

“MAY THE WIND BE WITH YOU!” THE BEAUTY OF COMMITMENT AND THE INEVITABILITY OF EVIL IN *THE WIND RISES* (STUDIO GHIBLI/ MIYAZAKI HAYAO, 2013)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The intricacies of “war”- Since its foundation in the year 1985, Studio Ghibli has become the epitome of successful cultural enterprise in Japan dealing with the production of cultural assets “made in Japan” and globally merchandised: animation works. Due to specific features which are to be outlined further below, the animation works – or anime works – produced by Ghibli Studio as represented by its two main directors Takahata Isao (b. 1935) and Miyazaki Hayao (b. 1942) are both aesthetically reflecting the reality and ideologically tackling current issues such as environmental pollution, social discrimination, the process of growing-up, historical responsibility, the meaning and value of life, love as a complex emotional paradigm. Based on an extensive fieldwork – interviews with anime producers and anime fans/consumers as well as participatory observation over several years – as well as in-depth literature research and taking into account Studio Ghibli’s aesthetic-ideological position within Japan’s Soft Power macro-endavors, this paper focuses on three creative strategies – emotional ambivalence, the dynamic reconsideration of history and the artistic highlighting of the spiral-like dialectics of cause and effect – employed in the anime movie *Kaze tachinu*. Translated as *The Wind Rises*, this anime movie was released on July 20, 2013 by Studio Ghibli and Tôhō, under the direction of the reputed anime director Miyazaki Hayao. A critically highly acclaimed anime work and the highest-grossing Japanese movie in Japan in 2013 (its budget was 30 million US\$, and it earned 136.5 million US\$ at the box-office), *The Wind Rises* is to be defined as a Japanese animated historical drama film, which subtly challenges prevalent and generally accepted visions of history, individualism and love. Furthermore, by means of dialectical questioning the established doctrines of representing history, individualism and love, *The Wind Rises* as an animated movie reverses the classical relation between past and present, cause and effect and inspires to critical thinking beyond the constraints of socio-economical involvement. Thus, the goal of the forthcoming analysis is to point out the complex and intricate levels comprised within the phenomenon of “war” as a media-related construction trapped in the unstable stress-ratio between economic-political systems

and socio-cultural individuals constituting those very systems. As it is highlighted in the conclusion, beyond being a historical appearance with apparently clearly defined levels of “good” and “evil”, “war” is a personal concern, deeply affecting individuals – both those directly involved and those marginally related – in their quest for love, happiness and existential fulfillment. Integrated within a larger framework addressing the problematic of recent trends in Japanese popular culture which transgresses the classical Soft Power endeavors while simultaneously challenging the prevalent Cool Japan paradigms, this paper refers to the anime movie *The Wind Rises* as the cultural dimension of historic-geographical events shaking the worldwide late-modernity and its perceptions of reality and humanity.

On a first level, this paper elucidates the technical data of the anime movie *The Wind Rises*: its plot, its characters, its media impact as well as main issues addressed by the specialized critique. This is a necessary stage in creatively introducing the readership to the vast and complex universe of Miyazaki Hayao’s worldview, and it attempts an objective discursive reflection of the animation work in its intrinsic existence, both as a cultural product and as a means of cultural consumption. Furthermore, on a second level, I’ll point out in this paper the intricate relation between nostalgia, ambivalence and historical belonging as dynamic entities negotiated by vehicles of cultural production/consumption and perception within the wider dimensions of the entertainment industry. Thus, these three elements – nostalgia, ambivalence and historical belonging – appear as main parameters in the process of reconstructing the past as a repository of emotional energy and socio-cultural role-models, beyond economic-political compulsions. “War” is, in this train of thoughts, simply an additional dimension of “evil” transgressing the limits of time and space, resulting in the revitalisation of the past via cultural artifacts praising technology, human bonding and nature, and as such creating social cohesion and mutual acceptance among individuals living in here and now.

