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A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Flawed Women in *Castle in the Sky*

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Abstract

The 1986 film *Castle in the Sky* by Studio Ghibli challenges the prevailing notion that moral characters in animation correspond to visual appeal by featuring flawed female characters instead of the genre's typical focus on attractive male and female protagonists. This study aims to analyse the depiction of flawed female characters in *Castle in the Sky* by examining the depiction of their physical appearance, verbal text, facial expressions, and body language. The data in this qualitative research was analysed using the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) approach, sourced from two female characters in *Castle in the Sky* named Dola and Sheeta. The findings suggest that the depiction of feminine images in *Castle in the Sky* contradicts conventional portrayals of female imagery in animation. These female characters exhibit a nuanced complexity, characterized by a multifaceted nature encompassing both strengths and weaknesses. The present study introduces the concept of a "flawed female character" and offers a way to analyse female characters who maintain complete autonomy and self-determination over their physical being.

Keywords: Flawed female character, animated film, critical discourse analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, Castle in the Sky.

Analisis Wacana Kritikal Multimodal Wanita 'Cacat' dalam Castle in the Sky

Abstrak

Filem Castle in the Sky pada tahun 1986 oleh Studio Ghibli mempertikai anggapan umum bahawa watak moral dalam animasi sepadan dengan daya tarikan visual dengan menampilkan watak wanita yang memiliki kekurangan dan bukannya tumpuan tipikal genre pada protagonis lelaki dan wanita yang menarik. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gambaran watak wanita yang banyak kekurangan dalam Castle in the Sky dengan meneliti gambaran rupa fizikal, teks lisan, mimik muka dan bahasa badan mereka. Data kualitatif ini dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), bersumberkan dua watak wanita dalam Castle in the Sky bernama Dola dan Sheeta. Analisis menunjukkan bahawa penggambaran imej feminin dalam Castle in the Sky bercanggah dengan gambaran konvensional imej wanita dalam animasi. Watak-watak wanita ini mempamerkan kerumitan yang bernuansa, mempunyai sifat yang pelbagai, yang merangkumi kedua-dua kekuatan dan kelemahan. Kajian ini memperkenalkan konsep watak wanita yang 'cacat' dan menawarkan kaedah menganalisis watak wanita yang mengekalkan autonomi dan menentukan nasib sepenuhnya berbanding fizikal mereka.

Kata kunci*: Watak wanita yang memiliki kelemahan, filem animasi, analisis wacana kritis, analisis wacana multimodal, Castle in the Sky.*

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1.0 Introduction

Animated films frequently present women as either virtuous or wicked. The positive female characters reflected in animation often have perfect appearances and convey positive meanings, such as bravery, kindness, and willingness to help others. Douglas (1994) critiques the representation of women in media, often highlighting the unrealistic beauty standards imposed on female characters. While her work might not focus solely on animation, her arguments about the "idealized feminine" in media apply. Hains (2014) examines the impact of princess narratives on young girls, often critiquing the overemphasis on beauty and the association of physical attractiveness with goodness. While her focus is primarily on Disney, her arguments extend to broader animation trends. On the contrary, the portrayal of negative female characters reflects their viciousness, selfishness, and cold-bloodedness, with an unattractive appearance and depraved-mannered behaviour. Nevertheless, human nature is often multifaceted and complex in real life. Female anime characters tend to be shallower and fall into stereotypes, yet the incomplete depiction of female characters impedes the audience's attempt to emotionally connect with them. This is especially true for female teenage viewers, which may lead to their deliberate demand for perfection while ignoring the diversity of human nature and eventually establishing misguided values and misleading expectations.

Castle in the Sky is a Japanese animated fantasy adventure film penned and helmed by Hayao Miyazaki. The film presents a compelling case study by featuring female characters whose morality is not directly correlated with visual appeal, challenging the conventional emphasis on physical attractiveness often seen in animated protagonists. This subversion of traditional representations provides fertile ground for analyzing the complexities of "flawed female characters" and their assertion of autonomy and self-determination. This Ghibli Studio-produced animated film primarily focuses on two female protagonists. Sheeta, the primary female protagonist, is in possession of an enigmatic crystal coveted by multiple factions. Dola, the leader of a squad of sky pirates. They assume significant functions within the storyline and are depicted as intricate and multifaceted. Hence, inspired by the discovery of this characterization, the present article has decided to evaluate the women in Studio Ghibli's animated film titled *Castle in the Sky*. There are studies that show that most of the respondents are motivated and inspired in their lives through the characters of students, employees, children or friends in the anime plots (Mamat, et al .,2021). The examination of female characters can offer valuable insights for the development of female characters in the future, while also expanding avenues for diversifying their portrayal.

