

Nature is within Screen's Reach

A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Environmental Representations
in Animated Eco-movies from the 90s and the 2000s Produced in the U.S.A and Japan

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Abstract

The environmentalization of society through media institutions has acquired a key function to address the urgency of our current environmental crisis. Scholarly research has found pervasive patterns in media products that represent nature as a commodity, as inferior to humans, with attributes strongly associated with women, and as more simplified with time. Academic work has shown that animations in particular have more freedom to diverge from these dominant representations and create alternative narratives of what is nature. Moreover, deviant representations usually come from overlooked cultural backgrounds that are not Western such as Japan. This study aims to compare how is nature represented in animated ecomovies that come from different contexts regarding time and place of production. Thus, this paper has compared ecomovies produced in the U.S.A and Japan from the decades of the 90s and the 2000s, which are *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Ponyo* (2008) from Japan; and *Pocahontas* (1995) and *Up* (2009) from the U.S.A.

For the research methodology, a multimodal analysis that combined Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Discourse Analysis was used to explore how nature was represented in dominant and/or non-dominant ways. As expected, the findings show there are ideological inconsistencies in how nature's representations from these ecomovies offer alternative narratives and, at the same time, comply with dominant environmental discourses. These are primarily related to an anthropocentric belief system by which humanity is superior to other forms of life. Therefore, nature was mainly depicted as an object. Moreover, the interpretations of these results have been guided by an ecofeminist perspective. This has associated nature's dominant representations with discourses that support the master consciousness and the human-nature split by which nature is understood as female regarding its experiences of oppression and domination by men and separated from humanity. Nonetheless, this thesis has also found non-dominant representations, which revolved around nature's agency, and a nature that is interconnected and queer in its unconventional existence. This was particularly true for the Japanese ecofilms, which presented a more congruent non-dominant representation of nature. Regarding differences in time, the most salient finding relates to a growing simplification of nature, which could be explained by the growing urbanization of our societies that has reduced the nature available to us.

Overall, this thesis shows that nature is a multilayered concept differently constructed based on contextual factors. It also serves as a reminder that while dominant discursive and representational practices are pervasive; there is always room to create new narratives, and possibly change what we know about nature, how we understand it, and experience it.

KEYWORDS: Nature, Eco-cinema, Children, Cross-cultural, Representations.

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Introduction

A thousand years have passed since the collapse of industrialized civilization. A toxic jungle now spreads, threatening the survival of the last of the human race.

(Miyazaki, 1984)

The message of this excerpt from the Japanese animated movie *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984) coincides with how the UN Secretary-General qualified our current climate and biodiversity crisis as “existential” (Guterres, 2021). This urgent concern has translated into an increased presence of environmentalism in educational institutions (Smith & Parsons, 2012). However, the efforts put in the environmentalization of society are not exclusive to education and have extended to popular media (King, 1994), such as animation which can appeal both young and older audiences (Todd, 2015).

Nonetheless, even when a large number of people may identify themselves as environmentalists (Podeschi, 2002), the meanings that nature has in our societies through cultural narratives should be further investigated in order to unchain possibilities of positive change (Podeschi, 2002), and avoid the dystopian scenario depicted in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984).

1.1. The Importance of an Animated Nature

Popular media has been involved in the environmentalization of the population (King, 1994). More specifically, the film industry has increased its production of cultural products with environmental messages (Murray & Heumann, 2011). This is of importance to environmental communication goals as popular media is a key source to deliver information to the public (Bulfin, 2017). However, it should be acknowledged that there is debate on how effective popular media can be in educating the audience about the environment (Bilandzik & Sukalla, 2019). On the other hand, some elements inherent to movies such as narrative engagement – understood as the audience’s cognitive and emotional engagement – can strongly predict feelings of guilt associated with a positive correlation with intentions to act (Bilandzik & Sukalla, 2019).

A particular genre that has the potential for environmental communicative purposes is animated eco-movies (Caraway & Caraway, 2020). Despite some criticism on how the affordances of animations, such as lack of realism, are detrimental for environmental communication purposes; there are other positive views that argue they can enhance self-reflection (Todd, 2015). Furthermore, dramatic features contained in animations could be good at communicating environmental concerns and change how we understand nature utilizing its potential to appeal to the public through enhanced sentiment (Starosielski, 2011). This benefit is connected to the potential to amplify engagement given recurrent melodramatic narrative structures within animations, which encompass a moral teaching, archetypal characters such as a villain and a hero, an obstacle that the hero resolves, and a conclusive ending (Thevenin, 2013).

In addition, animations' particular aesthetics and affordances allow for the most complex and creative ways to reaffirm the value of nature (Thevenin, 2013). While the depiction of nature in films is dependent on the availability of natural settings, animations are more independent of such constraints. This is a genre that, by endowing non-human settings, objects and living beings with life, agency, and consciousness; can make the audience reflect on what is nature, what is human, and how these interrelate (Heise, 2014). Moreover, Prévot-Julliard and Julliard (2015) argue that the relevance of animation in representing nature is that they act as vicarious experiences of the natural world; something particularly important in our present society that is increasingly more urbanized, and more disconnected from natural settings and non-human living beings.

However, even though animated eco-movies have been produced since the 1930s by studios like Disney, it was not until recently that scholars have focused more on animated films (Heise, 2014). However, the attention that nature's representations in animated films have received, comes from a Western perspective. Thus, the emphasis has been on Hollywood studios' productions with Disney and Pixar being two of the most studied (Caraway & Caraway, 2020; Thevenin, 2013). Nonetheless, interest

in differing representations from non-Western cultural narratives such as the Japanese Studio Ghibli has grown (Mayumi *et al.*, 2005; Smith & Parsons, 2012; Thevenin, 2013). Especially, due to the relatively recent global popularization of Japanese animations (Heise, 2014). Studio Ghibli has especially provided refreshing narratives regarding environmental issues that scholars such as Thevenin (2013) have identified as a “new nature narrative” (p. 150). Given the differences between Western and non-Western narratives, and the need to explore new ones on how to understand nature, humanity, and how they are interrelated (Heise, 2014); scholars like Smith and Parsons (2012) have compared nature’s representations from these two different cultural perspectives. Nonetheless, cross-cultural work still needs to be expanded.

1.2. Social Relevance

In light of the above, this thesis aims at studying nature’s representations in animated movies from different cultural backgrounds, which come from the U.S.A and Japan. This study’s social relevance partially stems from animations’ ability to provide a diverse array of perceptions on different topics (Brereton, 2015). Furthermore, environmental representations in media products are supported by ideologies, which are pre-existing complex combinations of a set of meanings through which we give subjective value to our intentions; and are constantly changing partly due to the mediation that “apparatuses of ideological production” (Hall, 1990, p. 33) such as media in general, and movies in particular, play. Consequently, inspecting environmental representations in films from major studios like Ghibli and Disney, which have a global audience, is also relevant inasmuch as they reflect current social views and can have an effect on society.

Thus, the social relevance of studying animated eco-movies is not restricted to its potential to influence children’s worldviews (Caraway & Caraway, 2020), but also expands to the possible effects they may have on older audiences, who are also avid consumers of animated movies (Odell & Le Blanc, 2015). Furthermore, scholars argue fictional films have higher relevance than scientific ones as they can rise above cultural boundaries and captivate a larger variety of viewers (Todd, 2015).

The conclusion drawn from this study may help reflect on the socio-cultural assumptions made about nature, which could be transformed through new narratives, and change how we relate to it. Additionally, academics from environmental communication may find this research relevant to understand the existing ideas and beliefs of society that are the basis of these representations. Viewers of these movies that come across this thesis may open up possibilities of change through self-reflection to potentially realize that cultural products, such as movies, reproduce and reinforce certain ideas and expectations of a misrepresented nature.

1.3. Scientific Relevance and Research Question

This thesis will further contribute to prior research by going beyond the overemphasis on Western films, which has neglected other influential regions such as Asian countries and overlooked other local experiences limiting the scope of their findings (Yee, 2019). Additional literature on non-Western ecomovies recognizes the malleability and dynamic multiplicity of meanings of representation processes that vary across different contexts (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, this thesis' scientific relevance is improved by taking into account that our relationship with nature has evolved with time due to historical changes such as industrialization and increasing urbanization (Prévot-Julliard & Julliard, 2015). Thus, as our environments evolve, our construct of nature changes accordingly. To unravel the potential temporal difference, movies from different decades will be studied. Therefore, this thesis will attempt to develop a wider understanding of how nature is represented in different cultural and temporal contexts.

Consequently, and since representations are multiple and complex (Hall, 1990), the purpose of this study is to analyze movies from presumably two different ideological backgrounds and times— namely from the U.S.A (*Pocahontas*, 1995; and *Up*, 2009) and from Japan (*Pom Poko*, 1994; and *Ponyo*, 2008) – to discern whether there are relevant cultural and temporal variances in nature's depictions. This will provide a cross-cultural understanding of environmental representations that has been largely overlooked. It also investigates the evolution of those representations regarding time

by comparing movies from the 90s and the 2000s. This will allow the researcher to observe the cultural and societal evolution regarding human-nature relationships.

Thus, this thesis' research question is:

How is nature represented in animated ecomovies within different cultural narratives from the U.S.A and Japan produced in the 90s and the 2000s?

I expect the movies selected to contain primarily dominant discourses aligned with environmentalist ideologies of conservationism by which nature is valued as a resource (Vivanco, 2013); and conservationism, which acknowledges nature's importance for its aesthetical and spiritual qualities (Podeschi, 2002). However, I also anticipate the presence of non-hegemonic narratives coming from ecologism, which challenges environmentalist ideologies (Ingram, 2000). Moreover, I conjecture that the intensity of ideological struggle will differ depending on the country and the time in which the movies were produced. In addition, I presume nature's representations within these movies will reproduce existing ideologies of a *master consciousness* (Plumwood, 1993) and a *human-nature split* (Radford, 1995) by which nature is compared to women from an ecofeminist perspective. In light of the above, this thesis will also address the following three sub-questions:

How do the findings reproduce dominant and/or non-hegemonic discourses about nature?

Do the results reflect cultural and/or temporal differences in nature's representations?

How do these animated ecomovies comply to and/or challenge gendered representations of nature?

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

The upcoming chapter is the theoretical backbone of this thesis and discusses pertinent theories and concepts to verify or falsify the assumptions mentioned above. It will start with an overview of relevant theories for the purposes of this study, such as cultural studies, mediatization, ecocinema and ecofeminism; which will be followed by an examination of past research regarding nature's representations in films. The third chapter provides an informed

plan for the methodology and research design. The subsequent chapter will discuss the results of the analysis based on whether nature's representations in the animated ecomovies complied with dominant discourses or challenged them from an ecofeminist perspective. The fifth and final chapter provides an answer to the research question, which revolves around a struggle between hegemonic and new narratives about nature. Additionally, nature seems to be more simplified in the 2000s movies as a result of a growing disconnected society from nature. The conclusion finalizes with a discussion of this thesis' limitations and societal and theoretical implications.

Theoretical background

“[A]s we grow collectively more estranged from nature, we have more options than ever to view it. But are we really seeing it?” (Paiella, 2021). On the one hand, this statement signals the increased interest and concern on environmental issues, which are reproduced and reflected in cultural products such as movies and documentaries where nature is present. On the other hand, the inquiry problematizes whether the nature in these media products is indeed an accurate reflection of what is being represented. Nonetheless, regardless of how closely this type of content represents nature, academics agree with Roger Ebert that cinema can connect the audiences with different worlds they are not familiar with; and even provide new perspectives to perceive their reality (Brereton, 2015). In other words, films have a role in how we understand, experience and think about our material world and give meaning to it.

This thesis will attempt to partially answer the mentioned question with regards to how nature is represented in animated ecomovies. For this purpose, notions such as discourse and representation, and related theoretical concepts of power and ideology are explored. A subsequent discussion of ecocinema and animated ecomovies is followed by the introduction of different approaches to nature from the U.S.A and Japan, as another aim of this study is to analyse animated ecomovies from these countries. These will be Disney, Pixar – owned by Disney since 2006 (Baskan, 2010) – and Ghibli. An ecofeminist perspective was added to complement this theoretical framework. The final section introduces the representation of nature in the film industry in general and animated movies in particular.

2.1. Cultural Studies

Cultural studies has been recognized for being a transversal field in contact with diverse disciplines such as semiotics, linguistics and anthropology, which support the idea that media does have an impact on society and its culture (Fürsich, 2010). Its interdisciplinary nature makes it problematic to provide a concrete definition (Nelson *et al*, 1992). Nonetheless, their tensions have the common purpose of investigating cultural practices regarding relations of power (Hall, 1980).

According to Williams (2009), culture involves both the material and symbolic realms; and its study cannot separate one from the other but rather necessitates both, as the main goal

is to understand how they interrelate. It then follows that the study of culture pertains to the study of its material forms or products (Wuthnow *et al.*, 2010), which are ultimately cultural practices constitutive and constituent of society (Hansen & Machin, 2013). Nelson *et al.* (1992) argue that studying cultural products requires being sensitive to their historical and contextual specificities to unravel the ideas, values and beliefs that direct the way we see the world, the way we conduct in it, as well as what is important to us. Thus, movies are cultural products through which our material world receives meaning. However, this symbolic aspect cannot be taken for granted since meanings are multiple and can change depending on the context of the practice (Hall, 1997). In light of these considerations, cultural studies will contribute to the purposes of this thesis by helping unravel the power relations that result in representational and discursive practices that reflect oppressive and dominant ideologies from our culture in relation to nature (Rust *et al.*, 2016).

2.1.1. A Discursive Nature of Knowledge and Power

Discourses are the ways in which we refer to and construct knowledge about a topic. It is not merely a linguistic notion, it also entails practice (Hall, 1997). Van Leeuwen (2008) defines discourses as being formed by particular ways of knowledge that are congruent with the social contexts in which they are employed. Miller (1990) specifies that the notion of 'knowledge' used by discourse theorists is less related to an objective truth than the word itself might suggest. The relevance of discourses does not solely rely on the assumption that everything we know comes from discursive practices; it also finds its legitimacy by the impact it has. For instance, in terms of environment, its discourses can establish wide shared beliefs and constructions of an environmental reality and thus, they can influence the domains of development policies (Scott, 1988; as cited in Adger *et al.*, 2001).

Alongside the concept of knowledge, power is another fundamental element of discourses (Fairclough, 1989; Hall, 1997; Miller, 1990; Van Leeuwen, 2008) partly because discourses are a site for power to be exercised (Fairclough, 1989), and there is an irreducible link between power and knowledge to construct knowledge through discursive practices (Hall, 1997). Power, in terms of Foucault, as explained by Miller (1990), originates from institutional actors, historical social practices, and the tools used in the construction of knowledge.

However, Foucault's notion of power should not be mistaken as a top-down form of influence. On the contrary, even if one is not the source of that power, one collaborates in the process of its circulation either from a position of domination or oppression.

The same way the enactment of power means the generation of knowledge, every piece of knowledge enables the exercise of power. Thus, any conception of it is a demonstration of power (Miller, 1990). All we 'know' about nature and the environment is produced by discursive practices where the fabricated knowledge is inseparable from historical and contextual relations of power.

2.1.2. Representation in Movies

Film theory has been fixated on the idea that movies are an accurate representation of our reality (Giroux, 2011). However, this understanding rejects the multiple complexities of the notion of representation, which goes beyond the limitations of mirroring something. From a discursive perspective, discourses are ways of representing the knowledge we have about an object at a given historical time (Hall, 1997). Thus, representation encompasses a broader sphere that escapes the materiality and physicality of our existence and enters our social world to be understood as a social process, a consequence of its context and how it is produced (Poole, 2019).

Hall (1997) argues that, while discourses generate knowledge, representations give meaning to that knowledge through the use of language. It should be noted that these associations between representations and meaning are not fixed by the users of discourses alone, nor the things that are being signified. On the other hand, we convey meaning to the world through a language system and the symbolic aspects of signs. Saussure, as explained by Culler (1986), understood signs as the links made when some aspect of our material world – the 'signifier' – is associated with an idea or concept – the 'signified'.

This being the case, representation for this thesis is conceptualized from a semiotic perspective which allows for the rejection of the initial assumption by which films are an objective reflection of reality (Fürsich, 2010). As Poole (2019) illustrates, since representations are contextually situated, they can change across time, space, and even depend on the medium used. Thus, there are a diverse array of representations for the same object, concept, or event. Therefore, those with access to the media are one of the most powerful in this regard,

considering that they can spread and circulate their particular representations and respective meanings which can become dominant and hegemonic (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, just as discourses, representations regulate our conduct, thinking and perception, and are assimilated into the background knowledge of the audiences (Eschholz *et al.*, 2002).

Since representations do not solely depend on language systems to give meaning, visual language is as important as text in the processes of representation, which can also utilize visual artifacts or 'pictorial representations' (Carroll, 2019). From this point of view, the pictures that constitute a movie give meaning to the cultural product through their ability to represent the referents from the real world (Carroll, 2019). Thus, a picture serves as a symbolic sign engaged in a signification process (Culler, 1986).