Finally, on a third level, this paper quests for the deeper meaning beyond the classical interpretations of everyday culture as carriers of significance in terms of excess, consumerism and delusional fantasies distracting social actors from focusing on higher degrees of existential fulfillment and individual transcendence. As it is argued in the last part of the paper, by employing the animated medium to transmit and communicate his ideas and ideological views, Miyazaki Hayao as well as other anime creators originating from Japan confidently choose to express themselves in an aesthetic language which touches the dormant child or teenager within the exhausted grown-up: it is a silent manifesto towards those who have buried their dreams and ideals in the rush of quotidian activities. The subversive power of this silent manifesto resides in its very inconspicuous ubiquity addressing the deepest fears and hopes of the audiences – and forcing them to wake up or to give up.

2. THE WIND RISES AND THE DIALECTICS OF HISTORY

The main theme of the anime movie can be summed up as it follows: it is a fictionalized biography of Horikoshi Jirô (1903-1982), the aeronautical engineer who designed Mitsubishi's A5M fighter and its successor the Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighter. Both fighters were used by Japan during the Pacific War to pursue its expansionist politics, which inevitably ended in the unconditional surrender from 15 August 1945. However, while it is an anime work heavily focusing on war and its wide-ranging devastations, it is definitely the gentlest animated feature about an armaments designer one could ever imagine and put into words, images and sounds. The anime movie is adapted from Miyazaki's eponymous manga, which was in turn loosely based on the 1937 short-story *The Wind Rises* (the official translation: *The Wind Has Risen*) by Hori Tatsuo(1904-1953). In addition, two previous live-action movies based on Hori's *Kaze Tachinu* were released in 1954 and 1976.

The plot deals with the life of Horikoshi Jirô: in 1918, the teenager Jirô longs to become a pilot, but his nearsightedness prevents him from becoming one. Meanwhile, he reads about the famous Italian aircraft designer Giovanni Battista Caproni, and dreams about meeting him one night. In that dream, Caproni tells him that building planes is more important than flying them. Five years later, during his travel by train to study aeronautical engineering at Tokyo Imperial University, he meets a young girl, Nahoko, who is accompanied by her maid whose leg breaks when the Great Kanto Earthquake (September 1, 1923) hits, so that Jirô carries her to Nahoko's family and leaves without giving his name. Four years later, in 1927, Jirô graduates with his friend Honjô Kirô (who would later design the aircraft Mitsubishi G3M), and both begin work at the aircraft manufacturer Mitsubishi assigned to design a fighter plane, the Falcon, for the Imperial Army. However, during tests in 1928, the Falcon breaks apart in mid-air and the Army rejects it. Dispirited about the apparent backwardness of the Japanese technology, Jirô and Honjô are sent to Germany in 1929 to carry out technical research and obtain a production license for the large German four-engine transport aircraft Junkers G-38. While in Germany, Jirô sees himself confronted with the ugly reality of the lurking aggressiveness, violence and discrimination which would lead, eventually, to the horrors of the World War II, and dreams again of Caproni who tells him that the world would be a better place with beautiful planes, even if humankind might employ them for destructive purposes. Later on, in the spring of 1932, Jirô is promoted to chief designer for a fighter plane competition sponsored by the Imperial Navy, but his design, the Mitsubishi 1MF10, fails the tests in 1933 and is rejected. Disappointed, Jirô goes to a summer resort in Karuizawa to rest, where he meets Nahoko again. They get engaged, but Nahoko has tuberculosis and refuses to marry until she recovers. A German visitor privately critical of the Nazi regime, Hans Castorp, assists the romance before fleeing arrest by the Japanese secret police.

Wanted in connection with Castorp, Jirô hides at his supervisor's home while he works on a new Navy project. Following a lung hemorrhage, Nahoko recuperates in an alpine sanatorium, but cannot bear being apart from Jirô, and returns to marry him. Jirô's younger sister Kayo, a doctor, warns Jirô that his marriage to Nahoko will end badly as tuberculosis is incurable. Though Nahoko's health deteriorates, she and Jirô enjoy their time together.

