

Tab 1

CHADScast

Mononoke Hime

Ashitaka's Curse and Clarity

00:00

Logan

The Epstein files will never be released. There's nothing special about releasing files unless there is something that they do not want us to know. So that's my opinion. I think we will just never know until certain people are no longer alive on this planet. Hey, everybody. Welcome to another Chad's cast with your boy Logan. But this will not be a Jeffrey Epstein podcast. I am going to fulfill my promise of what I said to you guys last time by doing a little Mana no Kahime breakdown and not the whole movie, because there's only 20 minutes. I'll try to say what I can, but I'll mainly just focus on Ashitaka. Interestingly, I do believe the movie was originally supposed to have Ashitaka in the title. It was supposed to be the story of Ashitaka in some way. I think that was the.

01:14

Logan

The working title they were using, but they changed it to Mana no Kahime. And I. I don't know exactly why, but I. I have to admit, I was always kind of curious why it was called Mononoke Hime or why it was about Princess Mononoke, because I didn't feel. Although she's a good supporting character, I never felt she was enough to name the whole movie after she. She doesn't really. She doesn't really change through the movie until the very end, I suppose. But, yeah, I don't know. There wasn't much of a journey for her. She was always on the same path. And Ashitaka was the one on the journey and the one having to make decisions that he didn't want to make. And that's kind of what I want to focus on, is how Ashitaka is this gestalt version of a man.

02:20

Logan

Gestalt means literally more than the sum of its parts. And sorry if that sounds confusing. There's not really a better definition. But I'll give you an example if. Well, just think of, like, a weapon, a sword, or something you put. Or how about a bow and arrow? Ashitaka's bow and arrow. So without the arrow or without the bow, both of those things are useless in a way. I mean, the bow without string is useless. So you have separate parts, right? But the sum of the parts is all of it put together to create something new. Now you can shoot an arrow. I don't know if that describes gestalt in the best way, but basically, because I'm trying to just describe more than the sum of its parts. That's what gestalt means.

03:20

Logan

So you piece something together, and now it has become more than what those individual parts are. So if he's the gestalt version of a man, that means he's conquered certain things about his masculinity, certain levels of his humanity, and it makes him better for doing that. It's ideal. Gestalt is also kind of an ideal. But I mean, overall, the movie is the overall theme of this movie. I know it's. It's a very environmentally focused movie, but it's also this loss of mythos, this loss of mysticism in our world through the coming of industrialization. It's very Tolkien. Tolkien was a very. Was had the same opinions about industrialization and nature. And just like in Tolkien, you have the hero's journey here where something happens in a small village and the hero has to leave the village.

04:48

Logan

It's the same thing that happens in Lord of the Rings. It's the same thing that happens in Star Wars. Luke Skywalker is a farm boy who knows nothing about the world and he has to go off and become somebody. Ashitaka is not a simple farm boy. He knows how to use violence when necessary. He knows how to handle himself. So he's not this young, inexperienced person. So the hero's journey is a little twisted here, but it still works. He has to go off and become something else. He has to grow beyond his limitations. Right? I mean, that's the basic thing. Whatever the limitations are, you have to go. And the hero's journey is growing beyond them and becoming a new thing. Even if you are a super-experienced person, there's still more to this world that you could learn.

05:51

Logan

And so he is outcast because he gets cursed. But this curse is very symbolic, this marking on his arm and it acts up in certain situations. It grants him extra power. And you could say this was part of Ashitaka's struggle in becoming a gestalt man, is that he had to learn to conquer this curse as well. He had to master it. And what the curse really represented is his inner violence, you might say, or his rage, his anger. Right? Every time his arm acts crazy, something bad happens. He shoots off a pair of arms of some. I mean, he's saving people's lives. So he's--he first warns them. This is the other part of being just him--the first layer of his masculinity and conquering his masculinity is that he's a calm person.

