication process, is another distinctive moment of meaning construction undertaken by the audience in interpreting the stories and narratives.

Encoding and decoding are meaning construction moments which take place in common codes of signs and language and relate to a single product, yet these constructions are undertaken by two different participants. It is possible therefore, that encoded meanings and messages will not be decoded strictly in accordance with the original maker’s intentions. There is always the possibility of ‘misunderstanding’ or ‘distortion’ in the audience’s interpretation (Hall, 1980). Turner (2003) summarises one cause of this ‘misunderstanding’ by suggesting that “Hall insists that there is nothing natural about any kind of communication; messages have to be constructed before they can be sent. And just as the construction of the meaning is an active, interpretive and social moment, so is the moment of its reception” (p.73).

Hall (1983) points out that “since there is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding, the former can attempt ‘pre-fer’¹⁴ but cannot prescribe or guarantee the latter, which has its own conditions of existence. Unless they are wildly aberrant, encoding will have the effect of constructing some of the limits and parameters within which decoding will operate” (p.135). Thus, even though the initial audience’s interpretation occurs individually, the content of the interpretation is not completely random.

Within these ‘limits and parameters’, Hall hypothetically sets out three positions of decoding: the “dominant-hegemonic position”, the “negotiated position” and the “oppositional code” (pp.136-138) (see Table 1).

Table 3: Three Decoding positions (adapted from Hall, 1983:136-138)

First Position	Second Position	Third position
Dominant-hegemonic position / dominant or preferred code	Negotiated position	Oppositional code
The audience members understand the encoder’s message and carry out interpretation in accordance with the intentions of the encoders.	The audience members understand the encoders’ messages, yet reserve a decision as to whether or not they agree with the message.	The audience members clearly oppose to the messages conveyed by the encoders.

In the first position, interpretation is carried out in accordance with the intentions of the encoders. In the second position, the audience partially agrees with the encoders’ messages. In the third position, the term ‘misunderstanding’ or ‘distortion’ is used to describe the audience’s interpretation, which means “that viewers are not

¹⁴ The word ‘pre-fer’ is cited as Hall originally puts in his account.

operating within the 'dominant' or 'preferred' code" (p.135).

By clarifying the process of meaning construction (encoding and decoding) and conceptualising the three positions of audience interpretation, Hall declines to accept the concept that audiences may be considered an undifferentiated, passive mass. Turner (2003) supports Hall's arguments stating that society is not homogeneous and therefore the audience cannot be regarded as a single undifferentiated group. Different groups of people interpret meanings and messages differently, based on each group's dominant ideologies and interests (p.73). This perspective forms a base from which to develop an audience analysis consisting of socio-culturally (for example social class, educational background, gender and age) and politically diverse groups. Turner states that an audience member's social position contains many specific factors, and that these factors are "so interrelated that even the attempt to make definitive empirical connections is a waste of time" (p.110). There is no simple or direct connection between the audience's social position and their reading of the messages, as Turner asserts that researchers should try to "resist the idea of the 'mass', undifferentiated audience, [and] ... also ... resist the temptation to individuate each audience member completely" (p.110).

This point is important for audience analyses which aim to incorporate an understanding of the audience's everyday lives. It is necessary to individuate the audience member to analyse the individuals' activities and the content of their interpretation of a media product. Each audience member begins an individual interpretation of a media product as soon as they start to read or watch it. Each audience member's individual interpretation lasts for as long as it takes for them to view or consume the product.

3.3.3 Audience analysis in relation to the audience's interpretation

In considering an audience's intentional use of media products, researchers of mass media have developed and adapted psychological concepts and theoretical trajectories to observe and analyse how the audience engages with media, and to search for positive mental and ideological support for their everyday experiences (Rubin & Perse, 1987, Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Perse, 1990; Young, 2000).

For example, a theory known as 'use and gratification' became an important academic concept in the 1970s. Lull (1995) summarises this theory by stating that "proponents of the new perspective straightforwardly claim that people actively use the mass media to gratify particular, specifiable human needs" (p.90). This perspective changed the main issue in media theory from "what the media does to people" into "what people do to the media" (Katz, 1977).

Lull (1995) undertakes an expanded search for socio-psychological factors relating to an audience's engagement with mass media products. He does so by adapting the psychological concept of 'motives' to describe what gives members of a society the energy and direction to gratify their needs and satisfy their wants (p.101 & p.107). The manner in which a person utilises mass media products as a part of his or her activities is dependant upon that person's motives. Such motives include biological and psychological motives, and socio-cultural needs and wants. In this context, the phrase 'socio-cultural needs and wants' relates to the notion of the specific audience member's 'socialisation'. From Lull's perspective, research of audiences needs to analyse both the 'texts' and the audience's perception of and reaction to these texts, in order to understand the effects of these products on the audience (Katz & Libes, 1987; Lull,

1996; Wells, 1998; Turner, 2002; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).

Researchers particularly highlight the need for empirical case studies which focus on the relationship between the content of a media product and the audience's reaction to it (Lull, 1995; Young, 2000; Turner, 2002; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; Gray, 2003). The reaction in this regard not only focuses on the audience's interpretation, but also extends to include the actual *effect* caused by the mass media product, based on the audience's interpretations. An empirical research framework from which to analyse the audience's reaction begins with a 'text' analysis from the perspective of the audience's interpretation of the content, and concludes with an examination of the effect that the content has on the audience (Perse and Powell, 1985; Liebes & Katz, 1986; Rubin, 1987; Lull, 1996; Sood and Rogers, 2000; Young, 2000; Turner, 2002, Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; Gray, 2003).

In these studies, the research focus shifts from a process of representation of the content ('text' analysis) to an analysis of the audience's interpretation and the effect of the mass media product on the audience. The shift does not discount the analysis of content, but it extends the focus to cover interpretation and the consequent effects on the audience as perceived by the audience members themselves. Thus the effects in this analysis are not merely theoretical, but are the actual effects observable in the audience and obtained through empirical methods.

For example, Wells (1998) attempted to reveal the relationship between the audience member and the animated film. This study is a suggestive and useful model from which to draw an analytical framework for the current study. It is a case study focusing on the relationship between animated films and their audience. Wells analyses

the participants' open-ended statements in "two cross-dimensional analytical processes": the first process is a categorisation of each audience member's statement under dominant themes, and the second process is an interpretation of the statements grouped under those themes.

Wells conducted a case study specifically concerned with animation films from the Walt Disney Studio and the audience's experience of viewing them. Disney films are widely viewed by children throughout the world, and most of those children will retain memories of their viewing experiences. The retention of such viewing experiences demonstrates the affective aspects of Disney films and their "enduring potential to influence the later life" (p.224). Wells explains that

"the viewer has already prioritised the important aspect of his/her spectatorship, and signified how and why the Disney text has connected with the individual's formative gaze as a child viewer, and the individual's mature gaze as an adult fully conversant with a Disney ethos which had imbued itself within a global popular culture" (p.231).

Some examples that Wells cites which demonstrate audience members' empathy for and identification with specific texts include such common childhood reactions as wanting to dress like a princess, wishing to be as beautiful as Snow White, identifying as twins (as in *Lady and the Tramp*), or finding similarities, based on appearance, between one's friends or family members and the characters in the animation. Statements of admiration, infatuation and adoration in relation to a character are also

common, such as longing for the Prince in *Snow White* and falling in love with Snow White herself.

The more complex versions of empathy and identification observable in adults is also commonly found in the literature. For example, Saito analyses cases of devout fans sexually affiliating themselves with female *anime* characters (Saito, 2000). Napier reports that some young adult *anime* fans state that they think what is presented in *anime* looks “real”, and sometimes “more real”, than the real world (Napier, 1998). Empathy and identification are common not only in the adult’s articulated memory of childhood viewing, but also in the adult’s experience of viewing.

Wells’ study shows the influence of Disney films, which is an articulated childhood viewing experience of the film from the adult perspective. This result shows the audience’s engagement with the film in two ways: 1) emotional involvement which was experienced in the audience members’ childhoods and which endured in adulthood; and 2) the distant evaluation of Disney films as an ‘objective’ adult spectator. Based on a data-driven categorisation of the dominant themes present in the audience’s experiences, Wells’ study successfully evaluates the actual, diverse relationships between the Disney *anime* and the viewer as a child, as perceived through an “adult gaze”.

However, Wells’ study does not include the viewers’ contemporaneous interpretation of the *anime*. This study is primarily concerned with the contemporaneous interpretation, as opposed to Wells’ reflective approach. Lewis (1992) and Turner (2002) have suggested that an examination of emotional or ideological engagements exhibited by the audience will display considerable diversity. This diversity is displayed thorough

empirical research in which audience members are asked about their particular interpretation of the content.

Young (2000) records experiences which have caused transformations in film viewers. Such transformations are not limited to inert reflections by viewers: they can also actively influence viewers' lives in a variety of ways, and to varying degrees. Applying psychological and psychoanalytical therapeutic concepts, Young asserts that audiences turn to movies for advice or suggestions on how to approach and solve problems encountered in their real lives. From Young's perspective, audience members use films as their "equipment for living" (p.448).

Focusing on the audience's intentional use of film and the influence of film on the audience, Young criticised the research frameworks of 'text' analysis and media use-gratification theory, claiming that the former neglects the audience's activities and considers the audience members to be passive recipients, and the latter does not clarify the relationship between the content of a particular movie and its audience. Young states that the use-gratification theory brought the audience members' diverse dimensions and degrees of involvement in the films into the research perspective; yet the theory fails, he claims, to answer the question: "what did this viewer do with this movie in this context?"(p.452). This echoes Turner's claim that the aim of sociology is to observe real people's everyday activities (Turner, 2002. p.121).

Young interviewed 12 participants. Their statements were analysed utilising a framework which contained three "developmental film-viewer relationship" levels. The framework was set according to what extent the participants in Young's interview differentiated or did not differentiate the content of films from real experiences and/or

actions in their daily lives. Young's three levels of developmental film-viewer relationships are shown in Table 2.

Table 4: Young's Three Developmental Film-Viewer Relationship (Young, 2000, pp. 457 - 459)

First Level	Second Level	Third Level		
Undifferentiated Relationship: Defined as primitive, consisting of delusional beliefs, lacking distance between the "inside" and the "outside".	Differentiated Relationship: Defined as that viewers make a clear differentiation actions in the movie and those in their real lives.	Integrated Self-Other Relationship: Defined as that viewers makes a clear differentiation between the reality of the film and the reality of their lives.		
		<i>Momentary:</i> a viewer refers to their movie viewing experience as 'enriching' or "cathartic".	<i>Specific Influence on Behaviour:</i> a viewer expresses the film has influenced on actual activities.	<i>Specific Influence on Thinking:</i> a viewer expresses that the experience of viewing the film influenced and led a change in thoughts, attitude or beliefs.

The third level is the level at which Young develops his discussion of "movies as equipment for living" (p.447), which he describes as the way that the audience utilises the content of movies in their daily lives.

Young's third level is sub-categorised into three groups: 1) momentary influence; 2) specific influence on behaviour; and 3) specific influence on thinking. The first category is to some extent similar to "escape and entertainment". The viewer refers to their movie viewing experience as "enriching" or "cathartic"; they express a feeling of "not being themselves" (p.458) while viewing the movie; or they identify perceived similarities between themselves and the characters. However, the influence or effects of the movies are temporary. Even though the viewers indicate the movie might be helpful in, and would have a subsequent impact on, their real life, at the time of viewing they do not know exactly what form this impact will take.

The second category refers to the actual influence that the film has on viewers' actual activity. An example is when a movie character's behaviour becomes a model for a viewer's activities in his or her real life. Young reports that there were only a few cases of this type of engagement present in his interviews (p.459).

In relation to the third sub-category, Young states, "the most pervasive type of influence films can have is when viewing leads to a change in viewers' thoughts, attitudes, or beliefs" (p.460). Some viewers refer to *Star Wars* as a film which provided them with an ideal towards which to strive. One woman stated in relation to *Star Wars* (1976) that

"the film might have helped form the impression that as you go through life you will have great adventure and make great conquests and come out victorious" (p.460).

Young quotes several similar statements to demonstrate viewers' engagement with movies, stating that "movies can sometimes play a role in the renegotiation of identity" (p.460). It is commonly observed that some viewers think of certain movie characters as role models (Kellner, 1995; Wells, 1998; Croteau, 2003).

It could be argued that these "renegotiation[s] of identity" and "changes of viewers' thoughts, attitudes and beliefs" are part of the process of socialisation, in which the viewers review and reconstruct their relationships with the real world. Young argues that viewers' recollections of their movie viewing experiences explicitly show that audience members are intentional and conscious in engaging with the movie's content.

The viewers of movies are conscious of movies' influences and effects on them in their daily activities, and sometimes viewers intentionally utilise their viewing experiences in their real lives. In other words, viewing movies facilitates a viewer's socialisation. Young classified a variety of viewers' emotional and ideological responses to movies, such as escape, catharsis, role models and the influence on viewers' activities and thoughts.

However, while Young claims that critics must consider the content of movies and the audience's reaction to this content, he does not deal with this consideration in his study (see p.457). The cases discussed by Young are recollections of interviewees' movie viewing experiences, but Young's study does not address the contemporaneous reactions of audience members. It is questionable whether the same audience reactions would be observable during the actual viewing of a movie as are observable in viewers' recollections of past movie viewing experiences. An analysis of audience members' interpretation of the content of a particular movie will indicate the extent and nature of audience members' involvement in the film and the manner in which they use films as "equipment for living"; in other words, how the film affects an audience member's process of socialisation.

Sood and Rogers (2000) attempts to shed light on the aspects of popular mass media products which significantly effect change in relation to viewers' thoughts, attitudes and beliefs. Sood and Rogers' study involves an analysis of the relationship between a popular entertainment-education television program in India called *Hum Log* and its viewers. The aim of the research was to re-conceptualise the manner in which audiences engage with the program, and to probe how effective and influential *Hum*

Log was in educating its audience.

Hum Log was broadcast on television in India in 1984 and 1985. The program was designed as a social education tool for public audiences to promote women's emancipation, through changing traditional customs such as the endowment of dowries. *Hum Log* was highly successful in terms of its popularity as well as in terms of social education (Sood & Rogers, 2000: 392-395).

Sood and Rogers collected 763 letters from viewers of the program out of a non-random sample of 20,000 letters, and analysed them to clarify the extent to which the audience related to the characters and how closely it was involved with the content of the program. Letters from viewers are informative and useful tool for audience analysis, particularly in order to determine the nature and content of an audience member's discussion in relation to the mass media product as well as in relation to themselves. The letters are "written in the respondents' own words, they concern perceived relationships with the program and its characters, and thus provide open-ended statements that mainly deal with parasocial interaction" (Sood & Rogers: 410).

Sood and Rogers used three analytical measurements in relation to character affiliation. The first is termed the "para-social interaction" and the second and third are content involvement patterns, as originally conceptualised by Katz and Liebes (1986). These measurements were taken to see how closely audience members related to the characters and how they interacted socially with other viewers. The involvement patterns indicate the audience's proximity to, or distance from, the program. Through examining the interrelationship in the patterns, Sood and Rogers concluded that there are sub-dimensions in the ways that the audience establishes relationships with the

program. In the case of *Hum Log*, strong, affective relationships between the audience and the characters in the program supported the success of the program, which in turn effected socio-behavioural changes in the public.

The letter writers in Sood and Rogers' research were highly attentive and serious viewers. They were enthusiastic fans, or at least liked the product and were often eager to talk about what they had viewed. These viewers tended to provide positive and constructive comments, showing strong emotional affiliation to the program and/or its characters. In reality, viewers hold a variety of attitudes towards a program's content and its characters, and it is not only fans who express opinions in regard to the ideological issues relevant to the process of socialisation.

Gray (2003) suggests a review of a range of audience members who are assumed to be active, intentional and attentive to include those viewers who express dislikes and concerns about the ideological representations (messages) of media products. Those audience members who are anti-fans or non-fans also clearly and often enthusiastically state their thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. Gray claims that anti-or non-fans express their socio-cultural values or worldviews in different ways to fans, and makes the case that those anti-or non-fans should also be included in audience analysis.