One day, Jirô has to leave for the test flight of his new prototype aircraft, the Mitsubishi A5M. Sensing that she will soon die, Nahoko secretly returns to the sanatorium and leaves letters for Jirô, her family and friends. At the test site, Jirô is distracted from his success by a gust of wind, sensing Nahoko's death. Later on, in the summer of 1945, Japan has lost the war and has been devastated by air raids. Jirô again dreams of meeting Caproni, telling him about his regrets that his aircraft had been used in war. A group of Zero aircrafts fly past, and their pilots salute Jirô. Caproni comforts him by saying that Jirô's dream of building beautiful aircrafts was nonetheless realized. Nahoko appears in his dream, too, exhorting her husband to live his life to the fullest.

This linear plot allows for a complex development in-depth of the characters and the ideological message they are carrying, so that *The Wind Rises* transgresses the limits and challenges of a war-related entertainment product towards the strangely familiar space of perennial works of human experience and longing. Thus, as to be shown further below, *The Wind Rises* expresses anew the necessities and intricacies of "war", as a "Ghibli anime", as a poetical meditation and as a *bildungsroman* (novel of formation).

2.1. *The Wind Rises* as "Ghibli anime"

Though it paints the reality of the lurking war, the anime movie *The Wind Rises* is neither an anti-war manifesto nor a pro-war revisionist re-writing of history. I would go as far as to state that it is not even a movie about war, equally as the anime movie *The Grave of the Fireflies* (director: Takahata Isao) from 1988 wasn't about war, as well. Back then, in 1988, when Takahata Isao's anime movie *The Grave of the Fireflies* was simultaneously released with Miyazaki Hayao's *My Neighbour Totoro* in April 1988, it simply depicted the life – and the death – of two war-orphans at the end of the Pacific War. As Takahata once stated, he could make a cinema work on such a devastating topic precisely because the animated medium, especially in its two-dimensional formulation, creates the emotional distance to the displayed object, necessary to render bearable the representation as well as the production and perception process. In the same way, *The Wind Rises* is an appeal to re-consider war as a part of daily life: like *The Grave of the Fireflies*, *The Wind Rises* simply depicts the life of human beings who happen to live in times of war, thus sending an appeal to re-consider war as part of daily life. On the background of on-going wars, life goes

on, with its ups and downs, with its challenges and discoveries, with its love-stories and solitudes.

Furthermore, in *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki Hayao overcomes the existential attitude of flying as liberation and survival strategy, as based on the model of Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1944). Antoine de Saint-Exupery is mostly known as the widely acclaimed author of the children's book *The Little prince* (*Le petit prince*, 1943), translated in over 250 languages and dialects. Simultaneously, though, he was also a pioneering aviator and a French aristocrat, writer and poet. He describes his cathartic experiences of flying in times of historical upheavals in several autobiographical writings such as *Wind, Sand and Stars* (*Terre des hommes*, 1939) and *Nightflight* (*Vol de nuit*, 1931). Miyazaki Hayao takes over Antoine de Saint-Exupery's vision of flying as existential attitude and as liberation and survival strategy, and has been employing it in most of his previous anime works, starting with *Nausicaa from the Valley of the Winds*, released in 1984, whose heroine negotiates the post-apocalyptic jungle by glider, throughout *Laputa: The Castle in the Sky*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *Spirited Away*, *Howl's Moving Castle*. This existential attitude of flying as liberation and survival strategy based on Antoine de Saint-Exupery's writings is most prominent in *Porco Rosso* from 1992. In *Porco Rosso*, Miyazaki explicitly adopts Saint-Exupery's existential model and extrapolates it on the intricate relationship between war and flying in the character of a flying ace, a pilot, who happens to have the body appearance of a pig, chasing air pirates across the Adriatic Sea in the interwar period. This aviator-pig flying a red plane – which gives the name of the anime movie *Porco Rosso*, meaning *The Red Pig* or *Kurenai buta* in Japanese – becomes a metaphor for the position of the individual in times of historical turmoil, while heavily employing Saint-Exupery's ideological attitude in Miyazaki's vision and definition of maleness and male role-models for apathetic middle-aged men by the early 1990s in Japan. (*Princess Mononoke* and *Ponyo On The Cliff* are blatant exceptions to this almost all-encompassing cinematic paradigm.)

