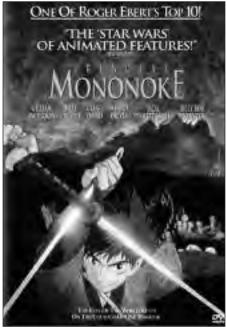# Girl (and Boy) Troubles in *Animeland*

EXPLORING REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN JAPANESE ANIMATION FILMS

By Kyu Hyun Kim

The interest in things Japanese among the American public reached an all-time peak in the late 1990s. One form of Japanese popular culture that has penetrated American consciousness, especially among the younger population, is Japanese animation, or *anime*. Fan groups, Web sites, and college clubs devoted to anime appreciation are found in almost every major American city. Japanese animation is increasingly one of the most frequently rented genres in video stores. In recent years, several monographs focusing on anime have been published, supplying vital consumer information for the connoisseur, reviews of and references to numerous titles, and academic analyses of their forms and contents.[1] Given this popularity, Japanese animation ought to be one of the most convenient tools for teaching American students about Japanese culture and society. At least in theory, that is. In truth, it is not apparent at all how Japanese animation can be employed for pedagogic purposes. What can our students learn from this outrageously popular artform? This essay is a small attempt to address that question.

For the purpose of brevity and convenience, I will focus on two Japanese animation films, *They Were 11* (*Juichinin Iru,* 1986) and *Princess Mononoke* (*Mononoke Hime*, 1997). With the help of these two films, I would like to explore representations of gender in Japanese culture, which in turn reflect changing positions of women in Japanese society. Why this topic? Over the years, I have had my share of frustrations in communicating to Americans the complexity and diversity of gender roles and their representations in Japanese culture and society. American perception of Japanese women remains profoundly affected by the stereotypical images formed during and immediately after the Second World War, including those of a traditional housewife and a geisha. These stereotypical views in turn condition American consumers of Japanese cultural products to readily identify signs of oppression and exploitation of Japanese women. A peculiarly self-congratulatory dynamic of cultural prejudice evolves out of this process, allowing Americans to oversimplify Japanese women as demure, submissive and oppressed, and then to chastise Japanese society for keeping its women demure, submissive and oppressed.

The reality is not so simple, to say the least. Real instances of oppression and patriarchal domination notwithstanding, the young unmarried women in Japan have become a powerful group, demographically and economically.[2] Indeed, a typical "model consumer" imagined by the department store chains, fiction writers and producers of cinema, TV and anime in Japan today may be a *shōjo*. This term literally means a "girl," but is imbued with a connotation that encompasses the entire spectrum of unmarried young women, from a fashion conscious junior high school student to an "office lady" toiling in a large corporation. Consequently, more and more cultural products in Japan are geared toward the tastes, wishes, fashions and everyday experiences of young women.[3] This is a marked contrast to the situation in the United States, where young teenage males are still considered the most important demographic group for the consumption of Hollywood films and other media products. Even the resolutely entertainment-minded animation films in Japan, therefore, tend to reflect these shifting positions of women. Added to these social factors are traditional and conventional modes of representing gender, such as the tradition of female impersonation in *kabuki* theater and the convention of "feminization" of male figures in "girl's comics," (*shōjo manga*) allowing for an astounding level of diversity and creativity in the Japanese anime.

When I began teaching a course on Japanese popular culture, I was drawn to Japanese animation as a potential resource for teaching about Japanese culture and society. I have screened *They Were 11* and *Princess Mononoke* for the "gender troubles" week of my course, and the opinions and insights of my students are incorporated into the discussion of these films presented below. Both films are relatively easy to rent or purchase in VHS format.[4] Neither film contains explicit sexual situations. There is virtually no violence in *They Were 11*. *Princess Mononoke*, however, was rated PG-13 by the MPAA when released in the United States and does include a few graphic battle scenes, including one where Prince Ashitaka's supernaturally propelled arrow amputates both arms of a samurai looter and decapitates another, as well as raw and unsani-

Page titled: A sweet moment between Tada and Frol (overheard by the rest of the group!).
Source: http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Island/3226/gallery/hagio/

tized depiction of the natural environment. In this Japanese forest, wolves are not vegetarians, and boars bleed gallons of red fluid when shot by human hunters, a far cry from a Disney theme park view of "nature." At any rate, instructors are urged to exercise some caution in assigning the latter film to their classes.