07:10

Logan

He's conquered his emotional side in a way. And he doesn't use his strength unless he is forced to. And that's what he does in almost every circumstance where violence is taking place. He first warns, he says, stop. And if they will not, he shoots off one of their heads or shoots off some arms. And that's the power inside of him. I mean, we're supposed to believe that it is because of his cursed arm. But the cursed arm is just a symbol for his own power. It's a surface-level, literal symbol for what a man can do when pushed to a limit. Ashitaka is meant to go on a journey

where he conquers this part of himself. Where he goes to conquer, there's still more for him to conquer. That is why he is on the hero's journey. I did say that he was--

08:22

Logan

You know, he's not like Frodo or Luke Skywalker. He's very experienced already. He knows how to use violence to solve something, to solve problems. But he needs to conquer that rage, that violence, that the arm is treated as this separate thing, that it's not him, but no, it is him. It is him. It's just on the surface now. And that's his journey, right? There's--there's other characters, right, that are all--they're all. They all have different kind of things going on. But that's part of his journey to see with eyes unclouded by hate. That is one of the English lines. And I think that is what really summarizes his character. He wants to see with eyes unclouded by hate because he could easily just put himself on a quest for revenge.

Princess Mononoke and the Balance of Worlds

09:32

Logan

And that becomes his cross to bear, to use an English expression as well, a Christian English metaphor, becomes his cross to bear as well. Will I take revenge or will I forgive? And it's up to him, because he's the one who was cursed. And he has these moments of struggle. We see him struggle. And that's the thing about this movie. We really only see him struggle with decisions. And I love that. You know, I think that's important to see for your main character. He has these moments when he's in the Iron Town where hears them talking about their guns. And it makes him angry, you know, because the only reason he's there and had to leave his village is because he was cursed.

10:38

Logan

Because these people hunted the forest spirits down the forest gods so they could make money, so they could make their life, right? And now it has cursed theirs. The prosperity of their life has cursed his. And isn't that the way of the world? Isn't that the yin and yang of life? But you know, life's dramatic irony, you would say, but there's another moment where he's with Lady Eboshi, and this, she says something about her gun. And this is the gun that shot the boar God or whatever. And suddenly his arm becomes, you know, all acting on its own. And it grabs his sword, but his other hand stops it from coming out. He's struggling right there. So now the decision is being made and she reacts to him very sarcastically. At least this is the way it is in the English version.

11:55

Logan

And she says, does that arm wish to kill me? Ashitaka, does that arm of yours wish to kill me? Voiced by Mimi Driver, by the way, so she has an English accent. Does that arm, of you always

wish to kill me? And Ashitaka's reply is honest, but he knows it's not the right thing to do. And that's. I mean, it's so beautiful what he says. I mean, the whole scene is amazing in that way that it demonstrates the core of his core values, right? What he really stands for. And the truth is, he stands for what's right. And--and even though that's a super hard thing to carry with you when so much, it'd be so much easier just to give in to your emotional instincts. And so his reply is, if it would lift the curse, I would let it tear you apart.

13:05

Logan

That's what he says to her. Ooh, ooh, so good. But he knows it won't lift the curse. He knows that will change nothing. He knows the path to revenge, that would be the woman to take revenge on that person is what caused him to be there in the first place. And yeah, he makes the choice not to do that. That's the harder choice. And you could say that without Ashitaka making that choice not to take revenge, that without that we would be doomed. And that's the point of a hero, not to say that the entire world rests on Ashitaka's shoulders. He, of course, does not control the world. He only controls himself. And that is what it means to be a gestalt of something. You have to be more than the sum of your parts. If you don't like the world, first change yourself.

14:21

Logan

Why? Because we are a part of the world. We are the problem of the world, but we can also be the solution. And if Ashitaka was to go the path of revenge, then all is lost, right? That's what makes him the gestalt man. And one of the greater scenes of the movie happens shortly after that when San invades Irontown and she's, you know, she wants to assassinate Eboshi. She's acting in pure emotion. But there's something else. So now think of it this way. Now, so think of the levels that Ashitaka has developed, right? He's calm, right? He's conquered his emotional side now he's conquered his revenge side, his rage, right? He's conquered the easy path. And now what he becomes is a mediator. This is like level three. And a lot of people would relate this to the Greek God Hermes.