Furthermore, we understand visual representations with relative ease when compared to language systems. Although visual representations also differ across places and cultures, we need little proficiency to be able to grasp their meanings (Carroll, 2019). One could watch a movie in a different and unfamiliar language and, despite being unable to understand the dialogues, still understand what the characters are doing and/or feeling thanks to the resemblance of the visual representations with systems of representations one already knows, such as facial expressions or body language that can signal mental and emotional states (Carroll, 2019).

Representation naturally brings the issue of misrepresentation, a concern that is apparent in the cultural machinery of the film industry which has been frequently accused of misrepresenting 'reality' (Ingram, 2000). However, the concept of reality itself is a social construct. Thus, what these accusations bring to the public debate is that the film industry is failing to represent the sense of what is real to a particular group of individuals (Ingram, 2000). Nonetheless, going beyond the textual narrative and investigating the pictorial representations about nature from movies – that might misrepresent other understandings – is still relevant to untangle what are the ideologies that frame our conception of nature and how we act in relation to it (Yee, 2019).

2.1.3. Ideological Nature

Along with discourse and representation, ideology is another fundamental concept in the investigation of cultural products. As Poole suggests (2019), the process of representation has ideological implications that in the context of media, the film industry is one key signifying system and enabler for those ideologies to give meaning and represent the world accordingly. The task of defining this term is rather troublesome. While some scholars see ideologies as a force whose presence aims at reinforcing the interests of the elites (Eschholz *et al.*, 2002); others focus on the unconscious aspect of these intentions that are naturalized by representations that have acquired a common-sense position and obscured their ideological background (Fairclough, 1989). Close to this definition, Storey (2001) discusses a type of ideology that distorts reality and produces a ‘false consciousness’ in the sense that neither of those that dominate and are dominated are aware of their position.

However, Hall (1990) explicitly rejects this perspective and argues ideologies are not produced by individuals, but rather sustained by them. Moreover, van Dijk (2006) sees the notion of ‘false consciousness’ as giving a deterministic definition to ideologies. Instead, he conceptualizes them as a set of beliefs that can change and are shared by a social group in relation to other groups; and to which members do not necessarily comply in a congruent manner. For the purposes of this thesis, ideologies are also seen as regulating the values, attitudes and practices of those that endorse them. Thus, we act, talk and think through ideologies (Hall, 1990).

This being the case, environmental representations in media products are unexceptionally supported by ideologies, which are sustained and also altered by specific “apparatuses of ideological production” (Hall, 1990, p. 33). As Hageman (2013) states, films are embedded with constitutive ideologies *and* constituted ideologies. Whereas the latter one is about how the content constructs ideologies, the former one is about how the constituted ideology has emerged from a particular social structure and machinery. Therefore, the film industry has a key role in the circulation and maintenance of dominant ideologies about nature, and the power relations and practices that naturalize them (Fairclough, 1989).

Nonetheless, other academics see the maintenance of dominant ideologies as a process of ideological struggle in which non-dominant ideologies attempt to substitute those understood as 'common-sense' (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2006). In a practical sense, understanding ideologies is useful for this thesis as the ones embedded in movies have the power to set a social agenda of what is important or ignored by society, which is in conflict with other existing ideologies (Fürsich, 2010).

As a brief illustration, Ingram (2000) argues movies represent nature in a complicit manner with a consumerist ideology and lifestyle. However, they also present a hegemonic struggle when promoting ecological sensibility. Hageman (2013) further argues that ideologies have internal contradictions and thus, ideologies in movies do too. These inconsistencies relate to a capitalist ideology that narrows our creativity for alternative approaches to our knowledge of nature (Ingram, 2000; Hageman, 2013).

2.2. Nature's Mediatization

From the lens of *mediatization*, some aspects that existed prior to the media and that were conceived as separate from it are now closely embedded in its *media logic*. Religion, politics, education and even science are now subjected to the media logic, which refers to the media's structural evolution and ways of operating with regard to institutional, aesthetic and technological possibilities. To give a more concrete example, consoles and video games have affected the way we conceive play in our current times (Livingstone & Lunt, 2014). In a similar fashion, the environmentalization of society through media tools and their respective affordances have an impact on how we understand nature. It could be argued that popular documentaries about nature such as those narrated by David Attenborough are influencing ideas of nature as pristine, wild, in-danger, and/or aesthetically pleasant (examples: *A life on our planet*, 2020; *Life in color*, 2021).

Mediatization has been defined as a middle-range theory that explores on a long-term scale how changes in media impact institutions and social practices (Hjarvard, 2013). Livingstone and Lunt (2014) give a more detailed framework of the timescales mediatization is concerned with, which ranges from decades to centuries, and even millennia. Thus, it is a theoretical framework that requires sensitivity to history; and it is not a technological

deterministic theory. Therefore, this theory poses another challenge to the often assumption of how media products, such as films, have an impact on society. Some counterarguments to the *effect paradigm* consider that there are other important factors such as individuals' predispositions and contextual elements that play a crucial role in one's worldview and meaning-making processes. Thus, the media's power is reduced as a reinforcing agent of pre-existing attitudes, beliefs and values (Fürsich, 2010).

On the other hand, although mediatization does not necessarily discard the possibilities offered by theories, such as mediation, that focus on how media influences society through the communication process; one of its main tenets is that media is not a separate entity from culture and society. On the contrary, media has become fundamentally embedded in our social and cultural fabrics. Therefore, our society and culture change in response to its structural developments (Hjarvard, 2013).

One obvious theme of mediatization relates to its technological advancements that are intertwined with social and cultural changes (Livingstone & Lunt, 2014). However, there is another focus on media's institutional aspects, where the term 'media logics' is more appropriate to utilize. Rocamora (2017) elaborates on the institutional nature of media and argues that media has its own functioning rules, just as institutions do; and that media's influence reaches all sites of social power. As an illustration, one crucial media institution of our present is the film industry, which has the power to set agendas, naturalize discourses and disseminate ideologies (Livingstone & Lunt, 2014). This being the case, Giroux (2011) sees films as not only entertainment. Instead, they have political and educational implications as a site to introduce pressing concerns into the public debate. Furthermore, this author argues that the power of the film industry also resides in its capacity to shape our imagination and consciousness.

Consequently, comprehending the notion of mediatization helps the researcher better understand why media in general, and the film industry in particular, have a considerable amount of power. Moreover, this framework contributes to this study due to its emphasis on the importance of historical and technical advancements regarding media that, in this case, change how we understand and represent nature. Thus, the power of media is closely related

to the *contradiction paradigm* used by Freedman (2015). This understanding sees media institutions with its own interests but, nonetheless, aware of the social and cultural context in which it functions. Similarly, the film industry can be perceived as an institutional entity in its own right. However, its exerted power is relational since this power is possible because these institutions are sensitive to society. This conception facilitates a better understanding of how representations of nature in movies are changing in response to society, which opens up possibilities for change (Freedman, 2015).

2.3. Ecocinema Studies

Rust and Monani (2013), when discussing the scope of ecocinema studies, relate it to the theory of mediatization inasmuch as they see films as a site to negotiate the meanings and practices of nature. Additionally, ecocinema is interested in the implications that the affordances of the medium have to affect the human world, “to show how films can reconfigure and reposition nature’s place in the culture” (Yee, 2019, p. 160). For instance, the aesthetic and melodramatic logics of movies play a role in our social and cultural construction of what is nature (Ingram, 2000). Additionally, new technologies in this industry enable viewers to ‘immerse’ in natural environments through stylized images that reinforce assumptions we have about nature; or, from a more positive stance, promote sustained attention and commitment to environmental messages (MacDonald, 2013).

There are, however, frictions on how to define this particular field between those that assert any movie can be studied from ecocinema studies, and those who argue the object of study need to promote progressive environmental features (Culloty & Brereton, 2017). For the purposes of this thesis, ecocinema is not limited by “explicit messages of environmental consciousness” (Rust & Monani, 2013, p. 2) because every movie can potentially be ecocritically analyzed and contain insights about how movies relate to us and our surrounding environments (Rust & Monani, 2013).

Within the ecocinema tradition, one genre that has received considerable attention is animated films (Shanahan & McComas, 1999; Starosielski, 2011). Despite some critics on how the affordances of animations, such as lack of realism, are detrimental for environmental communication purposes; there are more positive views arguing animations allow for self-

reflection and criticism (Todd, 2015). Furthermore, the dramatization afforded by animation could be a good communicator of environmental concerns as it has more potential to appeal to the public through enhanced sentiment (Starosielski, 2011). On the other hand, David Whitley (2008) presents a dual reality of the benefits of animation to disseminate environmental messages. While the aesthetics of films, such as *Bambi* (1942), promote audience engagement with environmental narratives; they also generate a utopian world of cuteness, harmony and balance that does not reflect with integrity nature's essence. Consequently, this framework will contribute to the analysis of the movies by reminding the researcher that the type of media product and its affordances are relevant to how nature *can* be represented.

2.4. Ecofeminism: Is Nature Female?

To further understand the representations of nature and how it relates to humans, the ecofeminist lens is a framework that will help narrow down future interpretations and focus the scope of the findings to a specific understanding. This being the case, ecofeminism could be briefly defined as a new approach to nature from a feminist perspective, which is primarily concerned about the relations between gender and nature, and their experiences of domination and oppression (Plumwood, 1993).

This is a field of study closely connected to *deep ecology*, an environmental philosophy whose basic tenet is to radically change how we relate to and understand nature as valuable for the usefulness it has for humans, and instead appreciate its inherent value (Madsen, n.d). As for feminism, its definition is multilayered and can drastically change depending on whether it is a movement within a radical socialist tradition or a liberal democratic one. However, in line with ecofeminism and the theoretical framework for this thesis, feminism can also be seen from a cultural lens that focuses on the domination of women, and men's control over resources and power (Radford, 1995).

A major theme covered by ecofeminism relates to the dualism of how men are associated with culture, and women with nature (Besthorn & McMillen, 2002; Plumwood, 1993; Radford, 1995; Salleh, 2003). Generally speaking, the origins of this historical tradition of women's identification with nature can be found in well-established social patterns where women's main role was related to reproductive objectives and made them subject and

accountable for most of the productive and maintenance tasks. As for men, their work has always been more valued and associated with the use of physical strength for conflicts or hunting, which allowed them to have more leisure time and control over culture (Plumwood, 1993). This distinction extends to the disjuncture between the human and natural world, men and women respectively (Besthorn & McMillen, 2002).

To maintain these unequal positions, forms of domination and oppression, any possibility of interconnectedness is discarded. On the other side of the spectrum of interconnectedness – which emphasizes that all elements of reality are part of a unified whole – the duality found by ecofeminists has been referred to as *human-nature split* – in which men represent culture and women represent nature (Radford, 1995) – which supported by the *master consciousness* (Plumwood, 1993). The master consciousness goes beyond the human-nature split, and further separates other interconnected unities by gender, class, and so on. It also conceives power in terms of domination and oppression over those it deems as inferior, less civilized, and less human (Caputi, 2011). Thus, to sustain and justify the domestication and domination of those excluded from the master, men, culture and civilization; the master consciousness negates its dependency on the other and naturalizes its consequential unequal power relations (Plumwood, 1993).

So far, this approach to ecofeminism takes a socialist stance as it particularly focuses on the domination and oppression aspects of a patriarchal system (Ingram, 2000). On the other hand, cultural ecofeminism also acknowledges the pervasive understanding of a dual reality that separates nature from humans (Radford, 1995), but complies with that narrative by the reification of the features associated with women and nature. It is a less critical point of view that celebrates spirituality and past religions that worshipped a nature personified as female (Ingram, 2000). Therefore, for the purposes of this study – and considering the theoretical framework constructed so far – the socialist approach will be used to guide the analysis of the representations of nature in animated ecomovies.

Alternatively, a different and contesting belief system to these male-centered ideologies is *green consciousness*, which is a holistic understanding of what is nature and how humans relate to it (Caputi, 2011). It is aware of our interconnected existence and thus, green

consciousness is not about dominating and oppressing, but rather about a relationship of giving and receiving in a sustainable manner. It further acknowledges the complexities of nature; which besides harmonious, can also be chaotic, cruel and ugly (Caputi,2011). Most importantly, it recognizes that all forms of life and being are equally valuable and that consciousness is not exclusive to humans, but rather extends to any form of life (Caputi, 2011)

2.5. Approaches to nature

Environmental movements and their respective belief systems shape how society relates to nature but also how it is depicted. Thus, it seems relevant to know what are the different environmental thoughts that serve as ideological, representational, and discursive forces (Podeschi, 2002). The most prominent are environmentalism and ecologism, which Barrett (1999) shows are a reaction to processes of rapid development and modernization specific to certain locations, where their respective pollution issues resulted in increasing environmental concerns.

For the purposes and scope of this thesis, the focus will be placed on these approaches to address environmental problems. Thus, one main general distinction should be made before venturing into the specificities of environmental perspectives from the United States and Japan, pertaining to the difference between environmentalism and ecologism. While the former one deals with the consequences of environmental issues and places upfront the idea of ‘reform’ for sustainability goals; ecologism is a more radical perspective that calls for deeper structural and systemic changes with an ethical background that asks for the extension of our morals to non-human beings (Barrett, 1999).

2.5.1. United States: Managing Nature

Ingram (2000) does an overview of the environmental discourses present in the U.S.A starting from conservationism, moving on to preservationism, followed by ‘mainstream’ and radical environmentalism. Conservationism finds its origins in the 19th century and is characterized by the idea that nature can and needs to be used wisely so that humans can continue using its resources for economic growth (Vivanco, 2013).

Preservationism, on the other hand, looked at the necessity to protect nature as a space for spiritual and aesthetic contemplation (Podeschi, 2002). This perspective was especially

promoted by artists and intellectuals who reproduced and disseminated their viewpoints in their artistic and literary work (Harris, 1985). Besides the developments of environmentalism thanks to art and literature, science within the areas of geology and biology also contributed to this approach. However, Harris (1985) argues for a complementary political perspective – already present in the 19th century – concerned with the allocation and utilization of natural resources and the protection of people from environmental dangers detrimental to public health.

In the 1970s, modern environmentalism originated and implied a shift to promoting lifestyle changes rather than industrial reform (Soles, 2013). This mainstream environmentalism – that continues to this day – is thus involved in the interests of a capitalist system that promotes consumerism, profits and economic growth, and relies on economic, scientific and technical experts to provide solutions to environmental issues. From this perspective, environmental concerns are seen as resolved with technical solutions instead of political, which approaches nature from the existing logic of capitalism safeguarded by environmentalism (Harris, 1985).

On the other hand, ecologism is more compatible with the ideas of radical environmentalism, which offers an array of perspectives that range from deep ecology to social ecology and ecofeminism. Despite their differences, a shared idea is that mainstream environmentalism is not the solution as it feeds on a system that is the main cause for the degradation of nature; and because it uses a ‘greenwashing’ strategy to exaggerate representations of change and substitutes real change with its images (Ingram, 2000).

2.5.2. Japan: *Kami* and the Machine

To understand Japan’s environmental movements and philosophies, one important factor is the long tradition of Japanese culture and its products to portray humans and nature as interconnected; which is associated with Japan’s longstanding association of nature with religion and philosophical ideas, especially from Shintoism (Barrett, 1999), which combines Buddhist principles, animism and natural mythology (Wilson, 2020).

Rowland (2020) defines Shintoism as a set of beliefs deeply rooted within Japan’s geography. Its definition is a complicated endeavor in terms of its historical origin and

mistranslations from Japanese to English. Nonetheless, it is an animist way of thinking that assumes living and non-living beings have sensitivities that are as valuable as that of humans (Heise, 2014). Napier (2001) additionally introduces the concept of *kami*, a notion that has often been compared to the Western concept of 'god' or 'deity' and thus, has a holy or sacred position (Rowland, 2020).

With this ideological background, Japan's emergence of environmental concerns took a conservationist attitude and has been associated with their agricultural revolution during the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912). As a result, they focused on the control and management of resources. Besides this, new visions about life, nature, class and politics from a romantic perspective emerged, which intended to construct a sense of unity with nature (Irokawa, 1985; as cited in Barrett, 1999). However, with Japan's industrialization after the Meiji Restoration, technological advancement turned into the main priority and environmental movements were neutered by the government. The measures taken to address environmental issues took a technocentric approach by which solutions tended to rely on technological advancements (Barrett, 1999).

2.6. Nature on the Screen

2.6.1. 'Humanized' and dramatized nature

One long tradition in the representation of nature in movies is the persistence of anthropocentric features, which refers to a conception of humans as central to the world (Caraway & Caraway, 2020). As an example, Podeschi (2002) found that in his study of sci-fi movies there was a pattern of devaluing nature and positioning it as worthless when compared to humans. Since people are presented as superior to other forms of life (King, 1996), the main character of these cultural products tends to manifest in human form, who renders the natural world as a passive object that can be possessed (Todd, 2015).