Gray (2003) points out that the majority of audience analyses implicitly or explicitly focus on fans; these researches tend to neglect non-fans and anti-fans (Fiske, 1992; Grossverg, 1992; Lewis, 1992; Brooker, 2001). He argues that it is commonly observed that viewers who do not like a media product also talk about the product, as Gray observed in his interview with *The Simpsons* viewers: "non-fans and anti-fans could provide lengthy and impressive in-depth analysis of *The Simpsons*" (p.66). The

non- and anti-fans could also readily provide their reasons for not being fans. Non- and anti-fans are often clearly aware of their moral and value judgments in relation to the content. In terms of interpreting the audience's reactions, these statements by non- and anti-fans should, and can, be included in the analytical framework of audience research.

An analytical framework adopted by Katz and Liebes (1986) is useful for the purpose of inclusively analysing audience members who are attentive, anti- or non-fans of a mass media product. They discuss the ways in which viewers with ethno-culturally different backgrounds are engaged by the television program *Dallas* (Katz & Liebes, 1986). The aim of their research is to analyse "how viewers use narrative to discuss their own lives" (p.153), and to investigate the different ways in which audience members engaged with the program according to their ethnic background. It is a study, not of effect, but rather of the process that leads to effects.

The researchers set 50 focus groups of differing backgrounds. The 50 groups were drawn from five ethnic communities. Four of the communities lived in Israel. The ethnic communities from which the focus groups were drawn included Israeli Arabs, Moroccan Jews (living in Israel), Russian Jews (living in Israel), second-generation Kibbutz Jews, and groups of second-generation Americans in Los Angeles. The research environment was a "close to natural" condition of viewing. The group viewed an episode of *Dallas* in a living room setting. This format created a condition which approximated their usual viewing environment. After viewing the program, the focus groups were asked to retell the episode and to describe three leading characters in the episode. They were also instructed to answer the interviewer's questions and to discuss certain points relating to the research questions.

The collected discussions were analysed in order to ascertain the viewers' interpretations of the episode and how viewers discussed the program, according to 'referential' and 'critical' measurements. Katz & Liebes found "that there were two main types of viewer involvements" (Stokes, 2003:140). The results indicate a significant difference in the way the Arab groups engaged with the program compared to the other groups. Their research takes socio-cultural influences on audience's reactions into consideration, and reveals how the same story can create different perceptions in audience members according to their ethnic background.

The above studies appear to concentrate on television serials rather than big screen films, and it could be argued that they are not relevant to this study. However, while not perfect, an attempt has been made in this study to combine the encoding/decoding model and psychological concepts thus creating a useful theoretical model for researchers to investigate each individual's experience of, engagement with and interpretation of mass media products. The model also allows the clarification of the collective inclinations and characteristics of the sub-group(s) in the audience, in terms of the uses and effects of the media products. This study uses analytical frameworks to see how and to what extent the audience engages with the media products.

3.3 Data collection method for the analysis of the audience's interpretation

3.3.1 Preamble

The data used to analyse the audience's interpretation of *Mononoke Hime* are drawn from 1) individual comments posted on Internet sites (see Appendix I, pp.126-7),

and 2) a published magazine of comments which will be referred to as *kansobun* (感想文 lit. notes of appreciation). This section presents how data were collected and selected for the study. The data are comprised of a total of 165 contributors from both *kansobun* (133 contributors) and selected Internet sites (32 contributors).

3.3.2 Comments posted on Internet sites

Comments posted on the Internet were located by searching under the keyword of *Mononoke Hime* on the MSN Search engine. This search returned 49,487 hits. The MSN Search engine allowed access to only 1,000 URL addresses, 2.0% of the total number of hits. A brief sample of site content was provided for each of the 1,000 sites to which access was granted. The remaining 98% of sites hit by the search were unable to be viewed for unknown technical reasons.

The list of 1,000 sample site content was downloaded on 24 June 2004. The brief sample from the 1000 sites was reviewed, and the results were categorised into 11 groups. The results are presented below in Table 5.

Table 5: Groups and site numbers of 1000 *Mononoke Hime* related sites (n=1000)

Category of the site	Number and (%)	Description of sites
Studio Ghibli site	21 (2.1%)	Newsletters, reports of Ghibli activities, fan's comments, information relating to Ghibli's works.
Advertisements by bookshops, shops of toys, wallpapers, watches, VCDs, CDs, DVDs, music score, etc	166 (16.6%)	Advertisements for goods relating to the film, such as lunch boxes, handkerchiefs, books and music-cassettes, CDs and VCDs. Second hand goods are also advertised.
Critiques and information on Mononoke Hime in newspapers, magazines, and other individual professional critics' sites	66 (6.6%)	Major media and magazine sites provide information on the film regarding its revenue, TV program rating, a number of theatre viewers (in 1997), as well as criticism and interpretation by commentators of the media.
Personal diaries, posted opinions, and fan's sites	492 (49.2%)	Further information relating to characters, voice actors, items in the film such as weapons, Japanese minorities in the history are found. Contributors from the U.S.A., quizzes, puzzles, parodies, exchanges of comment from contributors, discussion of the film and negative comments are frequently found in these sites.
Music and illustrations including audience creations	83 (8.3%)	Copies of scenes and illustrations from some viewers. One site had parody songs of <i>Mononoke Hime</i> .
School and University related sites	30 (3.0%)	Lectures notes, students' projects, Japanese, English and Russian language course materials. Performances of a play of <i>Mononoke Hime</i> at primary and high school events, such as at "cultural days" were also included here.
Information regarding events	27 (2.7%)	Previews and advertisements for gallery exhibitions, previews and mimicry competitions are included here.
Touring Guide	2 (0.2%)	These two sites are tourist guides provided by private tourist bureau and the Yakushima ¹⁵ tourism department.
Unknown sites	28 (2.8%)	These sites were only a cover page, or were inaccessible.
Other	14 (1.4%)	Notice or announcements regarding new URLs, opening and ending music, title and cast of the film, mistakes such as information regarding other film, or TV programs, articles which have appeared in other publications.
Repetitions	71 (7.1%)	Copies of the above sites.
Total	1000 (100%)	

¹⁵ Native forest in a reserved area of Yakushima is a model scenery of Shishi Gami no Mori in *Mononoke Hime*.

As shown in Table 5, almost a half of the 1000 sites (49.2%) are personal diaries or one-off personal comments by the audience and fans of the *anime*. All 492 of these sites were viewed on the computer. Comments selected for this study were written in Japanese, and employ what could be characterized as an essay style. This is similar to the comments contained in the *kansoobun*. The contributors' genders could be identified based on this style. Comments reviewed on the Internet for which gender was unclear were not utilized in this study. Gender was identifiable based on the contributor's name which was found in the comments or stated in the front page of the comments, and through the terms contributors used to refer to themselves in their comments: For example, "*obasan*" ('aunty', used to indicate a middle aged female), "*ore*" ('I', used only by males), "*ojisan*" ('uncle', used to indicate a middle aged male), and "*oyaji*" ('father'). 32 comments were extracted from the sites for analysis in this study; 28 were made by male contributors and four by female. These Internet comments are particularly useful in observing audience members' negative appraisals, which do not appear in the *kansoobun*.

3.3.3 Selected data from published 感想文 (*kansoobun*, Viewers' comments)

The *kansoobun* which were consulted in this study come from *Mononoke Hime o Egaku, Kataru* (『もののけ姫を描く、語る』 'Viewers describing and talking about *Mononoke Hime*'). The magazine was published in December 1997 by Fusion Product in Tokyo. Contributions were called for in the July 1997 issue of *Comic Box Vol.2* by Fusion Product, immediately following the release of *Mononoke Hime* in Japan. Responding to the call, over 400 *kansoobun* and illustrations were contributed to the

publisher who read all the contributions, contacted each contributor, and grouped the contributions under sub-titles. Ryoichi Saitani, the chief editor of the magazine, explained that the work was not as easy as he originally thought. He states:

作品のワクを超えて、みた一人一人の思いが言葉となり、絵となつて、編集者達に突き刺さる。...何度も何度も手紙を読み返し、組み合わせを考え、...投稿者一人一人に連絡もした。公開後一ヶ月位、夏の最中に出そうと思っていたのが、冬の初め、年の暮れになった。(Through their words and illustrations, individual viewers' thoughts moved us beyond the frame of the film. We read and re-read the viewers' letters, considered combinations of them, and contacted each contributor. We would have liked to have published the results during the summer, about a month after the film's debut, but it became the end of the year, the beginning of winter [when we published].¹⁶) (Comic Box Vol.3, p.190)

The compiled *kansoobun* were finally published in December 1997 as *ComicBox Vol.3 – Mononoke Hime o Egaku, Kataru*. This source was utilised nonetheless, as the contributors' comments were written directly after viewing the *anime* and are available in the audience member's own words. That makes these kinds of comments usable as a source of data. The selected contributors' background details are shown in Tables 6 and 7 below.

¹⁶ All translations are done by the researcher.

Table 6: Distribution by age and gender (n=133)

Age	Female	Male	Total
8	1	0	1
10	3	1	4
11	3	0	3
12	10	1	11
13	16	1	17
14	4	1	5
15	7	2	9
16	7	4	11
17	7	8	15
18	4	4	8
19	2	2	4
20	2	1	3
21	1	3	4
22	1	1	2
University*	0	1	1
23	3	2	5
24	3	0	3
25	2	2	4
26	1	1	2
27	0	1	1
28	3	0	3
29	0	1	1
32	1	0	1
34	1	1	2
35	1	1	3
36	2	2	4
37	2	0	2
38	1	0	1
41	1	1	2
42	1	0	1
unidentified	1	0	1
Total	91	42	133

*Note: A male contributor did not provide his age. Instead, he said he was a university student whose age cohort is grouped in the 20s.

Note: Contributors' ages are as appeared in the magazine in 1997.

Table 7: Contributors' distribution by prefecture (n=133)

Prefecture	Female	Male	Total
Hokkaido	1	1	2
Aomori	1	1	2
Akita	1	0	1
Iwate	1	0	1
Miyagi	2	1	3
Yamagata	2	1	3
Fukushima	2	1	3
Tochigi	3	0	3
Ibaraki	3	0	3
Chiba	6	3	9
Saitama	5	2	7
Tokyo	11	3	14
Kanagawa	7	4	11
Gunma	3	2	5
Nagano	3	1	4
Shizuoka	2	2	4
Aichi	2	3	5
Gifu	2	1	3
Mie	2	2	4
Fukui	1	1	2
Shiga	1	1	2
Oosaka	3	1	4
Nara	1	1	2
Kyoto	3	0	3
Hyogo	1	1	2
Okayama	2	1	3
Hiroshima	2	2	4
Yamaguchi	3	1	4
Shimane	2	1	3
Kagawa	1	0	1
Ehime	3	1	4
Fukuoka	3	1	4
Kumamoto	2	1	3
Nagasaki	1	0	1
Saga	1	0	1
Unidentified	2	1	3
Total	91	42	133

Regarding these data, two points need to be clarified. Firstly, there is a high possibility that many of the direct quotations have been edited by the publishers. Secondly, these data sources were occasionally incomplete as they lacked basic background information, such as the age, gender and social background of the contributors. The *kansoobun* for which gender was not identified were excluded from

this study. The selected *kansoobun* provided 143 letters of viewers in total. Ten of those 143 letters were excluded from this study, because in five of the letters both the age and gender of the contributors were not identifiable; one letter was less than ten words; three letters expressed a desire to work for Hayao Miyazaki, the director of *Mononoke Hime*; and one contributor requested *Mononoke Hime*-related goods and figures.

3.3.4 Age groups for this analysis

All the contributors range in age from eight to over 40 years old. Dividing the contributors into identifiable groups based on age and education level is more meaningful than the use of arbitrary age brackets. Japanese children are obliged to attend school up to lower secondary level. One survey reveals that 95.8 % of lower secondary graduates have proceeded to higher secondary level since 1994.¹⁷ Thus for this analysis, contributors aged between 8 and 18 years have been divided according to their level of education. The remaining contributors over 19 years of age have been divided according to age.

Both *kansoobun* and Internet contributors and their distribution by gender and age are shown below (Table 8). The total number of female contributors is 95 (57.6%) and the total number of male contributors is 70 (42.4%).

¹⁷ mext.go.jp/b.menu/houdou/09/12/tk0106.gif, (accessed 19 march 2006, 11.43 am).

Table 8: Contributors' distribution by gender and age (n=165)

Age group	<i>kansoobun</i>		Internet		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
8-11 (primary school)	0.6 (1)	4.2 (7)			4.8 (8)
12-14 (lower secondary school)	1.8 (3)	18.2 (30)			20.0 (33)
15-18 (Higher secondary school)	10.9 (18)	15.2 (25)			26.1 (43)
19-29 (the 20s)	9.1 (15)	10.9 (18)			20.0 (33)
30-39 (the 30s)	2.4 (4)	4.9 (8)			7.3 (12)
40-49 (the 40s)	0.6 (1)	1.2 (2)			1.8 (3)
unidentified		0.6 (1)	17.0 (28)	2.4 (4)	20.0 (33)
Total	25.5 (42)	55.2 (91)	17.0 (28)	2.3 (4)	100 (165)

From Table 8, it is clear that contributors of age cohort 15-18 (higher secondary school children) comprise the largest single group (26.1%) of all age cohorts. This is followed by the age groups 12-14 (20.0%) and 19-29 (20.0%). These three age cohorts which contributors are under 29 years old make up 66.1% of the total contributors.

Among the female contributors, lower secondary school level girls make up the largest group (18.2%), followed by the cohort of female contributors aged 15-18 (15.2%). Among the male contributors, higher secondary school level boys make up 10.9%, which is the largest male contributors' cohort.

3.4 The analytical framework for the audience's interpretation

This section introduces categories and definitions relevant to the analytical

framework for this study. The framework is used to analyse the types of relationships that the audience has made with *Mononoke Hime*. As previously stated, it is a modified version of the frameworks applied by Katz and Liebes (1986) and Sood and Rogers (2000). The framework outlined in Table 9 may be contrasted with a similar framework which was employed in the study by Katz and Liebes (1986) who focused on the relationship between the audience members' approach to the American soap opera *Dallas*, and their cultural backgrounds.

Katz and Liebes' study introduces the distinction of "I" (self and family), "We" (ethnic group and the nation), and "They" (universal and abstract social categories) in a category they refer to as 'Referential'. This category is useful to observe the different ways in which the audience members refer to themselves. However, this distinction as detailed by Katz and Liebes was not included in the study, due to the following factors. Firstly, this distinction may be observed in both the 'Critical' and 'Referential' comments. For example, the "We" concept is embedded in the notion of *our* Japanese films in two Critical comments, which praised the *anime* as the greatest artistic achievement of Japanese films (a 19 year old male contributor and a male contributor on Internet site). Secondly, the concepts of 'I', 'We' and 'They' often appear in one comment. Some comments in the 'Referential' category demonstrate an overlap of the notions "I", "We" and "They". For example, "the message of the film is for all of us Japanese" (male, 19 year old); and "I, as a member of the human race, am responsible for the future of both human beings and the natural environment" (female, 15 year old).

Table 9: Categories and Definitions of the Analytical Framework

Name of Category	Name of Sub-Category	Sub Sub-Category
<p>CRITICAL indicates the degree to which the audience members distance themselves from the content, and the reasons why they do so; includes the extent to which the audience members believe the content is fantasy or imaginary; and its relevance to the audience members' experiences, thoughts and expectations.</p>	<p>Criticism indicates how the audience members distance themselves from the film; how they observe and evaluate the film. Negative appraisals are included in this sub-category.</p>	
	<p>Aesthetic contains comments relating to the technical composition of the film such as voice acting, pictures and music.</p>	
<p>REFERENTIAL indicates the audience members' emotional (for example, this category reveals the extent to which the audience relates to the events, episodes and characters as though they are real, through its expression of sympathy, antipathy, sorrow, hope, desire) and/or ideological involvement with parts of the film; events, episodes and characters. Some contributors suggest an alternative plot for the character(s), indicating deep involvement with the film.</p>	<p>Cognitive¹⁸ concerns the significance of the film as a whole to the audience members' lives and society; how closely as a whole they relate themselves to the film; includes such comments as : 'the story describes our society...'; 'the content gives me guidance in life...'; 'the film gives me an answer to the question...'; and 'the story encourages me to...'. Suggestions of changes of episodes and/or alternative plot for the characters are included in this sub-category.</p>	
	<p>Real Keying indicates that the audience members have talked and/or stated about the characters and episodes of the film relating to their own experiences in their life and the society.</p>	

¹⁸ This sub-category is adopted from Sood and Rogers (2000). In their study, the category is used to analyse how audience members received the Indian educational-entertainment TV program *Hum Log*. *Hum Log* was broadcast in India from 1984 to 1986.

