



Universiteit Utrecht

THE ROOT OF MEANING:
Hair symbolism for Miyazaki's female
characters

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Abstract summary

This analysis discusses hair as a symbolic device for female character in Hayao Miyazaki's films. The four main female characters of Lettie and Sophie from *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* (2004) and Sheeta and Dola from *LAPUTA: CASTLE IN THE SKY* (1986) are examined through a modified version of Eder's character analysis in order to expose the various ways in which hair is used communicatively. A wide range of hair symbolism theory is applied in conjunction with observations of character representations in order to understand how cultural systems of meaning are reflected in these animated fictional characters. Here, the hair colour and style of each character are discussed in relation to their character identity and personality. Comparisons between characters are then made, identifying how hair visualises similarities and differences. This is followed by an exploration of hair change as reflective of character development, showing how hair cutting symbolises freedom from burden. Mapping out the various functions of hair for character exposes this device that can convey personal, relational, diverse, contradictory and subversive meanings. From these ideas, comparisons are made between Miyazaki's female characters (and their hair) and the broader genre conventions of shōjo anime in order to demonstrate the relevance of hair as a distinct yet responsive symbolic device for these characters. The analysis concludes by arguing that observing hair style, colour, change, and relations, can symbolise complex ideas for these nuanced characters. Importantly, hair is found to demonstrate the ways in which Miyazaki's female characters bring depth and variety to character femininity. As such, utilising hair as a lens for analysing character encourages a deeper understanding of Miyazaki's female representations.

Keywords: Character analysis, Hayao Miyazaki, hair, symbolism, shōjo anime, femininity.

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Theoretical framework</u>	2
Hair symbolism	2
Shōjo anime and Studio Ghibli	4
<u>Method</u>	6
<u>Analysis</u>	8
Hair symbolism, identity and personality	8
Character relationships and hair contrasts	14
Metamorphosis and hair cutting	15
Hair as part of Ghibli style and shōjo genre	18
<u>Conclusion</u>	20
<u>References</u>	22
<u>Filmography</u>	23
<u>Appendices</u>	24
Appendix I: LAPUTA annotated shot list	24
Appendix II: HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE annotated shot list	28
Appendix III:	35

Introduction

Red-heads are hotheaded, blondes are more fun, pigtails are girly, Mohawks are punk... While these stereotypes can be fun and superficial, they recognise an underlying truth: that the function and meaning of hair extends beyond just the physical, indicating symbolic associations of power, identity, expression, and style. Such systems of meaning can vary greatly across gender, culture, and ideology; influencing how we understand images of hair and the people it is attached to. How such cultural and individual meanings surrounding hair are represented and translated in animation offers a rich field to explore. In Hayao Miyazaki's works, hair is a key element in how his films move, inviting viewers to draw connections between physical appearance and character personality and identity. His animations utilise hair symbolically in various way, conveying complex characters of all ages, genders, and fantasy cultures.

Observing Miyazaki's female characters' hair reveals this aspect of aesthetics to be particularly meaningful, contributing to the communication of personality, character contrast, and individual development: from the stereotypical fiery (albeit faded) red-headed Dola in *LAPUTA: CASTLE IN THE SKY* (2004), to the multiple transformations of Sophie in *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* (1986). While male characters can communicate in this way (suggesting different or complimentary ideas), the hair of female characters appears to carry more varied and complex symbolism, demonstrating a wider scope for style, colour and change. Miyazaki's tendency to prioritise female protagonists further reflects this emphasis on feminine hair. This relates to the genre of *shōjo* anime which prioritises young female protagonists and their relationships. Such attention to female characters is therefore crucial for understanding how Miyazaki's films communicate, represent and relate to meaningful ideas of feminine hair, identity and personality.

However, the ways in which aesthetic aspects of hair and the more abstract aspects of character are linked in Miyazaki's films is complex, with various cultural understandings of hair influencing how this physical feature is interpreted. Considering Miyazaki's large filmography, understanding the symbolic function of hair must be focused in order to thoroughly analyse the case while also allowing for reflection on a wider scale. The corpus for this research is thus centred around the main female characters of Sophie and Lettie from *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE*, and Sheeta and Dola from *LAPUTA: CASTLE IN THE SKY*.¹ The nuanced and diverse personalities and appearances, and complex relations between these four characters allows for various connections with hair meaning and symbolism to be made. This variety will show how hair serves as a common yet varied symbolic device for Miyazaki films, and a central element to how these female characters relate, communicate and reflect narrative themes.

¹ *LAPUTA: CASTLE IN THE SKY* will be referred to as *LAPUTA* henceforth. This thesis will be analysing the English subtitled versions of both films.