In defining the concept of "flawed female characters," Hallie Shepherd (2018) defines "flawed female characters" as imperfect women living realistic lives, emphasizing that they are not villains but relatable figures. She argues that audiences connect with these characters because everyone has flaws. Burnham (2022) highlights three critical elements in dystopian literature: the setting, the protagonists' agency, and their engagement with feminist ethics. These elements help readers understand the characters' motivations and roles.

The study identifies two core ideas: first, flawed female characters provide an authentic portrayal of women with realistic traits and flaws, enhancing narrative realism. Second, they exemplify strength, autonomy, and self-reliance, with a clear vision of their goals and means to achieve them.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Discourse Analysis of Women in Media

Discourse can span diverse domains, including communication, information, politics, and literature (Putri et al., 2017). This study utilises an animated film as the medium of discourse, which is considered a subset of literature. Film discourse studies have thoroughly examined the portrayal and establishment of women's images, making it a prominent area of inquiry in recent times. Several studies conducted since the 1970s have acknowledged the societal significance of women (Giuliano, 2017). Most studies have consistently found that men generally occupy higher societal positions and wield more significant influence, whereas women are often confined to subordinate roles. Previous studies demonstrate the

predominant restriction of women to domestic tasks, whereas men enjoyed the freedom to pursue employment in other locations and workplaces (Iqbal et al., 2014). While discourse analysis spans various domains, this study focuses on animated film to examine the evolving portrayal of women, recognizing a historical trend of female subordination and a recent shift towards more complex female characters in media..

MCDA has become a pivotal framework for examining how women are represented across various media. This approach integrates linguistic, visual, and semiotic resources to uncover underlying ideologies and power dynamics (Machin & Mayr, 2012). O'Halloran (2011) extends this by examining digital media, where multimodal elements are used to construct and deconstruct female identities. Her study illustrates how new media platforms offer spaces for both reinforcing and resisting traditional gender roles. Furthermore, Norris (2019) investigates social media, showing how users utilize multimodal resources to negotiate identity and resist oppressive discourses. This body of work collectively underscores the importance of MCDA in understanding and challenging the complex representations of women in contemporary media.

2.2 Female Characters in Film

Films have been a significant component of the cinema industry for numerous decades. According to Van Leeuwen (2005), films are composed of several means of communication, with visual and temporal components being the most crucial. The editing process synchronises the various motions, voices, and music types, generating a rhythmic arrangement that amplifies the entire experience. Animation films possess a unique ability to narrate stories by conveying emotions and concepts through visually captivating means that are comprehensible to both children and adults (Gibson, 2019). An initiative that highlights significant achievements in the field of animated films is featuring women as the central narratives (Leon & Schmidt, 2021).

The portrayal of female characters in animation has been a subject of discourse in recent years. One study analyzes a range of Disney films and provides data on the representation of gender (among other factors). While not entirely recent, it is a foundational study that sparked much subsequent discussion (Towbin, et al., 2004). Morante (2015) provides a good overview of the changing landscape of female representation in animation, particularly focusing on Disney and Pixar.There is apprehension over the portrayal of female characters, as they are frequently depicted in a restricted and objectified manner with a limited narrative function. Nevertheless, there have been notable advancements in this domain. For instance, Pixar's film *Inside Out* centres around a little girl who serves as the protagonist, and the primary struggle revolves around two emotions associated with females. Similarly, Miyazaki's films frequently highlight robust and intricate female protagonists. Notwithstanding these favourable instances, a dearth of animated series featuring female protagonists remains.

3.0 Methodology

The present study used a qualitative methodology and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis to evaluate the data. The Studio Ghibli animated film *Castle in the Sky* served as the primary data source for this study. The primary analytical framework employed is Fairclough's three-dimensional model (2015). This study examines the textual, discursive, and social aspects of flawed female characters and the three dimensions of discourse analysis. Additionally, it utilises the concept of multimodality to analyse the visual semiotics in the animated film (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The researcher employed Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to analyse each instance of multimodality included in the animated movie and explore the underlying meanings conveyed by the flawed female characters depicted in the storyline.