		<p><i>Normative</i> contains evaluations of the episodes, the characters' attributes and their behaviours; comments are indicative of the audience's norms and values; often includes such words as: "ii" (good); "warui" (bad); "rippa" (awesome); and "sekininkan" (sense of responsibility); phrases such as: 'I would like to become...'; and 'I will follow...'; also regularly appear; indicates that the audience member has adopted anime characters as his or her role model.</p>
	<p><i>Play Keying</i> indicates that audience members have substituted themselves for the characters in the anime; comments often include such expressions as 'what would it be like if I were (the character)...'; and 'it would be wonderful or awful if I were like (the character)...'.</p>	
<p>PERSONAL¹⁹ includes how audience members have talked about the film with other people; indicates the audience members' activities beyond the viewing of the film.</p>		

By using the analytical framework described in Table 9, an analysis of *what*, not *how*, the audience viewed and commented upon the film was achieved. The contributors consulted in this study watched the *anime* and commented on selected topics and particular parts of the film, as well as sometimes providing an overall

¹⁹ This category is modelled on Sood and Rogers (2000). Their category is known as 'Behavioural'. They placed comments which indicated how the audience connected their viewing of the program with real life (p.390-391). Comments in their category indicate how the audience adapted its social activities on account of viewing the film. In their study, audience members changed their daily schedule to watch certain television programs, and they talked about the program with other viewers. For example, one viewer expressed a desire to organise and participate in a women's association on account of viewing the program (p.390). The 'Behavioural' category is only partially applicable to this study.

impression of *Mononoke Hime*. Analysis of these types of comments was undertaken in order to understand what the contributors stated in relation to what they saw in the *anime*.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

This study can be positioned within the theoretical tradition of cultural studies, in which researchers focus on actual audience members and their reactions towards mass media products (Lull, 1995; Turner, 1996; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).

Validity and reliability are achieved through maximising the level of fit between the research questions, data collection procedures and analysis. The research questions set in this study consist of three questions to clarify how and in what way the audience members established a specific relationship with this product, with *Mononoke Hime* used as a case study.

Credibility can be measured by the choice of *kansoobun* and comments on Internet sites. These selected data were the results of spontaneous reactions of the audience members. They were written in their own words, and were all written in essay style.

Analysis techniques are in two phases. An analytical framework was set up in the first phase of the analysis to determine *how* the audience members established relationships with the anime. For the second phase, analysis of depictions and interpretations by the audience members was conducted to answer *what* in the anime the audience members actually talked about. The general research question, then, will be answered by the above two-stage analysis. The first phase of analysis was

conducted four times in four months; the second phase was conducted twice in three months.

General accessibility is achieved by using Japanese movies and providing an analysis in English, a decision which widens the information on and understanding of contemporary Japanese popular culture and its audience members.

3.6 The choice of the topic and subjectivity

The choice of the topic for this study is related to my ethnicity. As a member of contemporary Japanese society, I am one of those who enjoy and were brought up with Japanese *anime*. I am accustomed to watching *anime*, and enjoy their stories, pictures and music as much as I enjoy live action films and other forms of art. While enjoying *anime*, I often consider messages by the filmmakers in my interpretations, just as I do with watching or reading other artworks, including novels. I think that words, phrases, episodes and the stories of *anime* often represent, remind, and reinforce what I think is important in my real life. *Anime* often provide alternative ways of thinking. In a sense, *anime* are one of the facilities that shape my construction and reconstruction of my sense of self, my values and norms, and my identity. I originally thought that I shared the same experience with other *anime* viewers in Japan. However, I only found a few accounts that referred to this type of activity taking place in audience members.

I watched the *anime* six times on video before commencing this study. When I watched *Mononoke Hime*, I had an impression that this *anime* was of a different form than the other *anime* directed by Miyazaki, and other entertainment-based films such as Hollywood animation. In my impression, the film has no heroes and no winners –

just losers. The film does not present any solutions to the problems that it presents. It was not entertaining, in the sense of being escapist or exhilarating; instead, it led me to think of the structure of society, the thoughts of the people and the meaning of life in our contemporary world. Watching the film also aroused my interest in what other viewers thought of it.

3.7 Summary

Both my theoretical background and my personal experience of viewing contemporary Japanese *anime* (in particular *Mononoke Hime*) led to the formulation of the goals of this study and the specific research questions. These questions were designed to investigate how audiences of a mass media product utilise it for their process of socialisation. Three specific questions were set to answer how the audience members of *Mononoke Hime* watched and utilised the *anime*. To answer the research questions, I collected and selected data which were written by audience members in Japanese using an essay style. I then analysed them using an analytical framework based on Katz & Liebes (1986) and Sood & Rogers (2000).

Data for this study were collected and selected from the published magazine of *kansoobun* and posted on Internet sites. The *kansoobun* and comments posted on Internet sites were selected because they were written by the audience members in their own words. Among the 165 selected contributors, 132 *kansoobun* contributors are identified by both gender and age; while one *kansoobun* contributor and 32 contributors of Internet sites are gender identified.

The analysis techniques used in this study were: firstly, categorising 420

comments of the data into a framework set in this chapter to see how the audience members established their relationship with the *anime*; and secondly, analysing topics that the audience members depicted and interpreted to see which aspects of the *anime* they utilised for their socialisation.

Chapter 4 Analysis of interpretations of *Mononoke Hime*

4.0 Preamble

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the 420 comments made by 165 viewers (133 *kansoobun* contributors and 32 from Internet sites) using the framework set out in Chapter 3, Section 4.1 presents an analysis of how each viewer relates to *Mononoke Hime*. This analysis aims to understand whether those viewers tend to distance themselves from the *anime* or become involved in it ideologically and/or emotionally. Section 4.2 presents what the viewers actually see in the *anime* and how they talk about it. The analysis aims to shed light on what parts of the *anime* the viewers depict and utilise for constructing and reconstructing their sense of self.

4.1 Audience members' relationships to *Mononoke Hime*

4.1.1 Distribution of comments

The overall ratio of Referential to Critical comments is 3.9:1 in favour of Referential comments. 75.2% of total comments were Referential. Recall that Referential comments show a closer relationship between the viewers and the *anime*. This means that the viewers here established a closer relationship in which they became emotionally and ideologically involved with the film. The distribution of comments is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Total proportion of comments in each category [n=420]

	(1) Referential 75.2% (315)			(2) Critical 19.3% (44)		(3) Personal	
	(1-1) Cognitive	(1-2) Real Keying		(1-3) Play- Keying	(2-1) Aesthetic		(2-2) Criticism
Total number of contributions [420]	26.5 % [111]	(1-2-1) Value-Free 24.0% [101]	(1-2-2) Normative 24.0% [101]	0.7% [3]	9.5% [40]	9.8% [41]	5.5% [23]

Note: Numbers in brackets refer to the number of comments.

Recall that Cognitive and Real Keying comments show that the audience members talk about the story and the characters relating to the real lives of the audience members. This means that consulted contributors saw the content of the film as significant to their own lives. These comments can be categorized in the first position of Hall's 'Three Decoding Positions' (see Table 1 in Chapter 1, page 12). At the same time, these comments indicate that the consulted audience members utilise the film as an "equipment for living" in Young's term (Young, 2000).

This ratio is larger than that in Katz and Liebes's (1986) study of *Dallas*. In that case, the ratio was 3:1 in favour of Referential. Katz and Liebes suspect that the audiences who have greater experience with dramatic forms are more inclined to take a critical distance in relation to the soap opera. Interestingly, their study shows that the American group generates the most Critical comments. Katz and Liebes comment that it is possible that Americans are more acculturated to this type of soap opera, and are therefore more likely to comment critically on the drama (pp.155-7).

Their research findings, however, do not explain the high proportion of Referential comments within the Japanese cohort. The Japanese considered here have

all grown up with the *anime*, TV and other mass media, that is, they are similar to the American group in Katz and Liebes' study in that they are already well acculturated to *anime* products. Therefore, if Katz & Liebes' study is taken into account, the Japanese cohort would have been expected to have made more Critical comments.

(1) Referential comments

Within Referential comments, Cognitive comments make up 26.5% (111 comments) of the total. Real Keying comments, (both Value-Free and Normative comments) make up 48.0% (202 comments), the highest proportion of all these sub-categories. Value-Free comments and Normative comments make up 24.0% each (101 comments each). In contrast, Play Keying comments make up only 0.7% (3 comments) of total comments. This is extremely small in comparison with other categories. Recall that Cognitive comments show that the audience member thinks the content of the *anime* is significant, and Real Keying comments show that the audience member seriously talks about the character and scenes in relation to real life. It is important that the proportion of Value-Free and Normative comments in *Mononoke Hime* is higher than any ethnic group in Katz & Liebes' study²⁰ (1986). This means that the consulted audience member tends to perceive the content of the *anime* realistically as well as morally.

Here are some examples taken from the Referential comments²¹ written by

²⁰ In their study, the Arab group shows the highest proportion of Normative comments. The proportion of the comments of Arab group is 60 % and 40 % respectively (Katz & Liebes, 1986:160).

²¹ Original comments are in Japanese. These have been translated by the researcher.

Japanese cohort of this study. These examples show what types of comments were categorized in each sub-category. Pages in the magazine which contain the comments are shown in the brackets at the end of the Japanese comments. Internet contributors are indicated by numbers of the list attached in Appendix 1 (page 126) in the bracket at the end of the Japanese comments.

(1-1) Cognitive comments

1: Cognitive (male, 25yo)

『もののけ姫』は、環境を破壊することでしか人間が生きられないのなら、せめて自然の包容力を超えない努力をやはり人間がしていくしかない、と言っているように思える。(Our lives depend on nature. Unfortunately, this dependence means killing animals and destroying nature. Human beings should make an effort to control the killing and not to exceed the limit. I think this was the message of *Mononoke Hime*. p.59)

2: Cognitive (female, 19yo)

サンは最後人間の世界へ帰ってほしかった。モロはもういないのだ。シシ神の森はもうないのだ。サンの帰る場所はない。...サンは最後にこう言えばいい。アシタカは好きだ。でも人間を許すことはできない。しかし私も人間だ。それがわかった。そんな私を森はもう許してはくれない。そしたらアシタカはこう答えるだろう。「それでもいいじゃないか。人間として共に暮らそう。そして森と共に生きよう。」(I wanted San to return to the human world. Moro has died and San has lost Shishi Gami's forest. She has no place to return any more... San would be able to say at the end that "I like Ashitaka, but I can

not forgive humans. However, I understand now that I am a human, too. The forest will never accept me.” And then perhaps Ashitaka would reply to San that “I think it is fine. Let’s live together as human beings, and let’s live together with nature”. p.48)

(1-2) Real Keying comments

3: (1-2-1) Value Free (female, 37yo)

サンは親によって犬神にささげられた少女であり、エボシはおそらく姫君の暮らしから遊女に転落させられた女。だから、サンの苦しみを一番理解できたのは、エボシのはずです。(San was a girl who was sacrificed to the Wolf god by her parents, and Eboshi was a princess who was dragged down to prostitution to save her family. I think Eboshi is the only character who could truly understand San’s suffering. p.73)

4: (1-2-2) Normative (male, 25yo)

はっきり言って、僕はアシタカに惚れてしまいました。そして僕にはアシタカのように勇気も決断力もないけれどもアシタカみたいに生きていきたいと思いました。(I liked²² Ashitaka very much. I am not so courageous or decisive as Ashitaka, but I want to become a person like Ashitaka. p.57)

(1-3) Play Keying comments

5: (female 24yo)

アシタカが再びタタラ場に戻ったときから、「私がこいつならきつとこ

²² In Japanese, “horeru” expresses a strong appreciation and respect towards the object of affection. “Horete shimaimashita” means that a person unexpectedly begins to like someone intensely.

うする」と思ったことをピタリピタリとやってくれた。(After coming back to Tataraba from Moro's cave in the forest, Ashitaka did exactly what I would do, if I were Ashitaka. p.60)

6: (female 41yo)

(北米原住民は人間を)²³自然の環の中の一部とみなしていた...彼らとならあるいはもののけも譲歩しあって、共存、共栄(?)²⁴できたかもしれない。(North American indigenous people could have lived and prospered [?] together well with the *Mononoke* in this film. The indigenous people chose to live with the nature, and their choice brought them to their own destruction. p.72)

7: (female 13yo)

いつの間にかサンは私のお姉さんの存在に、モロの君は私のもう一人のお母さんの存在になっていました。...時間があればもう一度『もののけ姫』を見に行きたいです。姉さんと母さんにも会いたいです。(I don't know when, but while viewing the film, San became as if she was my sister and Moro as if she was another mother ... I would like to watch the film again, because I would like to see my mother and sister again, too. p.26)

(2) Critical comments

Critical comments make up 19.3% (81 comments) of the total 420 comments. The total 81 comments are grouped into two sub-categories of (2-1) Aesthetic and (2-2) Criticism. These sub-categories make up 9.5% (40 comments) and 9.8% (41 comments)

²³ This phrase is inserted by the writer to clarify the meaning of this paragraph.

²⁴ This question mark is in the original writing of this contributor.

of the total 420 comments.

Comments in the Aesthetic category indicate that the audience members see the film primarily as an artistic creation, and they evaluate how the film was made. This means that the audience members have evaluated such things as whether the *anime* is well or poorly made in terms of filmmaking techniques, and/or discuss characteristics of the *anime* such as whether it is educational, or merely entertaining.

The audiences of *Mononoke Hime* enjoyed evaluating the aesthetic quality such as pictures, music and voice acting, in a similar way as audiences of live-action films evaluate their aesthetic quality. However, pictures with music and voice action that have appeared on a screen may be *real* to the audience: *real* in terms of that imaginary world they had prior to their viewing is presented in a form of active picture as Wells (1995:421) has pointed out. Some samples of Critical comments are included below.

(2-1) Aesthetic comments

8: Aesthetics (female, 32yo)

この作品を見ている間中ずっと画面からあふれ出るむせ返るような「草のにおい」「緑のにおい」を感じていたことだ。(While I was watching this film, I felt as if I were in the forest, I could even feel the breeze and sense the smell of the grass and forest from the screen. p.69)

(2-2) Criticism comments

9: Criticism (female 36yo)

一つの映画の中に色々な物語があったのだと思います。(I think *Mononoke*

Hime is a film in which there are multiple stories. p.72)

10: Criticism (male, Internet)

人が人に伝達させたい手段の一つとして映画と言うエンターテインメントを利用しているにもかかわらず、観客が意味不明、理解不能なものを見させられている観が強いのであれば、至極無意味だと思うのです。

(Even though this film can be seen as an entertainment with which a person wishes to convey a message, if viewers of this film strongly felt that they were forced to watch something incomprehensible or something that they were unable to understand, the film would be ultimately meaningless. No.6)

(3) Personal comments

Personal comments indicate contributors' social relationships and/or activities which could be derived from or inspired by the film. There were 23 comments in this category (5.5%). Thirteen comments referred to other viewers; four comments described other viewers at cinemas, three comments indicated that they talked about the film with friends, and three comments talked about their future intentions. One of the last three comments also described how the viewer had changed after viewing the *anime* (this comment is listed above as sample number 12). No comments indicated that contributors intended any actual social action such as organizing associations or other group activities inspired by the film. Examples of Personal comments are as below.