In this train of thoughts, flying becomes in *The Wind Rises* a *raison d'être*, airplanes being instrumental in this new existential attitude, as stated by the Italian aviator Giovanni Caproni in the main character Horikoshi Jirô's dream at the beginning of the anime movie. In this dream, as Jirô's encounters with the Italian aviator who is his role-model and mentor take place exclusively in Jirô's dreams, Giovanni Caproni tells him while walking on the wings of an airplane: "Airplanes are not for war or making money. Airplanes are beautiful dreams waiting to be swallowed by the sky." In *The Wind Rises*, the main character grows and matures in times of historical distraught and confusion, and learns to cope with the reality and the choices this reality imposes upon him. Inspired by a quotation from Horikoshi Jirô himself that all he wanted was to create something beautiful, as stated by Miyazaki in the introductory explanation to the making-off, this anime movie turns

thus into a classical *bildungsroman* (novel of formation) with the animated medium as representation channel.

On a conceptual level, beyond the classical story of star-crossed lovers Jirô and Nahoko combined with the life-path of a brilliant young man with nerdy features, and transgressing the characteristics of the classical *bildungsroman* mentioned above, there is the prevalent, almost obsessive message of life as being the most important asset one possesses or could ever possess. The final words of Nahoko, Jirô's wife, while floating through the air and eventually vanishing carried away by the white clouds in a dream scene short before the film ends, are: "Anata ha, ikite!" – "Live, my love!", a final appeal transmitting the message which was supposed to be perceived throughout the whole anime movie.

This message of life as being the most important asset one could ever possess permeates anime works released by Ghibli Studio since 1994, with *Ponpoko: The Heisei Tanuki War* (director: Takahata Isao) being a sort of pilot-project in this concern, and with the monumental *Princess Mononoke* (director: Miyazaki Hayao) from 1997 univocally representing this statement beyond the ecological propaganda – which was, for that matter, the superficial layer in *Ponpoko: The Heisei Tanuki War* as well. In *Ponpoko: The Heisei Tanuki War* the message of the necessity to live one's life at its fullest and to move continuously with the flow of history was slightly humorously displayed within the ethnocentric framework of the tanuki community's destruction by means of human progress and technology. On the other hand, in *Princess Mononoke*, the murder of gods which goes hand in hand with the devastation of nature – again, pursued and fulfilled by means of human progress and technology – is, in fact, the foundation on which the significance of human life, unique in its transience and beautiful in its transcendence, emerges and thrives. In the scene where Ashitaka first time encounters San directly – that is, where she tries to kill him and stops in the last moment –, Ashitaka opens his eyes while lying on his back with San pointing with her short sword towards his forehead. Then he says "Sonata ha, utsukushii. Ikiro!" – "You're beautiful. Live!" This "Ikiro!" ("Live!") becomes the essence of their fight against the complete destruction of the world as it used to be. As stated by Miyazaki himself in an interview on the meaning of *Princess Mononoke* as a Japanese work of art, the motif of "Ikiro!" ("Live!") as the main message of *Princess Mononoke* is to be understood as it follows: "The human being has this only choice, to keep on living while permanently thinking 'What am I going to do from now on?'. This is the only way in which life makes sense. This is what I mean through 'Ikiro!'"

(「人間はいつも、いつも、「自分たちがこれからどうやるのか」ということを考えて生きていくしかない。それしか道はないんですね。それが「生きろ！」ということです。”) This urge to move forward in life in spite of all difficulties and hardships while simultaneously enjoying the beautiful moments in their very transience is the fundamental topos in *Ponpoko: The Heisei Tanuki War* and *Princess*

Mononoke, deeply hidden beyond the layers of ecological propaganda – and finding their ideological climax further on in *The Wind Rises* and *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*, both released by Ghibli Studio in 2013.