Fairclough's three-dimensional model encompasses three distinct meanings, textual dimension, discursive dimension, sociocultural dimension. First, the textual dimension of discourse pertains to the linguistic aspects of a document, including grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Second, discourse centres on how language generates and sustains power dynamics among diverse social groupings. Third, social component of discourse pertains to the broader social framework within which speech occurs. The position of discourse producers in the existing social environment will be the initial

focus of the social context study (Kustati, 2022). This encompasses the historical, cultural, and institutional elements influencing conversation (Fairclough, 2015).

Applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the present study initially scrutinises the textual level by investigating the linguistic choices in portraying flawed female characters in films. It pertains to the utilisation of the characters' language in subtitles, facial expressions, body language, and appearance. Second, it examines the discourse practices and social practices reflected at the textual level. The theoretical framework is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework
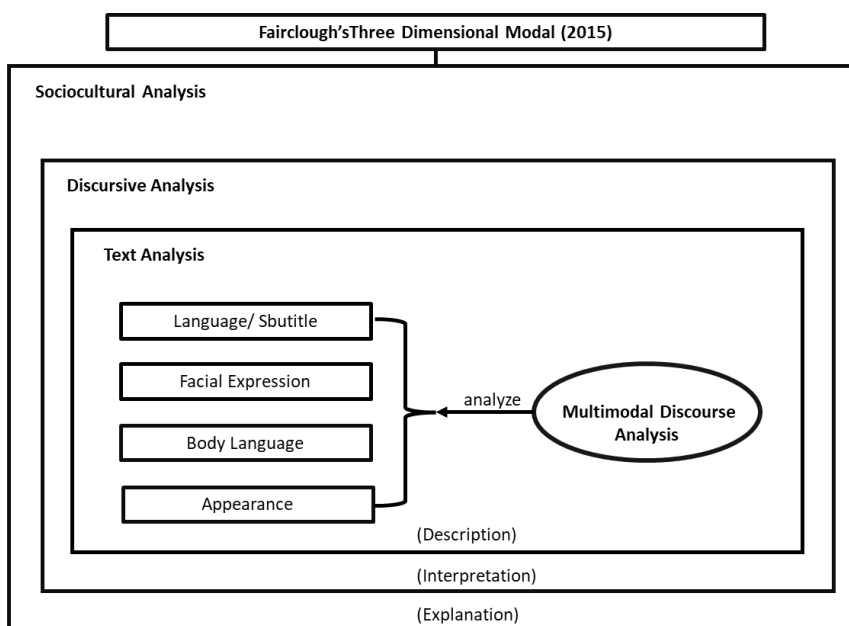
The language or subtitles used by the characters in the film were analysed using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which can be applied within MDA to analyse linguistic aspects of multimodal texts (O'Hallora & Fei, 2014). SFL, which Michael Halliday created, provides a solid foundation for understanding language as a system of options. It emphasises the interaction between grammar, semantics, and social context, concentrating on how language acts in context (Halliday, 2013). Facial expressions in anime films pertain to the emotions and reactions portrayed through the characters' visages, including smiling, frowning, wincing, and flushing (Puglisi & Ackerman, 2019). Body language encompasses the nonverbal signals conveyed by a character's physical motions, gestures, and facial expressions. The appearance mode specifically emphasises the physical attributes of flawed female characters.

This article uses ELAN to annotate the multi-modal modules of female characters. The ELAN (Version 6.5) software is utilised to segment and annotate the video corpus, conduct statistical analysis on various elements such as number, frequency, and length, and export the findings to offer data assistance for the following purposes: Analysis of communication that incorporates multiple modes of expression, including language, visuals, and gestures. Figure 2 is the interface diagram of the software ELAN used in this study.