11: Personal (male, Internet)

小学生の生徒が意味がよく分からないとぼやいていたけど、きっと何年

かあとに見直すことがあるだろう。そのときまた新しい発見があるだろう。(Some primary school children said that they could not understand the content of the film, but I am sure that they will return to the film someday in the future, and find new things in it.

No.23)

12: Personal (female, 16yo)

『もののけ姫』を見てから私は色々な面で変わりました。まず、生物や森に感謝して、私を生かしてくれてありがとうと食べれるようになりました。それから、はっきり将来やりたいことができました。大学に入って、古代の人々の自然に対する考え方を研究したいと思いました。(I have changed many aspects of my lifestyle after watching *Mononoke Hime*. I now can eat food thanking the forest and animals who give life to me. And I can set a clear objective in my future. I would like to go to university and study ancient peoples' thoughts about nature. p.39)

4.1.2 Summary

The contributions consulted in this study show high level of involvement with *Mononoke Hime*. This is supported by the fact that there are more Referential comments than Critical comments. The contributors show a more realistic involvement with scenes and characters in the film, rather than demonstrating a playful sense of involvement by fictionally situating themselves within the film. The contributors consulted in this study show higher uniformity in terms of how they establish relationships with *Mononoke Hime*. They discuss topics and episodes in the film more realistically and indicatively rather than playfully enjoying the film as a mere fantasy. This interpretation is supported by the extremely small number of Play Keying comments, and the higher

proportion of Referential comments. In short, these viewers watched the film introspectively by relating the content of the film to their own lives and society. This interpretation is supported by the high proportion of Cognitive and Normative comments.

The contributors did not indicate that the film encouraged them to directly change their actual social behaviour, except the comment (sample 12) made by the female contributor (16 yo). However, they stated the significance of the film in their lives and their society, rather than evaluating or playing with the content of the film. Some contributors speculated about the socio-educational effect of the film by reflecting on the film's wider audience, particularly referring to younger generations.

4.2 Depictions and interpretations of the film by the audience members

4.2.0 Preamble

This section presents the specific aspects and topics that the 165 contributors discussed in the data. Following the framework set out in Chapter 3, data are grouped under sub-categories which are shown in Table 9 (see pp.62-63).

What the contributors discussed shows what they actually received from the film. This was a combination of what was depicted on screen and how they interpreted the *anime* as a reflection of themselves and their society. Analysis of these topics and discussions directly relates to their construction and/or reconstruction of their sense of self, what values and norms they gleaned from the film, and how they utilized the film in their lives.

4.2.1 Referential comments

4.2.1.1 Cognitive comments

26.5% of all Referential comments are sub-categorized as Cognitive comments, which indicate that the contributors saw the content of the film as relevant both to themselves and to contemporary social issues. Each contribution shows which issues the contributor focused on in their viewing of the *anime*. Cognitive comments can be categorized into four groups. The distribution of the comments on the issues is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Issues that appeared in Cognitive comments and distribution (n=111)

	Group 1	Group 2		Group 3	Group 4
	Relationship between human beings and environment	Life and lifestyle		Change of the scenes	Other
		Reflection on one's life	Hope and/or encouragement for living		
Total 100 (111)	40.6 (45)	36.9 (41)	16.2 (18)	2.7 (3)	3.6 (4)

Group 1 is self explanatory. Comments in Group 2 can be categorized into two sub-groups. The first sub-group consists of comments showing that the contributors considered that they were challenged or invited to think about their life and lifestyle by the *anime*'s director, Hayao Miyazaki. The second sub-group consists of comments that the contributors perceived as hopeful and/or encouraging. Group 3 consists of comments that suggest alternative scenes in the *anime*. Group 4 consists of comments in which the contributors expressed concern about the characters beyond (or after) the story of the *anime*.

(1) Group 1: Relationship between human beings and natural environment

Comments which refer to the relationship between human beings and the environment make up 40.6 % (45 comments) of all Cognitive comments. All of the comments, either straightforwardly or implicitly, indicate that the audience members thought that human beings destroy nature. A female contributor (13 yo) stated that 壊れたものは、もう元には戻せない。今、私たちが住む大部分は、人間の手がかえられた物ばかりだと思ふ。(We can not bring a broken thing back to its original state. Almost everything with which we live is what human beings have altered. p.28). Another female contributor (24 yo) analogically describes the destruction of nature by humans: 今の世の中に至るまで、たくさんのエボシ達がたくさんのシシ神の首を落とし、いまだ地に残っている。(Until getting to the contemporary world, many Eboshi has been cutting off Shishi Gami's head, and it remains on our earth. p.60).

Two young girls (10 yo), one adult female (36 yo), and three male contributors (15 yo, 16 yo and 23 yo) clearly noted the rebirth of the native forest (Shishi Gami no Mori) in the last scene. Five of them stated that the reborn forest was not the original forest. One exceptional comment came from a female contributor (10 yo): 最後には、サンは森で、アシタカはタタラ場で暮らす、共に生きていくなんで、いい話でした。...森は再生し、タタラ場にもみどりができ、などととてもいい話だったと思います。(The film has a happy ending, because the forest was reborn, San and Ashitaka will live together in their individual places and people's lives will be restored. p.12) .

Four comments stated that natural disasters today are the result of the anger of nature demanding an end to the destruction. A female contributor (15 yo) wrote 人間は

もののけ姫の時代から森を奪い動物を殺してきた。そして今もそうしている。だから砂漠は増えるし、地震、洪水も多くなっていると私は考える。(Human beings have been invading the forests and killing animals, and we are still doing so. I think that is why we see an increase of deserts and are experiencing more earthquakes and floods. p.32) .

Two young female contributors, aged eight and ten years old, stated directly that the nature must be protected: 人間達に言いたい。森を切らないで。動物達を助けてあげたい。(I want to say to human beings, please do not cut down the forest. I want to save animals. p.5) ; 私はこの映画を観て、本当に自然は大切にしていかなければいけないと思いました。(I think that we have to protect nature, after viewing this film. p.16) .

Interestingly, direct comments such as those above were only found in the youngest age cohort of the consulted comments.

71.1 % of comments (32 comments) in Group 1 (containing a total of 45 comments) referred to a relationship between human beings and environment in terms of a balance between living as human beings and conserving the natural environment. Those contributors seemed rather more pleased to challenge the questions presented by Miyazaki than perplexed about the issue. A female contributor (13 yo) stated: 自然と上手に付き合って生きていかなきゃいけないということです。(We have to build a good relationship with nature. p.23) A male contributor (15yo) stated that 最後の復活した森は現代の森で、実は始まりはそこからです。日本は第2次世界大戦に破れ、皮肉にもそれによって最高の出発点を手に入れました。しかし、それに踏み出す左右を間違えた気づいたのはつい数年前。そしてそれを引きずってここまでできてしまった。今ここに新しいスタートラインを引きなおしてこれからを生きなくてははいけない。確実に自然に歩み寄ることをしなければ、と思った。(The

reborn forest at the end of the story actually marks a beginning for our future. Japan had been defeated in World War II. Ironically Japan got the best starting point by the defeat. However, only recently people have realized that we went down the wrong path. We younger generations need to resume cooperating with nature. p.36) .

This sense of balance between human beings and the environment appeared to derive from a perception that human beings need to gain things for living from nature, but these gains also cause destruction of nature. A male contributor (20 yo) stated: 悪い人間が自然を壊すのではない。人間が生きているということが自然を壊すのだ。その言葉がアニメーションとして私の眼前に現れた。(It is not bad people who destroy nature. It is living as human beings that destroy nature. These phrases emerged in front of my eyes in a form of the *anime*, p.49).

Three younger contributors aged 8-11, five contributors aged 12-14, seven contributors aged 15-18 and three contributors aged 24, 25 and 26 expressed mixed feelings regarding our attempt to improve living conditions caused disasters in the natural environment, which indicates a path to the total destruction of the world, including human beings. A male contributor (10yo) stated 僕は今生活が豊かだと思えます、...だけど、森や山などの自然や生物が生きることができなくなった分、ぼくたちの生活があると思うとやりきれなくなります。(I feel sad thinking that our comfortable life relies on the destruction of nature and killing the animals. p.17) . A female contributor (13yo) expressed the depressing point that 何十億年とわたって造られていった自然を人間は、あっという間に壊した。やはり人間は生まれてきてはいけなかったのか。未来は滅亡だけなのだろうか、少し真剣に考えさせられました。(Human beings have ruined nature that has been created over hundreds of millions of years. Are

we taking a path straight to our own self destruction? Are we the creatures which should never have been born? I have thought about these questions a little bit more seriously. p.28). Another female contributor (24 yo) stated that 見終わった後、私達はこれからどうやって生きていけばいいんだろうと考えると不安だったのです。(After viewing, I felt anxious thinking of how we should live from now on. p.58) .

Concerning this point, two other female contributors, aged 36 and 38, expressed relief after viewing the film. A female contributor (38yo) confessed that she cried while viewing the film at a cinema. She stated that 超自然的な力が、地球をこんなに悪くしたことの責任を咎め、私を罰するのなら罰してもいい...そう思ったら涙が一杯出た。そしたら、すっきりした。それはカタルシスの涙だったと思う。(I will accept the accusation and the punishment I am guilty of as one of the human beings who destroyed nature, if super-natural existence would do so onto me. I cried while viewing this film and I felt refreshed. I think my tears were tears of catharsis p.72) .

These comments can be categorized into Hall's Dominant-Hegemonic position. The consulted audience members understand the messages of the *anime*; their comments show that they are emotionally and ideologically involved with the work.

(2) Group 2: Life and lifestyle

Another sub-group of Cognitive comments is concerned with an individual's life, lifestyle and society. This sub-group makes up 53.1 % of the total Cognitive comments. 41 contributors (36.9%) stated that watching this anime gave them an opportunity to think about their own lives. These 41 comments are grouped in (2-1) Reflection on one's life below. 22 female contributors (aged between 12 and 41) and 19 male

contributors (aged between 15 and 41) commented about the film relating to their own experience in daily life. In terms of distributions of these comments based on gender or age, no distinctive difference was found.

Eighteen contributors (16.2%) stated that they were encouraged by the film to live on in this troubled world. Fifteen female contributors (aged between 11 and 42) and three male contributors (one aged 17 and two aged 23) commented that they were encouraged to live positively by viewing the film. Distribution of the comments in this sub-category is heavily biased towards female contributors. These comments are grouped in (2-2), 'Hope and/or encouragement for living'.

(2-1) Reflection on one's life

Comments in this sub-group indicate that the contributors reflected on their lives in the modern world while viewing the film. Typical examples expressed statements such as 最良の選択ができているだろうかと考えるきっかけを与えてくれた、いまどき貴重な映画でした。(The film was a valuable one, which gave me an opportunity to think about whether I am seeking the best option. Male, 22yo, p.52); この映画ほど自分のバックグラウンドを振り返らせる影響力のあったものはないということを言いたかった。(I want to say that I have never seen a film like this, which led me to such strong introspection regarding my background. Female, 35yo, p.81) . A male contributor (19yo) stated that 今の時代を若者と呼ばれながら生きている僕達が、悲しくも大人たちが血まみれになって追い求めた幸福の形を見つめなおしていく運命を背負うことを意味しているように思える。(We, being labelled as 'youths', who live in this contemporary world, are designated to reassess the definition of happiness which our older generation had pursued desperately. p.48) .

(2-2) Hope and/or encouragement for living

Comments in this sub-group often related to the contributors' personal problems in their real life. For example, three female contributors aged 13, 14 and 16 years old talked about how they were bullied at school, a female (24yo) was suffering from atopy, and a male contributor (19yo) was distressed by his failure to pass a university entrance exam. Those contributors related their sufferings to San's conflict, Ashitaka's cursed mark and Eboshi's private history. These contributors stated that these characters' actions in the film brought about relief, healing and encouragement for them.

These comments can be categorized into the Dominant-Hegemonic position in Hall's three decoding positions. The consulted audience members understood the messages of the *anime*, and their comments showed that they were highly emotionally involved with it. At the same time, these comments recall Young's Integrated Self-Other Relationship (see Table 2, page 19). The consulted contributors stated their cathartic experiences in viewing the *anime*, and these statements show that they used the *anime* to encourage themselves to live environmentally responsible lives and/or to relate themselves positively to their society.

(3) Group 3: Change of scenes in the film

There were only three comments in which consulted audience members suggested alternative plot points, or wanted to change any scenes in the *anime*. Two comments stated that the contributors wanted San to return to the human society. Both of these two contributors were female: one was 19yo and the other's age was unidentified. The 19yo

female contributor suggested alternative words by San and Ashitaka in the last scene of the film.

The other comment was made by a male contributor on the Internet site (No.15). He suggested replacing several phrases that did not match the particular scene. For example, he commented that 「どろどろ」 in 「どろどろが襲ってくるぞ」 (“Goopy things are coming to attack”) sounds too casual for such a serious situation, and that the dialogue between Ashitaka and Moro in the cave of mountain wolves was strange, because Ashitaka talked as if he were talking to a friend. As a matter of fact, Moro was upset about Ashitaka’s presence there, and consistently responded to Ashitaka with hostility.

These comments can be categorized in the Negotiated position in Hall’s three decoding positions. The consulted audience members in this category understood the message in the *anime*, yet they did not fully agree with or accept the scenes contained in it.

(4) Group 4: Other

Four comments grouped as ‘other’ in this category show the contributors’ concerns about the future lives of the characters. These comments were made by three female contributors (all aged over ten years) and one male contributor (aged 16 years). For example, a female contributor (14yo) stated that サンが選んだ森で生きるという道は一番いい選択なのかも知れない。でも、これでサンは本当に幸せになれるのだろうか。(It may be the best path that San had chosen to live in the forest. But I am sceptical about whether she will be happy in the future. p.29) . This comment shows a strong emotional

involvement with the character, as the contributor regarded the characters as if they were real people around her. For example, a female contributor (age unidentified) stated that いくつか、サンは人間の世界のほうへ戻ってきてほしいです。人間を許せたときが、サンの本当の解放かもしれないと思うからです。(I want San to come back to the human world someday. I think that true emancipation may come for San when she learns to forgive human beings, p.74).

These perspectives are similar to what Sood and Rogers (2000) refer to as ‘affective’. Sood and Rogers reported that audiences often view certain character(s) as real people, and feel sympathy, sorrow and regret with them (p.390). These affective comments suggest that audiences see the character(s) almost as real people. In the case of *Mononoke Hime*, however, such comments were extremely rare.

(5) Summary

The parts of the *anime* that were interpreted and depicted in the Cognitive comments shows that the contributors saw the film as presenting contemporary issues, particularly environmental ones, which directly relate to their lives and society. They perceived, through viewing *anime*, that these issues are rooted in the past history of their own society and, are directly related to contemporary issues. Viewers recognized that they are situated in a continuous line of history which stretches from the past, through their contemporary society, and towards the future. The contributors revisited the issues when viewing the *anime*, as well as interpreting these issues in relation to their lifestyles in the history of the society in which they live.

Two female contributors suggested changes to certain scenes, and four

contributors expressed their concern about the future of the characters beyond the last scene of the *anime*. These statements derive from their strong emotional involvement with the characters of the film, and they regarded those characters as if they were real people. These comments make up a small proportion of the cognitive comments. This demonstrates that the consulted audience members do not show strong emotional involvement with the characters, as the majority of the contributors do not see the characters as real.

4.2.1.2 Real Keying comments

Real Keying comments are concentrated on the main characters, particularly on San, Ashitaka and Eboshi. The audience members show a tendency to depict and interpret feelings and roles of the characters, and the meanings of the scenes, introspectively, rather than empathising with the characters. They see the characters and episodes analytically, separating characters and scenes into aspects which closely and/or directly relate to their own experiences.