15:50

Logan

Yeah, I think that's how you say it in Japan. We say Hermes, but Hermes, you might know, the brand is named after the Greek God who travels between worlds as a mediator, as someone who talks to humans and gods. Someone in the middle, someone to balance. That's what mediators do. And what does Ashitaka do in this very next scene? He steps right in between Eboshi and San fighting. I mean, and the way that he gets there, the way he now is in control of his arm, where he uses its power to bend the guy's sword and tells him to stand aside. So good. And then he gets in between San and Eboshi and they're both like, you know, San's, like, biting his arm and Eboshi's like, I'm sick of your bullshit.

17:00

Logan

Let me just try and cut your arm off, you know, because they--they both want to have their way. I mean, Eboshi's fighting for her thing. San represents the--the forest, and Ashitaka is the place in the middle. How do we live with--between industrialization and nature as humans, that's where Ashitaka sits. How we sit in that middle ground is important because we are human. We are here. It doesn't matter. We have to find a way to balance that without destroying nature or letting nature destroy us because nature will destroy us as well. So what does he do? He. He just, like, counterattacks Eboshi, like, punches her in the gut once, and then punches San, like, knocks them both out. But that's the power of his masculinity.

18:06

Logan

I mean, I'm sorry to make a gender like that, but it is very important that Ashitaka is being represented as a man in this movie. Because men are the ones that generally have to conquer their violent side. Any argument between a man has the possibility at the bottom line to result in violence at any time. There's always the threat of violence. That is what it is to be a man, you know? And I mean, I'm not saying you can't relate to him. You can't relate to Ashitaka as a woman. If you do, that's fine. But this specific breakdown that I'm doing right now is just about this side. I mean, there's many more things we could say about Ashitaka because the movie continues on. Of course.

19:11

Logan

I just wanted to highlight this type of viewing of Ashitaka because Miyazaki is very well known for his female characters, and they're always super strong and super cool and all that, but Ashitaka is never really looked at as this masculine character. I think he's overlooked, and that's why I want to highlight it here. I think he's a great representation of what it means to be a man. So, yeah, the rest of the movie goes on, but it's more of. Once Ashitaka has become this mediator position, he's also. The movie kind of shifts into what's going to happen between the two sides, and that's more of a journey for San and Eboshi. But, so, I think I've summed up what I wanted to say well enough. I'm not saying this is everything about Ashitaka, but this is this.

Terms

20:21

Logan

I think this concept is just the one I wanted to highlight today. So let's go on to terms. All right. The first term is invades. I think I said San invades Irontown, but I don't know if--it's probably not a very useful term, but invade. So it just means you go into a place that's not yours, you invade. You invaded my space. They call them home invaders. In the US when someone breaks into a home, there was a home invader. So they get into your space. They're not allowed, but they get in. They invade. The next term is the one I said a thousand times already, gestalt. Something more than the sum of its parts to be gestalt. Nope. I don't know if that's how you use that, actually. Hold on.

21:24

Logan

But it does mean to be more than the sum of your parts. But how to use it in a sentence? Well, yeah, I mean, like I was using it. He's the gestalt version. She is the gestalt version of a woman. The gestalt woman? Yeah, I think you would say it like that. She's the gestalt woman. The next term is mediator. Someone who negotiates between parties. You know, the person in the middle, the median. If you think about it, we--we--in the middle of the highway. We have big blocks. Or it could be Just dirt or something. But it's the thing that separates both sides of the highway, and we call that the median. Just like a mediator is in between two things in between two parties. Or like medium is in between hot and cold. They're all linked in that way.

22:34

Logan

The next term is fulfill. I said it at the beginning of the podcast because I am fulfilling my previous promise to do a Princess Mononoke podcast. So if you order something online, the person selling to you fulfills the order, so they send you the product. That's them fulfilling the order. Or you can feel fulfilled. You can feel like something deeply satisfied, Right? You are fulfilled. That's what fulfilled is. You're deeply satisfied. The last term is mythos. Mythos is like myth or mythology. It's, you know, it stems from a pattern of belief. And that is what is one of the overall messages of the movie Mononoke Hime is this loss of mythos. The world changes at the end, when the forest spirit dies. That is the loss of mythos. The gods are dead now, and only mankind remains.

23:53

Logan

The loss of something greater, the loss of myth. And myth is where all of our understanding of humanity comes from. I mean, that's how we've made sense of humanity in the past. So that's all mythos is, that idea, this overall belief in things greater than us. All right, 24 minutes. Good job, Logan.