Figure 2
The interface diagram of ELAN
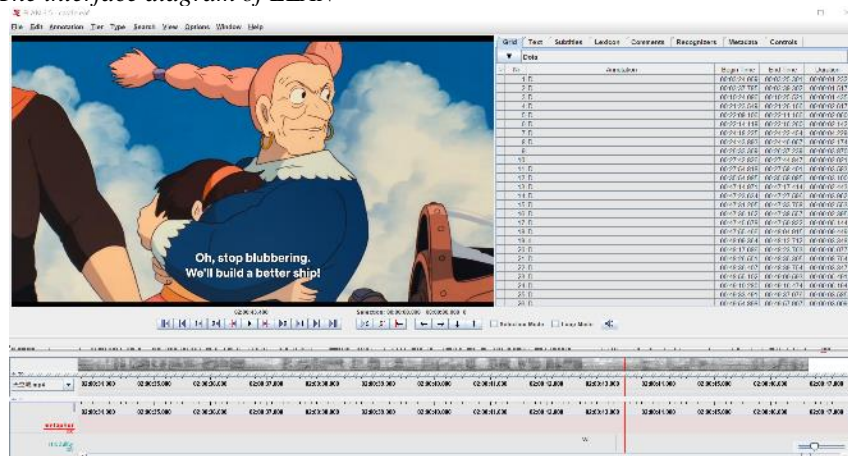
Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 00:43:03

4.0 Results and Discussion

This section will cover the analysis method of the *Castle in the Sky* animated film using MCDA. Using the plot's progression, eleven screenshots have been chosen as data to examine the depiction of flawed female characters. This study has chosen five situations, each of which portrays the image evolution of the two female characters. These scenarios are analysed using Fairclough's three-dimensional modal framework, which involves a multi-modal approach at three different levels. Initially, Sheeta's depiction is highlighted prior to showcasing Dola's characterization.

4.1 Sheeta

Based on Sheeta's change of mentality and growth process, this article selects three stages in the film about Sheeta.

4.1.1 Stage 1: Fear and Confusion
The initial portion of the film encompasses the setting of Stage 1. During this period, Sheeta and Puza find themselves confined within a tower by Muska. Muska warns Sheeta that Pazu's destiny rests solely in her hands. To ensure Pazu's safety, Sheeta yields and advises him to return home and abandon their commitment to seek out Laputa. Two screenshots have been selected for analysis at this stage.
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Figure 3
A screenshot in Stage 1.

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 00:44:17

The character's language text will be analysed in the first stage. The sentence structure represents the thematic and informative structures in Stage 1. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the presence of the thematic structure, with the subject serving as the theme and the residue as the rheme. However,

two modifications are made to the information structure when transitioning from given to new information (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Table 1
The information structure of the sentence in Figure 3

I really don't know!		Please let me see Pazu!	
structural		topical	
Theme		Rheme	
Given ⟶	New ⟶	Given ⟶	New

Table 1 shows the sentences in Figure 3, where the speaker delivers news to the listener twice, with the latter being previously unknown. In this case, Sheeta expresses her thought, "I do not know what you want," with the whole sentence being the clausal theme. The subject "I" is the theme of this clause, and the rest is the rheme. Sheeta implies that she is not knowledgeable enough about Laputa's history and culture. The following sentence, "Please let me see Pazu!" restarts a new topic. Sheeta uses "please" and "let me" to express a request to Muska, showing how polite Sheeta is. Combined with the previous sentence, the second sentence provides a possibility for Muska's request for a spell. The rheme in the sentence "see Pazu" implies that Sheeta cares about her companion's safety.

Figure 4
A screenshot in Stage 1.

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 01:04:58

In Table 2, the sentence in Figure 4, the theme "I" is Sheeta; she uses "beg" to start the rheme. "Beg" is a verb that means to ask for something humbly or earnestly. On the surface, this word signifies that Sheeta hopes Pazu will go home and gives up their prior dream. In depth, Sheeta is compelled to protect Pazu, even if it means giving up on their dream. The tonic prominence of this sentence is put on the imperative "forget," which makes it a focus on information or the culmination of new information. Putting information focusing on "forget" means that the speaker, Sheeta, hopes that the listener, Pazu, will cease further action to keep himself safe.