Mapping the topic and case, the main research question thus arises: How is hair used in *LAPUTA* and *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* as a symbolic and communicative visual device in order to convey the personality, differences and development of female characters? In answering this, several main subquestions must also be addressed (constituting analysis sections). First, how do cultural connotations of hair colour and style indicate ideas on personality for these characters through semiotic associations? Second, how does the comparison between different female characters hair reflect contrasts and similarities in their personality and identity? Third, how does dramatic hair change reflect film themes and ideas of metamorphosis and individual character development?

Addressing these connected areas also raises a fourth question of how Miyazaki utilises hair and character in a way that is distinct from, yet responsive to, anime genre and style. Here, Miyazaki's works will be explored in relation to conventions and complexities of *shōjo* as a genre that includes young female characters and emphasises human relationships. This broader question will allow my analysis to dissect how hair and character in these films both reflect and subvert anime and *shōjo* conventions. This will lead into a conclusion, arguing that hair is used as a varied and complex symbolic device in Miyazaki's films, bringing depth to representations of the feminine. By using hair as a lens, this character analysis will demonstrate how Miyazaki's female representations engage with, reflect, and challenge diverse systems of meaning.

Theoretical framework: hair symbolism

Understanding how hair and character function relationally requires a theoretical framework centred on hair symbolism and Studio Ghibli genre conventions for female characters. Mapping and contextualising these academic discourses will allow us to position this research, and understand how the analysis synthesises such seemingly distinct areas of discussion. Much of the literature on Studio Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki films revolves around either the motifs and themes, or the imaginative and distinctive style of Miyazaki worlds. What makes hair and character unique and compelling concepts for analysis is the potential for hair to communicate symbolically in often more subtle ways, with different qualities indicating complex ideas of national ritual traditions, visualising individual development, and highlighting the emotional experiences of characters. Here, exploring cultural ideas of hair colour and overall style provides a base for understanding how such systems of hair meaning are translated, reflected and adapted in Miyazaki's female characters' personality and identity.

Leach introduces a broad and comparative perspective on hair meanings across various cultures, emphasising consideration of both anthropological and psychological interpretations.² Importantly, he demonstrates that hair is often considered to possess universal symbolic value, even though such value and meaning varies across categories of

² E.A. Leach, "Magical Hair," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 88, no.2 (1958) July-December: 147-64.

culture, gender and religion. However, he also emphasises the problems with interpreting symbols and human behaviour as a definitive language, as both shared and individual meanings can vary significantly across cultures and communities. Leach thus demonstrates the importance of contextualising hair meaning and considering various interpretations. Here, Leach gives insight into hair as sexual, representative of personality and 'soul', and as linked to powerful rituals of sacrifice, adulthood, and religion.³

Sociologist Anthony Synnott expands on Leach, explaining how hair functions to symbolise social distinctions, changes and relationships of individual and group identities in Western cultures. He argues that hair functions as "a symbol of the self and of group identity, and an important mode of self-expression and communication."⁴ Synnott provides an important framework for understanding the symbolism of hair: that hair meanings are relevant, complex, contextual, and sometimes contradictory. This is crucial for demonstrating the importance of hair as a vital part of how we communicate individually and culturally. Considering how animated representations draw on and adapt these sociological networks of meaning could thus provide interesting comparisons. The author maps various oppositions in hair physicality, meaning, change and function relating to gender, attractiveness and ideology. Synnott's observations on hair colour are particularly relevant. He identifies hair colour as carrying gendered associations of temperament, identity, and intelligence. This suggests that different hair colours have different connotations of personality, thus demonstrating how hair aesthetics can symbolise the personality, identity, and differences of female characters.⁵

Important for understanding the cultural and historical context that Miyazaki's productions emerge from, the works of Choi and Ebersole focus the discourse of hair meaning and symbolism towards Japan (and Korea). Both authors discuss hair as meaningful throughout history, influencing how we interpret this varied sign today. Choi compares the cultural history of hair in Japan and Korea from ancient to modern times in order to identify commonalities. The author summarises her results by concluding: "First, hairstyles were thought to fend off evil influences; second, they were a means to express an ideal of beauty; third, they were an expression of a woman's marital status; and fourth, they were an expression of social status and wealth."⁶ While Korean interpretations may not be applicable to this particular research, Choi's observations show how hair can have connected, shared, and individual meanings cross-culturally, and the importance of considering different histories and cultures of hair beyond Japan in order to understand Miyazaki's works as global products.

³ Leach, "Magical Hair," 147-64.

⁴ Anthony Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," *The British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 3 (1987): 410.

⁵ Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," 381-413.

⁶ Na-Young Choi, "Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan," *Asian Folklore Studies* 65, no. 1 (2006): 69-86, 69.