They Were 11 was adapted from a graphic novel (*manga*) conceived by Hagio Moto.[5] Hagio, along with Takemiya Keiko and Yoshida Akimi, was one of the first "girl's comics" artists to branch off into the genres considered exclusive to male artists and readers, including science fiction, in a market that rigidly segregated

When Frol is first introduced, most other characters take "her" for a young woman, given "her" flowing curls of blond hair, red lips, violet eyes and "delicate" body shape.
Image source: Gary's *They Were 11* Website. http://www.inetres.com/gp/anime/tw11/index2.html

Tada, sure enough, is far from a specimen of macho hunk and is rendered throughout the film as one of the more feminine-looking characters.
Image source: Gary's *They Were 11* Website. http://www.inetres.com/gp/anime/tw11/index2.html

the female and male readership.[6] It should be noted that it has been a convention of the girl's comics to draw male characters in a manner that may appear "feminine" to an American eye, with slender bodies, long eyelashes and large pupils, and so on. Moreover, deliberate confusion and breakdown of gender distinctions has long been a staple of the girl's comics. In Hagio Moto's science fiction manga, pairings of heterosexual and homosexual kinds are unquestioningly accepted, and the characters' gender traits are often made unstable as well. The boy protagonist of Hagio's short manga "X, Y," for instance, finds that he is endowed with XX chromosomes, and that he may develop second sexual traits of a woman when he reaches adulthood.

They Were 11 is set in a distant future where human beings have colonized the galaxy and each colony planet has developed a unique culture and is populated by a distinct ethnic group. The film opens as Tada, the protagonist, joins nine other applicants from various planetary (ethnic) and class backgrounds for the final stage of the entrance examination for the prestigious Cosmo Academy. In this stage, the applicants must demonstrate their ability to cooperate with one another and to deal with any potential problem without outside help. They are to be confined in a deserted spaceship for the period of fifty-three days. Faced with an insurmountable problem, an emergency contact button may be pushed. The catch is that, when the button is pushed, all applicants fail the examination. The *esprit de corps* among the applicants is severely tested when they find an extra eleventh member (hence the title) among them who cannot be accounted for. The intricate plot unfolds in several threads. The mystery of who is the eleventh member and what is his or her purpose is handled suspensefully, with red herrings planted expertly throughout the narrative. (No student among the 60-plus class members shown the film correctly guessed the identity of the eleventh member.) The applicants encounter other serious obstacles, including a strange viral disease endemic to the deserted spaceship. In the end, multiple threads of the plot are brought together in a neat resolution, and the applicants learn valuable lessons of tolerance and respect for their diversity.

The main thread of the plot involves a budding friendship and eventual romance between Tada and Frol, the most rambunctious and seemingly reckless applicant. Frol's character is the fulcrum on which the film's theme of exploring gender differences and ambiguities turns. When Frol is first introduced, most other characters take "her" for a young woman, given "her" flowing curls of blond hair, red lips, violet eyes and "delicate" body shape. But Frol reacts angrily to their comments and vehemently refutes her femininity. It is later revealed, to everyone's consternation, that Frol is neither a male nor a female. It seems that in Frol's home planet, Vene, women are not accorded the rights and status of men. The young members of Venian society are gender-neutral until a certain age, after which the elders of the clan decide whether they should become male or female. Eager to avoid the subordinate status of a Venian woman, Frol petitioned the elders that, if accepted to the Cosmo Academy, he/she be allowed to become a man. Later, Tada and Frol fall in love with each other. Tada asks Frol to marry him and settle down on his planet. Thus, the climactic dilemma turns out not to be the identity of the eleventh member, but the question of whether Frol will accept Tada's proposal and become a woman.