(1) Value-Free comments

Value-Free comments were firstly sub-grouped into (1-1) comments on the characters and (1-2) comments on scenes. The comments (1-1) concentrate on the main characters, namely San, Ashitaka, Eboshi, Moro, Jiko-Bo and their scenes in the film. Distribution of Value-Free comments is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Distribution of Value Free comments (n=101)

			Female	Male	Sub-total	
Characters	San	Feeling	11.9 (12)	2.0 (2)	13.9 (14)	27.8 (28)
		Role	5.0 (5)	8.9 (9)	13.9 (14)	
	Ashitaka	Feeling	2.0 (2)	1.0 (1)	2.9 (3)	23.7 (24)
		Role	10.8 (11)	9.9 (10)	20.8 (21)	
	Eboshi	Feeling	2.9 (3)		2.9 (3)	10.8 (11)
		Role	2.9 (3)	5.0 (5)	7.9 (8)	
	Moro	Feeling	2.0 (2)		1.9 (2)	6.9 (7)
		Role	4.0 (4)	1.0 (1)	5.0 (5)	
	Jiko-Bo	Feeling				4.0 (4)
		Role		4.0 (4)	4.0 (4)	
	Other character	Feeling				4.0 (4)
		Role	4.0 (4)		4.0 (4)	
Relationship and last scene of San and Ashitaka			5.0 (5)	4.0 (4)	8.9 (9)	8.9 (9)
Scenes			7.9 (8)	5.9 (6)	13.9 (14)	13.9 (14)
Total			58.4 (59)	41.6 (42)	100 (101)	

The comments on the characters are grouped into two sub-categories: (1-1-1) Feelings and (1-1-2) Roles. The first sub-category (Feelings) contains contributors' perceptions on the characters' feelings, and their interpretations of the reasons for why the characters perform certain actions. The comments often used expressions such as "I understand why San did...", "I think Ashitaka liked San because...", etc.

The second sub-category (Roles) contains contributors' interpretations of which role the characters take in the *anime* and/or what the characters represent. The comments in this category often include expressions such as "The character's role is...", "This character symbolizes...", and the like. The comments on scenes reveal the contributors' interpretations of what the scenes meant and/or symbolized in the story. Comments on other scenes (1-2) referred to representational meanings of minor scenes and/or relationships between the characters in the film.

(1-1) Comments on the characters

The distribution of the comments was heavily skewed towards San, Ashitaka, and the relationship between them; and their last scene in the *anime*. 28 contributions commented on San, 24 on Ashitaka, and nine other comments concerned the relationship between San and Ashitaka (referring to their last scene). The total number of comments about San and Ashitaka make up 60.4% of the total Value-Free comments.

The total number of comments referring to the characters' Feelings and Roles is 77.2% of the total 101 Value-Free comments. Comments that referred to the characters' Feelings make up 21.8% of the total Value-Free comments; fourteen comments of the 22 comments are made about San's Feelings. Comments interpreting roles and representational meanings of the characters make up 55.4 %: the comments include four comments on how other characters, such as Kodama, Shishi Gami or other people in the film, play their roles, and/or what they represent. Distribution of the Feelings and Roles comments is shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Distribution of Feelings and Roles comments (n=78)

Number of comments	Feeling of the characters		Role of the characters	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
	24.4 (19)	3.8 (3)	34.6 (27)	37.2 (29)
Total 100 (78)	28.2 (22)		71.8 (56)	

(1-1-1) Comments on Feelings about the characters

Comments on San show a unique focus on San's Feelings in comparison with comments about other characters. Twelve of the total fourteen comments on San's Feelings were made by female contributors to *kansoobun*. Nine of the twelve comments

were written by the female contributors aged between 8 and 18. These comments include such statements as なぜサンがあんなに人間を憎んでいるか、私はサンの気持ちが少し分かりました。(I understand why San hates us human beings. Female, 11yo, p.18) , サンはどこにも居場所がなかったのだ。今の私もそう思ったことがある。サンの気持ちを理解できるような気がする。(San did not find her place anywhere. I have felt similar. I think I can understand her feelings. Female, 13yo, p.24) , or サンももとは人間だからアシタカを殺さなかったんだなと思います。(I think one reason why San did not kill Ashitaka was because she was originally human. Female, 10yo, p.9) .

The heavy proportion of comments about San's Feelings show a contrast with other comments in this sub-category; that is, comments on the other main characters were made about their Roles. The distribution of comments on characters' Feelings by gender is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Distribution of comments on the characters' Feelings by gender (n=22)

	San	Ashitaka	Eboshi	Moro	Total
Female	12	2	3	2	19
Male	2	1			3
total	14	3	3	2	22

(1-1-2) Comments on Roles of the characters

56 of the 78 comments on characters talked about the roles and/or representational meaning of the characters. Comments on Ashitaka's role made up 37.5% (21 comments); 25% (14 comments) were on San's role, and 14.3% (8 comments) were on Eboshi's role. The comments on the main characters (San, Ashitaka and Eboshi) make up 76.8% (43 comments). The overall distribution of the comments by gender does not

show a distinctive difference between male and female contributors. However, more male contributors (14 comments) than female contributors (8 comments) commented on the roles of San and Eboshi; and, while 4 male contributors commented on Jiko-Bo's role, no female contributors did. The distribution of the comments on the characters' Roles is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Distribution of comments on the characters' Roles by gender (n=56)

	San	Ashitaka	Eboshi	Moro	Jiko- Bo	Other characters	Total
Female	8.9 (5)	19.6 (11)	5.4 (3)	7.1 (4)		7.1 (4)	48.2 (27)
Male	16.1 (9)	17.9 (10)	8.9 (5)	1.8 (1)	7.1 (4)		51.8 (29)
Total	25.0 (14)	37.5 (21)	14.3 (8)	8.9 (5)	7.1 (4)	7.1 (4)	100 (56)

Comments concerning interpretations of characters' Roles show more analytical perspectives of the consulted audiences. Consulted contributors see a reduced aspect of the characters such as a symbol of nature or human beings. These perspectives show a contrast to 'affective' perspective towards the characters. For example, the consulted contributors tend to see San as a symbol of nature, Eboshi as a symbol of modern human beings in the post-industrialization era, and Ashitaka as mid-way between nature and the human world. One male contributor (25 yo) states that 映画の人物を一言で説明するならば、自然と一体となって生きる少女サンと人間の代表であるエボシの宿命の対決、この戦いに立ち会う青年アシタカ。(If I explain the characters in a word, Ashitaka, a youth, witnesses a fatal confrontation between San, a girl, who lives at one with nature and Eboshi who represents human society); and a female contributor (13 yo) states that タタラ場の人と共に生きることに命をかけるエボシ御前。自然（もののけ）と人間（たたら場）の共生を願うアシタカ。(Eboshi: one who risks her life to live together with people

in Tataru Ba. Ashitaka: one who hopes for the cohabitation of humans (Tataru Ba) and nature (beast deities).)

The interpretation of the characters as representations of contemporary human beings and their society is shared among the consulted contributors aged over 13. For example, one female contributor who saw Eboshi as a symbol of human beings in the contemporary world (15yo) stated that エボシは人間にとっての天国を作ろうと思っただけだったのだ。それは20世紀の人々がやってきたことそのままだったのだ。(Eboshi only wanted to build a haven for human beings. It was exactly what human beings in the 20th century have been doing p.35). A female contributor (19 yo) who saw San and Eboshi as representatives of nature and human beings extended her interpretation to contemporary people, as サンにはなれない。エボシにもなれない。それが現代人の大多数だ。(The majority of modern people cannot become a person like either San or Eboshi. p.51). Another female contributor (13 yo) stated that 登場人物たちは、だれにでも少しはある、アシタカ、サン、エボシ御前などの心をはっきり強く表しています。(We all share the characteristics of San, Ashitaka and Eboshi. p.25). A male contributor (18yo) stated that 今日の当事者である我々一人一人の姿が映画の中でエボシやジコ坊となって、あるいはタタラ場の群集となって描かれているのである。(We modern people are portrayed on the screen as Eboshi, Jiko Bo and/or the people of Tataru Ba.) p.47) . A male contributor thought that the subordinates of Tenchoo (the Emperor) acted like modern governmental executives. He stated that タタラ場とものけたちとアシタカの3竝みを利用して利権を揺るがぬものにしようと画策する天朝の手先の暗躍振りまるで現代の政府官僚のようだ。これはオヤジ世代の弱さとずるさの象徴だろうか。思えば、エボシもアシタカも天朝の手先も我々自身に他ならない。(The

secret activities by the henchmen of Tenchoo, who attempted to secure their benefit by utilising the tripartite deadlock of Tatara Ba, animals and Ashitaka, resembled the activities of modern governmental executives. Do these characters reflect the weakness and slickness of us older generations? I think that Eboshi, Ashitaka and the subordinates of Tenchoo represent us, No.16).

These contributors took up certain aspects of the characters by making comparisons between the characters and contemporary people. They saw characteristics of modern people, including themselves, reflected in the characters in the *anime*. This perception is different from the empathy that derives from seeing the characters as if they are real people.

The consulted audience members of *Mononoke Hime* tended to see the characters as idealistically constructed, and they focused on specific aspect(s) of the characters that they were able to relate to their own real life experiences. The audience members discussed and exposed certain aspects of the characters relating to themselves. They seemed to search for those aspects which resonated with their own experiences, feelings, morals and values. Through these resonances, the audience members seem to be able to reconfirm and reinforce a sense of self in society.

Comments on the last scene between San and Ashitaka categorized here show different interpretations of the scene. For example, a female contributor (13yo) stated, that 「共に生きよう」と言うことはサンとアシタカだけでなく、自然も人間も共に生きようという意味だと思いました。(I think Ashitaka's words 'live together' means that nature and human beings must live together, not only Ashitaka and San. p.27), while another female contributor (15yo) stated that 『生きろ』とシシ神はアシタカののろいを解いた。それは、苦しくとも生き抜くことという意味だ。(Shishi Kami lifted the curse

on Ashitaka to let him live. It means that he should live, even though life is tough. p.35). A male contributor on an Internet site stated that 離れていながらもお互いを思い図ることのすばらしさを感じます。...二人が「めでたし、めでたし」で一緒に住むなんて話があっては、物語の核がこわれてしまうのだ。(I feel marvellous that the couple (San and Ashitaka) are concerned about each other even though they live separately... If, they lived together in the *anime*, the core of this story would have been ruined. No.18) .

(1-2) Comments on other scenes

Other episodes in this sub-group are comments on the relationships of the characters symbolising generic aspects of real life, such as the relationships between Shishi Kami, San and Eboshi (nature and human beings); Moro and San (mother and child); Ashitaka and Jiko Bo (young generation and old generation); San (nature); Eboshi (humans and environment); Jikobo (development of the nation-state system); and Eboshi's killing of Shishi Kami and other scenes which are often concerned with relationships between and among the main characters, such as San and Moro, San, Eboshi and Jiko-Bo.

A male contributor on an Internet site wrote that a representational relationship between San, Eboshi and Jiko-Bo was a 'tri-lemma'. He stated that サンー自然、エボシー人間と環境の対立の構図が、国家レベルの成長を象徴するジコ坊というトリックスターを加えることで、トリレンマ：自然、環境、成長の対立の構図として明らかになる。(There was a structure of confrontation between San as a symbol of nature and Eboshi as human beings, combined with the trickster Jiko-Bo as a symbol of developing national power: the structure shows a tri-lemma, a conflict between nature, humans and development. No.21)

The scene of Eboshi's headhunting of Shishi Gami is commonly interpreted by contributors as representing the destruction of nature by human beings. A female contributor (19 yo) extended her interpretation of this episode to 私達はこのころから未知なる物を神聖、神秘ではなく、危険と思うようになったのかもしれない (It is the point when became to think the things unknown as dangerous rather than. p.48). These interpretations show that the contributors sought meanings in the scenes relating to their own experiences and knowledge of contemporary society.

The Value-Free comments on *Mononoke Hime* can be categorized into Hall's Dominant-Hegemonic position. Contributors in this category interpret meanings of characters and the scenes by focusing on specific aspects of them that relate to their real life experiences.

(2) Normative comments

Normative comments show contributors' moral judgments on the characters' activities, conduct and/or the scenes of the story. The comments in this category are sub-grouped into (2-1) Characters and (2-2) Others. 75.2% of the comments were made on the characters. The distribution was heavily concentrated on Ashitaka: 38.6% of the total Normative comments were made on Ashitaka, 19 (18.8%) on San, 12 (11.9%) on Eboshi and 7 (6.9%) comments on other characters. The comments on the main characters relate to traits of the main characters of Ashitaka, San and Eboshi. These comments were made by contributors aged ten years and over. Distribution of the comments in this category is shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Distribution of Normative comments (n=101)

	Characters	Female	Male	Sub-total	total
Characters	Ashitaka	22.8 (23)	15.8 (16)	38.6 (39)	76.2 (77)
	San	12.9 (13)	5.8 (6)	18.8 (19)	
	Eboshi	7.9 (8)	4.0 (4)	11.9 (12)	
	Other characters	3.0 (3)	4.0 (4)	6.9 (7)	
Others	The last scene	6.9 (7)	4.0 (4)	10.9 (11)	23.8 (24)
	Other scenes	7.9 (8)	5.0 (5)	12.9 (13)	
		61.4 (62)	38.6 (38)	100 (101)	

10.9% (11 comments) related to the last scene, while 12.9% (13 comments) were made about other scenes in the film. The last scene of the film, which is also the last scene between San and Ashitaka, was also commented on by the contributors. The comments on other scenes included moralistic accusations of people from the marketplace who followed Ashitaka to steal his gold, indiscriminate bombings by men of Tenchoo on animals and men from Tatara-Ba, and the episode in which Ashitaka gave Kaya's necklace to San. This episode prompted a strong moralistic accusation towards Ashitaka from two female contributors (14 yo and 15 yo). They were strongly accusatory of Ashitaka, stating that he neglected Kaya's feelings.

(2-1) Normative comments on the characters

Normative comments on the main characters are mostly related to appreciation of character traits. They included adjectives such as 'decisive', 'courageous' and 'affectionate', and/or motivational phrases such as 'fighting for things and people that should be protected' and 'never give up'. These comments suggest that the viewers' appreciation of the *anime* was heavily weighted towards Ashitaka and San. Comments

on Ashitaka and San were made by female contributors aged between ten and 42; and by male contributors aged between ten and 26.²⁵ The distribution of Normative comments on Ashitaka, San and Eboshi by age and gender is shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Distribution of Normative comments by gender and age (n=70)

	Ashitaka		San		Eboshi		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
8-11	4.3 (3)			1.4 (1)			5.7 (4)
12-14	17.2 (12)	4.3 (3)	11.4 (8)		4.3 (3)		37.2 (26)
15-18	5.7 (4)	4.3 (3)	5.7 (4)	2.9 (2)	2.9 (2)		21.4 (15)
19-22	1.4 (1)	5.7 (4)		2.9 (2)			10.0 (7)
23-30	1.4 (1)	2.9 (2)			1.4 (1)		5.7 (4)
31-40					1.4 (1)		1.4 (1)
41-	2.9 (2)		1.4 (1)		1.4 (1)		5.7 (4)
unidentified		5.7 (4)		1.4 (1)		5.7 (4)	12.9 (9)
	32.9 (23)	22.9 (16)	18.5 (13)	8.6 (6)	11.4 (8)	5.7 (4)	100 (70)

58.6 % of the comments on Ashitaka, San and Eboshi were made by contributors aged between 12 and 18. The consulted contributors often identified with characters of the same sex as their role model, and opposite sex characters as their desirable opposite sex role model. For example, a female contributor (11yo) stated that 見ているうちに、アシタカがかっこよく思えました。サン、うらやましい。(While watching the movie, I thought Ashitaka was so cool. I envy San. p.19), and a male contributor wrote that サンは現代人的ではない魅力を備えた少女である。誇り、誠実、家族愛、努力...筆者の個人的な趣味で言えば、嫁さんにしたいタイプだ。(San has a charming personality which modern people do not have. She has pride, loyalty, affection for

²⁵ It should be noted the comments by male contributors includes comments posted on Internet sites. Therefore, it does not mean that the above comments by male contributors were made only by the contributors under 26 years old.

her family, guts, effort...She would be my personal preference to have as a wife, No.14).