This follows the melodrama narrative that was very conspicuous in the 1980s (Ingram, 2000) and still continues in the 21st century (Thevenin, 2013). Although the heroic protagonists are closely associated with 'authentic' and pristine forms of nature, the leadership is often given to a white male figure who will fight for and protect nature's interests. However, for the hero to exist, there needs to be an antihero or villain that in ecomovies can vary between two

archetypes: hunters and the 'big business' (e.g.: developers, corporations' tycoons, oil companies, etc.) (Ingram, 2000).

This dynamic of heroes and villains ignores the question of responsibility and allows for its displacement to an abstract and general entity that Ingram (2000) argues usually is a 'they' that simplifies, not only environmental issues but nature itself. On the other hand, there are other interpretations like that of Richard Slotkin (1998), who sees that melodrama narratives allow for the dramatization of ideological inconsistencies that could help formulate solutions to them.

In relation to anthropomorphism, in animated ecomovies there are anthropomorphic patterns by which nature is similar to the human world resulting in, for instance, animals having human-like behaviors (Napier, 2001). Furthermore, nature's characters are also endowed with features that appeal to humans, such as wide eyes and other facial characteristics that facilitate the viewer to empathize with a constructed archetype of nature (Whitley, 2008).

Animated movies not only shape nonhuman characters after human forms, but they also provide them with 'plasmaticness' features (Eisenstein, 1986; as cited in Heise, 2014), which means their bodies are given innumerable possibilities and flexibility to change their shape. Furthermore, anthropomorphism may represent nonhuman beings as characters with their own ways of thinking and behaving, forcing the viewer to include other forms of life in their worldview (Heise, 2014). Elements of anthropocentrism can also be seen in more recent movies from the last decades that have addressed environmental concerns more explicitly, such as the *Lorax* (2012) or *Wall-E* (2008), which usually acknowledge there is an immediate threat posed by humans' mistreatment of nature (Murray & Heumann, 2011).

2.6.2. Gendering Nature

Additionally, representations of nature have been connected with identity politics (Starosielski, 2011), especially with gender. King (1994) compares how nature is seen as a passive object – similarly to women's experiences (Fox, 1997) – whereas humans are usually represented by the figure of a white male superhero who saves nature.

Further feminization of the natural world can be seen in the aesthetics of the movies that render nature as 'cute', 'fragile' and highly feminized. Moreover, female characters related

to nature tend to be highly sexualized and limited in terms of their intellectual capabilities (Smith & Parsons, 2012). On the other hand, other scholars argue animated ecomovies and the plasmatic and malleable bodies that nature is endowed with, might be a good sign to counter the idea that nature is fragile as they venture into nature's capacity to adapt and withstand the humans' developments that will inevitably affect nature (Heise, 2014). In addition to these female stereotypical representations, another aesthetic representation of nature is related to a 'sublime' imagery usually through the great magnitude and sense of the vastness of the natural elements pictured.

These gendered patterns are criticized by socialist ecofeminism as women are associated with nature in terms of a patriarchal system that constructs both nature and women as nurturing objects that bear life, need protection, and as passive objects that can be managed and controlled (King, 1994). The mastery of nature and its dominion could be linked to another pervasive representation in which nature is expressed as inherently harmonious and balanced. This is in line with what Stephen Budiansky, as explained by Ingram (2000), says about environmentalism and ecologism sharing the idea that nature, if left alone and not intervened by humans, will be able to restore itself and go back to its harmonious and delicate balance. Consequently, movies reproduce an image of "static, timeless and harmonious" nature (Ingram, 2000, p.18).

These features connect to the cultural ecofeminist approach and green consciousness discussed in the previous section, by which the associations between women and nature are celebrated through discourses of interconnectedness, harmony and spirituality (Ingram, 2000). Therefore, this type of representation is aligned with preservationist principles, and with the human-culture split and master consciousness that divides unities: male from female, ingroup from the outgroup, human from nature, master from slave. As the master elite groups sustaining these understandings see nature as more savage, uncivilized, undesirable, and because of that reason that its exploitation is justified. Women, who are closer to how nature is understood are part of this enslaved split culture and consciousness as they are the presumed caretaker, child-bearers.

2.6.3. Domesticated Nature, the 'Wilderness' and the Pastoral Mode

From an ecofeminist perspective, nature is conceived in similar ways to how women are. Thus, we have seen that aspects associated with women are usually also characteristic of what we understand as nature. One such case has been linked to the control and management of both women and nature (King, 1994), which is further reproduced in representations of nature as domesticated and tamed, which has resulted in its simplification (Prévot-Julliard & Julliard, 2015). This tamed and over-simplified nature exempt from complex dynamics and processes has been argued to be the result of an increasing detachment of our modern and urbanized societies from nature as we are increasingly more surrounded by human-intervened environments (Prévot-Julliard & Julliard, 2015).

This process has been identified as the *extinction of experience* by Murray and Heumann (2011) and it refers to how our everyday lives are progressively devoid from physical encounters with nature. Thus, although there are more movies explicitly addressing environmental issues (Thevenin, 2013), their representations of nature are rather limited by the physical environments surrounding us where nature is less and less present (Murray & Heumann, 2011). Nonetheless, despite the extinction of experience and nature's domestication, nature has also been represented from two pervasive modes: the pastoral and the wilderness.

These modes are also connected with gendered stereotypes and preservationist principles, which have been reproduced through the use of colors and specific imagery that stress the sacred status of nature and justifies its value through its esthetic elements (Wolfe, 2008). The visual result manifests through vibrant colors and flourishing lush vegetation almost "reminiscent of a new Eden" (Brereton, 2015, p. 263). Thus, it seems that the Western approach to nature idealizes and romanticizes our natural environments with the 'pastoral mode' by which humans have an ideal and balanced relationship with a type of nature that can either be domesticated or 'wild' (Whitley, 2008).

Thus, a representation of a 'wild' nature is not necessarily incompatible with the pastoral mode, especially in the U.S.A., where they have been associated through a desire to reconnect with a past reality; an ever-lasting nostalgia of an idealized connection with nature.

The difference, however, is that the wild is strongly represented as a remote, uncivilized and primal nature; and associated with a purity and innocence that is separate from our 'civilized' world. As a consequence, representations of the wilderness can also be pastoral inasmuch as there is a sense of escape from the stress, exploitation and injustice so inherently present in our contemporary experiences (Whitley, 2008).

On a different account, the wilderness understood as primitive and uncivilized has been juxtaposed with a domesticated nature, which is an extension of our civilization (Podeschi, 2002). The emphasis by movie representations of domesticated nature as good, and wild nature as bad reinforces, once again, the master consciousness and the human-nature divide criticized by ecofeminism given that women and nature to be valued need to be civilized and domesticated (Plumwood, 1993).

2.6.4. A Commodified Paradox: The Simplicity of Greenwashing

Ingram (2004) argues movies' ideological work is embedded in capitalism, a system that limits our imaginations to visualise alternative environmental representations. Similarly, King (1994) highlights there is a liberal environmental paradox present in eco-movies, that despite evoking an environmental ethic, promotes the maintenance of existing social relations that celebrate consumerism. In relation to this theme, other authors have identified the commodification of nature as it is represented as a resource with value relative to the benefits and profits it provides to humans. Thus, nature is portrayed as a commodity that can be owned and exploited (King, 1994; Todd, 2015).

Caraway and Caraway (2020) also identify this paradox and refer to it as greenwashing. Although this term is mainly used to define the deliberate disinformation about the environmental practices of businesses to the consumer, these authors relate it with ecomovies inasmuch as the movies itself overlook, or displace, the responsibility of pernicious systemic actions to the individual; and instead, prompt its continuity (Caraway & Caraway, 2020). Thus, even if movies advocate for the environment, they still promote the continuity of current destructive systemic behaviors.

Paradoxical representations continue technological grounds where movies may present technological developments as evil and detrimental for the environment and, at the same time,

they also celebrate those technologies that are related to leisure and entertainment practices (Starosielski, 2011). Moreover, films tend to represent environmental issues as easily resolved with simplistic and liberal solutions rather than with complex systemic changes (Caraway & Caraway, 2020; Ingram, 2000; King, 1994).

This is connected to what Napier (2001) describes as the *reassurance* narrative, which portrays environmental issues not as urgent matters that need action, but rather as another product to be consumed. This type of narrative implies an ending of the movie in which the resolution of all problems is predictable; and in relation to the environment, the restoration of nature's harmony is expected. While this is the norm for the closure of movies' stories, Thevenin (2013) argues that movies produced by Ghibli present a new environmental narrative that could include Napier's (2001) identification of a *deassurance* narrative that challenges its overly idealistic counterpart.

This simplification of nature and environmental issues is further achieved by the shift of responsibility by rhetorical tools that frame the dangers and enemies that nature faces as 'the other' by, for instance, using the unspecific pronouns such as they which additionally creates the idea of an ingroup and outgroup (Ingram, 2000). This oversimplification and generalization reinforce the displacement of responsibility, a pervasive practice in media products like movies by which they draw attention to a more digestible cause for the audience (Caraway & Caraway, 2020).

2.7. Conclusion

As a brief overview of the above, from a cultural studies and mediatization perspective, animated ecomovies are a cultural product that not only reflects and reproduces our knowledge about nature, but have become an almost quintessential element to construct what we know about nature. Furthermore, it has been discussed that since media institutions are influenced by society, nature's representations in movies resonate with the context in which they are produced, leading to variances depending on the location of the discursive and representational practices. Nonetheless, from an ecofeminist perspective, there is a ubiquitous patriarchal system that results in a shared understanding of nature as female and inferior to a

masculine humanity, who takes advantage of his master position to dominate and oppress to control, not only women but also nature's resources.

Methodology

In this chapter, the description of the units of analysis, the sample criteria, and its collection process will be presented. This will be followed by an argumentation of the methodologies chosen – Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Discourse Analysis – and their operationalization. In the last section, a detailed illustration of the analysis will be provided, which commences with a pilot phase and a subsequent full analysis stage where I looked at all the data set considering the findings from the pilot phase.

3.1. Object of Study, Units of Analysis and Sample Collection

As Jäger argues (2001), a fundamental part of conducting research is identifying your object of study. For the purposes of this research, the investigation will be centred on animated ecomovies. As illustrated in Chapter 2, among ecocinema scholars there is a certain level of disagreement on what exactly constitutes ecomovies. However, for this study, ecomovies are constituted by any movie that, regardless of deliberate intention, transmits a message related to nature and are thus part of the eco-cinema genre (Brereton, 2015).

This being the case, four animated eco-movies were selected with a non-probability method known as purposive sampling, which entails that the researcher's decisions are based on his/her own judgement allowing him/her to fit the selected samples from a population into the goals of the study (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013). Contrary to usual associations of the word 'population' with people, in the context of research, it refers to all the cases that would qualify as being part of the object of the study (Etikan *et al.*, 2015), which in this case are animated ecomovies.

However, this method raises some concerns about the representativeness that the selected sample can have for the entire population. To address this issue, prior research on the topic and related concepts of the research question was conducted. This previous investigation ensures a higher degree of representativeness (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2018), as more knowledge enables a more grounded judgement of what are the characteristics of the population and thus, increase the compatibility and representativeness of the selected sample with that population (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013).

Thus, the sample criteria for the selection of units of analysis was based on four preconditions. First, the movies were animations where nature was represented, which for the purposes of this study excludes humans and encompasses natural living – mainly, animals and plants – *and* non-living elements – such as mountains, rocks, oceans, and so for. Second, these eco-movies were produced by renowned studios from two different countries, namely the U.S.A and Japan, as a way to close the gap found in the lack of cross-country comparisons. Third, considering that our understanding and knowledge about nature have evolved with time, animated eco-movies from different decades were considered. The timespan ranges from the 90s to the 2000s with at least ten years of difference between movies of a particular country. Thus, for a balanced sample that represented different cultural ideologies equally, for each decade two movies were selected from which one had to have been produced by a studio from the U.S.A and the remaining one by a Japanese studio. Fourth, to address issues of accessibility during the process of data collection and analysis, all four movies had to be available on online streaming platforms (Netflix and Disney +).

Given the scope and time limitations of this thesis, four animated eco-movies that adhered to the sample criteria were chosen. Those from the U.S.A were produced by Disney and Pixar and are *Pocahontas* (1995) of 1 hour 21 minutes, and *Up* (2009) of 1 hour 36 minutes. On the Japanese account, the films selected are *Pom Poko* (1994), of 1 hour 59 minutes duration, and *Ponyo* (2008), of 1 hour 42 minutes long. The selection of four movies produced by different countries is in hope of finding a more holistic conclusion on the topic and answer to the research question; as well as to close the gap found in the lack of cross-country studies. Furthermore, it also adheres to the requirements from the Methodological Guidelines (Janssen & Verboord, 2019).

Considering the research question of this study and that, what we understand as nature is always in relation to its relative position to humans, the focus of the analysis was on environmental discourses. These have been defined by having two aspects: one, related to commentary on how nature is valuable in relation to humanity, its society and culture; and second, the type of relationship these have with nature and the environment (Podeschi, 2002).

Considering the multimodal discourse analysis that will be employed, both screenshots and screenplays will be used in the analysis. The scripts were collected using Google search with the “[Movie name] + [year] + script”. Since the screenplays found come from unofficial websites – *sublikescript.com* for *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Ponyo* (2008), and *orkein.net* for *Pocahontas* (1995) and *imsdb.com* for *Up* (2009) – they were checked with the movies as they were being played to fix inconsistencies and make corrections.

The scripts were complemented with screenshots for further visual analysis taken from every scene. It should be noted that a scene is the “part of a play or movie in which the action stays in one place for a continuous period of time” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). However, since a scene can have different shots and transitions (Israel, 2018), the screenshots were taken every time there was a transition to a different shot, which may or may not mark the beginning of a new scene.

As Follows (2017) shows, an average film can have from over 400 shots to over 1500 shots, depending on the genre. Thus, considering the limitations in time and scope of this thesis, a careful selection of the total screenshots taken was conducted. This process was primarily focused on identifying relevant objects to environmental discourses in terms of natural environments and elements such as animals, plants and landscapes; or human-made artifacts in terms of technology or development (Podeschi, 2002). However, since this criterion still implied an unmanageable quantity of data, the following conditions were also considered to reduce it.

First, presence of the main characters (*Pom Poko* (1994): Shokichi; *Pocahontas* (1995): Pocahontas and John Smith; *Ponyo* (2008): Sosuke and Ponyo; *Up* (2009): Carl and Russel). Second, if the characters are humans, the screenshot was selected if they were interacting with non-human living beings. Third, presence of human-made artifacts (e.g.: house, utensils, construction devices, etc). Fourth, interaction between non-human living beings with those artifacts. Since these criteria are non-linear and sometimes overlap at a different level, a more detailed and visual representation of how these factors determined to keep or to discard a screenshot is provided in Figure 1.

An additional element considered in this selection process was the reappearance of some conditions, in which case the first screenshot among those that are similar was chosen. The selected screenshots taken were organized numerically with their respective timestamps (see Appendix B).

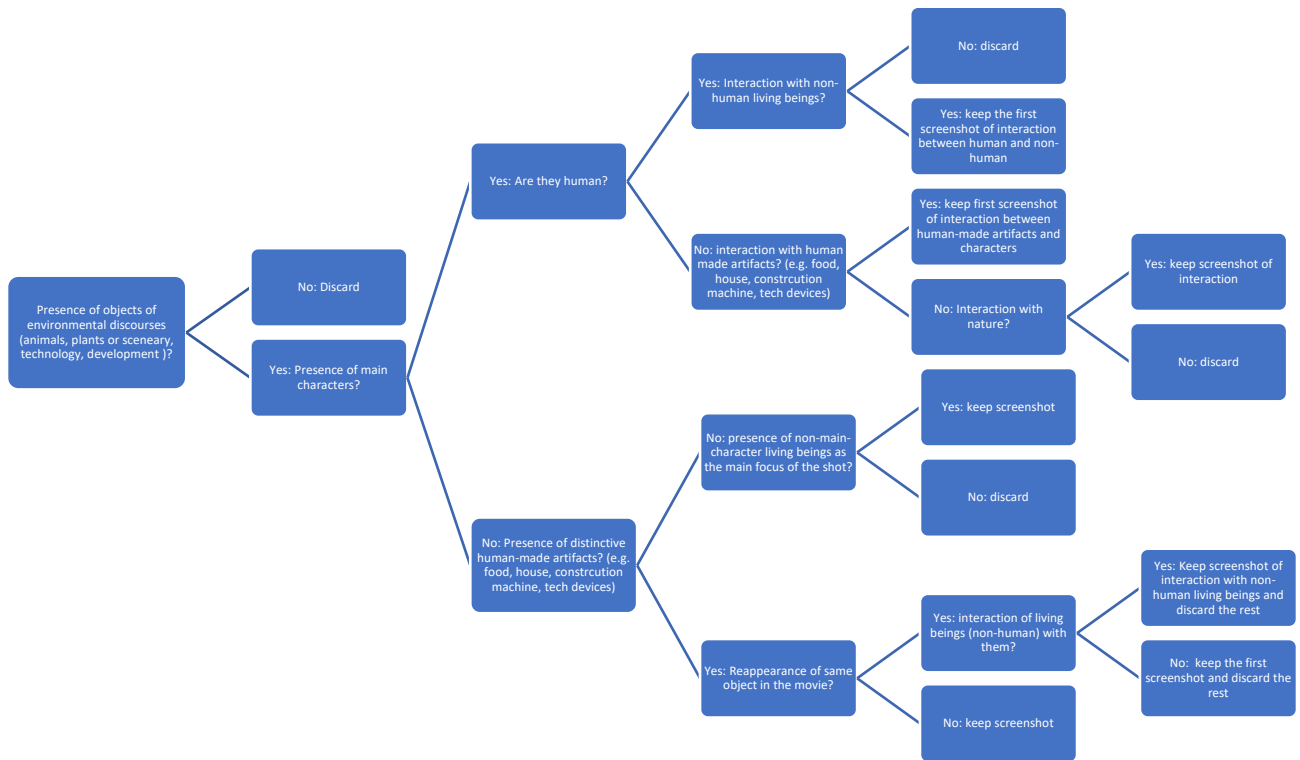


Figure 1. Diagram made by the author for the selection process of the screenshots

3.2. Qualitative Methods

According to Ingram (2000), movies sustain a multi-layered ideological work that, as Wildfeuer (2014) argues, can be seen in the usage of both textual and visual language. Moreover, Wolfe (2008) argues animations reinforce ideologies in a prominent visual format. Provided these premises, movies represent the societal and cultural assumptions of the 'knowledge' we have about nature, which implies the presence of not just ideology but also relations of power. Therefore, the object of this study is more related to an interpretive

approach rather than a descriptive one. Consequently, a combination of qualitative research methods has been considered to be the best approach. The methods employed will address the importance of written language and images and thus, are Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Discourse Analysis. As both are qualitative methods, they will allow the researcher to intensively explore the nuances of the case being studied – especially considering that the answer to the research question is difficult to quantify – and lead to “richer and more informative” findings (Seaman, 2008, p. 36).