Frol is not the only "feminine-looking" character in the film. Following the conventions of girl's comics that are alluded to above, King Mayan Baceska, for instance, possesses waist-length, straight, light blue hair, sharp, narrow, Modigliani-inspired facial features, willowy frame, and other qualities that may signal femininity to American viewers. This is partly explained by the fact that, in Japanese girl's comics, male characters tend to be illustrated in a markedly feminine manner. In terms of identifying the gender of animated characters in Japanese anime, voices are sometimes more helpful than visual cues. However, gender stereotypes are tweaked throughout the film in other ways as well. Ganga, the most masculine-looking character of the bunch, with tanned bronze skin, deep bass voice and stocky, muscular body, is depicted as the most *nurturing* character, closely identified with the healing process (he is a pre-med student) and "giving birth" to the antiviral
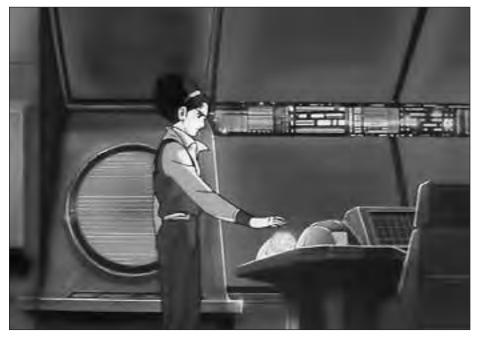

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Image source: Gary's *They Were 11* Website. http://www.inetres.com/gp/anime/tw11/index2.html

Ganga, Amazon and Toto.
Image source: Gary's *They Were 11* Website. http://www.inetres.com/gp/anime/tw11/index2.html

Tada and the scramble button.
Image source: Gary's *They Were 11* Website. http://www.inetres.com/gp/anime/tw11/index2.html

vaccine that saves the lives of other characters, by using his bloodstreams as incubators for the viral cultures. Another character named Amazon has shoulder-length black hair, plays guitar, but proudly displays the scars he had acquired while hunting for wild beasts. This deliberate mixing of male and female characteristics further destabilizes the audience's perception of gender identities of the characters.

After the screening of *They Were 11*, students in my class had a lively discussion about how to interpret Frol's final decision, whether Frol's character is "really" masculine or feminine, and what kind of stereotypes about gender differences the film demolishes, plays with, or leaves unscathed. Students were reminded that, despite its fantastic setting, many elements of the film are recognizably derived from contemporary Japanese situations. For instance, the "examination hell," which many Japanese youngsters are subject to throughout the length of their teenage years, informs the societal background of the film. An early scene in which Tada sits alone in an opaque cubicle, frantically typing answers to the written tests, is a sight many young Japanese would recognize as a mirror reflection of their real-life experiences. During the discussion, female students were generally more successful in picking out what may

be construed as gender stereotypes, explicitly stated by the characters or implicitly expressed in the film itself. Some were not impressed with the dim views of female leadership displayed by the film's characters. One student exclaimed, "Oh God!" in a disgusted voice at the point where King Baceska patronizingly intones, "We have to treat Frol with proper respect," if "she" turns out to be a woman. Others noted with irony that even in the future when human civilization is advanced enough to enable interstellar travel, female applicants to a top university are rare enough that a big fuss is made out of Frol's presence. "Boy's club" is alive and well in the galactic federation.[7]

And yet, *They Were 11* and its characters resist easy categorizations and summary conclusions. The answer to the question of whether Frol should choose to become a man or a woman is not self-evident either. In the anime version, Frol *does* agree to become a woman and marry Tada. However, the latter decision is not much of a concession to "her" femininity as it may initially seem, since it has been made clear by Tada that on *his* planet men and women enjoy an equal status. Tada, sure enough, is far from a specimen of macho hunk and is rendered throughout the film as one of the more feminine-looking characters.[8]

Frol's character is an engaging metaphor for a young Japanese struggling with his or her identity. Frol's decision is made not only through her individual will, but also in the context of the relationships that define his/her social being. It is not necessarily made only from coming to terms with his/her "essential" qualities. Thus, becoming a man or a woman has no intrinsic moral or social values for Frol. Either can be a "right" choice for "him" or "her." Despite the fact that it may not be entirely free from some gender stereotypes of its own, *They Were 11* is a charming and unique film that, by dint of its intricate plot as well as complex and loveable characters, engages its intended young audience to contemplate the fluidity and socially constructed nature of gender and sexuality.