Similarly, Ebersole discusses Japanese hair symbolism by exploring associations of spiritual power, control, a person's life-force, and processes of ageing.⁷ Here, the author reflects on Japanese folk literature and myth, concluding that hair change, length and quality have powerful connections to ideas of personality, life-cycle, and ritual in Japanese culture. This is relevant for Miyazaki, as many of his works feature spiritual and fantasy themes, including hair that seems to possess magical and lively qualities. Both Choi and Ebersole therefore add to Leach's exploration of 'magical hair' by providing a particularly Japanese interpretation. This is important for understanding how Miyazaki's characters reflect, contrast and represent these cultural and historical meanings of personal strength, responsibility and sacrifice.⁸

However, while Japanese productions, Miyazaki's films take influences from culture and ideas beyond Japan, presenting fantasy worlds with representations and meanings that can conflict with or reject historical and cultural associations of their production context. Thus, while this analysis will discuss influences of Japanese culture, it must also consider such alternate explanations in order to demonstrate how Miyazaki both reflects and contradicts hair meanings. Here, each author's distinct focus will aid in understanding how the various elements of hair representation suggest, interact with and sometimes contradict a landscape of different semiotic associations and meanings.

Theoretical framework: shōjo anime and Studio Ghibli

In order to interpret such sociological ideas through case representations in animated film, the analysis also requires a framework for understanding Miyazaki's works as connected with anime. Napier presents an overview of various conventions, themes, and production aspects in order to explain 'anime' as Japanese animation with a diverse yet somewhat distinct range of styles, narratives and characters. Significantly, Napier explores how Miyazaki's films fit within the context of anime, identifying contextual influences, thematic similarities, and representational differences. This is important for understanding Miyazaki's works as distinct from, yet connected to other anime forms, inviting contemplation of how Miyazaki's filmography can be considered somewhat as a sub-genre of its own.⁹

Napier also introduces considerations of shōjo (meaning 'little girl') as a somewhat ambiguous sub-genre of anime with conventions highlighting human relationships, the liminality between childhood and adulthood, and young femininity and innocence (among

⁷ Gary L. Ebersole, "Long Black Hair Like a Seat Cushion": Hair Symbolism in Japanese Popular Religion,' in *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Culture*, eds. Alf Hiltebeitel, and Barbara D. Miller (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 75-103.

⁸ Choi, "Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan," 69-86.

⁹ Susan J Napier, *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 118-126.

other thematic concepts) through generally 'cute' aesthetics.¹⁰ For Miyazaki's female characters, she identifies a tension between realism and relatability, and with fantasy and unconventionality against shōjo ideals of femininity and youth. This is particularly evident in many of his female character's 'unfeminine' elements of violence, bravery and a level of darkness which conflict with their simultaneously conventional qualities such as magic, youth, and cuteness. Napier thus demonstrates the complexity of positioning Miyazaki's films as shōjo as well as the elasticity of the term, identifying how his themes and gender representations can both subvert and reflect conventions.¹¹

In Masami Toku's edited volume on shōjo perspectives and girl culture, Marc Hairston delves deeper into Miyazaki's view of shōjo in order to unpack how the director interacts with and expands beyond conventions of the genre. Hairston explores 'Ghibli girls' under categories of age in order to demonstrate the unique depth and complexity of Miyazaki's characters. Important for discussing Sophie and Dola as older female characters, he also introduces the "seemingly contradictory idea of an 'elderly shōjo'" which opposes conventional ideals of 'cuteness', youth, and fun.¹² Here, Hairston argues that what sets Miyazaki's female characters apart is their realism and emotional complexity that reaches deeper than most shōjo representations. In this way, Hairston contributes to this analysis' suggestion that Miyazaki's films function and communicate with their own language, specificities and conventions beyond shōjo anime.¹³

Analysing Studio Ghibli as a production house, Odell and Le Blanc build from Napier and Hairston's explorations by providing deeper analysis into Miyazaki's works. Such details of production context influences, analyses of narratives, and observations on character themes give insight into how Miyazaki's films work. Here, while the authors strengthen some of this analysis' arguments, their lack of detail in regards to hair as a symbolic device gives relevance to the explorations following.¹⁴

The various perspectives and focuses outlined above construct a framework for understanding hair's symbolic functions in anime and Miyazaki films. The authors have been selected both for their scope and relevance to Miyazaki's films as influenced by both local and global systems of meaning and cultural production. Here, meanings observed in real life, media, and myth will be interpreted for application with representations in LAPUTA and HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE. While many of these symbolic ideas are historically rooted,

¹⁰ For more information about the culture of cute or 'kawaii' culture in anime, Napier provides the following reference: Sharon Kinsella, "Cuties in Japan," in *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, edited by Brian Moran and Lisa Skov (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995).

¹¹ Napier, *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke*, 118-126.