2.2. *The Wind Rises* as a poetical meditation

There are two main elements highlighting this path of interpretation in *The Wind Rises*. The first indicator is the quote from Paul Valéry (1871-1945) from which the title itself *The Wind Rises* is derived: "The wind rises ... we must try to live" is the first line from the last strophe of the poem *Le cimetière marin* (*The Graveyard by the Sea*, 1920/1922), one of the most important poems of the French literature and Paul Valéry's most famous poetical work.

Le vent se lève! . . . il faut tenter de vivre!
L'air immense ouvre et referme mon livre,
La vague en poudre ose jaillir des rocs!
Envolez-vous, pages tout éblouies!
Rompez, vagues! Rompez d'eaux rejouies
Ce toit tranquille où picoraient des focs!

The wind is rising! . . . We must try to live!
The huge air opens and shuts my book: the wave
Dares to explode out of the rocks in reeking
Spray. Fly away, my sun-bewildered pages!
Break, waves! Break up with your rejoicing surges
This quiet roof where sails like doves were pecking.

(Translated by C. Day Lewis)

Belonging to the symbolist movement and displaying a very hermetic character, the poem *The Graveyard by the Sea* is a seaside metaphysical meditation on the meaning of life and death, composed of 24 strophes of six lines each. While the first four strophes introduce the sea as an object similar to the nothingness (Hegel's "thing" – "das Ding"), perpetual and lacking any awareness, the next four strophes (5 to 9) present the opposition of this symbolical character in the shape of the ever-challenging mobility of human consciousness which exists within time, striving towards the pure power of thought. The confrontation between these two symbolical characters – the sea and the human consciousness – brings out the emergence of the body (strophes 9 to 19), which results into a meditation on death: the rejection of the illusion of the soul's immortality accompanies the temptation to die in order to stop the opposition between consciousness and existence developing on its own. This temptation is, however, ruled out in the last five strophes (20 to 24): by dismissing the paradoxes of the pure thought, the subject chooses life, the movement

of the body, the poetical creation, the action, in the exclamation: “Le vent se lève! ... Il faut tenter de vivre!” – “The and is rising! ... We must try to live!” Thus, the poem becomes a reflection on time, on the contradiction between consciousness and object as well as between consciousness and body. The final choice overpasses this contradiction without, in fact, solving it. The first-person author contemplates life and death, engagement and withdrawal, love and estrangement, in a setting dominated by the sea, the sky, stars, rocky cliffs, and the rising sun. A further possible reading of the poem is as an allegory on the question of the way fate moves human affairs or as an attempt to comprehend the horrific violence in Europe at the time of the poem's composition – that is, in the immediate aftermath of the World War I. Though the poem is not about World War I, it does try to address the relationships between destruction and beauty, and, in this sense, it resonates with ancient Greek meditations on these matters, especially in the plays of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

From this perspective, the anime work *The Wind Rises* becomes a meditation on life and death on the background of the emerging and gradually unfolding Pacific War, and the circumstances individuals living in that era were facing. Employing the animated medium as the means by which this contents is transmitted to the audiences, the director Miyazaki Hayao fulfills his lifetime's goal of re-defining animation in terms of an artistic language, able to possess and develop the strength to mediate real-life messages and teachings.

2.3. *The Wind Rises* as a *bildungsroman*

The second element indicating the fact that the anime work *The Wind Rises* is not a propagandistic work on war, but a groundbreaking piece of art and a novel of formation permeated by the deep message of “Ikiri!” (“Live!”) as life being the most important asset one possesses and could ever possess, is composed of two direct references to Thomas Mann's (1875-1955) monumental novel *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*, 1924): firstly, the character of Hans Castorp showing up briefly in Miyazaki's anime work (who was the main character in Thomas Mann's novel), and, secondly, Nahoko's tuberculosis and her short retreat in the sanatorium in the mountains (which was the main setting in Thomas Mann's novel). A highly ambiguous and elusive literary work, *The Magic Mountain* blends a scrupulous realism with deeper symbolic undertones, and within this complexity, forces the reader to weigh up the artistic significance of the pattern of events set out within the narrative, a difficult task, given the overall ironic tone of the narrator. It was often compared, both by critics and by Thomas Mann himself, to a symphonic work orchestrated with a number of themes and leitmotifs transgressing the classical literary pattern into levels of philosophical meditation. While the main narrative thread focuses of the protagonist's life – that of a typical *bildungsroman*: the