Where *They Were 11* is a cerebral and genteel chamber piece, *Princess Mononoke* is a grandiose symphonic score, full of heavenly choral passages and savage blaring of horns and trumpets. The film ostensibly takes place in medieval Japan, but it is really set in a mythical realm several dimensions removed from the historical Japan. In this world, primeval forests are populated by totemic animals capable of human speech that uneasily coexist with human settlements.

Prince Ashitaka, a young Emishi tribe leader, defends his village against the attack of a frightening monster. In the ensuing battle, the monster puts a curse on him by contaminating his arm with its putrid substance. Ashitaka sets out on a trip, so that he can find a cure for the curse. In the course of his travel, Ashitaka first meets San, a young girl raised by a great white wolf, Moro, and then Eboshi, the leader of Tataraba, a town organized around iron mills. San and Eboshi are fighting against each other, San trying to protect the forest and its denizens from encroachment of the industrial town, and Eboshi trying to protect citizens of the town from the enraged animals of the forest. It is revealed that the monster earlier confronted by Ashitaka was originally a wild boar mortally wounded by the hunters of Tataraba. Eboshi is enlisted in a plot hatched by Jiku, the emperor's agent, to hunt down the Deer God (Shishikami)

and thereby rob the forest animals of their life-sustaining deity. The interventions of Ashitaka fail to stop the enmity between the creatures of the forest and the towns-people from breaking out into an all-out war. Leading an elite team of hunters, Eboshi manages to decapitate the Deer God, but this act, instead of killing the inscrutable deity, causes the latter to liquefy and expand to gargantuan proportions.

In the stunning climax of the film, the now-vengeful Forest Spirit threatens to overwhelm and destroy the forest and humans alike. Ashitaka and San make a desperate attempt to reclaim the deity's severed head. As the result of their heroic efforts, the forest is restored to health and the industrial town is overcome by vegetation. San goes back to the forest, promising that she will "occasionally meet" Ashitaka. Eboshi, despite losing an arm, is not subdued and resolves to rebuild the town, presumably having learned the lesson not to exploit the natural resources of the forest.

The highest-grossing domestic film in Japan until 1997, *Princess Mononoke* is an epic environmentalist fantasy that dwarfs recent Walt Disney animation films in terms of sophistication of characters, visual splendor and thematic depth. It is a brainchild of Miyazaki Hayao, who is indisputably the most successful creator of anime films in Japanese history. As a writer/director and as the head of his pro-

San (Princess Mononoke) and Moro.

duction company, Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki is responsible for a series of animation films that have proven themselves to be not only commercially successful but also touted by mainstream media critics as great works of art and social criticism, including *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Winds* (*Kaze no tani no Nausika*, 1984), *My Neighbor Totoro* (*Tonari no Totoro*, 1988), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (*Majo no takyubin*, 1989), and *Porco Rosso* (*Kurenai no buta*, 1992).[9]

Susan Napier argues that the film's two central female characters actively subvert the myth of Japanese women as supportive, nurturing and dependent on men.[10] San, Princess Mononoke herself, is portrayed as literally half animal, in one sequence sprinting on all fours like a cat and leapfrogging between roofs. When her face is revealed to the audience for the first time, it is shockingly smeared with blood, as she was sucking poisoned blood out of a rifle wound sustained by Moro.

The transformation of the Deer God into the vengeful forest spirit.

Eboshi in the leper gun shop.