3.2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Since the representation of nature in movies has proved to be a construction based on an ideological work that adheres to dominant discourses of race, gender and class (Starosielski, 2011), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been chosen as an appropriate method to unravel hegemonic and dissenting discourses; which are not only constructed and disseminated, but also reproduce patterns of ideological frameworks and power dynamics that, in turn, influence how language is used to convey meaning, for what purposes, and to which audience messages are directed to (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

In the process of unearthing these naturalized and opaque strategies that hide the ideologies within which we operate in our societal and cultural realm, language is a major focus. Teun van Dijk (2008) specifies that CDA is particularly concerned with a form of power characterized by its abusive use, which he also calls domination, that results in unequal and unjust relations. Furthermore, Fairclough (2013) argues that one main concern of CDA is to unravel how the use of language, or discourse, is connected with societal and cultural changes. Thus, CDA helps broaden the understanding of how the relations of humans and nature are being constructed, and how they change through discourses that, in the case of this research, are sustained in the dialogues of movies. It will enable the researcher to deconstruct the ideological work behind what is taken for granted, what is explicit and implicit, and make interpretations about what social world the text is supporting and reproducing (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Machin and Mayr (2012) provide the researcher with the following elements to pay attention to when conducting CDA:

Word connotations: Provided that the producers of discourses select their words with some interests in mind, the researcher must look at the utilization of relevant words that might signal to these interests (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In my analysis, I paid attention to words and constructions related to nature, humans and how they both related and described each other.

Overlexicalization: Discourses can accomplish their persuasive objectives through the emphasis on a topic by using multiple words with similar meanings (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The overuse of certain words and expressions was studied considering the word connotations found.

Suppression: Discourses may try to persuade by omitting information, which confirms pre-existing assumptions of how our world operates. Thus, looking at what is absent or suppressed in the text is equally important to overlexicalization (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This is connected to the discussed naturalization of ideologies in Chapter 2. In the analysis, I focused on the words that were repeated and connoted and contrasted them with their opposite meanings to check whether they were absent or present in the text (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Structural oppositions: Suppression of certain ideas in a text can lead to structural oppositions, or opposing concepts (Machin & Mayr, 2012). I focused on the opposition of humans and nature, and their understanding as separate and/or incompatible entities in terms of conduct, coexistence, and similarities. When analyzing the scripts, I focused on what human characters said in relation to nature; and when there were natural living beings with dialogue, I looked at whether they said anything to characterize humans on the same grounds as humans did.

Lexical choices: Machin and Mayr (2012) refer to these choices of language and genre as serving certain goals in terms of claiming authority or simulating equalization with the audience to gain persuasive strength. However, given that the sample is mainly a product of entertainment that does not seek authority or power legitimation as in, for instance, a political speech, this aspect of CDA was not expected to be present. To confirm or discard this supposition, a pilot phase was conducted. In this pilot phase, based on Machin and Mayr (2012), I looked for words indicating expertise in knowledge about nature through the use of scientific jargon. The other type of lexical choices identified by these authors, colloquial and

everyday language, was not considered as a factor to determine the importance of lexical choices in this research given that the data sample is part of a genre made to be understood by young audiences.

3.2.2. Visual Discourse Analysis

Considering that the unit of analysis consists of visuals, which along with oral and written language also influence our perception of reality, focusing just on the linguistic elements would overlook the contribution of images to the meaning-making process (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Thus, Visual Discourse Analysis (VDA) was also utilized, given that images represent an ideological work and certain ideas the same way language does because they carry meaning (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, images say things that language cannot (Machin & Mayr, 2012). As Fernández-Vázquez and Sancho-Rodríguez (2020) argue, going beyond the framework of CDA implies expanding the focus on textual language to other signs such as visual images. Moreover, the combination of CDA with VDA is even more relevant considering that movies are embedded with multimodal discourses as they transmit meaning through different semiotic ways, which in this case are mainly textual and visual language (Wang, 2014).

The toolkit provided by Machin and Mayr (2012) to do visual analysis is summarized by looking at:

Iconography: In this step, there are two levels of analysis. One descriptive, also identified as connotation, where I described what the image showed. The second level is related to the connotations, or the abstract ideas conveyed, of the image. In the analysis, I focused on the representation of the natural settings and living beings, as well as how they related to humans. Informed by the literature review, I looked for signs of anthropomorphism, commodification, 'tamed', 'greenwashing', pastoral and feminized images of nature. Some of the questions I considered to assess the presence of features in line with these representations were: Do natural living beings resemble humans? Are natural elements being used as a tool or resource beneficial for humans? Has nature been intervened by humans? Are natural elements connected to symbols of consumerism? Do the images of nature refer to a romanticized past? Does nature have features associated with women (e.g.: in curvy appearance, bigger eyes, etc.)?

After describing and establishing the main abstract ideas being connoted, I prepared to make a list of the *attributes*, or objects, present in the given screenshot to discuss what meaning is being transmitted through the presence of certain objects or elements. Another crucial element in VDA is the *setting*, which is the context and in the case of movies, implies defining the background of an image to discover what discourses and values are being communicated. Settings are used as instruments that can reinforce certain meanings over others as they connote discourses and action. I looked for what the background showed in terms of what space it was (natural or 'human') and the color (the predominance of certain colors to represent either natural or associated human elements such as their living spaces).

The final step entailed the *salience* of certain features. In other words, what does step out? In order to define salience, I focused on the employment of potent cultural symbols, size (larger objects are used to attract attention), color (more vibrant and saturated colors are easier to be noticed), tone, focus (where is the stress in the image), overlapping or foregrounding (this is placing an object in front of another). These features communicate the central symbolic meaning of the visual composition.

3.3. Data Analysis

3.3.1. Pilot Phase

Yujin Kim (2011), while acknowledging the lack of attention to pilot studies in qualitative inquiries, argues on the multiple benefits they have for an informed development of any given research. Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) define it as a small-scale version of the prospected study that helps the researcher in assessing and improving if needed the main research by testing the feasibility of the research plans regarding the collection of the data, the methods employed, and the analysis itself (Kim, 2011). Thus, conducting this pre-testing phase helped me assess the suitability of the elements discussed regarding CDA and VDA and gain insights for the future main analysis.

This pilot phase was employed on the first 5 screenshots I selected, and the first 5 pages of the scripts. From the pilot study, it was decided that the lexical choices from CDA would not be considered for the main analysis, since no instance of the use of scientific terms to refer to, or explain, nature was found. Thus, it did not seem appropriate to assume the producers of the movies intended to gain legitimacy and authority over their audience to persuade them on how to understand, think about, and experience nature. This does not exclude the assumption that these lexical choices were made on the grounds of given and naturalized ideologies. But these aspects were covered by word connotations, overlexicalization, suppression and structural opposition.

3.3.2. Analysis

The analysis was conducted in three stages where the first one entailed doing CDA and VDA separately as explained by Machin and Mayr (2012), and with the adjustments made after the pilot study. CDA was carried out using NVivo in order to organize the notes I took regarding the scripts. After reading the text in detail, I first highlighted in codes what could be word connotations, overlexicalization, suppression and structural opposition. At the same time, I made comments about the first ideas that emerged to interpret those elements in regard to what meanings are being conveyed, what is being emphasized and/or ignored, what are the main arguments used, who is talking and to whom, what power relations are being reproduced and/or challenged.

The second stage entailed finding discursive patterns to create main themes for Chapter 4. This resulted in two main categories: one that complied with the master consciousness and the split culture; and a second one encompassing counter-narratives named after “green consciousness”. VDA was conducted using Microsoft OneNote to make comments regarding the elements needed to analyze visual language. At the final stage, the screenshots were assigned to the themes generated in step 2.

3.4. Credibility Concerns

Considering that the methods of research are qualitative, which are known for their interpretive nature, the researcher should acknowledge that the findings will not be the ultimate truth. Thus, the results should be considered as one of the multiple possible interpretations that the data analyzed could have. This recognition addresses issues of validity (how accurately the results reflect what is being studied) in research (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Furthermore, as with any study, other issues of credibility relate to reliability, which is concerned with the methodological procedure being consistent and acknowledging the individual biases of the researcher (Noble & Smith, 2015). In my case, the fact that I am not a native English speaker is of relevance when looking at the results. Especially considering that the sample data was studied in English, which might have resulted in misinterpretations or meanings lost in translation, and even overlooked. Furthermore, my personal interest in environmentalism has had an influence in the selection of a topic related to nature; which, when combined with my studies on media, and my upbringing watching animated movies, led to the research question on how nature was represented in animated ecomovies. Moreover, my experience of being a woman has made me resonate particularly with the ecofeminist perspective from my theoretical framework.

To ensure consistency and address these concerns on biased results, the processes and frameworks of CDA and VDA are provided to increase transparency in the analysis and the methodology. Additionally, the results include quotes and screenshots from where the interpretations were inferred (Silverman, 2011). To further guarantee trustworthiness and increase the transparency of the methods (Silverman, 2011; Noble & Smith, 2015), an illustration of how I conducted CDA and VDA has been incorporated in Appendices C and D.

Results and Discussion

This chapter will elaborate on the findings from the multimodal analysis conducted for the four movies, which, for the purposes of this thesis, had natural living beings as main characters and/or the plot developed in a natural setting. *Pom Poko* (1994) tells the story of a group of *tanukis*¹ from Tama Hills, in the outskirts of Tokyo, and their struggle in the face of a development project that is denuding their home. *Pocahontas* (1995) is a love story between a Native American, Pocahontas, and an Englishman, John Smith, who has travelled to the New World with the intent to find gold. *Ponyo* (2008) is a love story between Sosuke, a human kid, and a goldfish named Ponyo. *Up* (2009) shows the adventures in a remote place in South America of an old, widowed man, Carl Friedricksen, and a kid called Russel (see Appendix A for more details about the movies). The quotations and screenshots employed to illustrate the interpretations made will be identified with an abbreviation of the title of their respective ecomovie, namely: PP for *Pom Poko* (1994), PH for *Pocahontas* (1995), PN for *Ponyo* (2008), and U for *Up* (2009).

Most of nature's representations resonate with ecofeminist elements, as explained in chapter 2, which are intrinsic to the master consciousness and the human-nature split argued by Plumwood (1993) and Radford (1995). Thus, this chapter starts discussing the results that align to dominant representations with an emphasis on themes about anthropocentrism, the commodification of nature, a gendered nature, and gendered representations of the pastoral and the wild mode. These themes, which align with the dominant representations and discourses about nature, have been found to be in an ideological struggle with alternative and counter-narratives; which will be discussed under the umbrella term of *green consciousness* used by Caputi (2011) in a second section that encompasses two subsections: a queer interconnected nature, and the agency of nature. Furthermore, it should be noted that cultural and temporal differences will be explored throughout all sub-themes mentioned if relevant.

¹ *Tanuki* is the Japanese word equivalent to 'raccoon'

4.1. The Master Consciousness

4.1.1. Anthropocentrism: Humans First

All four movies presented an anthropocentric belief system by which nature was represented in relation to humans, who are characterized as being superior to, and as having power over nature in accordance with the master consciousness. Unsurprisingly, the cases of Disney and Pixar live off these discursive and representational practices by having humans as the main characters. Furthermore, although they interact with animals and other natural elements, these are represented as comical and as being subordinates of the humans they accompany. Thus, the depicted nature did not add anything to what these characters – and by extension nature – had to express about their experiences, values and ideas. As an illustration, in *Pocahontas* (1995), Meeko, the raccoon, and Flit, the hummingbird who accompany Pocahontas; and Percy, the Governor's dog, are limited to an assigned humoristic role that makes them behave in a playful manner, fight among them, or adopt absurd conducts such as using perfume or deodorant like Percy:



Figure 2. Screenshot taken by the author from PH

The comic relief achieved through these animals and their peripheral role contrasted with the main characters of *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Ponyo* (2008), who were mainly animals. This could be explained by the deeply rooted Shinto and Buddhist beliefs in Japan and their longstanding tradition to worship natural elements who are seen as *kami* (Rowland, 2020). Traces of these religions were especially apparent in *Pom Poko* (1994), which had multiple references to, and representations of Buddhist and Shinto elements:

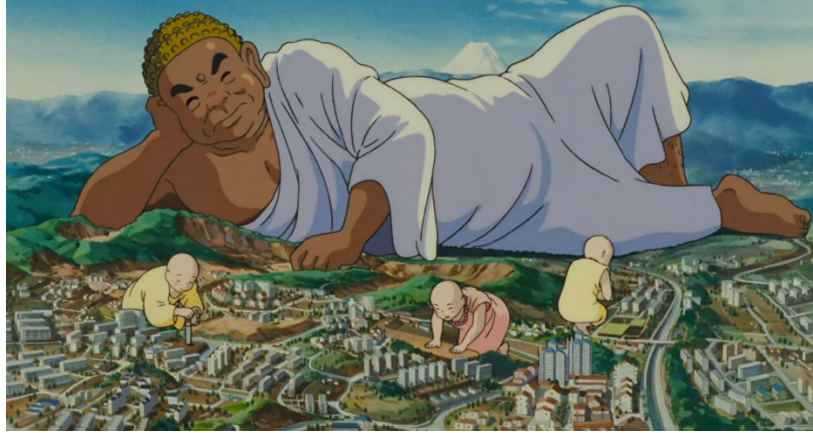


Figure 3. Screenshot taken by the author from PP

Nonetheless, this ecomovie also aligned with anthropocentrism, especially when the *tanukis* refer to humans as if they were more powerful than the gods given their ability to change the environment at their will for the development project of a new suburb of Tokyo:

We always thought they were animals just like us, but now we know we were wrong.

They must be even more powerful than the gods (PP).

This power relations dynamic is just an example of how those who represent nature – in this case, the *tanukis* – are depicted as inevitably incompatible with humans, which reinforces the human-nature split. In the case of *Pom Poko* (1994) this split is continuously reminded in their dialogues as they always refer to humans with “the”. This resort not only indicates that the *tanukis* are not humans, but also connotes that they are distancing themselves from “the humans” (PP), who are strongly portrayed as the villain and their enemy. Particularly by the *tanuki* named Gonta, who is the character with the most extremist perspective on how to address the deforestation of their home: “Out with the humans! Slaughter the humans!” (PP). Considering that the four movies have a villain that is human; it was surprising to find that in the ‘Western’ representations of nature, it is nature who ‘worships’ humans through the presence of ‘wild’ and/or domesticated animals that behave towards them as loyal subjects. As Dug, one of the dogs ‘owned’ by Muntz, the adventurer long admired by Carl in *Up* (2009), says: “My master is good and smart” (UP).

An additional finding related to anthropocentrism was found when comparing the ecomovies by decades regarding the degree to which animals are being controlled by humans. While in the ecomovies of the 90s, animals are ‘wild’ and thus, have relative freedom from

humans in relation to movement and behaviour; in the case of *Ponyo* (2008) and *Up* (2009), natural actors are conceived by humans as property in the form of pets. This could be the result of our increased urbanized society in which one of our main contacts with natural beings is through domesticated animals. However, through this temporal difference there is another cultural divergence in the representation of how humans have power over these animals; namely, that the Japanese ecomovies endow natural elements with much more independence and agency, especially through their plasmatic ability to change their form.