Table 2
The information structure of the sentence in Figure 4

I	beg	you,	forget about Laputa.	
Theme			Rheme	
Given ⟶	New		Given ⟶	New

In Figure 3, Sheeta conceals her face with her hands and emits a growl in a low voice, displaying her emotions of rage and terror directed at Muska. Figure 4 depicts her countenance as anxious and apprehensive. The character's appearance, expressions, and behaviours illustrate that she is experiencing a state of perplexity and unease regarding her circumstances. She is also enduring feelings of apprehension and repulsion towards Muska's ambition and harshness while also being concerned about Puza's unwavering determination. These indications suggest that Sheeta has numerous

unfavourable feelings at the outset of the narrative. Nevertheless, these adverse sentiments also indicate Sheeta's benevolence, courage in safeguarding her comrades, and indifference towards seductive advantages.

At the discourse level of social practice, Sheeta's encounter at the beginning reflects the oppression and danger she faces as a woman in a male-dominated society. Sheeta was abducted by a government operative named Muska, who sought to exploit her crystal necklace to locate Laputa without any regard for her consent or emotions. The pirate gang leader, Dola, and her sons pursued Sheeta relentlessly, driven by their desire to pilfer her crystal necklace, with little regard for her well-being. In addition, Pazu's neighbours encircled and taunted her, perceiving her as an young woman while disregarding her need for personal space and respect. At this stage, Sheeta's initial meeting exemplifies her powerlessness and weakness as a woman in a tumultuous country.

4.1.2 Stage 2: Regaining Confidence

Stage 2 occurs during the midpoint of the film, when Sheeta is rescued from Muska. While Sheeta cries in Pazu's embrace, Dola assures them that she will escort them back home. However, Pazu and Sheeta express their desire to join Dola's group and offer their services, emphasising that their intention is not to seek wealth but to uncover the truth. Dola firmly believes in the value of having them on the plane as part of the crew. Subsequently, the group embarks on a quest to locate Laputa. Three screenshots have been selected for analysis at this stage.

Figure 5
A screenshot in Stage 2

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 01:18:35

In the texts, the ideational function of language is mainly discussed at this stage. The focus is on constructing and upholding a comprehensive framework of understanding, encompassing both the subjective realm of our awareness and the internal workings of our consciousness. The ideational function includes two central systems: transitivity and ergativity. The former is concerned with how we represent processes and actions, while the latter is concerned with representing states and events (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). Table 3 shows the transitivity structure of the sentence from Figure 5. Syntactically, this sentence is in the active voice and the declarative form. The participant in this sentence is "I" as the 'senser.' The main verb "want to see" indicates the mental process of this sentence that expresses the process of wanting, which specifies Sheeta's change in mentality from passive to active. "For myself" further deepened her subjective initiative. It is a sincere request by the speaker (Sheeta) that the listener (Dola) agree for her to stay, which provides the possibility for the story to continue to develop.

Table 3
The transitivity structure of the sentence in Figure 5

I	want to see	Laputa	for myself.
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Senser

Figure 6
A screenshot in Stage 2

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 01:10:39

In Figure 6, Sheeta also regains her confidence on her journey to find Luputa. The relation between "I" and "mountain girl" is attribution, as shown in Table 4. "With sharp eyes" further explains what attributes "I" and "a mountain girl" have. In other words, "because I have sharp eyes, I can do this task." This is the subtext of Sheeta, which shows her confidence in her eyesight and her capability of performing the job.

Table 4
The transitivity structure of the sentence in Figure 6

I	'm	a mountain girl with sharp eyes.
Carrier	Process: relational	Attributes

Figure 7
A screenshot in Stage 2

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 01:47:07

Figure 7 shows Dola's arranging for Sheeta to cook on the plane. Sheeta does not seem to be frustrated when encountering the messy kitchen, as shown in the screenshot's background, but has a firm expression on her face with arms akimbo to make every effort to impress. Sheeta's outfit changes from a nightgown to Dola's clothes, an oversized top with pants in bright colours. When worn with a belt, it is easier to walk and work than in a nightgown. The change in clothing illustrates Sheeta's transformation and Dola's transition from hostility to partnership. Judging from the facial expressions and body movements, Sheeta's expression when she first asks Dola to take her in portrays a moment of sadness and anxiety. In the meantime, Pazu supports Sheeta with both hands and looks at Dola from the side. At this stage, Sheeta's negative emotions slowly turn into positive emotions. She establishes a deep friendship and a cooperative relationship with Dola on the ship.