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Throughout the movie San constantly identifies herself with wolves and professes her hatred of human beings. She is never "rehabilitated" into human society, à la *Jungle Book*.

Eboshi, on the other hand, is portrayed as a genuinely popular leader, providing a role model for the town's women who have fled the patriarchal society, and taking the discriminated-against lepers under her wing. She is resourceful, calculating if need be, capable of handling swords and rifles with equal expertise, and remains completely unintimidated by any man, animal or spiritual being she encounters. It is not difficult to imagine Eboshi claim-ing the role of a heroine in an American fantasy film.

The film's thematic conflict between nature and civilization is distilled in the struggle between San and Eboshi. This particular pattern of antagonism between two strong, willful female characters, one a young girl and the other an adult woman, is not an innovation introduced in *Princess Mononoke*. It also drives the narrative in Miyazaki's earlier work, *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Winds*.[11] In *Nausicaa*, the heroine, a spunky and pure-hearted teenage princess of a desert kingdom, is pitted against Kushana, the unflappable queen of a neighboring country. Kushana is, like Eboshi, associated with technology and civilization, whereas Nausicaa, like San, is identified with nature. Nausicaa is the only human who can communicate with the Ohmu, a race of colossal, sentient insects, hideous to human eyes. She is for that reason set apart from the rest of mankind. Kushana seeks to destroy the mutant insects and make the world safe again for human beings. She is also set apart from the rest of humanity in that parts of her body have been replaced by metallic components, as a result of contamination from the insect-infested forest.[12]

As Susan Napier and others suggest, these two films problematize the standard narrative of progress and modernity that tends to equate maleness and civilization and relegate the feminine to the realm of irrationality and primordiality.[13] Indeed, in the discussion following the screening of *Princess Mononoke* and further extended into the e-mail correspondences, my students overwhelmingly acknowledged that female characters in the film are strong, willful and "masculine"; in the words of one (female) student, they are women who "wear pants." It was pointed out that, in a sharp contrast to the American films of similar type, most male characters in *Princess Mononoke*, with the exception of Prince Ashitaka, are consigned to the role of sidekicks or underlings. Even armed guards and workers of the Tararaba iron mill consist largely of women. Students also responded to the fact that both San and Eboshi evinced the qualities markedly removed from "cuteness" (*kawaisa*) associated with the female-oriented consumer products of contemporary Japan.

To further advance the discussion, I introduced a very critical interpretation of *Princess Mononoke* by Japanese media critic Saitō Minako to the students. She presents an alternative reading of the film that exposes privileging of the rationality and moral superiority of the male hero in the character of Prince Ashitaka.[14] In Saitō's view, *Princess Mononoke* takes on the color of a shrewdly calculated male fantasy, in which the hero wins the hearts and affection of two physiologically attractive women, who are neither intelligent nor rational enough to resolve their differences on their own.

Ashitaka and Yakkul.

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San's character also loses her feminist sheen when compared to Nausicaa, an independent thinker who eventually becomes the "mediator" between two radically different species, the Ohmu and mankind. In *Princess Mononoke*, this role of the interspecies mediator is monopolized by Ashitaka. Moreover, although Nausicaa is aided by a male friend, Prince Asbel, he is more useful to Nausicaa as a technical helper (he is a good pilot) than as a source of ideas or inspiration. San, in comparison, appears not only defenseless against Ashitaka's charms but also dependent on him. Despite her identification with the forest, she has to be told by Ashitaka that the severed head of the Deer God has to be returned by human hands to appease it (Where did he learn all this?); when the wounded Ashitaka utters the magic words, "You are beautiful," she clumsily falls on the ground like a love-smitten little girl; and so on.

While some students conceded the validity of this argument, others defended the character of Ashitaka, arguing that he is still a considerable departure from a typical American "action" hero. It may even be argued that he possesses many "feminine" characteristics. His relationship with San certainly breaks out of the mold of a "boy-gets-girl" romance prevalent in a typical anime film, not to mention a typical Hollywood motion picture. In the end, as is the case with *They Were 11*, gender representations in *Princess Mononoke* are complex enough to lend themselves to a wide range of stimulating interpretations.