Interestingly, stronger compliance to anthropocentrism in Disney's and Pixar's ecomovies resulted in natural elements having more anthropomorphic behaviours (see Figure 2 and 4). On the other hand, the animal characters from these studios are not able to communicate in humans' language as the *tanukis* and *Ponyo*, unless they have a translator like the dogs of Muntz. As seen in chapter 2, language, and being able to communicate are forms of power. Thus, it could be said that the anthropomorphic features endowed to the animals from *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Ponyo* (2008) ecomovies grant them the possibility to dissent from dominant representations found in *Pocahontas* (1994) and *Up* (2009) of a passive nature that serves and is peripheral to humans.



Figure 4. Screenshot taken by the author from U

Further cultural differences present in the ecomovies regarding the theme of anthropocentrism relate to how humans are perceived by nature. In the more familiar discourse of Disney and Pixar, humans are somehow blamed for the degradation and mistreatment of nature; either through a villain that could be identified as 'development' in *Pocahontas* (1995) or the 'hunter' in *Up* (2009). In the case of *Pocahontas* (1995) the members of the Virginia Company, whose goal is to establish a colony in the 'New World', are the ones shown to be cutting down trees and excavating the soil as they look for gold:



Figure 5. Screenshots taken from PH

In *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Ponyo* (2008), there are also visual representations showing humans as the ones responsible for the damage of the environment, which is implied through the appearance of human artifacts such as a bulldozer or a fishing net (see Figure 6). However, Studio Ghibli products go beyond visual subtle hints and make explicit accusations about how humans are the villain and the enemy of nature. As an example, Kyoshi, a female *tanuki*, tells Shokichi, the main character, how one of her relatives was hunted by a human: “A hunter killed my grandpa. But grandpa wasn't boiled or fried. Someone paid a lot for his pelt” (PP). As a result, nature’s characters forthrightly demonize and, ironically, dehumanize humans. Gonta, for instance, the most radical *tanuki*, compares them with undesirable noxious pests: “The two legs are our sworn enemy! They're vermin. We’ve got to get rid of them once and for all!” (PP). Similarly, Fujimoto, Ponyo’s father, sees humans as undesirable and dangerous creatures: “How often have I warned you about humans? Their very breath is polluted” (PN).

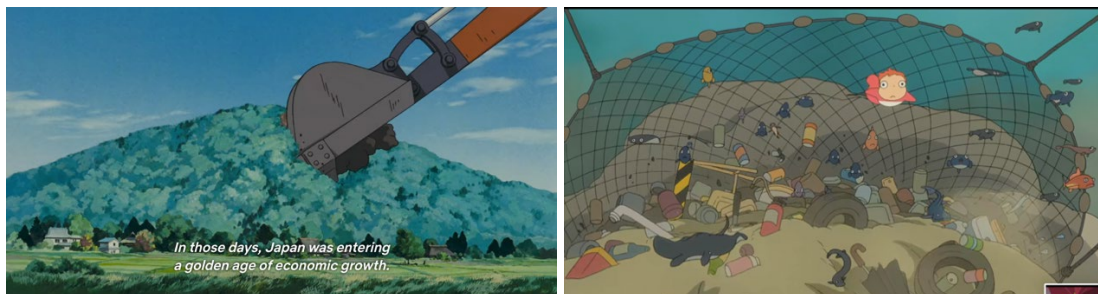


Figure 6. Screenshots taken from PP and PN respectively

These two ecomovies show that nature-related characters have a great aversion towards humans, which contrasts with the Western representations of animal characters, who very easily befriend them. This is clearly exemplified by the ‘exotic’ and ‘wild’ bird that is supposedly not domesticated, and which Russel names Kevin. This animal, although presumably

not familiar with humans, immediately interacts with Russel as if it had known him for a very long time or as if Russel was one of its own kind (see Figure 7). Moreover, the superiority and higher position of humans in relation to nature are also discursively reproduced with dialogues that show humans can claim and own any natural element even if it has a life of its own. As an illustration, Russel assumes that, because Kevin the bird is following him, it is his property: “That's my new giant bird pet. I trained it to follow us” (UP).



Figure 7. Screenshot taken from U

With this rhetoric, which is similar to how the Englishmen from the Virginia Company have naturalized that the land can be owned and exploited, nature is represented as a passive object that humans can possess for their own convenience and delight. On the other hand, while *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Ponyo* (2008) also reproduce this belief system, there is an explicit critique that especially manifests in their anthropomorphic abilities that allow them to communicate and generate their own narratives; a practice that is missing in Disney's and Pixar's products, which reproduce more conspicuously the master consciousness and the human-culture split.

4.1.2. Commodified Nature

While the theme of anthropocentrism was treated differently in terms of whether the ecomovie was a film from the U.S.A or Japan; for this sub-theme, *Pom Poko* (1994) and *Pocahontas* (1995), share a depiction of nature as being valuable to humans because of its resources, and the profits and benefits they can obtain by exploiting it. In both cases, the characters who are the villains endorse this understanding, and the main characters who

represent nature show a more critical perspective that defends nature's interests to some extent. As an illustration, the main goal of Ratcliffe, the Governor and leader of the Virginia Company in *Pocahontas* (1995), is to get rich with the arbitrarily high-valued natural resource that gold is. On the other hand, John Smith, one of his subordinates who falls in love with Pocahontas, says: "This place is incredible! And to think, we came all this way just to dig it up for gold" (PH). However, even with such a quote, which shows an appreciation of the natural environment the English colonizers are intensively denuding, one can still question what type of value Smith is implying and reproducing. One interpretation is that he is suggesting that, if the nature that surrounds him were not aesthetically beautiful, he would not regret destroying it. Thus, this Disney ecomovie presents signs of compliance with conservationist and preservationist principles. It first shows that humans want to manage nature as a resource for their own benefits, while at the same time derives nature's value from its aesthetic beauty.

On the other hand, the *tanukis* from *Pom Poko* (1994) do not focus on the beauty of nature. However, as the ecomovie of *Pocahontas* (1995), they also reproduce conservationist ideas, but from a more critical point of view. Nonetheless, they show signs of having internalized and naturalized their own commodification: "In the modern era, we've been hunted for our pelts and our fur has been used for paintbrushes and toothbrushes" (PP). This quote, from Granny Oroku, by illustrating the way humans oppress them with a relatively neutral vocabulary, showcases how opaque the commodification of nature has become even for nature's actors themselves.

When comparing the topic of commodification from the ecomovies of the 90s with the relatively more recent representations of nature in *Ponyo* (2008) and *Up* (2009); it is noteworthy to mention that, while the older ecomovies commodified nature as a resource (e.g.: gold, land, for utensils, and so on), the ecomovies from the 2000s did so in terms of ownership. Dogs, exotic birds and sea animals are implied to be objects and possessions of humans; not only with how they are treated and how their existence is limited by their 'owners', but also in how humans refer to them with a naturalized rhetoric where using possessive pronouns is the norm. As an illustration, Kumiko (a classmate of Sosuke), when she sees Ponyo for the first time says: "My goldfish is much cuter" (PN).

Although this ownership narrative complies with the master consciousness, the fact that some animals can be part of humans' lives could quiver the lines of the human-nature split. Nonetheless, in the case of *Up* (2009), this temporal difference by which the ecomovies of the 2000s reproduce discourses about owning natural living beings, converges with the conservationist commodification of nature from the 90s, by depicting nature as nothing more than the means to an end. As an example, Muntz's dogs are not with him to keep him company or because he sees them as 'friends', but rather because they serve a greater goal: to restore his stained reputation. To achieve his purpose, he needs to capture Kevin the exotic bird of Paradise Falls, for what he has trained his dogs to track it and hunt it. Additionally, Muntz's dogs are even sacrificed if needed: "I've tried to smoke it out of that deathly labyrinth where it lives...Can't go in after it. Once in, there's no way out. Lost so many dogs..." (U). As we can see, there is some degree of lament, but there is no sign of guilt or responsibility for the safety of the dogs that live with him. Thus, Western representations of nature, despite the temporal difference mentioned above, represent nature as a resource humans can use and waste as if they were disposable objects. On the other hand, even if seen as property or a resource, in their Japanese counterparts, natural elements have a life of their own, which they try to protect.

Besides this cultural difference, I was able to identify an additional one related to a type of commodification that goes beyond conservationism. This was related to how Disney's and Pixar's ecomovies depicted nature as an object of entertainment to be consumed by humans. This could be argued with the existence of ecomovies themselves, which are produced to be watched as an entertainment product where nature is part of it. However, looking more closely at the visual and textual content of these ecomovies, human characters in Disney's and Pixar's ecofilms tend to refer to nature in relation to something unknown that needs to be explored. This was a discourse that primarily emanated from white male figures such as John Smith, who, right after arriving at the New World, starts singing:

*All of my life I have searched for land like this one
A wilder more challenging country I couldn't design
Hundreds of dangers await and I don't plan to miss one*

In a land I can claim, a land I can tame

The greatest adventure is mine (PH).

From a different perspective, and in a more contemporary setting, Russel, the kid that accompanies Carl in his air-balloon house to Paradise Falls, is a member of the Wilderness Explorer club. The name of the club itself signals the commodification of a wild nature to entertain kids. This type of entertainment takes the form of several activities that the club's members need to accomplish to achieve a higher rank. As Russel explains to Carl: "These are my Wilderness Explorer badges. You may notice one is missing. It's my Assisting the Elderly badge." As we can see, the tasks are not necessarily related to nature, which signals a type of commodification that blurs the lines that define what is nature and what is not. Consequently, the way Russel's club depicts wild nature seems to be far from accurate. Probably due to the extinction of experience of nature available to humans in our current times. As a result, Russel himself, once having been for some time in a real wild nature setting, confesses to Carl the following: "The wilderness isn't quite what I expected. It's kinda... wild. I mean, it's not how they made it sound in my book" (U).

Thus, while John Smith embraces wild nature and 'plays' with it without hesitation, in our modern societies, nature is a stranger unless it is domesticated. Furthermore, Russel's quote not only connotes our disconnection with nature. It also illustrates that the social construction of this unfamiliar element is very sanitized, which results in a manipulated misrepresentation of nature to satisfy the taste of humans so that they can still consume it even if it is 'unreal'.

4.1.3. An Oppressed and Feminized Nature

All four movies shared a story in which nature was negatively affected by humans' actions. This pattern has been identified from a socialist ecofeminist perspective as a way of comparing nature with women due to their longstanding unequal power relations with men, or humanity in this case (Plumwood, 1993). In *Pom Poko* (1994) the *tanukis* suffer from the destruction of their habitat due to a development project for a new suburb in Tokyo. In *Pocahontas* (1995), the land where the Powhatan people—the group of Native Americans Pocahontas belongs to—live in harmony with nature is plundered by white Englishmen. In

Ponyo (2008) the ocean is polluted by humans. In *Up* (2009), the life and wellbeing of an exotic bird are threatened by a resented old explorer.

The women-nature analogy is reproduced in all movies, regardless of time and place, by associating nature with gendered female stereotypes and/or by personifying nature as female. In general terms, animals were endowed with likable features such as wide-open eyes, fluffy fur, chubby faces and playful behavior that depicted them as cute, a longstanding characteristic associated with women that implies nature's feminization (Plumwood, 1993). However, the human-nature split where men represent humanity and the civilized world; and women are connected to nature, the unknown and/or the unexplored, is most obvious in the pictorial representations of the ecomovies. As an example, *Ponyo's* mother, called Granmamare is the personification of a sea goddess and thus, is the closest figure to nature. Even though her goddess-like existence is not explicitly expressed, Wu (2016) has identified her with the Japanese goddess of everything that flows – such as rivers and oceans - known as Benzaiten.

Similarly, another character from *Pocahontas* (1995) representing nature is Grandmother Willow, an ancient willow tree that resembles an old woman. Both share a magical and beyond-reason existence. Granmamare takes the form of a young woman who not only has great proportions that she can alter in size at her own convenience, but she also has a translucent body from which seeming magical yellow light emanates. Besides these features, the feminization of nature is present in her extreme beauty, the use of bright colours such as red and blue, and what seems to be an astounding waterproof make up most apparent in her eyes and lips (see Figure 8). In the case of Grandmother Willow, the feminization through her aesthetical appearance is less present as the bark of the willow tree and the features of her wrinkled face attribute her a very old age (see Figure 8). However, this could be in line with the cultural approach to ecofeminism since the connotated wisdom that this entity has is by extension attributed to nature too.

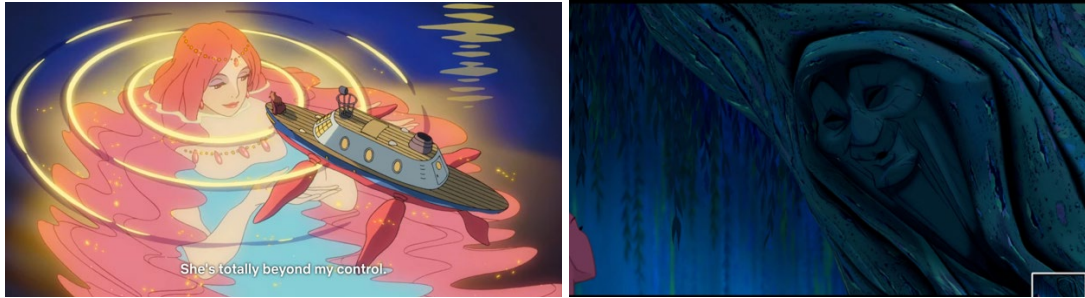


Figure 8. Screenshots taken by the author from PN and PH respectively

Nonetheless, though different in appearance, these female magical figures have in common an assigned ‘mother’ role. This can be inferred from their names alone, but in the ecomovies they are also presented as nurturing and caring characters that treat humans as their family. As an illustration, when Grandmother Willow interacts with Pocahontas, she uses possessive pronouns or affective nouns: “Is that my Pocahontas?” (PH), “Child, remember your dream? (PH)”.

Related assigned roles to female animals are also hinted in *Up* (2009) as the exotic bird that Russel names Kevin is looking for food to nourish her chicks. As Dug illustrates: “She has been gathering food for her babies and must get back to them”. The reiteration of the mother role in more realistic natural living beings is also evident in the female *tanukis* of *Pom Poko* (1994); who have a secondary presence that is mostly related to nurturing, supporting, and taking care of their male *tanuki* partners. As an example, both Otama, the wife of Gonta; and Koharu, the partner of Tamasaburo, look after their partners when they get injured or sick. As the narrator explains: “His loving wife Otama cared for him tenderly”, and: “Koharu, who stayed by Tamasaburo’s bedside and miraculously nursed him back to health”. What this practice reproduces is the split culture that separates men and women in which the male figures have more power and are more valued.

From a socialist ecofeminist lens, the result is the representation of nature as inferior to humans, is also connoted in how male characters want to protect nature-related characters. This is especially true in the more recent movies of *Ponyo* (2008) and *Up* (2009) in which the kid’s characters of Sosuke and Russel see themselves as the protectors of nature. As an illustration, Sosuke, when his mother asks him if he is allowed to bring Ponyo to the school, he answers: “It’ll be fine. I’ll look after her” (PN).

4.1.4. Gendering the Pastoral and the Wild

In addition to how nature was represented as cute and/or beautiful through characters related to nature, the stylization of the environment is further achieved by the pictorial representations of natural settings and scenery. Primarily, the analysis discovered two main representations that aligned with the literature review (see Chapter 2). These were the cuter pastoral mode and the more sublime and breathtaking imagery of wilderness.

Among the movies, the settings from *Pom Poko* (1994) were more compatible with the pastoral mode inasmuch as they presented an idealized harmonious relationship between nature and humans that used to be possible. As an illustration of a nostalgic past, the *tanukis*, once they know they have lost the battle against the humans and that their woods are nowhere to be seen, decide to join forces one last time to shape-shift Tama New Town into the old Tama Hills. As the environment rewinds to its past form, the *tanukis* bring the audience back to a time when people lived on farms and worked the land in exchange for its fruit. Thus, the nature that is reminisced is not a pristine nature untouched by humans (see Figure 9), but a managed one where the presence of farms resonates with conservationist principles and a romanticized nature that corresponds to preservationist understandings.