At the discourse level of social practice, Sheeta's performance in Stage 2 exemplifies her sagacity, self-assurance, and autonomous reasoning. She demonstrates her sagacity and self-assurance aboard Dola's vessel, assisting the pirates to eradicate Muska and the military forces. In addition, she exhibits self-sufficiency and self-governance, abstaining from depending on male safeguards and assistance and instead relying on her own capabilities. Sheeta's experience aboard Dola's ship exemplifies the capacity for women to possess wisdom, confidence, and independence, highlighting women's crucial contribution within a society predominantly controlled by men.

4.1.3 Stage 3: Determination and Love

The third stage occurs towards the narrative's conclusion when Sheeta reaches Laputa. Muska utilizes the potent energy of the crystal to engage in a relentless killing spree. Sheeta implores him to cease the ongoing slaughter because she finds it repulsive. However, her pleas are futile. Two screenshots have been selected for analysis at this stage.

Figure 8
A screenshot in Stage 3

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 01:52:38

In Figure 8, the phrase "Run, everyone!" is a directive given to a collection of individuals, urging them to swiftly escape from a perilous circumstance. The use of the term "everyone" in the statement implies that Sheeta is expressing apprehension over the life of the soldiers and desires the evacuation of all individuals from the perilous situation, irrespective of whatever harm they have caused her. Sheeta uses her body to hit Muska, illustrating that in the last stage, she becomes brave enough to fight against the enemy she has always been afraid of, which implies that Sheeta is kind and compassionate.

Figure 9
A screenshot in Stage 3

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 00:21:13

In Figure 9, "This will be our grave" has a strong thematic structure. Sheeta utters the clause, "This will be our final resting place," to Muska. She is resolute in her efforts to thwart Muska's acquisition of the crystal stone. Using "our grave" implies that Sheeta is prepared to surrender her life

to thwart Muska's objectives. This emphasises the significance of the crystal stone and the extent to which Sheeta is prepared to safeguard it. The line can alternatively be interpreted as a manifestation of the overarching motifs of the film, encompassing the conflict between righteousness and malevolence, the significance of empathy, and the potency of resoluteness when confronted with hardship. In essence, the line "this will be our grave" is a potent declaration that effectively captures the key concepts and intense emotions conveyed in the film. Sheeta's facial expression appears determined. Combined with the subtitle, it shows that she is fully prepared to die along with Muska to protect the land.

Sheeta's appearance or visual characteristics are reflected in three aspects. First, about her attire, Sheeta wears a simple indigo dress and a white petticoat underneath. Later in the film, she changes into Dola's oversized red pants, paired with a yellow blouse and red shoes. Second, in terms of her hairstyle, Sheeta's dark brown hair is neatly braided into two sections on either side of her head, secured with red ribbons. She also wears a red headband. Overall, Sheeta's appearance is unassuming yet resilient. Her exterior does not draw attention, but her inner wisdom and kindness shine through.

At the discourse level of social practice, the ending of the movie reflects the notion that women can be strong, independent, and capable of saving the world. Sheeta's courage, intelligence, and kindness throughout the film show that women can play an essential role in a male-dominated society. Sheeta has a metamorphosis in the narrative, transitioning from a timid and introverted girl to a courageous and self-assured young woman. At first, she displays reluctance to place her trust in Pazu and harbours fear towards the military and Colonel Muska. Nevertheless, as the narrative unfolds, she gradually becomes more confident and assumes control over her fate. Sheeta's character development exemplifies the unwavering determination and inherent fortitude of a flawed female character, and her metamorphosis is a notable pinnacle of the film.

4.2 Dola

Dola assumes the role of leader for a group of sky marauders, while Colonel Muska serves as her archenemy. Dola is keenly interested in the ancient artefacts of the legendary floating city of Laputa, which initially creates a conflict between her and Sheeta. This article chooses two scenes for investigation that exemplify Dola's traits.

4.2.1   Scene 1: Fierce Chase

Scene 1 follows Sheeta's descent from the spacecraft and her subsequent rescue by Puza. Dola pursues Sheeta and Puza in their quest for the crystal stone. Although Sheeta first manages to repel the Dola, she soon finds herself confronted by a massively fortified military war train. Sheeta is then compelled to disembark from the train and is propelled over a precipice afterward. As death becomes unavoidable, Sheeta's stone becomes active once more, causing Dola to be amazed and astonished as she observes the two descending gracefully. Two screenshots have been selected for analysis in this scene.