¹² Marc Hairston, "Miyazaki's View on Shōjo," in *International Perspectives on Shōjo and Shōjo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture*, ed. Masami Toku (New York: Routledge, 2015), 105.

¹³ Hairston, "Miyazaki's View on Shōjo," 101-109.

¹⁴ Colin Odell and Michelle Le Blanc, *Studio Ghibli: The Films of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata - Second Edition* (Harpenden: Oldcastle Books, 2009).

traditional ideas remain interesting, influential, and relevant to apply and consider in relation to modern representations. By using the intersection of hair and character as a lens, the proposed research will expand our understanding of the importance of hair aesthetics in influencing our interpretation of character in Miyazaki films.

Method

Reflecting on the theory and initial research questions, determining a methodology required an adaptive approach that could effectively bridge the more or less distinct discourses of hair symbolism and Miyazaki's anime characters. Since the central theoretical concepts involved hair as meaningful personally, culturally and in relation to genre, the analysis method needed to draw connections between character representations and various hair associations across cultural and anthropological theory. Here, the four subquestions indicated four sections for character analysis: semiotic associations of character hair aesthetics; character contrast as communicated through hair; dramatic hair change as representative of character development and metamorphosis; and lastly hair as part of Miyazaki's style of shōjo female representations.

As specified, the case centred on the main female characters of *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE*, and *LAPUTA*. Analysing two films allowed for identification of the complex and varied ways in which Miyazaki's characters communicate symbolically. While many of his films could be analysed, the selection of two Miyazaki films provided a manageable corpus for detailed individual and comparative explanations of hair and female character, as well as reflection on the wider body of Miyazaki's works and shōjo as a genre.

In order to understand the personality, differences and development of Sophie, Lettie, Sheeta, and Dola, the analysis utilised a form of character analysis that could incorporate considerations of hair symbolism. Jans Eder's method of analysing character provided an outline for exploring character construction and reception on the four interrelated levels of: artefact (aesthetic/textual elements such as character appearance and film style), fictional being (mind, sociality, and behaviour within the narrative world), symbol (higher meanings including messages and themes), and symptom (processual communication including filmmaker's intent, cultural contexts, and reception).¹⁵ This method invited systematically describing each layer which could subsequently be compared and connected in order to identify patterns, themes, and interrelations. Using hair as a lens, this method aided in understanding how each layer contributed to a nuanced overall understanding of a character, and how each aspect (both internal and external to the films) influences our interpretation.¹⁶

Additionally, Chiao-I Tseng adapts this method by applying an explicitly semiotic lens which allowed for further identification of how communicative character and aesthetic

¹⁵ Jans Eder, "Understanding characters," *Projections: The Journal for Movies and Mind* 4, no.1 (2010): 16-40.

¹⁶ Eder, "Understanding characters," 16-40.

patterns reflected cultural associations through systems of film language. Here, the author demonstrates how film meaning is constructed through processes of co-pattern between filmic devices, genre and style, and social and ideological meanings.¹⁷ This expanded approach was particularly appropriate for drawing connections between character representations and real life systems of hair meaning, and analysing how context, cultural hair symbolism, and shōjo genre conventions were reflected in Miyazaki's female characters. In this way, incorporating Tseng's approach to Eder's method of character analysis helped discuss Miyazaki's character's hair meanings as related to, yet distinct from, cultural understandings of hair symbolism.¹⁸

Centring hair as a lens for analysing female characters necessitated adaptation of this somewhat hybridised method. This involved a close reading of hair in each film, developing shot lists of significant hair change, relevance, and relation to the characters of Sheeta, Dola, Lettie, and Sophie.¹⁹ Eder's four aspects of character were therefore adjusted in order to emphasise observations on hair meaning for character. Thus, on the level of artefact, hair aesthetics were emphasised, analysing the movement, colour, length, style, and change of head hair across the four characters. Furthermore, on the level of 'symbol', emphasis was given to arguments of hair symbolism as outlined by the various authors in the theoretical framework. In order to address the level of 'symptom', consideration of shōjo genre conventions and anime contexts were also necessary for contextualising and identifying Miyazaki's distinct character representations.²⁰

Operationalising this method involved sectioning the analysis along the thematic subquestions. Here, patterns and significant elements that address hair and character interrelations could be developed. The first subquestion involved researching symbolic hair meanings, and applying them to specific representations of hair qualities for each individual character. Here, the analysis connected observations of character elements such as gesture, speech, narrative relationships, action, and appearance with semiotic associations of hair meaning within broader cultural contexts in order to demonstrate how the construction of character correlated with associations of hair. This allowed for interpretation of how characters' hair acted symbolically by signifying cultural ideas of personality and identity as presented in the framework literature.