Figure 9. Screenshot taken by the author from PP

Pocahontas (1995), when compared to its Japanese counterpart, not only depicted nature with the pastoral mode, but it also combined it with a representation of nature as ‘wild’. This ecomovie conceived nature as untamed, but this was attained through a manufactured nostalgia that seems to go back to the deep history that would lead to the foundation of the country of the U.S.A (Whitley, 2008). Thus, the combination of the wild and the pastoral mode in this ecomovie can be seen in its pictorial representations of nature as a remote and distant

location in time and space where the interactions between humans and nature are idealized. It resonated with the 'noble savage' narrative (Brereton, 2015) of an ecological Native American (Ingram, 2000) that harvests the crops, fishes or hunts with a seemingly permanent smile that connotes a harmonious and pastoral lifestyle attuned with nature:

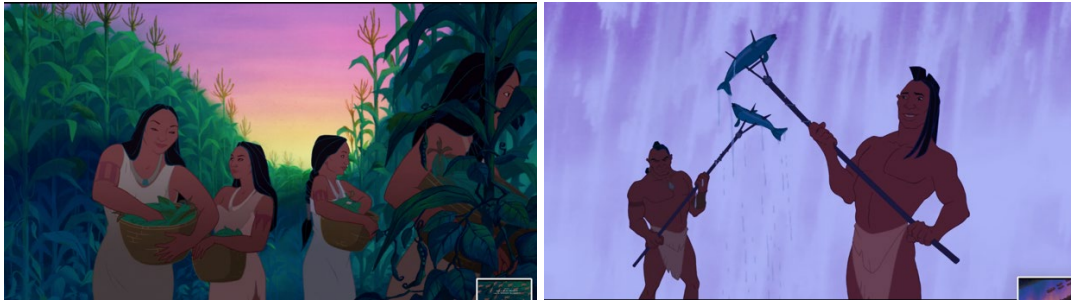


Figure 10. Screenshots taken by the author from PH

An additional interpretation of how the pastoral is alternated with the wild in this movie seems to be connected with the gender of the characters. As we can see, in figure 10, there is a gendered association of colors and landscapes to women and men. The rosy warm background is the stage for women harvesting corn, which is portrayed as an activity that does not require too much effort, but rather patience and care. On the other hand, a simpler background of a whitish and subtle-purple-shade waterfall foregrounds two muscular men who are fishing. Furthermore, the activities these characters are engaged with are complete opposites, not only in how the ones that require skill and strength are stereotypically associated with men, but also in terms of the nature of the food they are gathering and how it is collected. The crops are the result of a prolonged wait as if it were a gestation that ends up in the hands of women collecting their fruits. Contrarily, the act of fishing inevitably means the act of killing another living being. Thus, the pastoral mode is more conspicuous in activities where women are engaged, and a 'wilder' nature is associated with men's presence.

This gendering based on the characters' sex can also be seen across movies. While both *Pocahontas* (1995) and *Up* (2009) share their pictorial representation of a wild and untamed nature whose territory cannot be encompassed by the human eye, their use of color as an aesthetical force is strikingly different (see Figure 11). In *Pocahontas* (1995), where the protagonist is a woman, there is a persistent presence of very light colors that range from blue to pink (see Figure 10). On the other hand, in *Up* (2009), where the main characters are all

male, what predominates is vast spaces of grey rocky landscapes without vegetation that contrast with very saturated green lush spaces (see Figure 11). Whereas in the case of *Pocahontas* (1995) the use of colors implies a sense of harmony and peace; in *Up* (2009) the scenery is a bit 'rougher', possibly challenging the feminization of nature, but nonetheless reproducing gender stereotypes associated with men. Thus, in opposition to the fertile reproductive nature of abundance and life of Disney, Pixar produced a representation of a barren nature that, as the movie itself suggests, is brusque and unwelcoming: "Who would dare set foot on this inhospitable summit?" (U).

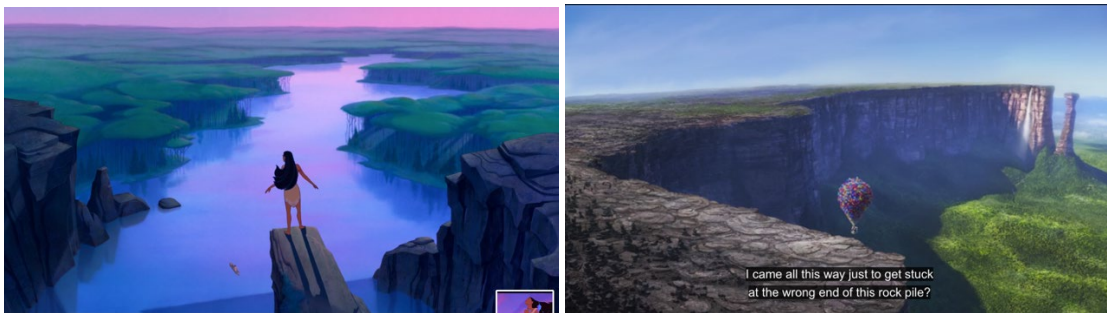


Figure 11. Screenshots taken by the author from PH and U respectively

The dangers of a wild nature are represented from the very beginning when Carl as a young kid is in the movie theater watching a documentary about Charles Muntz, an adventurer and explorer of Paradise Hills, an exotic place somewhere in South America that is represented as the opposite to civilization. Similarly, *Pocahontas* (1995) represents nature in terms of the 'wild' as the 'other' and implicitly juxtaposes nature to the civilized world. This 'otherness' quality is reinforced in both eco-movies by images where natural environments are partially hidden by natural elements like fog, which creates an ambiance of threat, uncertainty and mystery. In *Pocahontas* (1995) the men are reduced and look insignificant in comparison to the tall trees that surround them (see Figure 11). In *Up* (2009) The fog impedes the eyes to clearly see what awaits ahead, which foregrounds the spiky and unfamiliar plants that seem to be as sharp as a knife:



Figure 12. Screenshots taken by the author from PH and U respectively

In the Japanese eco-movies analyzed, nature was not represented as dangerous. It was rather portrayed as cute, harmless and benevolent. However, the aforementioned pattern from Disney's and Pixar's ecomovies of associating certain colors and tones to a more masculine or a more feminine nature was also present. In *Pom Poko* (1994), except for Granny Oroku, all important characters are males (Gonta, Shokichi, Osho, etc). Thus, if compared to *Up* (2009), we can find a cross-cultural and cross-temporal similarity by which the colors that predominate are green and brown (see Figure 11 and 13). Similarly, *Ponyo* (2008) can also be cross-culturally and cross-temporally connected to *Pocahontas* (1995) with its gendered use of aesthetical elements. As in both cases there is a stronger presence of female characters, they used more vibrant colors that ranged from different shades of blue, green and warm colors like yellow (see Figure 11 and 13).



Figure 13. Screenshots taken by the author from PP and PN respectively

4.2. Green Consciousness: Challenging the Master Consciousness

4.2.1. A Queer and Connected Nature

The representational and discursive practice of showing a different and new aspect of nature that goes beyond its feminized, sanitized, benign, and balanced imagery, is more conspicuous in those characters with more malleable and indeterminate bodies. Particularly,

Ponyo and the *tanukis*. Moreover, it could be said that they represent a queer nature inasmuch as all of these characters can change their form, breaking given assumptions of the possibilities of nature. Thus, a *tanuki* is not just a *tanuki*, and a goldfish is not just a goldfish. They transcend the static understanding of nature as stable and balanced; and imply chaos, dynamism, and an interconnectedness by which humans and nature's actors are no longer seen as separate from each other but are rather interchangeable. This is especially true considering that in both cases the main characters eventually adopted a human form. This ability of nature's actors to be something different from what they originally seem to be poses an opposite narrative to the human-nature split, and instead reproduces a sense of interconnectedness among all living and non-living beings. A possible explanation is the deeply rooted religion of Shinto in Japan, which embraces a sense of oneness reified through the *tanukis'* ability to combine their energy to shape-shift into something bigger, which they did when they shape-shifted Tama New Town into the old Tama Hills:



Figure 14. screenshot taken by the author from PP

The idea of being connected with other living beings is more explicitly expressed in *Ponyo* (2008). When Granmamare tells Fujimoto they could test Sosuke to confirm he truly loves Ponyo and let her become a human. However, Fujimoto is worried that if Sosuke's love is not truthful, their daughter will become sea foam, to what Granmamare replies: "That's where we all came from, dear" (PN). Her statement with the word "all", by which every living being is included, also implies a cycle of renovation and destruction that illustrates green consciousness principles for nature is not just the positive attributes that we project to it, but also its opposite poles.

A similar representation of a cyclical and holistic conception of nature is also discursively constructed in *Pocahontas* (1995) through Pocahontas' song *Color of the Wind*:

The rainstorm and the river are my brothers

The heron and the otter are my friends

And we are all connected to each other

In a circle, in a hoop that never ends (PH).

Through her words, she compares humans and nature positioning them at the same level and portraying them as equally valuable. The message is clear: we are all part of the cycle of life that makes us be interdependent and interconnected to every living being. Thus, it is a challenge to discourses of anthropocentrism and of nature's commodification that, nonetheless is visually contradicted with pastoral and wild representations of nature as pious, benevolent and exuberant; which hides the inevitable possibilities of death, danger and scarcity acknowledged by green consciousness principles.

On the other hand, *Up* (2009) did not show signs that could challenge the human-nature split. However, it should be noted that 'wild' nature was represented as queer inasmuch as Kevin the exotic bird did not comply with the male gender that Russel initially assigned her. Nonetheless, this could be the result of the increasing disconnection of humans from nature and its consequential unfamiliarity to anything that is not domesticated. Therefore, when comparing both countries, the ecomovies from the U.S.A are the ones less committed to narratives aligned with principles of interconnectedness among all living and non-living beings. Time-wise, something similar could be said about the ecomovies of the 2000s. Although *Ponyo* (2008) does express messages of interconnectedness, they are more scarce than in *Pom Poko* (1995). Hence, it can be compared with *Up* (2009) as both seem to be less connected with an idea of oneness. A more disconnected version of nature in the more recent ecomovies could be interpreted, once again, by the extinction of experience of physical nature available in our current societies.

4.2.2. Nature Has Agency

Despite the ideological contradictions, all four animated ecomovies represented nature with agency. For instance, Grandmother Willow not only has her own opinions, wisdom, and

ability to speak, but she is also able to consciously move her roots and vines. One such occasion could be seen when John Smith's colleagues, Lon and Ben, were looking for him. As the possibility of them discovering Pocahontas and Smith being together could lead to more problems, Grandmother Willow prevents this from happening by scaring them and driving them away. Once gone, she says: "There's still some snap in these old vines" (PH). With the word "snap" she is endowing herself with traits in terms of energy and life.

However, this level of agency, is not given to any other nature's actor from *Pocahontas* (1995), which could reflect anthropocentric representations as the natural character endowed with more agency is the one closest to human appearance. Moreover, this results in the exclusion of those who do not have the same level of anthropomorphic features from the human realm, which reinforces the human-culture split. Similarly, in *Up* (2009), the animals with more agency are those symbolically closer to humans: dogs. On the other hand, undomesticated animals, as is the case of Kevin the bird, are characterized with little intelligence and a simplified existence that revolves around survival. As an illustration, Kevin's actions are portrayed as idiotic inasmuch as she is not even able to recognize what is edible or not. As a result, she swallows Carl's walking stick several times and almost chokes with it (see Figure 15). Related to this 'idiotic' characterization, there is a cultural pattern by which Disney's and Pixar's ecomovies use animals as comic relief.



Figure 15. Screenshot taken by the author from U

Alternatively, the Japanese counterparts of this movie present a clearer and more convincing discourse of a nature that has its own agency and power regardless of its

relationship with humans. Furthermore, this agency is extended to presumably non-living beings such as the ocean in *Ponyo* (2008), which is even characterized with eyes (see Figure 16). Nonetheless, the superiority of humans is still present as the agency of nature is influenced and limited by the agency of humans. As an illustration, despite the water of the sea being represented with life, it still serves Fujimoto (see Figure 16); who, despite claiming he is no longer connected to humans, conserves his human form and features. Thus, in a like manner to their Western counterparts, the master consciousness is paradoxically reproduced by giving nature the agency humans need to satisfy their goals.



Figure 16. Screenshot taken by the author from PN

Nonetheless, the paramount representation of nature's agency aligns with one of the green consciousness principles through which nature is not just benign and, instead, has the potential to destroy the Earth and humanity. As Fujimoto explains to Granmamare, the independent actions taken by Ponyo to become human have altered the balance of the ocean: "She's totally beyond my control. It's complete chaos. She doesn't understand what she's done ... If we don't stop her, the planet is doomed!" (PN). Thus, *Ponyo* (2008) is challenging the mainstream environmentalist belief that nature, if left alone, will be restored to a harmonious balance. In this case, it is a natural agent (Ponyo) who creates chaos. Additionally, she is also contesting the master consciousness of a masculine humanity that wishes to control nature, which is implied in the two instances she rebels against her father and escapes from his watch.

In *Pom Poko* (1994), despite the *tanukis*, and nature in general, being suppressed by and subjected to humans, nature is still represented as resourceful. As an example, Ponkichi, a

friend of Shokichi, directly addresses the audience and implies that the *tanukis* will not so easily disappear because of urbanization:

You often hear on the news how foxes and raccoons are disappearing because of urban development, right? I wish you humans would stop saying that ... most of us can't just disappear (PP).

Thus, these representations of nature as having agency construct a new narrative of a surviving nature that challenges representations aligned with the master consciousness. Especially, considering that nature, although oppressed, still, has the agency to exist. This cultural difference in which natural elements portrayed in the Japanese ecomovies are alive and act as independent actors from humans – unlike Disney's and Pixar's cases, – could be explained by the long tradition of Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan by which natural elements are understood as having sensitivities of their own that are as valuable as that of humans' (Heise, 2014).

Conclusion

This final chapter entails answering the research question of this thesis: *How is nature represented in animated ecomovies within different cultural narratives from the U.S.A and Japan produced in the 90s and the 2000s?* Additionally, the subsequent sub-question will be addressed: *How do the findings reproduce dominant and/or non-hegemonic discourses about nature? How do the results reflect cultural and/or temporal differences in nature's representations? How do these animated ecomovies comply to and/or challenge gendered representations of nature?*

This chapter will further present the limitations of this thesis, as well as the societal and theoretical implications of the findings, and suggestions for future research.

5.1. Major findings

After conducting the multimodal analysis, using Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Discourse Analysis, the main conclusion is that *Pom Poko* (1994), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Ponyo* (2008) and *Up* (2009) share a representation of nature with ideological inconsistencies. As seen in chapter 2, cultural and ecocinema studies, and mediatization share the idea that the film industry is a powerful institution to construct knowledge about nature as it has the ability to influence society. Nonetheless, as the contradiction paradigm argues, media institutions are also sensitive to the changes in society (Freedman, 2015). Thus, the findings supported my original assumption about the ecomovies presenting an ideological struggle between dominant environmental discourses, and new ways of representing nature, which could be the result of a more environmentally conscious society (Podeschi, 2002). However, considering our ubiquitous urbanized lifestyle and the film industry's sensitivity towards this change in society, the recent ecomovies from the 2000s presented a nature that was more simplified and homogenous when compared to the ones produced in the 90s. Taking into account previous literature, this pattern is explained by the extinction of experience of physical nature available to us (Murray & Heumann, 2011).

With the same theoretical framework, cultural differences were unsurprisingly present, which varied regarding the degree to which the ecomovies endorsed dominant and/or non-dominant discursive and representational practices. Studio Ghibli's ecomovies tended to

contest and inquire naturalized assumptions about nature in a more explicit manner. On the other hand, Disney's and Pixar's products presented a less critical attitude towards them. Moreover, when the ecomovies from the U.S.A directly questioned the anthropocentric belief system, these efforts to construct an alternative narrative were contradicted by images of natural elements as peripheral to humans. Thus, promising signs of a new nature narrative were more prominent in the animated ecomovies studied from Japan, in which a new green consciousness narrative had more possibilities to be expressed. This cultural difference can be explained by how Japan and the U.S.A have historically approached nature. Thus, although both share ideas stemming from environmentalist ideologies that reduce nature to a resource, a property or an object for entertainment and aesthetical contemplation; the longstanding tradition of Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan has resulted in a representation aligned with green consciousness principles related to an interconnected, chaotic, dynamic and resourceful nature. Furthermore, the assumption of Shintoism by which natural elements can be *kami* – the equivalent to what the West understands as god – could explain why Studio Ghibli's movies depicted nature as more powerful than humans, which defies an all too naturalized anthropocentric belief system.

From an ecofeminist perspective, the dominant representations of nature aligned with the master consciousness, the human-nature split and the oppressive association of women with nature (Caputi, 2011; Plumwood, 1993; Radford, 1995). Therefore, the four ecomovies analyzed had encoded an understanding of nature as mainly female through the personification of nature in female figures or the attribution of gendered stereotypes related to women (e.g.: being nurturing, caring, cute, etc.). Considering the pervasiveness of an anthropocentric belief system in the results; not only was nature represented as inferior to humans but by extension, women were also depicted as subordinates of a male humanity. This can be explained by the master consciousness and the human-nature split. As seen in chapter 2, the master consciousness entails the separation of unities such as women from men, and humanity from nature (Plumwood, 1993). Therefore, provided that this divide leads to unequal power relations, nature and women were simultaneously commodified and oppressed. Their commodification was present through the representation of nature as a resource that can be

owned and managed or as a beautified and aesthetical object designed to please the male gaze. The feminization of nature implied a beautified and sanitized representation. This hampered a representation in terms of green consciousness principles by which nature is also ugly, chaotic, and dangerous. Nonetheless, there was a cultural difference in how the Japanese ecomovies endowed nature's characters with extreme plasmaticness and the agency to break free from given assumptions of what is nature and what is human resulting in a queer representation. An active and agentic nature symbolized the pinnacle of a new nature narrative in the ecomovies analyzed. Nonetheless, establishing such a pinnacle was also symbolically barren when humans were, sooner or later, portrayed as having more power. Thus, even when some of the ecomovies represented nature in ecological terms –extending humanity's morals to non-human living beings –, a consistent critique of how we understand and treat nature was absent and/or overshadowed by dominant environmental ideologies that position humans as the master of nature.