immature Hans Castorp leaves his home and learns about art, culture, politics, human frailty and love –, embedded within this vast novel are extended reflections on the experience of time, music, nationalism, sociological issues and changes in the natural world, so that Castorp's stay in the rarefied air of *The Magic Mountain* (geographically located in Davos, high up in the Swiss Alps) thus provides him with a panoramic view of pre-war European civilization and its discontents.

Like *The Magic Mountain*, *The Wind Rises* is a *bildungsroman*, a "novel of education" or a "novel of formation", employing the animated medium as representation channel. Moreover, like *The Magic Mountain*, *The Wind Rises* reconsiders the message and structure of the classical *bildungsroman*: whereas the classical *bildungsroman* would conclude by having "formed" Hans Castorp into a mature member of society, with his own worldview and greater self-knowledge, *The Magic Mountain* ends with a clear implication that Hans Castorp, precisely as the main character, would be killed on the battlefields of the World War I. In the same way, instead of living with the girl of his dreams happily ever-after, Horikoshi Jirô loses her to her incurable illness, and the airplanes he's been struggling to create so far are employed by the army to spread war, death and chaos. Still, as Thomas Mann once stated on the meaning of *The Magic Mountain*, there are two ways to mature life: The one is the common, direct, and brave path. The other is the bad and dangerous path, leading through death, and that is the genius way (as stated by Thomas Mann himself in his discussion of the work, written in English and published in the *Atlantic* in 1953: "what [Hans] came to understand is that one must go through the deep experience of sickness and death to arrive at a higher sanity and health."). This concept of illness and death as a necessary passage to knowledge, health and life turns *The Magic Mountain* as well as *The Wind Rises* into real *bildungsroman* masterpieces.

On the background of these two main influences – French symbolism and German realism with deeper allegorical undertones –, Miyazaki Hayao displays his own vision on life, health, illness, personal dreams, historical belonging and the role of the intellectuals as creators of (fictional or not) role-models. In the same line as the two European authors, Paul Valéry and Thomas Mann, Miyazaki uses the phenomenon of "war" as an impetus to meditate over the value and significance of life and death. While in case of the European authors, "war" – specifically the World War I – was only an artistic means to express ambivalent emotions and abstract thoughts on the significance of the human existence, on frailty and love, for Miyazaki, the specter of war – that is, of the World War II – was an opportunity to express his "very complex feelings" about the war, as published in an interview with the daily *Asahi Shinbun*, and to state, at the same time, that the airplane Zero "represented one of the few things we Japanese could be proud of – they were a truly formidable presence, and so were the pilots who flew them". In the contrast between Western power and Eastern ingenuity as reflected in the confrontation with German

technology of the time and Horikoshi Jirô's reply back home "If we leave the guns out, we should be OK", the portrait of pre-war Japan with its calamitous economical state, desperate to pull itself into the 20th century is painted in the anime movie *The Wind Rises* in lyrical nuances. The nostalgia encompassed in this "visually sumptuous celebration of an unspoiled pre-war Japan" (*Japan Times*) becomes especially in the latter half of the movie heartbreaking, suffused with melancholy and loss, poignantly expressed in Jirô and Nahoko's love being shaped by their dwindling time together, in contemplation of the imminent death.

CONCLUSIONS

The contradictions of "life"- Beyond the subtle insinuations of the lurking war, the anime movie *The Wind Rises* clearly shows that the biggest devastations are nature's doing, not man's. For instance, the only blood spilled is the blood coughed into a handkerchief by Nahoko, whom Jirô later marries, their love shaped by their dwindling time together, as her death from tuberculosis becomes increasingly imminent. In the same train of thoughts, the Great Kanto Earthquake which flattened Tokyo in 1923 is depicted in *The Wind Rises* as a roiling behemoth that ripples the earth like a rug – an incredibly vividly mastered animation scene. The frailty of human existence and of human bonds is thus contextualized in powerful tones, less than a choice and more of an inevitable combat.