¹⁷ Additionally, like Tseng's approach, my analysis places more emphasis on interpreting the construction of character on a textual and cultural level rather than understanding viewer reception.

¹⁸ Chiao-I Tseng, "Analysing characters' interactions in filmic text: a functional semiotic approach," *Social Semiotics* 23, no.5 (2013): 587-605.

¹⁹ Appendix I and Appendix II present shot lists of moments of hair change, agency, and relevance in relation to character in both films (centred on Eder's 'artefact' and 'fictive being' levels). The levels of symptom and symbolism are developed further in the analysis with the use of these appendices. Key moments and examples from these shot lists are included in the running in order to support and illustrate analysis observations, demonstrate hair aesthetics, and provide visual comparison between characters.

²⁰ Eder's four aspects of character were explored across all four characters, supporting the identification of patterns, contradictions, similarities and differences. These observations were then collated in a table (see Appendix III).

Addressing the second subquestion involved identifying how relationships between characters were conveyed through associations, contrasts, and similarities of hair aesthetics. Here, the ideas explored under the first subquestion were developed and compared in order to show how hair representations and associations function relationally. Answering the third subquestion involved addressing the changes and developments of characters in both films. This aided interpretation of how aesthetic changes in hair functioned as symbolic of character identity metamorphosis and growth. Connecting these observations with Japanese cultural meanings of hair demonstrated the significance of dramatic hair cutting and the symbolic power hair possesses. Finally, the fourth subquestion expanded the observations of the previous sections towards a more broad understanding of Miyazaki as a genre of shōjo anime itself. Here, comparing Miyazaki's characters with shōjo conventions, contextual influences, and systems of meaning allowed for a nuanced understanding of hair as an important and distinct symbolic device in Miyazaki's films.

Hair symbolism, identity and personality for character

The identity and personality of a character is conveyed through complex systems of language, culture, and meaning. In relation to hair, it is therefore important to understand how specific qualities of this character element communicate ideas of individual identity. Synnott says of hair culture and the individual: "hair is a powerful tool of the self."²¹ As animated fictive beings, Miyazaki's female characters are constructed in ways that both stand apart from, and relate to real world representations and symbolic associations both locally and globally. Sophie and Lettie of *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* are introduced as young adult sisters, with the central narrative following Sophie's magical adventures at Howl's castle. In *LAPUTA*, Sheeta is a young girl being chased by villain Muska and pirate captain Dola (who becomes her unlikely ally) for her crystal and her connection to the floating city of Laputa. Such qualities of style, colour and length are relevant to discuss for initial impressions of characters, and how understandings of characters change as we experience more of them.

Many theorists highlight the link between hair and sexuality. Ebersole observes that in historical Japan, 'well-groomed and tied up' hair reflected a 'self-controlled person' and 'controlled sexuality'. Whereas, unkept or wild hair can indicate a love crazed woman or a sign of 'psychic and spiritual turmoil'.²² While these ideas don't appear to be particularly relevant to much of the case narratives and characters (in that sexuality is rarely discussed or referred to explicitly), the more general ideas of repression, restricted femininity, and control maintain significant weight. For Sophie (the eldest daughter of a hatter), her initial appearance with a long brown braid (figure A) is a symbol of her self-

²¹ Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," 404.

²² Ebersole, "Long Black Hair Like a Seat Cushion," 94-95.

repression in submission to her responsibility, her belief that she is unworthy of love, and her low self-esteem. While those around her encourage Sophie to join in during the opening scene, she tells them to “go have some fun,” while she stays behind working. This characterisation of Sophie as responsible and serious is further suggested through her hair colour. Synnott argues that brown hair has a strong association with being more sensible, familiar, and intelligent than women with other hair colours. In this way, Sophie’s hair symbolises fundamental elements of her character.

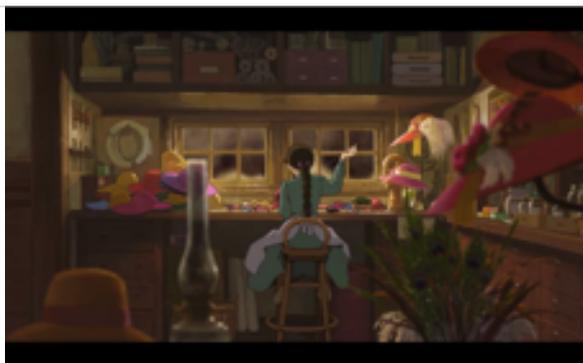


Figure A: Sophie’s introductory shot.



Figure B: Sheeta and Dola on the airship: twin braids.