From a different perspective, the feminization of nature was also accomplished through the pictorial representation of natural scenery. This was true for the pastoral and the wilderness modes of representing the environment. While the pastoral connoted nature had stereotypical female attributes such as being benign, caring, generous, and so on; the wilderness was feminized by enhancing the aesthetical aspect of nature depicting it as almost sublime. Interestingly, a finding which was not foreseen was that, cross-culturally and cross-temporally, nature could also be represented with features strongly associated with men. However, this could only be found in the wilderness mode. Thus, the ecomovies representing a wild nature gendered it as feminine or masculine depending on two main factors: the gender of the main characters, and the gender of the characters in a specific scene. In both cases, if they were male, the wilderness mode would show a less beautified and benign nature resulting in a 'rougher' imagery.

To conclude, representations of nature from these ecomovies challenged or complied to dominant representations of nature depending on the time and space the ecomovies were produced. As discussed, Studio Ghibli's animations presented more instances of apparent defiance to the dominant narratives of the master consciousness and the split culture. Indeed,

they created a new nature narrative where nature is queer, indefinite and resourceful. However, it seems that the dominant and already too familiar discourses are the ones that predominate in all four ecomovies. Regarding differences in time, the main finding was a simplification of nature in the more recent ecomovies of the 2000s. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this simplification was not present throughout all the sub-themes discussed in chapter 4. Especially those regarding practices that gendered nature and presented green consciousness principles.

5.2. Socio-theoretical Implications and Limitations

The purpose of this thesis was to unearth the representations of animated ecomovies from different decades and cultural backgrounds. Conducting multimodal analysis has helped in understanding what the dominant discursive and representational practices are, and additionally discover alternative narratives that challenge them and show a multi-layered and complex construction of what we know as 'nature'. Therefore, considering that in order to change the ways we know about, experience and understand nature; we need to change how we talk about and represent it (Podeschi, 2002), this study has been useful to unearth other discursive and representational possibilities to construct nature in animated ecomovies. By looking to different representations in time and place, and finding spaces to challenge dominant narratives, the findings highlight the importance of further research on these cultural products across different societies and periods. Furthermore, qualitative methods like CDA and VDA are known for their interpretative nature (Brennen, 2017). Thus, my discussion and conclusion of the findings should be considered as one of the multiple interpretations possible, and future research could delve into this array of readings by studying the audiences.

The film industry as a media institution has the power to prioritize its own interests, but at the same time, it does so being aware of and sensible to societal and cultural changes (Freedman, 2015). Thus, the significance of this thesis' results expands to a better comprehension of how different societies and cultures understand nature in distinct ways, and how over time nature has been simplified due to the increased urbanized environments in which we live. However, this global trend and its consequential representation of nature do not generate homogenous narratives. Thus, regardless of how useful a common theoretical

background to study nature's representations in media is, the findings of this thesis imply that contextualization is key to prevent possible misrepresentation. Nature is a social and mediatized construct with different layers depending on different conditions that go beyond time and space. Therefore, future research could further contextualize by looking at other crucial factors such as the people involved in the production of the animated ecomovies. Do they strongly support environmental and ecological causes? Or are they just producing for the purposes of entertainment? This would take into consideration how the ecofilms are encoded, as well as provide a more nuanced understanding of contextual factors.

From a societal perspective, this thesis serves as a reminder that environmental education and communication through media apparatuses need to revise the ideological basis from where the content is generated and go beyond its limitations. Media in general, and animated films in particular, are a powerful tool for environmental communication if used wisely. For the audience to understand a movie, familiar knowledge is required and thus, dominant discourses are almost inevitably present for a message to be understood. However, this thesis also signals the importance of animations in, not only rising above cultural barriers, but also letting our imagination and creativity work unchained from 'common-sense' discourses and create good-sense representations of nature.

With regard to limitations, one major disadvantage of this thesis is related to my positionality in this study (see Chapter 3). In addition, another significant limitation is the reduced sample size of the four animated ecomovies studied. Due to time and formalities considerations, expanding the scope to more ecomovies was not manageable. Although this constraint did not hijack the depth and insightful nuances of the findings, it poses the problem of overlooking other types of representations absent in the ecomovies that were analysed. Furthermore, the reduced sample size may have compromised having a more nuanced discussion on temporal differences regarding the representation of nature. Although the sample size in qualitative research tends to be small, to address these issues, further research could contribute to this thesis by studying different animated ecomovies, and including more movies in the sample size to better understand variances in representations regarding the time they were produced.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Information about the movies

Movies from the 90s	Title	Pom Poko (PP)	Pocahontas (PH)
	Release date	16 July, 1994 (Japan)	23 June, 1995 (USA)
	Director	Isao Takahata	Mike Gabriel & Eric Goldberg
	Screenplay writer	Hayao Miyazaki & Isao Takahata	Carl Binder, Susannah Grant, Philip LaZebnik
	Studio	Studio Ghibli	Walt Disney Pictures
	Duration	119 minutes	81 minutes
	Synopsis	It is the 1960s in Japan and the <i>tanukis</i> from Tama Hills, in the outskirts of Tokyo, are threatened by the development project of a new suburb. To get their home back, they start training to master their shape-shifting skills. With this ability, they conduct several missions scaring, attacking and fighting humans.	In the XVII century, English settlers from the Virginia Company sailed to the New World hoping to find gold. Among the crew, captain John Smith meets Pocahontas, the daughter of the leader of the Powhatan. They fall in love with each other but conflicts and tensions between the Powhatan and the English settlers puts them both at risk.
Movies from the 2000s	Title	Ponyo (PN)	Up (U)
	Release date	19 July, 2008	May 16, 2009
	Director	Hayao Miyazaki	Pete Docter & Bob Peterson
	Screenplay writer	Hayao Miyazaki	Pete Docter & Bob Peterson
	Studio	Studio Ghibli	Pixar Animation Studios
	Duration	101 minutes	96 minutes
	Synopsis	Initially named Brunhilde, a goldfish with a human face sneaks out from the submarine of her father, Fujimoto. In her little adventure, she meets a five-year-old human called Sosuke who rescues her from being trapped in a jar. Sosuke takes her with him and calls her Ponyo. The two grow fond of each other and Ponyo decides she wants to become a human, which unleashes a series of natural events that disrupt nature's balance and threatens the survival of humanity.	An elderly widower named Carl Friedrichsen embarks in the adventure that he and his wife Ellie dreamt about: reaching the waterfalls of Paradise Falls, in South America. To do so, he ties his house to multiple balloons that set his house in the sky. Russel, a young kid, gets stuck in the porch of Carl's house. After a storm, the floating house ends up on the other side of Paradise Hills. While both Carl and Russel pulled on the house to get to the waterfalls, they meet a dog and a giant exotic bird that tag along in their journey. However, other dogs are chasing the bird to give it to Muntz, the hero of Carl and Ellie when they were kids, who is obsessed with restoring his reputation by hunting the bird down.

Note: Information was collected from the *IMBd* and *Wikipedia* pages of the movies.

APPENDIX B: Timestamps, descriptions and screenshots taken from scenes in the four movies

Movie 1: Pom Poko 1994

Time Stamps	Scene	Description	No. Screenshots
00:00:00 - 00:02:01	1	A voiceover explains the peaceful way of life raccoons from Tama Hills had before the development project of 'Tama New Town', a suburb of Tokyo.	2
00:02:01 - 00:06:41	2	Due to the reduced space, they start having conflicts. Raccoons power to shape-shift is revealed. Granny Oroku shows the raccoons the root of their problems.	6
00:06:41 - 00:10:17	3	All raccoons join forces to protect their homes and set a five-year plan to revive their shape-shifting techniques and study humans to stop them from invading their environment.	0
00:10:17 - 00:16:00	4	Their shape-shifting teaching and learning, and observations of humans start.	4
00:16:00 - 00:18:20	5	Raccoons that can shape-shift venture into the human world to test their abilities.	1
00:18:20 - 00:20:30	6	Gonta finds his home, Tama Woods, half destroyed and demands drastic actions. Shokichi joins him and Granny Oroku teaches them another technique.	0
00:20:30 - 00:22:00	7	With their shape-shifting skills they cause several accidents in the development plan constructions.	4
00:22:00 - 00:28:00	8	It seems their attacks have had the effect they wanted, but there are still humans pushing for the development plan.	1
00:28:00 - 00:33:15	9	This time their attacks focused on scaring humans based on their beliefs in sacredness, gods, spirits and paranormal activity; which received national coverage in media. However, the development plan kept on advancing.	8
00:33:15 - 00:34:05	10	They send Tamasaburo and Bunta representatives to ask for help from the shape-shifting masters.	0
00:34:05 - 00:43:50	11	The remaining raccoons keep on scaring humans forcing some construction workers to quit but new humans always come.	2
00:43:50 - 00:45:13	12	Autumn comes and raccoon focus their energy on getting the fat they need to survive the winter.	6
00:45:13 - 00:47:47	13	A new raccoon from Fujino Woods arrives and explains the soil excavated from Tama Hills is being dumped in his woods.	2
00:47:47 - 00:50:14	14	In winter holidays they destroyed some machines and some workers witnessed it. Nobody believed their accusations.	3
00:50:14 - 00:53:04	15	Spring comes and raccoons cannot remain chaste any longer. Shokichi and Kiyō have baby raccoons.	6

00:53:04 - 00:55:47	16	Tamasaburo is at Kincho Daimyo Shrine in the island of Shikoku with master Kincho VI. He fell ill and had to stay longer (6 months). He met Koharu and they had baby raccoons. The island elders decide to boycott Tama Hills development plan.	1
00:55:47- 01:01:03	17	Meanwhile at Tama Hills, the raccoons had a lot of misfortunes. Gonta demands revenge and Shokichi confronts him.	6
01:01:03- 01:07:32	18	The masters-Inugami Gyobu, Kincho VI, and Yashimano Hage arrive to Tama Hills with Tamasaburo and teach the racoons superior techniques.	5
01:07:32- 01:19:53	19	The day of Operation Specter arrives. Gyobu Master dies. Raccoons assumed victory.	4
01:19:53- 01:22:55	20	The president of the Theme Park Wonderland claims to be responsible for Operation Specter.	0
01:22:55- 01:23:34	21	The raccoons feel helpless. Ryutaro, a shape-shifted fox reaches to master Kincho.	2
01:23:34-01:27:25	22	Ryutaro explains to Kincho raccoons have to shape-shift into humans to survive.	4
01:27:25- 01:31:56	23	The raccoons at Tama discuss what they can do in their situation. Kincho arrives and tells them what he has learned from Ryutaro.	1
01:31:56- 01:33:53	22	They do not reach any agreement and divisions start to emerge. Tamasaburo follows Kincho VI to become his successor.	0
01:33:53- 01:34:58	23	Kincho and Tamasaburo get their revenge from the president of Wonderland.	3
01:34:58- 01:35:43	24	Gonta acts with his crew to attack humans and halt the development plan. They resort to a kamikaze attack.	3
01:35:43- 01:36:02	25	Raccoons at the temple get the money stolen from the president of the theme park.	1
01:36:02-01:38:40	26	Shokichi and others try to stop Gonta from his kamikaze attack.	1
01:38:40- 01:42:07	27	A reporter gets the raccoons to admit they're responsible for Operation Specter.	5
01:42:07- 01:44:47	28	The oldest master Yashimano Hage decides to leave a world of suffering. Along with him, Gonta and other raccoons that lost their lives leave too.	2
01:44:47- 01:51:06	29	Bunta comes back to a destroyed Tama. Raccoons bring back to life their old Tama Hills.	10
01:51:06- 01:52:33	30	Everything they knew is urbanized although some concerns to preserve nature led humans to leaving aside some nature.	5
01:52:33- 01:54:13	31	Shokichi and the others that could shape-shift live as humans. The rest try to survive as they can.	5
01:54:13-01:56:19	32	Shokichi finds Ponkichi and other fellow raccoons and celebrate.	2
Total			105

Movie 2: Pocahontas (1995)

Time Stamps	Scene	Description	No. Screenshots
00:00:00 - 00:01:50	1	John Smith and other men embark on a Virginia Company ship headed to North America.	3
00:01:50- 00:05:52	2	They get caught in a storm.	2
00:05:52- 00:07:57	3	Pocahontas' father comes back to their tribe, the Powhatan.	7
00:07:57- 00:10:10	4	Pocahontas comes back to the village to meet her father.	2
00:10:10- 00:12:38	5	Pocahontas' father tells her he wants her to marry Kocoum.	1
00:12:38-00:15:10	6	Pocahontas canoes towards Grandmother Willow.	6
00:15:10- 00:18:19	7	Pocahontas asks for advice to Grandmother Willow and sees the ship of the Virginia Company.	4
00:18:19-00:19:35	8	Ratcliffe converses with John smith to make sure he takes care of the 'savages'.	1
00:19:35-00:22:37	9	John Smith meets Meeko and Flit and almost discovers Pocahontas.	6
00:22:37-00:24:00	10	The Powhatan tribe decides the foreign visitors are dangerous.	1
00:24:00- 00:28:48	11	Ratcliffe orders the Virginia Company crew to start digging to find gold.	9
00:28:48-00:33:21	12	John Smith and Pocahontas meet for the first time.	3
00:33:21-00:35:51	13	The Powhatan and the Englishmen have their first encounter and one of the Powhatan is wounded by a firegun.	1
00:35:51-00:43:16	14	Pocahontas shows John Smith the wonder of what their land has.	7
00:43:16-00:45:37	15	Ratcliffe thinks he is not finding any gold because the Powhatan are keeping it from him.	2
00:45:37-00:47:17	16	John Smith finds Pocahontas.	1
00:47:17-00:50:40	17	Pocahontas introduces Grandmother Willow to John Smith and shows him they have no gold.	0
00:50:40- 00:51:55	18	Warriors from other tribes arrive to fight the Englishmen.	0
00:51:55-00:54:07	19	John Smith goes back to the campsite and tells Ratcliffe that there is no gold. Ratcliffe insists in killing the Powhatan.	1
00:54:07-00:56:03	20	Pocahontas and John Smith sneak off to meet. Kocoum and Thomas follow them.	0
00:56:03- 01:00:31	21	Pocahontas convinces John Smith to talk to her father, but Kocoum attacks John Smith. Thomas shoots Kocoum. John Smith is taken by the Powhatan.	0
01:00:31-01:03-10	22	Pocahontas' father decides to kill John Smith at sunrise.	0
01:03-10- 01:04:29	23	Thomas arrives at the campsite and informs that John Smith has been captured.	1
01:04:29- 01:05:29	24	The Powhatan prepare to fight the Englishmen.	2
01:05:29- 01:06:36	25	Grandmother Willow helps Pocahontas take action.	0

01:06:36-01:10:21	26	Pocahontas stops her father from killing John Smith and the fight between the Powhatan and the Englishmen ceases. John Smith is hurt trying to protect Pocahontas' father from Ratcliffe.	2
01:10:21-01:15:28	27	Pocahontas says bye to John Smith as she decides to stay with her people.	2
Total			64

Movie 3: *Ponyo* (2008)



Time Stamps	Scene	Description	No. Screenshots
00:00:00 - 00:02:47	1	Ponyo runs away from her 'house' under the sea.	5
00:02:47- 00:05:07	2	Sosuke finds Ponyo.	8
00:05:07- 00:07:13	3	Sosuke takes Ponyo to the school and hides her in the yard. Ponyo makes Kumiko Cry.	4
0:18:17- 0:21:08	4	Sosuke presents Ponyo to the nursing home elders. Ponyo squirts Toki.	2
00:21:08- 00:23:54	5	Fujimoto recovers his daughter, Ponyo.	2
00:23:54-00:25:06	6	Lisa and Sosuke go back to their house.	3
00:25:06- 00:30:15	7	Koichi, the father of Sosuke, works in a boat and can't come back that night.	3
00:30:15- 00:35:28	8	Fujimoto tries to restrain Ponyo but she has gained power from licking Sosuke's blood and develops legs and hands. Fujimoto leaves to ask Ponyo's mother for help.	4
00:35:28- 00:39:49	9	With the help of her sisters, Ponyo escapes to find Sosuke.	5
00:39:49- 00: 43:23	10	Sosuke goes to the nursing house after school.	4
00: 43:23- 0:50:39	11	Sosuke and Lisa go back home and Ponyo finds them on the way.	5
0:43:50- 01:02:07	12	Ponyo spends the night with Lisa and Sosuke. Lisa leaves to check how the residents of the old folks' home are.	5
01:02:07- 01: 04:41	13	Koichi is at sea and Granmamare, Ponyo's mother, helps his ship's engine work again.	5
01: 04:41- 01: 08:55	14	Granmamare meets Fujimoto and suggests testing Sosuke's love.	4
01: 08:55- 01:26:04	15	Ponyo and Sosuke go on a little boat to look for Lisa.	8
01:26:04- 01:29:14	16	Lisa is with the home residents talking to Ponyo's mother.	2
01:29:14- 01:38:00	17	Sosuke and Ponyo arrive where Lisa and the residents are. He passes the love test and restores earth's balance.	3
01:38:00- 01:39:35	18	Granmamare leaves and Fujimoto apologizes to Sosuke. Koichi is safe, and ponyo kisses Sosuke to become fully human.	2
Total			73