In the present essay, I have attempted to enlist two anime films in exploring one of the more difficult and controversial issues regarding Japanese culture and society. I hope that the discussions above help us recognize that good anime films, whether out of slick commercial calculations to appeal to the *shōjo* demographic group, enlightened feminist consciousness, or fidelity to the genre conventions imported from other media such as girl's comics, effectively derail unthinking stereotypes about Japanese women, while opening up the path for a further examination of the possibilities and limits of representing gender identities and relationships.

There are certainly many other Japan-related issues, such as multiculturalism and multiethnicity, the relationship between history and public memory and relevance of the traditional arts to the contemporary consumer culture, that can be discussed in conjunction with anime. Instead of facile entertainment, the best of anime offer our students excellent opportunities to think about a foreign culture that may not be as familiar or alien as they initially might have thought. These works may even encourage our students to look at their own identities, beliefs and world-views in a new light. Sometimes it is *not* too good to be true when they tell you that students can have their minds stimulated while having a great deal of fun. ∎

Ashitaka and San.

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NOTES

1. Please refer to the bibliography appended to this essay.

2. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, an unprecedented number of Japanese women have joined the labor market. Meanwhile, the birthrate has declined so precipitously that rural schools have been forced to close down due to the lack of incoming students. Between 1975 and 1990, the number of Japanese women in their twenties with spouses decreased from 80.3 percent to 57.5 percent, while the birth rate for the country declined from 1.76 per person to 1.53 per person. See Nancy R. Rosenberger, "Fragile Resistance, Signs of Status: Women between the State and Media in Japan," in Anne E. Imamura, ed., *Re-Imaging Japanese Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) pp. 29–30.

3. For discussions of the *shōjo* as a cultural prototype, see John Whittier Treat, "Yoshimoto Banana Writes Home: The *Shōjo* in Japanese Popular Culture," in John Whittier Treat, ed., *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996); also Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 157–62.

4. *Princess Mononoke* is also available in DVD format, which allows the instructor to choose between the English-dubbed version and the Japanese language version with English subtitles. Even though for anime films the original Japanese dialogue with English subtitles is always a preferred choice, in the case of the *Princess Mononoke* DVD, it may facilitate interesting discussions if the instructor compares both versions and encourages students to identify subtle differences between the two. For instance, the great white wolf Moro, Princess Mononoke's adoptive mother, is given a male voice in the original but is voiced by Gillian Anderson (of *X-Files* fame) in the English version. For another, the Japanese dialogue identifies the enigmatic deity of the film as Shishigami, which is correctly rendered in the subtitles as "Deer God," but is translated as "Forest of the Spirit" in the English soundtrack.

5. The original graphic novel was translated by Viz Communications but has unfortunately gone out of print. Highly recommended to English-speaking readers is a collection of Hagio's science fiction manga entitled *A, A Prime* (San Francisco: Viz Communications, 1997), centering around a genetically engineered future race called "Unicorns," highly intelligent but emotionally inexpressive beings. At their best, these manga evoke the great American science fiction literature dealing with the issues of gender, memory and identity, such as works of Ursula Le Guin and Nicola Griffith.

6. Frederik L. Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983), pp. 102–5.

7. In fairness to Hagio Moto, the Galactic Academy may well have had separate testing facilities for women, a policy that admittedly gives rise to another set of questions about the state of gender segregation in the future.

8. At this juncture I should add that, although it has not yet happened in my class, it is possible for some students to challenge the film's apparent acceptance of heterosexuality as the norm. In other words, some may wonder why Frol can't choose to be a man *and* get married to Tada. This topic, fully engaged, will go beyond the scope of the present essay. For now, I will merely point out that there are anime films that deal head-on with homosexual relationships, even among teenagers, and they do reflect both traditional Japanese attitudes toward homosexuality and changing norms of the post-industrial, sexually polymorphic Japanese society. Whether any of these anime titles can be fruitfully employed for the purpose of engaging with such issues as gay/lesbian relationships and choice over sexual lifestyles in an American classroom setting is certainly a question worth investigating.