Comments on Eboshi were made by eight female contributors (aged between 13 and 42) and four male contributors on Internet sites. Six comments on Eboshi by female contributors expressed appreciation of her, and two comments expressed regrets and/or moralistic judgment mixed with appreciation. A female contributor (13yo) stated that 人間のほうを大切にしようと思うあまりに、周りのことが見えなくなってしまうのがエボシである。(It was Eboshi who cared for human beings excessively, and came to neglect things around her. p.24) , yet she continued that でも、私はエボシを尊敬している。誰に対しても変わらぬ態度や、病人をちゃんと人として見ることのできるとても純粋な心の持ち主だからだ。(Nevertheless, I still respect Eboshi, because she does not change her attitude to anyone and has a pure mind, treating the sick²⁶ people as normal people. p.24) . A female contributor (24yo) wrote a similar comment on Eboshi, stating that シシ神を倒して獣達を黙らせようとしている彼女を初めのころどうしても受け入れることができず、モロがエボシの首を噛み切ってくれないかと真剣に思ったものだ。だが、今はあの時代を力強く、りりしく生きた彼女に賞賛を送りたい。神殺しと言う最大の汚れを、自分ひとりで引き受けようとしたことは確かだ。(At the beginning, I could not accept Eboshi's attempt to silence the animals by killing Shishi Gami, and I eagerly waited for Moro to bite Eboshi's head off. But now, I appreciate Eboshi who lived through that era strongly and gallantly. I am sure that Eboshi was willing to accept the ultimate sin of killing Shishi Gami by herself. p.60) .

Three points are noteworthy in respect to which traits of the characters the

²⁶ The sick people of Tatara Ba in the *anime* were described as those who suffered from incurable epidemic disease such as leprosy.

contributors see as their role models. Firstly, the consulted contributors stated that they felt close to the main characters because they are similar to those characters in some way. For example, a male contributor (19 yo.) stated that 歴史上の主役のような人ではなく、ごく普通の人物が描かれている。だから、すんなり感情移入できる。(The main characters were described not as the heroes are described in history, but as nothing like we are. That is why I can easily feel empathy for the characters. p.50) . A female contributor (36yo) wrote that 彼が思い悩む主人公だから、アシタカにすんなり感情移入できた。(I could easily feel empathy for Ashitaka because he was perplexed and confused in the situations that he was involved in. p.71) .

Unlike criticism made by professional commentators such as Kiridooshi and Murase described in Chapter 2 (see Table 4, p.48 and pp48-50), these contributors stated that they felt empathy for the characters, and their empathy was brought about by relating their own experience to the traits of the characters. It appears that empathy is not only derived from a sense of realism stated by Murase, or a moment of involvement in a fantasy world being set up by the creator of the *anime* as stated by Kiridooshi.

Secondly, relating to the first point above, the consulted contributors tended to take up certain aspects from the personalities of the characters. A female contributor (14yo) stated that アシタカはそういう自分のいき方を気に入っているんじゃないかと思う。サンは森のために頑張る自分が好きなんだと思う。エボシもタタラ場で力を尽くす自分が好きだ...。(私も)せめて自分は好きになりたい。(Every character in this film likes his/her way of life. San likes to be a part of nature with her family, Ashitaka likes to live on his own, Eboshi likes to live for her people. I would like to become a person, at least, who respected myself. p.34).

The consulted contributors did not talk about these points such as that Ashitaka, for example, was unsuccessful in protecting the native forest and in finding a way for humans to live together with nature (see Chapter 2, page 43 and Appendix II, pp. 128-129), yet they focused on the traits of Ashitaka that related to their own experience.

Thirdly, relating to the second point, the contributors adopted role models in a cross-gendered way. Eight female contributors (seven from *kansoobun* and one female on an Internet site) expressed that they would like to become a person like Ashitaka, and four male contributors (all contributors from Internet sites) expressed their attraction to and appreciation of Eboshi for her gallant attitude. Ashitaka was given the most positive appraisal by both females and males, as well as from both *kansoobun* and Internet sites; San was praised for her courage in protecting the forest of Shishi Gami; Eboshi was praised for protecting the weak in her village and for her committal of the sin of decide for the sake of improving her people's living conditions. A female contributor (42 yo) stated that アシタカもサンもエボシ御前も、それぞれ潔く勇気がありたまらなくカッコイイ。(Ashitaka, San and Eboshi are all courageous and gallant. They are all cool beyond words. p.72) . A male contributor on an Internet site stated that 僕はエボシ御前に惹かれた。指導者としての重圧に耐えながら毅然としているところに惹かれる。(I was attracted to Eboshi. She is gallant under pressure as a leader. No.28) .

Normative comments on the characters can be categorized into the Dominant-Hegemonic position in Hall's Three Decoding positions. Adjectives and phrases that appeared in the comments show an awareness of traditional and conservative virtues in the society depicted; the consulted contributors perceived these virtues and supported them. That is, these comments suggest that the contributors saw these virtues as

important for living in modern society. The *anime* functioned to give the contributors an influence which can be categorised into Young's third sub-category of the Third Level, referred to as Specific Influence on Thinking (Young, 2000:457 and see Table 2 in Chapter 1, page 19 of this study).

(2-2) Normative comments on the last scene and other episodes

Eleven Contributors singled out the last scene for Normative comments. The last scene contains the longest part of the film – from the massive destruction by Shishi Gami (Deidarabocchi) to the very end of the film with the appearance of one Kodama. One girl (14 yo) stated that 木霊はたった一人しか現れなかったけれど、アシタカとサンと言う人間の活躍でシシ神から人間に小さなチャンスをもたらえたのだし、よかったと思います。 (It was good that human beings were given a small chance to survive thanks to those people named Ashitaka and San, even though only one Kodama appeared in the last scene. p.16) . A female contributor (24yo) stated that ダイダラボッチが全てを飲み込んだ後生き物が再生したシーンを入れたのは、死ぬことは負けることだ、人は生きてその罪を、人間が生きるために仕方になった自然の切り崩しをを償うために、弱さに逃げずに強く生きろと、だからアシタカが共に生きようと言ったのかとも考えられる。 (I think that the scene of the rebirth of the forest after Daidarabotchi had swallowed everything in the last scene was inserted because it conveys a message that dying is losing and we should not be weak; we have to live on to compensate for the sin of human beings destroying nature, even though that destruction was inevitable for the human beings' survival. I think that is why Ashitaka said in the scene to live together. p.52).

Normative comments on the last scene between San and Ashitaka, which are

categorized here, show the audience members' moral judgements. Concerning the last scene, Ashitaka and San's decision to live separately was welcomed rather than questioned by the consulted audiences. Some other contributors focused on Ashitaka's phrase, "live together", in the last scene with San. There were various interpretations of the word 'together', including 'live together with nature', 'live together for the future', and so on. A male contributor (20 yo) took the word as a personal invitation or encouragement, and stated that 『生きろ』それは生きることに戸惑っているものたちへの励ましか、永遠の問いを投げかけるものたちへの挑戦か。目をそらさずに答えてやれ。『きっと、多分、やって見せるさ』 (I wonder if the word 'live' is an encouragement for those who are bewildered about their lives, or a challenge to those who pause to ask questions about their lives... I will answer that I will, definitely or at least probably, live. No.20) .

(3) Summary

The Normative comments made by the consulted audience members can be categorized into the Dominant-Hegemonic position in Hall's three decoding positions. The contributors took up moral representations of the *anime* which can be considered traditional and conservative in terms of moral values in contemporary Japanese society; they assert and reconfirm that these moral values are important for their real lives. At the same time, these comments recall Young's second and third sub-categories of the Third Level of film-viewer relationship (see Chapter 1, page 19). Young reports (2000) that there were only a few cases of the second category in his interview. In contrast, many comments of this type were found among the consulted contributors of *Mononoke Hime*. This means that the *anime* functioned for the consulted audience members in this

study as “equipment for living” (Young, 2000:448).

4.2.1.3 Play Keying comments

There are three comments categorized as Play Keying. The proportion (0.7%) is too small for further analysis, yet it invites some interesting speculation concerning the reason why the result forms such a small proportion of the selected comments for this study.

Play Keying relates to a type of activity which involves the audience pretending to be either a character or in an active situation in the film. The audience members can enjoy fictionalizing their own lives through this playful activity. Katz and Liebes’s study (1986) shows that Play Keying comments were balanced with the comments in other categories. However, they report that Play Keying comments often appear to be foregrounded in the initial stage of group discussions (p.159).

Consulted audience members viewing *Mononoke Hime* did not demonstrate this kind of activity in the comments analysed in this study. Two questions of interest are, firstly, whether this type of activity is typical in dialogue or oral activity and not common in the essay form; and secondly, whether the contributors are too serious to allow themselves to ‘play’ with the *anime*. Katz and Liebes (1986) stated that “when they [the audience members] relate the story to life, they do so *realistically*”²⁷ (p.157). In their study, the audience members offer Real Keying comments more than Play Keying comments when talking about their lives, and how they relate to and are inspired by the film.

²⁷ Italics of this term was made by Katz and Liebes (1986).

Following their findings, the Japanese cohort in this study tends to relate the content of the *anime* to their lives and to talk about their lives realistically, rather than engage in fictional playing. This suggests that they think that the content, characters and scenes of the *anime* are related to their own experiences, and that the *anime* is significant for their sense of selves.

4.2.2 Critical comments

4.2.2.1 Aesthetic comments

Aesthetic comments consulted in this study are grouped in two sub-categories. They are, firstly, comments on the aesthetic quality of the film such as picture, music and voice acting; and secondly, on historical studies regarding the background settings of the film. No negative appraisals of the aesthetic quality of the film are found in the consulted contributions of this study, except for one male contributor on an Internet site commenting that the main characters (San, Ashitaka and Eboshi) have almost the same facial features and expressions (No.8). Distribution of comments is shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Distribution of Aesthetic comments (n=40)

Number of comments	Aesthetic			
	Picture, Music, Voice		Historical study	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
	57.5 (23)	35.0 (14)	2.5 (1)	5.0 (2)
Total [n=40]	92.5 (37)		7.5 (3)	

The music and voice acting of *Mononoke Hime* were also highly appreciated. A male contributor (23 yo) signalled his appreciation of the aesthetic quality of the film

by stating that 圧倒的なパワーに終始驚嘆。第1級のアニメ・CG技術²⁸による驚異の映像が観客の度肝を抜く。ドキュメンタリー的な味わいもあり面白い。

(This film has power. It is an excellent creation of high quality computer graphics and techniques of creating anime. I felt as if I was watching a documentary film, p.52).

Three comments refer to the historical studies by Miyazaki which set the background of the film. A female contributor (25yo) stated that 白紙から書き起こした架空の世界。でも、きめ細かな時代考証で裏打ちし、妄想とは一線を画している。(Miyazaki designed a fantasy world on a totally blank page. But it is based on accurate historical study of Japan; this divides his fantasy world from an illusion. p.67) ; a female (36yo) contributor also appreciated Miyazaki's historical research, stating that 近年の研究成果が描かれている。(This film contains the latest academic analysis of the history and society of Japan. p.71).

However, these kinds of appreciations do not always coincide with an appreciation of the content of the film. Some contributors, mainly the contributors on Internet sites, rate the technical aspects of the film highly, yet negatively appraise its content. These negative appraisals are counted as Criticism comments.

4.2.2.2 Criticism comments

Criticism comments concern contributors' evaluations of the content of the film as a whole. The comments are divided into four sub-groups.

- (1) Appreciation of the *anime*: comments positively and often enthusiastically in praise of the *anime*. The comments in this sub-category include words

²⁸ Miyazaki Hayao and Studio Ghibli used CG technique since 『耳を濟ませば』（『もののけ姫』を読み解く）118—119Comic Box Vol.2, August 1997)

and phrases such as “new genre”, “lively”, “vivacious”, and “spirited”.

- (2) Characteristics of the film: comments in this category talk about the genre of *Mononoke Hime*, such as “this film is categorized into...”, “this film has characteristics of ...”, or “This film is a kind of ...”, and the like.
- (3) Contrast/comparison with other films: comments include contrast between content and/or ideological representation of Miyazaki and other filmmakers (Kurosawa and Tezuka), or comparisons with Miyazaki’s other *anime*
- (4) Negative appraisal: comments that criticise *Mononoke Hime*

Aesthetic comments were made by both female and male contributors in all the age cohorts of the consulted contributors. Nineteen contributors aged between eight and 18 years old and twelve contributors over 31 years old commented on aesthetic aspects, and showed their appreciation of the *anime*. Distribution of the comments is shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Distribution of Criticism comments (n=41)

	Criticism							
	Appreciation of the <i>anime</i>		Contrast/comparison with other films		Characteristics of the <i>anime</i>		Negative appraisal	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
	21.9 (9)	12.2 (5)	7.3 (3)	9.8 (4)	7.3 (3)	17.1 (7)	4.9 (2)	19.5 (8)
Total 100 (41)	34.1 (14)		17.1 (7)		24.4 (10)		24.4 (10)	

Ten negative appraisals were made by the contributors aged over 19 years old; nine comments among these were taken from comments posted on Internet sites. These negative appraisals make up 24.4% of the total 41 Critical comments.

(1) Appreciation of the *anime*

Fourteen comments expressed a positive appreciation with expressions such as “*Mononoke Hime* is a new genre of film” by a male contributor (14 yo) from *kansoobun*. These comments came from every age and gender cohort. A female contributor (12 yo) stated that SF、ノンフィクション、ラブストーリー、アクションのどれにもあてはまり、どれにも当てはまらない映画 ([The film] can be grouped into science fiction, non-fiction, love story, and action, and at the same time it does not remain in any of these categories. p.21), and another female contributor (18 yo) comments まさに生きた映画 (This anime is totally lifelike. p.47). A male contributor (27 yo) wrote 魂が吹き込んである芸術 (This film is an artwork which has its own spirit. p.68).

(2) Characteristics of the film

Ten comments refer to ideological aspects of the film by expressing that the *anime* presents Miyazaki’s ideology and opinion, and that he asks the audience ‘deep and significant’ questions. The comments are often delivered with the appreciation that contemporary complex themes are well combined and structured into a single film. A female contributor (25yo) stated that 自然を食いつぶす人間も、それを無言の圧力ではねのけようとする自然も、それぞれの自由意志で生きているのだ、と描かれているように思われる。(The film clearly shows us that Miyazaki asserts that human beings and nature all live with their own intention in this world. Humans exhaust nature and nature resists this. p.61), and a female contributor on an Internet site states that 133 分の映画で共生というテーマを自然と動物、動物と人間、子と集団、男と女、諸々の関係の中でとことん追求していきます。(This film pursues a theme of ‘co-existence’ in many relationships

such as nature and animals, animals and humans, individuals and groups, and men and women; and in only 133 minutes of film. No.28), or 色々なストーリーの中で今の人間と自然について 教え諭して下さるので、かんしんします。(I am impressed that Miyazaki always teaches us about human beings, our lives and animals and nature in many stories, female, 13 yo, p.25).

Other comments stated that the film poses questions to the audiences, such as 文明を享受しながら、自然を美しいともいつつ破壊することをやめることのできない人間の矛盾した姿であり、私達に問いかけられた課題である。(The film is directed at adults, and it asks us adults many questions about our lives, nature and society. Female, 36yo, p.71) ; この映画は見た人たち、一人一人に責任があるのだ。これからをどう生きるかと考える責任だ。(Individual audiences have a responsibility to think about how we live from now on. Male, 21yo, p.52) ; もののけ姫は過程としての映画であって、観た人にきっかけを与えると言う目的においては成功したのでは。「こうなんだが、どう思うと？」と。(Mononoke Hime as a film showed a process. I think it was a success in terms of providing an opportunity to its audience to think about things by asking them ‘things are like this, and what do you think?’ No.15) .

These comments show that the audiences evaluated the film in terms of Miyazaki expressing his opinions in the film, or that he asked questions through the film about life, society and nature to the audience members in a clear way. In other words, their evaluations are based on perceptions that Miyazaki’s presentation of his opinions and questions is clear to all audiences. A male contributor stated that 今までの宮崎作品にはなかった壮大かつシリアスなテーマで貫かれた『もののけ姫』は、子供達の世界にとどまらない大人の映画作品として完成されていた。(Mononoke Hime was an accomplished film work which contains magnificent and serious themes. These themes were not present

in his previous films. The film is not only for children. No.26) .