Hair style can indicate immediate ideas of a character’s disposition, attitude, and identity. However, these ideas can be misleading, or subverted by other aspects of character. For Dola and Sheeta of *LAPUTA* (figure B), the symbolism of twin braids is utilised with distinct effects for each character. Braids are a common and versatile hair style that can have a variety of cultural meanings. Traditionally, as Nelson and Choi demonstrate, long hair and braids could indicate the youth of (unmarried) girls across many Asian cultures.²³ While not specifically a Japanese symbol, this connects to the wide-spread general association braids on either side of the head have with the innocence and youthfulness of ‘school girls’ (both in Asia and the West).²⁴ For Sheeta’s soft-spoken, young, and innocent character, her braids reflect such ideas of ‘school-girl’ innocence and discipline. Similar to Sophie, Sheeta’s brown braided hair also suggests intelligence and sensibility as suggested by Synnott.²⁵ We first see Sheeta as a captive, then being chased by the antagonist Muska and by the pirate gang. However, while not entirely submissive, Sheeta also displays bravery and ingenuity, hitting Muska over the head with a wine bottle and escaping out the window before falling. This suggest that while her hair may symbolise innocence, she is not simply a helpless and controllable child, encouraging us to interpret Sheeta as an underestimated young girl.

²³ Sarah M. Nelson, “Bound Hair and Confucianism In Korea,” in *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Culture*, eds. Alf Hildebeitel, and Barbara D. Miller (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 108. Choi, “Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan,” 72-75.

²⁴ Twin braids are a common visual short-hand for school-girls, ranging from Britney Spears to Pippi Longstockings to Japanese school uniform.

²⁵ Synnott, “Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair,” 386-387.

Dola's similar twin braid hair style also suggests complex ideas of identity and personality, yet pushes expectations a step further into subversion. A much older and more boisterous character, Dola is the captain of her pirate crew. She initially goes after Sheeta in pursuit of the Laputa treasure before begrudgingly becoming allies with the protagonists and revealing a soft-side to her otherwise greedy and bossy personality. We first see Dola wearing a navy jumpsuit over her stocky body, with two thick stiff braids protruding upwards from her aviator cap (figure C). Her large nose, angular face, and aggressive attitude suggest a masculine and powerful personality. When we consider the connotations of innocence and femininity that twin braids suggest for Sheeta, we can see how the same hair style has a different affect for Dola. As Odell and Le Blanc suggest, Dola's hairstyle is "mockingly girlish."²⁶ In this way, the innocent, disciplined, and feminine symbolism of twin braids is contradicted by her aggressive and somewhat masculine personality, and her law-breaking pirate identity. Dola's character personality, appearance, and hair style thus subvert expectations of femininity and braid symbolism in a striking way.²⁷ Therefore, it is important to recognise the individuality of hair meaning, and how certain hair qualities can be symbolically different for different characters.



Figure C: Dola in the opening scene.

Colour can also influence how hair is interpreted. Red hair carries associations for numerous cultures. Although faded to a greyish-pink, the portrait of young Dola in her room (figure D) shows her red hair and encourages us to consider the development of her character. Dola's red hair reflects ideas of 'less femininity', aggression, and a 'no-nonsense' attitude that Synnott observes in associations of red-headed females in the US.²⁸ Her character comes across as bossy, powerful and rough: communicating a particularly non-feminine personality. Her voice is harsh and commanding, and she often speaks enthusiastically of getting the crystal despite the trouble her crew of "little idiots" cause. In this way, while she does demonstrate care and sympathy at times (such as when she embraces Sheeta in the final scene), her red hair colour indicates clear meanings of an aggressive and 'fiery' personality. However, as her red hair has faded, it is important to consider what the affects of greying hair are for character interpretation.

²⁶ Odell and Le Blanc, *Studio Ghibli: The Films of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata*, 49.

²⁷ This issue of femininity will also be explored in a following section in relation to shōjo genre conventions.

²⁸ Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," 386.



Figure D: Dola and her portrait, with Sheeta.



Figure E: Sophie transformed.

Synnott argues that greying hair can be a mark of 'distinction' and 'wisdom' and subsequent authority.²⁹ These associations are particularly relevant for Dola. Her fading red hair appears pinkish, complimenting the communication of her age through her wrinkled face and hoarse voice. As captain of the pirates, Dola's faded hair symbolises her rank as an elder and the respected leader with more experience than her younger crew members. Dola is often referred to as 'mom', suggesting her superior position in the pirate (and family) hierarchy. Far from being feeble however, Dola still retains some of her original red hair colouring, resisting ageing through her energetic lifestyle and temperament.³⁰

In contrast, Sophie's hair is grey under very different circumstances, symbolising and communicating complex ideas of (lacking) inner strength, character disposition, and identity. According to Ebersole, in Japanese culture, grey hair is not simply as indication of old age, but also bares associations of lost youth, vigour, and love, and of the natural cycle of life.³¹ Her main appearance is that of an elderly lady with thin grey hair in a single short braid (figure E). Being transformed by a witch, Sophie is initially shocked by her transformation from young woman into old lady. Quickly however, we see that Sophie embraces her new form, stating that her appearance and clothes "finally suit you." In this way, considering Ebersole, we see that Sophie does not identify with the vigour and power of youth that her original long dark hair symbolises.³² As Hairston suggests, "Sophie is already dull and mousy, resigned to a life of spinsterhood."³³ Thus, with Sophie introduced as a relatively unconfident, responsible and reserved person, we can interpret her elderly form as a representation of Sophie's dull and timid identity. Unlike the energetic and subversive Dola, Sophie submits to the associations of weakness that grey hair can indicate.