The individual consciousness of historical belonging in what Miyazaki displays as a layered look at how Horikoshi Jirô's passion for flight was captured by capital-flow and militarism" (*Asia-Pacific Journal*) is subtly counterpointed by this emotional ambivalence towards the position of the intellectuals in times of historical turmoil. A symbolical return to *The Grave of the Fireflies* (director: Takahata Isao, the double-pack release with *My Neighbor Totoro*, director: Miyazaki Hayao, from 1988), *The Wind Rises* is both an appeal to accept war as an unavoidable and to a certain degree necessary evil, and a reminder upon the position of the individual within the political system. It is a late echo of the credo in intellectual activism strongly represented by the so-called *anpo* movement of the late 1960s, of which Takahata Isao and Miyazaki Hayao, the "Big Two" of the "Ghibli Quartet" (together with Suzuki Toshio and Hisaishi Joe), were main representatives. (The *anpo* movement was a student movement in Japan, comparable to the 1968s-movement in the West, and opposing the renewal of the *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan*, first signed in 1952 in San Francisco, then amended in 1960 in Washington and extended in 1970, in spite of the protests.) The critiques to the plot of *The Wind Rises* came from both left and right sides of the political rainbow, on the one hand due to the artistic canonisation of the man who, at least partly, was responsible for the carnage of Pearl Harbour, and pointing out that some

of the laborers who built the planes were Korean and Chinese people who were forced into labor. On the other hand, Miyazaki himself added to the controversy by publishing an article in which he actively criticises Japan's conservative party's proposed changes to the constitution, as to amend the Article 9 related to Japan's commitment to peace and its preservation.

Furthermore, *The Wind Rises* avoids to tell parables of the risk and responsibilities of great power in hands of individuals as the other two animated blockbusters of the year 2013 do: Both *Frozen* (directors: Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, released by Walt Disney Pictures) and *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (director: Takahata Isao, released by Ghibli Studio) provide symbolic undertones of female empowerment accompanied by a detailed description of the weight of personal choices, so that Andersen's fairy-tale respectively the old Japanese folk-tale become a space of longing, and paradoxically, belonging. Instead, *The Wind Rises* tells the story of great dreams and the way they are taken over by the waves of history. One of Miyazaki's "most ambitious and thought-provoking visions as well as one of his most beautifully realized visual projects" (*Asia-Pacific Journal*), *The Wind Rises* combines the fantastic worlds Miyazaki created along the decades, with their finely observed, lushly rendered naturalism, for instance emblematically represented in 2001's *Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi* (*Spirited Away*) that made even the more out-there scenes feel thrillingly beautiful and real (see the train ride through the water) with nostalgia for a vanished time, similar to 1992's *Kurenai no buta* (*Porco Rosso*), his "air pirates" animation set in the inter-war era in, around and above the Mediterranean Sea.

Historical belonging emerges from nostalgia as what one could call an "invented emotion" which allows for transfer of significance in historical terms, which leads, in its turn, to socio-cultural affiliation as the result of conscious choices on the basis of everyday events and accumulated life experience. Emotional ambivalence delivers the impetus to intellectual activism transgressing time and space. Social actors, as Pierre Bourdieu put it, grow into responsible, self-aware citizens. More than being a plain animated *bildungsroman* in terms of classical education and formation, *The Wind Rises* creates an aesthetic-ideological space where the overcoming of loss and fear leads to the creation of the mature individual, embedded in historical reality, which turns, again, into a site of responsible, self-aware citizen participation. The responsible, self-aware citizen becomes able to live in the present and to respect life as the most precious asset one possesses and could ever possess. Thus, instead of waging a holy war for peace which won't leave a single stone in its place, it is maybe sometimes more constructive to regard, at least for the moment, war as an inevitable, necessary evil to accompany our lives – and to accept it as such.

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