Figure 10
A screenshot in Scene 1

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 00:26:33

Dola blames her men for not catching Sheeta and urges them to get in the car as soon as possible in Figure 10 of Scene 1. Her words, "You idiots! Hurry up and get on!" are examples of a speech act, an utterance that acts; Dola is giving an order to her pirates. In this case, the speaker, Dola, urges the characters in white suits to board the vehicle quickly, and the expletive "idiots" merely suggests frustration or urgency. This sentence reflects that Dola is bossy and has absolute leadership in her group. Judging from her body language, Dola points her thumb towards the car, and her two braids are raised with an angry face, indicating her impatience and bad temper.

Figure 11
A screenshot in Scene 1

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 02:00:42

The sentence in the following screenshot, "I refuse to give up," is a mental process, as shown in Table 5. As the main verb, the word "refuse" indicates that the speaker, Dola, is determined and resolute in her decision to continue pursuing the target; this also reflects her persistence in Laputa's treasure and her greedy character. The verb "move!" is a direct imperative associated with progress and success that implies urgency and action. The line "I refuse to give up. Move!" can be interpreted as a display of Dola's power and authority. Using these words together, Dola frames the situation to emphasise the importance of persistence and action, implying her quick response and strong execution.

Table 5
The transitivity structure of the sentence in Figure 11

I	refuse	to give up.
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

In Scene 1, Dola is portrayed as a middle-aged, muscular woman with pink hair styled in braids, signifying femininity alongside her gold hoop earrings. Her attire—a dark blue blouse, leggings, and a lacy collar—along with a green brooch, emphasizes her pirate identity and defiance of gender norms. Her assertive behavior showcases traditional masculine traits like leadership and aggression. Dola's depiction challenges conventional beauty standards and highlights her unique personality, blending femininity with strength and originality.

4.2.2 Scence 2: Final Shindig
Scene 2 occurs after the complete disintegration and detachment of the bottom section of Laputa from the tree. Dola and the pirates, observing the devastation from their flaptors (a special type of aerial craft in the film), believe that Pazu and Sheeta have perished. Indeed, it has been determined that the children have managed to survive. Two screenshots have been selected for analysis in this scene.

Figure 12
A screenshot in Scene 2.

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 02:00:44

The text in Figure 12 reads "Oh, stop blubbering. We'll build a better ship!" is what Dola says to one of her crew members, Motro. The actor, Dola, uses the verb phrase "stop blubbering" to address someone's crying or being upset. The phrase dismisses Motro's emotions and implies that he is overly emotional. The second part of the line, "We'll build a better ship," is a typical material process, and the sentence component can be read from Table 6. The goal of "a better ship" suggests that the actor (Dola) is trying to reassure the listener (Motro) that things will improve in the future. "We'll build a better ship" serves as an example of how men are often portrayed as problem-solvers and fixers, while women are portrayed as emotional and needing reassurance. On the contrary, in this anime, it is a woman talking to a man. This particular line exemplifies how language is used to weaken gender stereotypes. The line implies that Dola is resolute and unafraid of obstacles.

Table 6
The transitivity structure of the sentence in Figure 12

We	'll build	a better ship.
Actor	Process: material	Goal

Figure 13
A screenshot in Scene 2

Note : Castle in the Sky (1986) 02:00:44

The line "You poor child, the worst is having your hair hacked off…" in Figure 13 involves an interaction between Dola and Sheeta. Dola assumes a position of authority or care. The adjective "poor" conveys empathy and compassion. It positions Sheeta as someone deserving of sympathy. The superlative form "worst" suggests extreme suffering or difficulty. "Hair hacked off" implies Sheeta's traumatic experience. Dola positions herself as a comforter or a supportive figure. Sheeta is positioned as someone experiencing hardship. Overall, this line reflects a compassionate response from the old woman, emphasising the severity of the girl's situation.

In Scene 2, the sky in the background is clear and blue, which could symbolise hope or a new beginning. Dola is hugging Sheeta. It shows that in the process of searching for Luputa, the relationship between the two has gradually changed from a hostile relationship to a close partnership. At the same time, Dola also sees her younger self in Sheeta and feels pity for her. The difference between the two screenshots is the orientation of Dola's head. In the first screenshot, the speaker (Dola) has her head turned towards the recipient of the words (Motro), when Dola scolds Motro for his cowardice. Dola's facial expression is slightly angry, with her eyebrows raised and her mouth open. This all proves that Dola, as a female leader, has gained the dependence and dignity of her subordinates. In Figure 12, Dola's head is nestled on Sheeta, showing a loving expression like a mother comforting her daughter. The expression of maternal love reflects Dola's femininity.