²⁹ Additionally, Synnott's research suggests her greying hair further reflects her limited femininity. As we have seen, Dola displays significantly masculinity, thus reflecting the symbolism of her hair.

³⁰ Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," 388.

³¹ Ebersole, "Long Black Hair Like a Seat Cushion," 82-83.

³² Ebersole, "Long Black Hair Like a Seat Cushion," 77.

³³ Hairston, "Miyazaki's View on Shōjo," 105.

Sophie's hair also extends to symbolic ideas of witches and magical abilities. Throughout the film, Sophie seems to display supernatural or otherwise unexplainable capabilities. Even Calcifer the fire demon expresses his confusion with how Sophie was able to get into Howl's magically protected castle, and Markl questions whether Sophie is a witch on several occasions. Witches as an archetype are often depicted as old ladies with grey hair and magical powers, so such a comparison is heavily related to bodily association. Japanese literature illuminates particular historical ideas linking hair and magic. Choi explains how hair was traditionally believed to be "a gift from God" possessing magical powers, and a powerful symbol of the self.³⁴ Considering that Sophie offers Calcifer her long braid in order to restore his weakened energy, we can interpret this sacrifice of hair as a symbol of Sophie's energy, with Calcifer stating that he "needs something from [her]." Furthermore, Choi explains how traditionally in Japan people burned their hair for good luck in harvest.³⁵ In this way, Sophie's hair represents an energetic part of herself, yet also something that can be given up as powerful sacrifice. We can see here how hair is a complicated symbol of self and a valuable magical tool.



Figure F: Sophie and civilians.

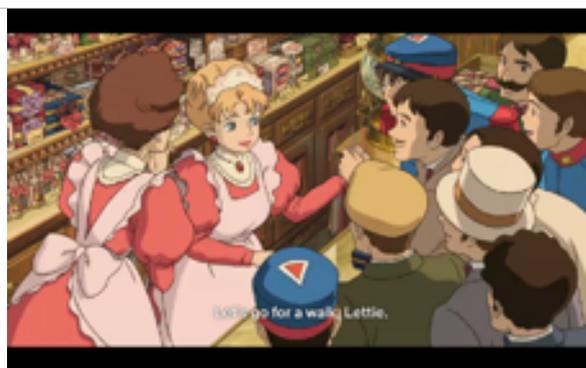


Figure G: Lettie at work.

Hair fashion and accessories can also influence how characters are understood by the world around them. This is particularly relevant for understanding how contextual and textual ideas of beauty and fashion communicate through Miyazaki's female characters. As Choi suggests, hair style can be an important "means to express an ideal of beauty."³⁶ The setting of *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* presents a somewhat fantastical Edwardian Europe, with many of the background women of the city wearing large elaborately decorated hats and swirling pompadours with their frilly bustled dresses (figure F). Sophie's younger sister Lettie reflects the contemporary fashion of the story world, wearing similar pastel coloured Edwardian fashion with a sophisticated peachy blonde hairstyle and feminine accessories (figure G). Synnott also suggests that in Western culture, Lettie's blonde hair suggests a fun and attractive woman.³⁷ In this way, we can see how hair works in conjunction with other character aesthetics in order to convey fashion, beauty, and attractiveness. Lettie is

³⁴ Choi, "Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan," 80.

³⁵ Choi, "Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan," 80.

³⁶ Choi, "Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan," 69.

³⁷ Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," 388-389.

remarked to be beautiful and very popular, with men asking her on dates and trying to get her attention at her workplace. These inferences of beauty, femininity, and popularity contribute to our perception of Lettie as an attractive and confident woman.

Accessories can also reflect meaning through reference to other media characters. Choi and Ebersole's discussions of Asian hair symbolism highlight the significance of various accessories such as combs and ribbons. For Sheeta however, the influence of international culture on the construction of the story world motivates a consideration of European accessories in relation to hair meaning.³⁸ Sheeta wears a red 'alice band' ribbon on her head that helps further convey her innocence, youth, and curiosity (Figure H). This young girl's accessory was popularised through the iconic character of Alice from English author Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* books.³⁹ Considering the generally curious, brave, and gentle character of Alice in her own story, our interpretation of Sheeta can be influenced through comparison. In this way, hair symbolism is both intertextual and international; influencing how we connect associations for understanding character.