On the other hand, there are comments in which audience members perceived that Miyazaki expressed his confusion and inner conflict directly to the audience. A female contributor (17yo) wrote that 今、一番強く思うのは表現とは何かということです。日々自分が一生懸命考え、考え考えても答えが見つからないこと、自分でも何をどうすればいいのか分からないこと。そういうものは私は人に伝えることはできないと思っていました。でも、その混乱を伝えることが表現なのだと、監督は教えてくれました。...真正面からまっすぐに取り組み、深く考えることの大切さ、そしてそれを伝えることの素晴らしさ。それを私は強く感じました。(I thought about expression. I thought that we could convey our thoughts only after we find an answer. I thought that we could not express our confusion and unsolvable questions in a film. Miyazaki taught me that it is the expression which conveys the confusion ... I learnt the importance of challenge, to think of what seems to be unsolvable, and I also learnt the significance of expressing and conveying it. p.43).

(3) Contrast / comparison with other films

Seven contributors contrasted and compared *Mononoke Hime* with Miyazaki's other films, and also with other film makers such as Kurosawa and Tezuka. Five comments made a comparison with Miyazaki's other films *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*, *Laputa* and *My Neighbour Totoro*. In contrast with criticism by professional critics (see Chapter 2, page 48), the comments counted in this category did not undermine *Mononoke Hime*. These comments were made both female and male contributors aged between fifteen and 25 years old. For example, a male contributor (17

yo) stated that 空を自由に飛びまわることもなければ、トトロのような優しさも感じられない。あるのは地べたをはって、一生懸命生きていく生命の純粋性であり、その美しさだけだった。(I did not see the characters freely flying in the sky. I did not feel the gentleness that I felt in viewing *My Neighbour Totoro*. What I saw were only purity of lives which attempt to live on with strength by sticking to the ground, and the beauty of those lives. p.44)

The contributors who made these comments appreciated all the films by Miyazaki, or appreciated *Mononoke Hime* more than Miyazaki's other films. A female contributor on an Internet site stated 『もののけ姫』は大きなテーマを持っていて、『風の谷のナウシカ』に通ずるものを感じました。ラストもきれい事ではなく、現実を見据えていて、私は好きです。(*Mononoke Hime* contains an important theme. I felt something which relates to *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*. The last scene of *Mononoke Hime* does not gloss over reality; it penetrates into it. That is why I like it. No.2). A male contributor (18 yo) stated that ナウシカはどんな行動もポジティブだ。...でも、もののけ姫はネガティブさの中で人間がどうやってポジティブに生活していたのか、これから生きる中でどうすればいいのかをもっと深い位置で表現しているのがもののけ姫だと思います。(*Nausicaa* is always positive in her action.... On the other hand, *Mononoke Hime* expresses with deep insight the ways in which people have lived positively in negative conditions, and what should be done when living in the future. p.47)

The above comments of three sub-categories in the Criticism comments can be categorised into the Dominant-Hegemonic position of Hall's three decoding positions. The consulted contributors discussed and/or appreciated ideological representations and Miyazaki's intention(s) in making *Mononoke Hime*. It seems that the consulted contributors enjoyed discussing the *anime* more than showing "distance" (Katz &

Lieabes, 1986:154) from it. It may be stated that talking about how a film was made does not always mean that audience members distance themselves from the film.

(4) Negative appraisals

Ten negative appraisals have been counted. Negative appraisals are posted more on the Internet (9 comments) than in *kansobun* (one comment). None of the male contributors of *kansobun*, nor the female contributors on Internet sites, stated a negative appraisal.

Six comments of nine Internet site comments appear to share the same criticism shown in Chapter 2 (see Chapter 2, Table 4, page 48). They put a negative evaluation on the film as a whole by using negative adjectives, such as ‘meaningless’ and ‘failure’ to describe it.. A male contributor on the Internet commented in a similar way that 深いテーマを無理やり子供向けにしてしまったせいで、全てが中途半端になってしまったのかもしれない。(This film may have become too tedious due to its having forced deep themes onto children. No.6) . A male contributor stated that せっかくよいアイデアなのに、生かしきっていない。本人（宮崎）の頭の中で未消化だったんじゃないだろうか。(Despite being a very good idea, it does not develop Miyazaki’s good idea fully. This may be because Miyazaki did not digest the ideas well in his mind. No.6).

Another contributor questioned why this film became so popular. He stated 宮崎駿はこの作品の中で未来にはよいことなんて残っていないかもしれないけれど、それでも生きろといたかったのだなどとパンフレットに書いてあるけれど、ひどいヒトだよ。そんなひどいアニメがなぜあんなに人気があるのだろう。(A pamphlet says that Miyazaki wanted to say to the viewers to live on, even though nothing good would

remain in the future. I think Miyazaki is awfully inconsiderate to the viewers. I wonder why such bad *anime* became so popular. No.17) , or 自然と人間の根源的闘争と言うテーマを取り上げるのは全然気になりませんが、エンターテインメントとしての映画を使ってそれに一つの決着をつけると言うのであれば、逃げないでほしかった。デイダラボッチの暴走は、宮崎さんのもののけ姫に対する未消化の部分そのものと言う気がします。例えて言えば、有名なシェフの料理を食べに行ったら、素材がそのまま出てきて、料理はお前がやれ、みたいな…。 (I do not mind that Miyazaki took up a fundamental conflict between human beings and nature. Yet, if he intended to put forward a solution of the issue utilising a film for entertainment, I think he needs to keep trying. I think that the reckless running of Daidarabocchi represented Miyazaki's own confusion and indigestion of *Mononoke Hime* itself. It is as if we went to a restaurant expecting the best meal by a famous chef, and then we were served only with raw ingredients on the table and told to cook ourselves. It was so disappointing. No.12) .

Two male contributors on Internet sites and one female contributor of *kansoobun* expressed mild or mixed criticism with perplexed impressions of the film. A female contributor (24yo) commented that the theme of the anime was not well focused, yet she also expressed strong empathy to the characters in Referential sections.

The negative appraisals can be categorized into Oppositional Code in Hall's three decoding positions. The comments show that the contributors understood Miyazaki's intention of making *Mononoke Hime* and the message(s) in the *anime*, yet they did not think that the *anime* presented Miyazaki's intention or message well. It also should be noted that the consulted audience members were unenthusiastic of making moralistic accusations about the characters or scenes of the *anime* which show the contributors'

moral stance, a point argued by Gray (see Chapter 1, page 24 & page 26).

4.2.3. Personal comments

Sood and Rogers (2000) conclude that the highly successful entertainment-educational program of *Hum Log* attracted a wider range of audiences. It invited the audiences to become emotionally involved with the program and its characters, and thus it encouraged the audience to change their lives. It successfully led some Indian communities to change traditional customs such as the dowry and child marriage. Sood & Rogers comment that “program planners can promote greater audience involvement with their program, therefore increasing a program’s effectiveness in bringing about behavioural change” (p.409).

The comments consulted in this study did not show the same potential for social change or activities as Sood and Rogers found in their own study, despite the results showing greater audience involvement in the film. It seems that even if a highly successful program attains greater audience involvement, it does not necessarily increase its effectiveness in nurturing audience members’ social/behavioural changes.

However, seventeen comments out of the 23 Personal comments remark on other viewers at a cinema or other general viewers, particularly younger audiences. This type of comment was not reported in Sood and Rogers’ research. These comments may form a pre-stage that some audiences may progress from, in order to perform the social actions inspired by the film’s content.

4.3 Summary of findings

The results of the analysis of the consulted comments on *Mononoke Hime* are summarised in the following four points.

(1) Contributors' involvement with the film content

Contributors consulted in this study show high levels of involvement with the film, in terms of how they saw the film's content as relevant to their lives and society. They showed an inclination to be introspective, being concerned about their lives and lifestyles. They discussed the content of the film seriously, realistically and indicatively. This point is supported by the higher proportion of Referential comments in comparison to Critical comments, and by the extremely small number of Play Keying comments.

(2) Contributors' social reactions beyond the content

The contributors do not show an inclination towards actual behavioural changes or a tendency towards social action. Contributors under 17 stated that they talked about the anime with friends and/or other viewers. On the other hand, the contributors in the age cohort over 18 years old referred to other younger audience members stating what the younger viewers think of the *anime*. However, it should be noted that these types of comments did not appear often. (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.3, page 113)

(3) Depictions and interpretations of the anime by the audience members

The consulted contributors showed a tendency to describe aspects of the characters relating to their own experiences in their real lives. They interpreted those aspects more

analytically, rather than becoming emotionally involved with the characters by regarding them as if they were real people.

(4) Role models

The consulted contributors showed that they regarded the main characters, namely San, Ashitaka and Eboshi, as their role models in a cross-gendered way. Examples of these comments included female contributors who saw certain characteristics of Ashitaka as virtuous or moralistically desirable, and male contributors regarding Eboshi as their role model for his positive characteristics. A possible explanation of this result is that this tendency relates to the audience's introspective perceptions of the characters, by relating aspects of the characters to themselves.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.0 Preamble

The purpose of this study is to investigate how contemporary Japanese people use *anime* as a facility to help form a sense of self. Exploratory research was undertaken to analyse particular reactions of audience members to a sample *anime*, in this case, *Mononoke Hime*. This chapter presents a conclusion by answering the three research questions posed in Chapter 1.

5.1 Answers to research questions

1) How have audience members perceived and accepted what has been represented in the *anime* in terms of its maker's intentions and/or the depictions and interpretation of the *anime* as outlined in the research literature?

It can be stated that the majority of consulted audience members of *Mononoke Hime* made comments that can be categorized into Hall's Dominant-Hegemonic position more than any other category set up in the analytical framework of this study. This implies that the audience members commented in favour of Miyazaki's intention, and the film's ideological messages.

The consulted audience members in this study show a high level of emotional and ideological involvement with *Mononoke Hime*. Through viewing the film, the consulted audience members perceive that the issues which are presented in the *anime* such as relationship between human beings and nature, conflicts for survival and the like are rooted in the past history of their own society and are directly related to

contemporary issues. Moreover, they recognize that they are situated in the continuous line of history from the past, through their own contemporary society, and towards the future.

By being involved in the *anime* in the way that the filmmaker intended, audience members were able to perceive positive support concerning their lives in society, and also to construct and reconstruct their senses of self as members living in a contemporary world.

2) Continuing on from Research Question 1), how have the consulted audience members in this study interpreted *Mononoke Hime*?

The consulted audience members interpret issues presented in the *anime* in relation to their lifestyles in the context of the history of the society in which they actually live. Cognitive comments made by the members show that they interpreted the story of the *anime* as a reflection of their own lives and the society of contemporary Japan.

However, they differentiated the content of the *anime* from reality even though they saw a clear relationship between the *anime* and their lives. Critical comments made by the consulted audience members show that they make a clear differentiation between the *anime* and real life. It seems that they are involved in the *anime* as a fictional creation by talking about, evaluating and/or making comparisons with other films. The consulted audience members enjoy discussing the *anime* rather than showing “distance” (Katz & Lieabes, 1986:154) from the *anime* when they talk about aesthetic aspects of the film and/or the typology of the *anime*. It may be concluded

then that talking about how a film was made does not always mean that audience members distance themselves from the film.

3) How have the consulted audience members utilised the *anime* to construct their senses of self?

Cognitive comments on Life and lifestyle show most clearly that the consulted audience members are encouraged and/or they are given the opportunity to reflect upon their own lives. They utilised the *anime* to construct their senses of self via encouragements and reflections which the *anime* provided to the audience members.

Normative comments show that the consulted audience members regarded virtues of the main characters as their role models, that is, they stated that moral virtues of the main characters as desirable for their real lives. They described these virtues such as ‘*hokori*’ (誇り, sincerity), ‘*yuuki*’ (勇氣, courage), ‘*aijoo*’ (愛情, affection), *seegikan* (正義感, righteousness), ‘*ketsudanryoku*’ (決断力, decisiveness), ‘*doryoku*’ (努力, effort), ‘*akiramenai*’ (あきらめない, not giving up), ‘*mamorubeki mono no tameni tatakau*’ (守るべきもののために戦う, fighting for a thing or people that should be protected), and the like. These words were not directly mentioned in *Mononoke Hime*, yet the consulted audience members interpreted what was presented in the *anime* as these words. It can be stated that the audience members constructed and/or reconstructed their virtues by interpreting actions and episodes of the anime into these words.

However, it should be noted that the audience members do not show strong emotional involvement with the characters. In fact, the majority of the contributors do not see the

characters as real, as if they exist in real life. It appears that the consulted audience members tend to focus on particular phases of the characters' personalities that they perceive as similar and/or related to their experiences and situations in their real lives. They show a tendency to discuss aspects of the characters relating to their own experiences. They interpreted those aspects more analytically, rather than becoming emotionally involved with the characters by regarding them as if they were real people.

It also should be noted that the consulted audience members show that they regard the virtues mentioned above in a cross-gendered way, that is, there was not only gender-based perception. Female audience members do not only take up certain characteristics of the female characters as their models; they also take up some male characters' characteristics and male audience members also take up certain characteristics of female characters as role models.

5.2 Issues coming out of the data and recommendations for further research

There are a few issues regarding what has not come out from the data, yet it seems to relate to constructions of sense of self. Firstly, popular activities inspired by *anime* such as 'cos-play' were not observed in case of *Mononoke Hime*. There is a possibility that it may be related to a finding of this study in which extremely few cases of Play Keying are reported.

Secondly, despite of the *anime* presented serious contemporary issues such as environmental problems, conflicts among groups of the living and the like, there was found no evidence that the anime inspired or enhanced the Japanese environmentalism movement and/or other actual social activities relating contemporary social issues of

Japan. Unlike the analysis in Sood and Rogers (2000), it seems that a high involvement of audience members has to a media product does not necessarily nurture actual behavioural change of the audience members.

Thirdly, due to a limitation of the selected data, there were found relatively small number of negative appraisals within the consulted audience members. Result of this study shows that the majority of comments can be categorised into Hall's Dominant-Hegemonic position. However, there is a good possibility that result of analysis may be different from what has been presented in this study, if comments posted on Internet sites which do not show contributors' age and gender were justified and their authenticities were proven. Given these issues, it would be reasonable to recommend further research here investigated into a more detailed study of backgrounds of audience members using more delicate research and analysis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Video

Studio Ghibli (1997), *Mononoke Hime* (Mononoke Princess), Kodansha, Tokyo, Japan

Studio Ghibli (1984), *Kaze no Tani no Naushika* (Naushika of the Valley of the Wind), Kodansha, Tokyo, Japan

Studio Ghibli (196), *Tenkuu no Shiro Laputa* (Flying Castle- Laputa), Kodansha, Tokyo, Japan

Studio Ghibli (1988), *Mimi o Sumaseba* (Whisper of the Wind), Kodansha, Tokyo, Japan

Uratani Toshio, Studio Ghibli (1997), *Mononoke Hime wa Kooshite Umareta* (Making of *Mononoke Hime*), Tokyo, Japan

II. Reference

Ang, Ien (1991), *Desperately Seeking Audience*, Routledge, London, U.K.

“Animage”, Vol. 225, Tokuma Shoten, Tokyo, March 1997

“Animage”, Vol. 230, Tokuma Shoten, Tokyo, August 1997

Azuma, Hiroki (2001), *DoobutsuKa suru Posto Modan*, KodanSha, Tokyo, Japan

Bailey, Steve (2005), *Media Audiences and Identity – Self-construction in the fan Experience*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, U.S.A.

Berndt, Jaqueline (1994), *Manga in Understanding the Global Era – 75 keys to Comparative Culture* by Takeuchi Minoru and Nishikawa Nagao (eds), Saimaru Shuppankai, Tokyo, Japan

- (1994) *Manga no Kuni, Nippon – Nihon no Taishuu Bunka, Shikaku Bunka no*

Kanoosei (Country of Manga, Japan – Future Possibility of Japanese Popular Culture and Visual Culture), Kadensha, Kyohei Shoboo, Tokyo, Japan

Befu Harumi (1999), *Globalizing Japan: Ethnography of The Japanese in Asia, Europe, and America*, edited by H. Befu, Routledge, London, UK

Clements, H. & McCarthy (2001), *The Anime Encyclopedia – A Guide to Japanese Animation since 1917-*, Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley, U.S.A.