9. For an English-language introduction to Miyazaki Hayao's *oeuvre,* see Helen McCarthy, *Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Japanese Animation* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1999). Both *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Kiki's Delivery Service* are available in the United States in original Japanese VHS versions with English subtitles.

10. According to Napier, *Princess Mononoke* "defamiliarizes two important icons in Japanese culture, the myth of the feminine as long-suffering and supportive and the myth of the Japanese as living in harmony with nature, often expressed through a union of the feminine with the natural." Susan J. Napier, *Anime From Akira to Princess Mononoke*: *Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (New York: Palgrave Books, 2000), p. 177.

11. It is regrettable that *Nausicaa in the Valley of the Winds*, in many ways a superior film to *Princess* and a purer statement of Miyazaki's environmentalist concerns, has not received a legitimate release in the United States, and therefore remains largely inaccessible in classrooms.

12. In one of the most memorable scenes in *Nausicaa*, Kushana casually removes her arm from its socket in front of her (male) prisoner. Noticing a stunned look on his face, she smiles and quips, "My husband-to-be will see something even more terrifying on our wedding night."

13. On the point of how *Princess Mononoke* problematizes the narrative of progress and modernity, see Napier's perceptive comparison of *Princess Mononoke* and Walt Disney's musical *Tarzan. Anime From Akira to Princess Mononoke*, pp. 190–2.

14. Saitō Minako, *Kōittenron*, *A Theory of One Red Flower*, (Tokyo: Village Center, 1998),

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They Were 11 (Juichinin Iru)
Tōhō Film Company/Kitty Enterprises/ Victor Company of Japan. 1986. 91 minutes. Color.

Based on the comic by Hagi Moto. Screenplay by Imaizumi Toshiaki and Koide Katsumi. Character design by Sugnio Akio and Shimizu Keizo. Art direction by Azuma Jun'ichi. Executive producers: Taga Hidenori and Ochiai Shigekazu. Produced by Kotoku Minoru. Directed by Dezaki Tetsu and Tominaga Tsuneo.

VHS available from U.S. Manga Corps. Unrated. Suitable for most audiences. Parental Discretion Advised. Producer of English version: John O'Donnell. English translation: Dan Kanemitsu and Tim Eldred. Production Coordinator of English version: Stephanie Shalofsky.

Princess Mononoke (Mononoke Hime)
Tokuma Shoten/Nippon Television/Dentsu/Studio Ghibli. 1997. 134 minutes. Color.

Original story and screenplay by Miyazaki Hayao. Art direction by Oga Kazuo, Yamamoto Nizo, Tanaka Naoya, Kuroda Satoshi, and Takeshige Yoji. Animation directed by Ando Masashi, Kosaka Kitaro, and Kondo Yoshiftimi. Cinematography by Okui Atsushi. Edited by Seyama Takeshi. Music by Hisaishi Jo. Produced by Suzuki Toshio. Executive producer: Tokuma Yasuyoshi.

Distributed in the United States by Miramax Films. Rated PG-13.

VHS and Region Code 1 DVD available from Miramax Entertainment.

Executive producers of English version: Harvey Weinstein, Bob Weinstein, and Scott Martin. English-language screenplay by Neil Gaiman. English voice direction by Jack Fletcher. English voice actors: Billy Crudup, (Ashitaka) Claire Danes, (San) Minnie Driver, (Eboshi) Gillian Anderson, (Moro) Billy Bob Thornton, (Jiku) Jada Pinkett. (Toki)

Note: All Japanese names cited in this essay are presented with their surnames first, following the Japanese convention. Thus, the director of *Seven Samurai* is given as "Kurosawa Akira" rather than "Akira Kurosawa." I have not applied this rule to those who, for professional or other reasons, prefer to keep the American way of presenting surnames.

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