Movie 4: *Up* (2009)

Time Stamps	Scene	Description	No. Screenshots
00:00:00 - 00:02:37	1	Carl as a kid is in a movie theater	0
00:02:37- 00:05:07	2	Carl meets Ellie	3
00:05:07- 00:07:18	3	Ellie shows Carl her plans to go to Paradise Falls	1
00:07:18- 00:11:33	4	Their life together is shown till the moment Ellie dies.	8
00:11:33- 00:18:23	5	The neighborhood of Carl's house is being renovated, but he does not want to leave his house under any circumstance. He meets Russel, a kid that wants to help Carl to get the last bandage he needs to become a senior Wilderness explorer. The scene ends with Carl hitting a worker.	1
00:18:23-00:20:28	6	Carl goes to court and is assigned to a retirement home.	0
00:20:28- 00:27:59	7	Carl escapes with his balloon-floating house. Russel accompanies him by accident and they're caught in a storm.	4
00:27:59- 00:34:18	8	Carl and Russel land in Paradise Hills, South America, the dream destination of Carl and Ellie.	3
00:34:18- 00:42:27	9	Carl and Russel meet Kevin and Dug.	10
00:42:27- 00: 44:39	10	Gamma, Beta and Alpha are tracking Kevin.	0
00: 44:39- 00: 52:21	11	Gamma, Beta and Alpha find Dug, Russel and Carl and take them by force to their master	2
00: 52:21- 00: 52:21	12	They meet Muntz, Carl's childhood hero and he takes them as guests.	0
00: 52:21- 01: 00:32	13	They all go into Muntz's airship and are treated as guests till Muntz misinterprets that they also are after the bird he wants to capture (Kevin).	3
01: 00:32- 01: 04:01	14	They escape but Kevin's leg is injured.	0
01: 04:01- 01: 04:17	15	Muntz commands his dogs to track Dug to find them.	0
01: 04:17- 01:10:22	16	Meanwhile, Dug, Russel and Carl try to help Kevin get to its babies. However, Kevin is captured because. Russel and Carl continue carrying the house to the falls.	1
01:10:22- 01:15:22	17	Once there, Carl looks at Ellie's adventure's book and realizes he was wrong.	0
01:14:00- 01:15:30	18	Russel is angry at Carl and leaves by himself to rescue Kevin. Carl and Dug go after him.	0
01:39:35- 01:26:00	19	Carl and Dug end up saving both Russel and Kevin.	8
01:26:00- 01:26:56	20	Carl, Russel and Dug finally help Kevin get to its babies and go back home in Muntz's airship.	2
01:26:56- 01:28:43	21	Carl attends Russel's ceremony of becoming a Senior Adventurer.	2
		Total	48

APPENDIX C: Illustration of Critical Discourse Analysis

Directory:

	Word connotation
	Overlexicalization
	Suppression
	Structural Opposition

Movie 1. Pom Poko (1994)

Script text	Analysis
<p>[Female narrator] We raccoons have always lived near the humans. Not to steal their food, not at all. Where there are paddies and fields, there are frogs and grasshoppers, mice and moles, there's fruit like persimmons and mulberries. There's much more food than in the woods.</p> <p>Last spring, the old farmhouse was suddenly abandoned. It looked like no one was coming back, so we all moved in.</p> <p>We spent a wonderful year there. Living in a house with a garden was like a dream! But then...</p>	<p>“we” is implying a sense of group and “the humans” connotes an outgroup. There is a suppressed stereotype about raccoons stealing humans' food. Repeated terms related to sources of food which are natural elements. Contrasting abundance of sources of food in natural and humans settings. Nature measures time with its own cycles. It is a given that animals won't live where humans are. Again “we” and the sense of community. Tamed/domesticated nature is seen as good even for 'wild' animals like raccoons.</p>
<p>[Male narrator] We raccoons usually don't make a fuss over territory, but this was different. Wherever we went looking for food, we run into other raccoons. There were more quarrels and fights over burrows until one day...</p>	<p>Raccoons fight for survival. The source of conflict is that there is not enough food for everyone.</p>
<p>[Male narrator 2] Autumn, year 31 of the Pom Poko era. On the newly logged border between Taka and Suzu woods, the raccoons of Tama Hills gathered for their last battle. The red army was led by Gonta, a fearsome raccoon from Taka. The Blue Army was led by Seizaemon, an elder from Suzu. Now, it's a little-</p>	<p>Nature measures time on their own terms. Opposing raccoons. The leaders of the two armies even have opposing features.</p>

known fact, but when humans aren't around, raccoons walk on 2 legs just as you see here. The battle was hard-fought, but it did not last long.

[Granny Oroku] Fight, fight! Taka!
Fight, fight! Suzu!

Red wins, blue wins,
both of you lose.

Slaughter the losing raccoons
Taka loses today, Suzu loses tomorrow.
Raccoons have nowhere to go.
where can the raccoons go?

There is nowhere for them to go.
Whether red wins, or Blue wins,
both sides lose.

Kill the losing raccoons!
It's for the greater good.

There are too many of them,
Fewer raccoons is better for all.
The rest of you, control yourselves.
Stop having children.

Have more children and you'll lose everything.
Your homes are disappearing and that's a fact.

[Male narrator 2] Granny Oroku was right.

The raccoons were stunned by the desolation around them. The woods were disappearing, A chilling panorama of denuded, flattened hills stretched as far as the eye could see.

[Granny Oroku] This is madness!
It's no time for us to be fighting!

[Male narrator 2] In those days, Japan was entering a golden age of economic growth.

Demand for housing around Tokyo exploded.
Lots of farmland and forest disappeared in waves of uncontrolled development.
As Tokyo grew, it gnawed the land in random patterns like a huge insect.

Then in 1967, the city fathers hit on a better

Separation between nature and humans
Signs of anthropomorphism

Granny Oroku is illustrating how non-sensical it is to fight when both groups of raccoons will not win at the end of the day

Raccoons have not enough space.

She is also showing that the issue is they are too many for such little space

Suggesting the roots of their problems comes from lack of space.

Repeated terms related to emptiness where there was something in the past. Terms that add drama to the description of an emptied scenario.

Urbanization

The human world and its development is incompatible with the thrive of nature.

Insects are not positively perceived and humans are being compared to one that has an insatiable appetite to destroy nature

idea: A plan for a new suburb of Tokyo called Tama New Town.

Movie 2. Pocahontas (1995)

Script text	Analysis
[Ratcliffe] Look at it, Wiggins. An entire New World chock full of gold , just waiting for me.	Value of the land for the resources it has
[Wiggins] And scores of adventures waiting for us, right , Percy? Do you think we'll meet some savages ?	Commodifying nature in terms of entertainment (adventure)
[Ratcliffe] If we do, we should be sure to give them a proper English greeting.	Opposing their ingroup with the outgroup, civilization versus uncivilization, humanity versus nature
[Wiggins] Oh, gift baskets!	.
[Ratcliffe] And he came so highly recommended.	
[John Smith] It's perfect, Governor. The water's deep enough, we can pull right up to shore. Hey there, Percy.	
[Ratcliffe] Very well, then. Give the order.	
[John Smith] Already done, sir. I've got a crew assembled and they're ready to go.	
[Ratcliffe] About the natives, I'm counting on you to make sure those filthy heathens don't disrupt our mission.	Opposing them with the native Americans, again as the civilized against the 'savages'
[John Smith] Well, if they're anything like the savages I've fought before, it's nothing I can't handle.	
[Ratcliffe] Right. That'll be all, Smith, there's a good man.	
[John Smith] See ya, Percy.	
[Ratcliffe] The men like Smith, don't they? I've never been a popular man.	
[Wiggins] I like you.	
[Ratcliffe] And don't think I don't know what those backstabbers at court say about me.	
[Wiggins] Oh yes, all that talk about you being a pathetic social climber who's failed at everything he's—	
[Ratcliffe] I'm very well aware that this is my last chance for glory. But mark my words, Wiggins, when King James see the gold these peasants unearth success will be mine, at last.	Value of nature in terms of resources.

[Ben] Wake up! Shake a leg!

[Lon] It's **incredible**.

Nature as being valuable for its aesthetics.

[Thomas] **And it's all ours**. I've never seen anything like it.

Referring to nature as property.

[Ben] It can look like Ratcliffe's knickers, for all I care, just as long as we get off this stinking boat.

[John Smith] Come on, men, **we didn't come all this way just to look at it**.

Suppression of their naturalized purposes of colonizing and finding gold.

[Ben] Keep it taut, lads, keep it taut! Steady, steady.

[Lon] Ah, that's far enough! All right now, tie her off.

[Thomas] Here, John, tie up this end. John? John? What are you doing up there?

[John Smith] Getting a better look. Hey! Well, you're a strange-looking fellow. You hungry? Here you go, it's a biscuit. It's food... Well, sort of. You like it, eh? Well, try eating it for four months straight. You got a friend back there? Hey, what, what, watch out! No... Get that... Look out!

[Thomas] John! You better get down here! The Governor's coming ashore!

[John Smith] All right, all right, I'm leaving.

...

[Ratcliffe] Why, of course! Let's not forget what the Spanish found when they came to the New World.

Gold, mountains of it. Why, for years they've been ravaging the New World of its most precious resources but now... It's our turn.

Value of nature in its resources. It is almost a given that humans will destroy nature for the valuable resources it has

Movie 3. Ponyo (2008)

Script text

Analysis

[Fujimoto] This is all my fault.

Bringing you along to watch me was a mistake.

How often have I warned you about humans?

Making humans look dangerous to nature

Their very breath is polluted. Come, you must

beings. **And at the same time it separates**

eat. Can't you hear me, Brunhilde?

nature from humans. Demonizing humans.

[Ponyo] I want ham!

[Fujimoto] Ham?! What on earth have you been doing? Answer me, Brunhilde!

[Ponyo] My name's not Brunhilde.

It's Ponyo.

[Fujimoto] Ponyo?

[Ponyo] Ponyo loves Sosuke. I am going to become human!

[Fujimoto] Human? How could you love such disgusting creatures? They rob the sea of life. I was human myself... once. I finally escaped that awful heritage.

[Ponyo] I want hands! I don't like these feet! I want feet like Sosuke!

[Fujimoto] Of all the nonsense!

[Ponyo] Look at me! Hands and feet! Look!

[Fujimoto] Don't tell me you tasted human blood!

[Ponyo] Look! I want to see Sosuke!

[Fujimoto] No! His blood has deranged your DNA! Revert... revert... Revert... revert...

Go back... Go back! It's not working. I need more power.

[Ponyo] Let me out! I want to go. I want to go!

[Fujimoto] Be still, you evil blood. Revert, revert! Just like her mother, so strong. If I hold her like this, she should be fine. My powers can only hold her for a while. Looks like only her mother can do it.

No! My elixir is too strong for you! Shoo! Go away! My crab shields are weakening. Calm down! Calm down! I get a bad feeling every time I have to meet her. No leaks down here. This door is loose. I'll have to fix it later. I can't let any creatures in, or there'll be big trouble. Superb! I feel the ocean's power in my very DNA.

When this well is full, the Era of the Ocean will begin. An explosion of life to match the Cambrian Era! This revolting era of Man will be over. Close up, close up.

Nature is not fixed and completely separate from humans.

Being human is undesirable. Humans destroy nature.

Nature is not separate from humans, nature can be human.

Humans damage nature

Nature is powerful and has agency (in this case Ponyo)

Demonizes humans.

Nature is powerful and can't be easily controlled which goes against the gendered stereotypes associated to women and nature. Only nature can handle nature.

Nature is powerful.

Opposing an era where nature rules with that of men. Separating nature from humans. Degrading humans

Movie 4. Up (2009)

Script text

Analysis

[Newsreel announcer] What you are now witnessing is footage never before seen by civilized humanity): a lost world in South America! Lurking in the shadow of majestic Paradise Falls, it sports plants and animals undiscovered by science. Who would dare set foot on this inhospitable summit? (wild nature is not apt for civilization)

Why, our subject today: Charles Muntz!

The beloved explorer lands his dirigible, the "Spirit of Adventure," in New Hampshire this week, completing a year long expedition to the lost world!

This lighter-than-air craft was designed by Muntz himself, and is longer than 22 Prohibition paddy-wagons placed end to end.

And here comes the adventurer now!

Never apart from his faithful dogs, Muntz conceived the craft for canine comfort! It's a veritable floating palace in the sky...complete with doggie bath and mechanical canine walker.

And Jiminy Cricket, do the locals consider Muntz the bee's knees! And how!

[Muntz] "Adventure is out there!"

[Newsreel announcer] But what has Muntz brought back this time?

[Muntz] Gentlemen, I give you: the Monster of Paradise Falls!

[Newsreel announcer] And golly, what a swell monster this is. But what's this? Scientists cry foul! The National Explorers Society accuses Muntz of fabricating the skeleton!

Humanity versus the wild, the unexplored the untamed.

Nature as sublime.

Separating humans from nature. Wilderness is seen as the other.

It implies wild nature is not apt for humans and thus, reinforces the separation between humans and nature.

Nature is an object to be explored for humans' entertainment

Nature is separate from the civilized world, wild nature in particular is far in time and space from the world humans know.

Why is an explorer of nature praised? Taming, dominating, controlling is valued in our society. Comparison of nature to women's experiences of oppression and domination.

The master versus the 'slaves'

Why do the dogs need baths and walkers? It has been naturalized that the nature that we control we incorporate into our world by treating them as if we were humans.

Wild nature is pictured as dangerous. It is thus separated from our familiarity with domesticated nature.

The organization strips Muntz of his membership.

Humiliated, Muntz vows a return to Paradise Falls and promises to capture the beast... alive!

Nature can be managed, controlled, captured... it is seen as a passive object that humans can treat as they wish for their own purposes. In this case, restoring Muntz's reputations

APPENDIX D: Illustration of Visual Discourse Analysis



Figure 2. Screenshot taken by author from the movie Pom Poko (1994)

Iconography	Attributes	Settings	Salience
<p>Description: A green leaf is being eaten by bulldozers and other machines with an urban background.</p> <p>Connotation: The machinery could symbolize how development is eating/destroying nature in a voracious way as if they were caterpillars.</p>	<p>The green leaves, the machines on the leaves, and the buildings from the background.</p>	<p>The action could be said to be taking place in two settings: the leaf and the new urbanization that is being built.</p>	<p>Due to the big size and the centric position of the leaf, what is happening on its surface is what is more relevant.</p>



Figure 2. Screenshot taken by author from the movie *Pocahontas* (1995)

Iconography	Attributes	Settings	Salience
<p>Description: Ratcliffe is standing on a rock in the centre of the image, staking the flag of England on the ground. The only sign of humans and related objects are Ratcliffe himself and the flag. Most of the image is empty space of a dark blue sky</p> <p>Connotation: He is marking England's ownership of that land.</p>	<p>Blue and greenish sky, the flag, the rock, Ratcliffe and his attire in English clothes.</p>	<p>The action is taking place in the New World they just arrived to.</p>	<p>Due to his position in the centre and how his size is being exaggerated by being on a higher height, Ratcliffe and the flag as symbols of Europeans is what is noteworthy</p>



Figure 3. Screenshot taken by author from the movie *Ponyo* (2008)

Iconography	Attributes	Settings	Salience
<p>Description: Ponyo is trying to scape from a net that is collecting all sorts of trash and objects used by humans laying on the sea bed. Other fishes and sea animals are also struggling to not be camptured.</p> <p>Connotation: Humans are huge polluters of the sea, as well as dangerous to sea animals.</p>	<p>Human related objects such as the car tires, the umbrellas, cans and other types of containers.</p> <p>Sea animals and Ponyo, a huge net.</p>	<p>The action is taking place in the sea of a harbour.</p>	<p>Due to the big size of the net and the huge amount of trash that make the figure of Ponyo almost insignificant, the attention is on the trash being collected with the net.</p>



Figure 4. Screenshot taken by author from the movie *Up* (2009)

Iconography	Attributes	Settings	Salience
<p>Description: A single tiny house with a small green yard stands in the middle of a construction site with tall structures. There seems to be a lot of sand and dust which makes the image a bit blurry. There are several huge construction machineries moving around.</p> <p>Connotation: A development project is the cause of this brusque landscape.</p>	<p>The tiny house, tall buildings being constructed, machines for construction, sand, a green yard, pavement, cones for the construction.</p>	<p>The scene is taking place in a site of a city that is being developed by demolishing old houses and building</p>	<p>Given the small size of the house when compared to the buildings being built around it, the salience is in that contrast between old small houses and new huge buildings.</p>