Cohen, Jonathan (2001), *Defining identification: A theoretical look at the identification of Audiences with media characters*, in *Mass Communication and Society*, August, Vol. 4, Issue 3

Croteau, David & Hoynes, William (2003), *Media Society – Industries, Images and Audiences*, Pine Forge Press, California, U.S.A.

Eureka, August Special Edition, Vol.29 –11 (Series. 393), “*Miyazaki Hayao no Sekai*”, (Miyazaki Hayao World), AotoSha, Tokyo, 1997 (First Editoin)

Gray, Jonathan (2003), *New Audiences, New Textualities – Anti-fans and non-fans*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6 (1): 64-81

Hall, Stuart (1980), *Encoding/Decoding*, in *Culture, Media and Language*, edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis, Hutchison, London, U.K

Hasegawa Tsutomu (1999), “*Tezuka Osamu Shi ni Kansuru 8tsu no Gokai*” (8 misunderstandings about Osamu Tezuka), Chuukoo Bunko, Chuuoo Kooron Sha, Tokyo, Japan

Kanae Seiji (1997), ‘*Mononoke Hime*’ o Yomitoku (『もののけ姫』を読み解く』 A Guide to Reading *Mononoke Hime*), ComicBox Vol.2, Fusion Product, Tokyo

Kellner, Douglas (1995), *Media Culture – Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics*

between the Modern and the Postmodern, Routledge, London, USA

Kinsella, Sharon (1998), *Japanese Subculture in the 1990s: Otaku and the Amateur Manga Movement*”, in *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 24:2, page 289 – 316, Melbourne, Australia

Kiridooshi, Risaku (2001), *Miyazaki Hayao no 'Sekai'*(A World of Miyazaki Hayao), Chikuma Shoboo, Tokyo, Japan

Kitano Taitsu (1998), *Nihon Anime Shigaku Kenkyuu Josetsu* (An Introduction to Japanese Animation History), Hachiman Shoten, Tokyo, Japan

Lewis, Lisa A. (1992), *Adoring Audience – Fan Culture and Popular Media*, Routledge, New York, U.S.A

Liebes, Tamar and Katz, Elihu (1986), *Patterns of Involvement in Television Fiction: A Comparative Analysis*, *European Journal of Communication*, Vol.1:151-71

Lull, James (1995), *Media, Communication, Culture – A Global Approach-*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Martinez, Dolores P. (1998), *The World of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, UK

McCarthy, Helen (2001), *Hayao Miyazaki – Master of Japanese Animation -* , Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley, U.S.A.

Meers, Philippe (1997), *Is there an Audience in the House?- New Research Perspectives on (European) Film Audiences-*, *Journal of Popular Film and Television* , XX(XX), 138-144

Mes, Tom & Sharp, Jasper, 2005, *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*, Stone Bridge Press, California, U.S.A.

Minamida, Misao (2000), "Kindai Anime shi Gairon" in *20 seiki Anime Taizen*, 2000, Futabasha, Tokyo, Japan

Misono, Makoto (1999), *Zusetsu, terebi Anime Zensho*, Vista, Tokyo, Japan

Mita, M. et. Al (1993), *Nihon no Shakaigaku 12 – Bunka to Shakai Ishiki*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, Tokyo, Japan

Miyazaki, Hayao (1983), *Shuna no Tabi*, (Version 3) (A Journey of Shuna), Tokuma Shoten, Tokyo, Japan

Moori, Yoshitaka (2003), *Bunka=Seiji, Culture=Politics: New Cultural-Political Movements in the Age of Globalization*, Getsuyosha, Tokyo, Japan

Napier, Susan (2001), *Anime -From Akira to Princess Mononoke*, Palgrave, New York, U.S.A.

Natsume, Fusanosuke (1998), *Teduka Osamu no Boken* (Adventure of Tezuka Osamu), Shogakukan, Tokyo, Japan

NHK Hoso Bunka Kenkyuujo (2000), *Gendai Nihonjin no Ishiki Kozo, Dai 5 Han* (A Structure of Awareness of the Modern Japanese, vol. 5), NHK Books, NHK Publishing Association, Tokyo, Japan

Nightingale, Virginia (1996), *Studying Audiences – The shock of the real-*, Routledge, London, UK

Patten, Fred (2004), *Watching Anime, Reading Manga – 25 years of essays and reviews-*, Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley, U.S.A.

Perse, Elizabeth M. (1990), *Involvement of Local Television News – Cognitive and Emotional Dimensions*, *Human Communication Research* 16 (4):556-581

Poitras, Gilles (2000), *Anime Essentilas – Everything a Fan Needs to Know*, Stone

Bridge Press, U.S.A.

Porter, Vincent (1999), *Feature Film and the Mediation of Historical Reality: Chance of a Lifetime – a case study*, *Media History*, 5(2), 181-199

Pop Culture Critique 1 (1997), *Miyazaki Hayao no ChakuchiTen o Saguru* (A search for Miyazaki Hayao's Destination), Seikyusha, Tokyo, Japan

Radway, Janice (1987), *Reading the Romance: Woman, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*, Verso, London, U.K.

Rayner, F., Wall, P., & Kruger, S., (2004), *Media Studies: The Essential Resource*, Routledge, London, UK

Rubin, Alan M. & Perse Elizabeth M. (1987), *Audience Activity and Soap Opera Involvement – A Use and Effects Investigation -*, *Human Communication Research*, 14 (2), 246 – 268

Rubin, Alan M. & Perse Elizabeth M., & Powell, Robert A. (1985), *Loneliness, Parasocial Interaction, and Local Television News Viewing*, *Human Communication Research*, 12 (2), 155 -180

Rubin, Rebecca and McHugh, Michael P. (1987), *Development of Parasocial Interaction Relationship*, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, Vol.13, No.3:279-292

Saito Tamaki (2000), *Sento Bishojo no Seishin Bunseki*, Ohta Shuppan, Tokyo, Japan

Sakuta, Keiichi (1971), *Kyodo to Shutaisei*, in H. Furuta et.al. *Kindai Nihon Shakai Shisosh'*, Chikuma Shobo, Tokyo, Japan

Schodt, Frederik L. (1986 & 2001), *Manga! Manga! – The World of Japanese Comics*, KodanSha International, Tokyo, Japan

- (1998), *Nippon Manga Ron* (Dreamland Japan), Maaru Sha, Tokyo, Japan

Shibuya Yoichi (1993), *Kurosawa Akira, Miyazaki Hayao, Kitano Takeshi- Nihon no 3 nin No Enshutsuka* (Three Modern Film Creators-Kurosawa Akira, Miyazaki Hayao, and Kitano Takeshi”, Rocking On, Tokyo, Japan

- (2002), *Kaze no Kaeru Basho: Naushika kara Chihiro made no Kiseki* (The Destination of a Wind: A Trace from Naushika to Chihiro), Rocking On, Tokyo, Japan
Shimotsuki, Takanaka, (1997). *Pop Culture Critique 0 – Eva no Nokoseshi Mono*, SeikyuuSha, Tokyo, Japan

Schilling, Mark (1999), *Contemporary Japanese Film*, Weatherhill, Inc., CT, U.S.A.

Sood Suruchi and Roger, Everette M. (2000), *Dimensions of Parasocial Interaction by Letter-Writers to a Popular Entertainment-Education Soap Opera in India*, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, Vol.44 (1): 386-414

Standish, Isolde (1998), *Akira, Postmodernism and resistance*, Chapter 3, pp 56- 74, in *The World of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures*, edited by D. P. Martinez, Cambridge University Press, UK

Stokes, Jane (2003), *How to do Media and Cultural Studies*, Sage Publication, London UK

Stronach, Bruce (1995), *Beyond the Rising Sun*, Praeger Publishers, U.S.A.

Takeuchi, Minoru et. al ed. (1994), *Hikaku Bunka Kiiwaado 1 & 2* (Understanding the Global Era – 75 Key to Comperative Culture), Saimaru Shuppan Kai, Tokyo, Japan

Tezuka Osamu (1999), *Garasu no Chikyuu o Sukue* (Save this fragile planet), Chie no Mori Bunko, Kobun Sha, Tokyo, Japan

Thompson, John B. (1995), *The Media and Modernity – A Social Theory of the Media-*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK

Tsurumi, Shunsuke (1993), *Sengo Nihon no Taishuu Bunkashi* (Japanese Mass Culture

after World War II), Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, Japan

Turner, Graeme (1996), *British Cultural Studies – An Introduction –*, Routledge, New York, U.S.A.

Ueno, Toshiya (1998), *Kurenai no Metaru Suutsu; Anime toiu Senjo* (Metalsuits, The Red – Wars in Animation), Kinokuniya Shoten, Tokyo, Japan

Watson, James (2003), *Media Communication – An Introduction to Theory and Process*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, U.S.A

Webster, Chris (1996), *Film: the place where art and technology meet*, in *An Introduction to Film Studies*, edited by Jill Nilmes, Rotledge, New York, U.S.A

Wells, Paul (1996), *Animation: forms and meanings*, *An Introduction to Film Studies*, edited by in Jill Nilmes, Rotledge, New York, U.S.A

-. (1998), *Understanding Animation*, Routledge, London, UK

White, Merry (1996), 7. *The Marketing of Adolescence in Japan - Buying and Dreaming*, in *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan* by Lisa Skove and Brian Moeran, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, U.S.A.

Yano Kota Kinenkai (2000), *Nihon Kokusei Zue- 2000/2001*, Kokuseisha, Tokyo, Japan

Yomota Inuhiko (2002), *Manga Genron*, Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, Chikuma Shobo, Tokyo, Japan

Yoro, Takeshi (1999)., *Miyazaki Hayao*, KineJun Muk Film Makers, No 6, Kinema JunpoSha, Tokyo, Japan

Young, Stephen Dine (2000), *Movies as Equipment for Living: A Developmental Analysis of the Importance of Film in Everyday Life*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol.17, No.4, December, 2000, 447-468

www.yk.rim.or.jp/~rst/rabo/miyazaki/miyazaki_inter.html (downloaded 26 March 2004)

Appendix I

URL list of Audiences' Comments on Internet

Female contributors' URL addresses

1. <http://www.rethead.com/d1/movie/002.html>
2. <http://madoka17.ld.infoseek.co.jp/mononoke.html>
3. <http://www.kt70.com/~rio/book/mononoke.htm>
4. <http://www.ghibli.fc.net/fc/mononoke/mono001.html>

Male contributors' URL addresses

1. <http://www.sankei.co.jp/mov/yodogawa/97/971209ydg.html>
2. http://matsmark.site.ne.jp/pages_folder/nandemoreview_pages/005mononokehime.html
3. <http://www.across.or.jp/neciaen/essay/e1997/mononoke.html>
4. <http://www.gji.jp/tsugaru/mononoke.htm>
5. <http://www.scn-net.ne.jp/~rasen/mononoke.html>
6. http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~sb6k-ski/vol10_ohigami.html
7. http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~sb6k-ski/vol10_kataoka.html
8. http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~sb6k-ski/vol10_sato.html
9. http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~sb6k-ski/vol10_autumn.html
10. <http://www.j-mind.com/koramu/koramu20.htm>
11. <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/saika/home/mb/movie/movie5.htm>
12. <http://www.magic-vox.com/ab/anime/mononoke.html>
13. <http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~nakauhi/index9-10-1.html>
14. <http://www.allnightpress.com/main/mononoke.htm>
15. <http://homepage1.nifty.com/faye/cinema/1998/981118.html>
16. <http://www1.newweb.ne.jp/wb/neue/c.mononoke.html>
17. <http://www1.odn.ne.jp/~ccf18930/mononoke.html>
18. <http://www.246.ne.jp/~diver-t/takechan-01aug1998.html>
19. <http://www.ichibata.org/houwa/d-mononoke.htm>
20. <http://www.beats21.com/ar/A03013101.html>
21. <http://skasuga.talktank.net/works/mononoke.html>
22. <http://www.cnet-ta.ne.jp/k/kepy/diskreviews-new/joe-hisaishi/mononokehime.html>
23. <http://www.rikkyo.ne.jp/~htanaka/99/mononoke.html>

24. <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/akira/flick/flick/movie/1997/9707.html#970717>
25. <http://www.jkkt.zaq.ne.jp/baags702/kasou020.html>
26. <http://www1.sphere.ne.jp/muuci/mono/mononoke.htm>
27. <http://homepage1.nift.com/scgh02.html>
28. <http://www2.big.or.jp/~nary/html/mononoke.html>

Appendix II

Story of *Mononoke Hime*

The story starts in what appears to be a medieval age, in a remote eastern part of Japan where the clan of Emishi has been living for the last 500 years, escaping from oppression by the Yamato regime in the west. When the village is attacked by a cursed creature named Tataru Gami, the crown prince of the clan, Ashitaka, shoots down the Tataru Gami; however, driving the battle Ashitaka himself is cursed. A Shaman of the clan reveals that a boar in the west turned into Tataru Gami caused by an iron bullet.

Ashitaka is exiled in accordance with clan law and starts a journey searching for a way to lift the curse that he received from Tatri Gami. On his journey to the west, he met a suspicious monk, Jiko Bo, who tells Ashitaka about a sacred ancient forest in which ancient animals still worship and protect their supreme deity Shishi Gami.

Ashitaka eventually encounters a battle between a convoy led by a woman leader named Eboshi and huge mountain dogs with a human girl named San. Ashitaka rescues wounded members of the convoy who were left behind by the convoy and escorts them to their village (Tatara Ba) through the sacred ancient forest where Shishi Gami lives.

At the same time Ashitaka finds that a battle between the villagers and a group of boars led by Nago no Kami (a boar deity of the forest which turned into Tataru Gami) was the origin of his curse when he found the village was a hideout for the marginalised who were desperately struggling to survive. Eboshi reveals that her village is standing against Samurai powers by producing and trading iron and incendiary weapons. She asserts that developing the Shishi Gami's forest is crucial for the villages' fight against the Samurai power for their better living and taking back San to human world. Ashitaka understands that conflict between the iron mining villagers and the animals of the forest derives from a clash of each group's attempts at survival in a complex and contradictory way.

One night, San and her mountain dog brothers attack the village. Ashitaka attempts to stop the fight. When he successfully separates San and Eboshi, he is shot by a villager who had lost her husband to a mountain dog. Ashitaka manages to take San out of the village to the forest. San, who attempted to kill Ashitaka but regards him as a human being, spares his life and seeks Shishi Gami's help to save Ashitaka. Ashitaka stays with San and the mountains dogs while healing his wound.

Moro, San's mountain dog mother, asserts that there is no way to stop the ongoing battle between the villagers (human beings) and the animals (the nature); and also that there is no way to take San, who is deeply caught in a hatred towards humans, back to Ashitaka's side.

When Ashitaka sees that the final battle had started, he decides to go back into the battle, attempting to stop the fighting by intercepting Eboshi, who is on her way to assassinate Shishi Gami in the forest. Eboshi succeeds in shooting off Shishi Gami's head and gives the head to Jiko Bo as per the contract between them. Moro, with her last strength attacks Eboshi and bites off his arm.

Shishi Gami turns into a cursed power, able to destroy everything. Ashitaka and San manage to take the head back from Jiko Bo and return it to Shishi Gami. With the last explosion, Shishi Gami disappears as putting the battle's fire out. New green starts to grow in the forest.

San tells Ashitaka that she will stay in the forest with her dog brothers. Ashitaka replies that he will stay in the village (Tatara Ba) and he will visit her in the forest from time to time. Eboshi regains consciousness and tells the villagers to guide Ashitaka back to her village. Jiko Bo leaves with nothing in his hand.

In the last scene, Kodama, a forest spirit, is left staring at the top of the trees from the bottom of his dark forest.