Analyses show that women are generally positively represented in political leadership (Rahman & Zainudinaniscar, 2023). Although Dola is not the protagonist of the film, she plays a crucial role and makes substantial contributions to the narrative. Dola is initially portrayed as an authoritarian, commanding, and self-centred individual, solely driven by the objective of acquiring Laputa's wealth. Subsequently, it is disclosed that she is a rather compassionate person who gradually develops an affection for Sheeta and Pazu, albeit with some hesitation. Sheeta, specifically, evokes a sense of youthfulness within Dola. Dola's own sons hold her in high esteem and consistently comply with her orders. It is challenging to determine whether this character aligns with feminist ideals or opposes them. Nevertheless, Dola possesses intricate qualities that challenge conventional gender norms. She is a formidable and competent leader who elicits respect from her team, yet she is also an affectionate mother with a profound concern for her sons. Her character is a testament to the fact that women possess multiple dimensions and are not obligated to adhere to conventional gender expectations.

5.0 Conclusion

The researcher employed critical discourse analysis, incorporating the multimodal elements of the animated film, to examine the portrayal of flawed women. Under the guidance of a theoretical framework rooted in Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and visual grammar, the present study employs multimodal discourse analysis to explore the portrayal of two flawed female characters in *Castle in the Sky*. It offers an innovative viewpoint for analysing the representations of imperfect women in films. Based on the results and discussion, the following conclusions are drawn:

The text-level summary is mainly reflected in the characters' words, facial expressions, body language, and appearance. The MDA examination of these aspects from the eleven selected screenshots might help the audience understand what makes a flawed female character. By closely examining these multimodal elements, the research aims to identify and understand the specific traits and nuances that contribute to the depiction of "flawed" female characters. This goes beyond simplistic representations and looks for depth. Based on the two speakers' language performances, Sheeta's language has two characteristics. First, she is reserved and polite. Her language tends to be cautious, and she does not readily reveal her inner thoughts. Second, she is loving and protective. She also uses words to warn those who have hurt her to run away for safety. In contrast, Dola's language exhibits two qualities. First, directness, firmness, and rudeness. Her language tends to be straightforward and to the point. Second, Dola exhibits resourcefulness and maternal instincts. She issues orders with a quick response, but she will also act like a mother to comfort others when they are depressed.

Concluding the body language and facial expressions, Sheeta goes from the painful Stage 1 condition of frowning and sobbing forth to a smiling and firm one, ultimately hitting the opponent with her body, and her countenance does not waver even in the face of death. On the other hand, Dola's eyes and mouth often grow larger, and her movements are bold with exaggerated expressions. She has sharp eyes and takes quick action. Although Dola shows her bossiness and intelligence, she also has a tender side when she hugs Sheeta at the end.

By appearance, Sheeta's outlook is unassuming yet resilient. Her exterior does not draw attention and is understated and natural, aligning with her character. Dola, on the other hand, has a more flamboyant and prominent look. Her distinctive appearance shows her status as a female pirate leader.

This study examines the film from the perspectives of discourse practice and social practice. The three-dimensional study reveals that the portrayal of female identity in Castle in the Sky challenges simplistic categorization, showcasing both traditionally feminine traits and actions that defy those stereotypes, embodying aspects of postmodern feminism. The portrayal of female identity in *Castle in the Sky* comprises a mixed bag of feminist and anti-feminist elements, representing the idea of postmodern feminism. Sheeta has a beautiful feminine appearance and soft voice, but she also shows courage and determination against female stereotypes while simultaneously depicting a weak and fearful side. Dola has a strong appearance, is domineering and greedy, has excellent leadership skills, and possesses a shrewd mind. There are traditional male characteristics, but she treats her male subordinates like a strict mother and shows her gentle side to Sheeta. Analysing flawed female characters could make fantasy-based animated films more realistic. The analysis of flawed female characters' personalities and the narrative context might illuminate the social significance of the discourse.

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