The complex and sometimes contradictory or subversive hair meanings of these characters reflect their multifaceted personalities and identities. Both complimenting and challenging associations, we can see how hair draws attention to specific personality qualities such as femininity, attitude, and strength. As such, hair brings depth to these characters by playing with expectations and leaving room for developing understandings.



Figure H: Sheeta's hairband

Character relationships and hair contrast

Throughout LAPUTA, Sheeta and Dola are explicitly compared to one another. When Dola describes Sheeta's brave actions to protect Pazu as "remind[ing] her of her youth," her sons are surprised that Sheeta will "grow up to be like mama." This idea that Sheeta is a young Dola is reiterated when we see her in Dola's clothing following behind her (figure B). Their shared hairstyle encourages us to recognise their similarities and question their

³⁸ See the following reference for European influences for HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE: Odell and Le Blanc, *Studio Ghibli: The Films of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata*, 46-47.

³⁹ Valerie Cumming, C. Willett Cunningham, Phillis Cunningham, and Charles Rely Beard, *The Dictionary of Fashion History* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 3.

differences. As we have seen, while Sheeta's braids can convey innocence and youth, Dola's braids contradict this symbolism. Here, her age and rambunctious pirate identity contrast heavily with Sheeta. Even the texture rendering of their hair subtly indicates these differences: Sheeta's flows more fluid and supple, whereas Dola's behaves like rough, puffy straw sticking outwards. These characters are initially introduced as enemies with vastly different surface identities. However, as we get to know the characters, their shared hair styling suggests they may not be as different as they initially seem.

By the end of the film, Dola and Sheeta have grown from being enemies to allies in opposition to Muska and the military. Getting to know both women, we see similarities in Dola and Sheeta's independent, caring, and intelligent personalities. This is particularly evident when Dola commands Sheeta to come down from the crow's nest and Sheeta questions why. Dola retorts "You're a girl," before Sheeta responds, "So are you." We can recognise the strong-will the two women mutually share and respect, as Dola laughs and gives in. Furthermore, after Sheeta's braids are shot off by Muska, Dola embraces Sheeta with sympathy stating, "You poor child, the worst is having your hair hacked off." In this way, we can understand how hair is valuable for these women, with Dola empathising with Sheeta through their shared physical (and gendered) asset. This comment also demonstrates how their relationship has changed from the beginning of the narrative. Through their hair, we can see how these women grew from being misunderstood adversaries, to reluctant allies, to genuinely caring for and learning from each other as two women with surprising similarities.

Sisters Sophie and Lettie of *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* have a very different relationship with each other that is reflected in their opposing hair styles and appearances. Sophie is a relatively quiet, plain and unconfident girl, contrasting heavily with her younger sister Lettie: an attractive, bubbly and popular bakery assistant that appears to be much more confident and self-assured. Sophie struggles with self-esteem, and explains herself to be the 'eldest', carrying responsibilities and obligations to her father's hat shop. This can be seen when Lettie shows concern, telling her sister near the beginning of the film, "It's your life Sophie, do something for yourself for once will you?" Observing these two characters together, we are presented with a clear visualisation of their differences. While Lettie wears bright colours, make up and a fashionable hair style with accessories, Sophie wears a plain dress and hat with a single braid down her back (figure I). In this way, Sophie's hair emphasises her more limited femininity and beauty, and her comparative plainness in relation to Lettie. Aesthetic contrast thus helps to convey the personality differences of both characters, emphasising their individuality.



Figure I: Sisters Lettie and Sophie.

Instead of the same hairstyle drawing attention to how characters may relate (as in *LAPUTA*), Sophie's unique hair style isolates her from the women in her family and broader society. When we see Sophie's mother and sister, their elaborate and feminine appearances highlight Sophie's subdued look. Similarly, when Sophie goes to the palace, her dark dress and simple grey hair braid under a straw hat stands out against the crowd of pastel colours, embellished dresses, and sophisticated hairstyles under Edwardian hats. This has the effect of conveying Sophie's disconnection from those around her, and her belief that she is not attractive or worthy of love or acceptance from others. Sophie tells Lettie that she should not be concerned about Howl stealing her heart as he only goes after "beauties." The film narrative is centred on Sophie's perspective, with each scene following her. As Eder suggests, this encourages us to engage and empathise with Sophie.⁴⁰ Her individual appearance thus symbolises her mentality and how she views herself in relation to others: as an outcast.

Reviewing the relationships between these four characters exposes hair as a powerful symbolic device signifying both similarities and differences. While the shared hairstyle of Dola and Sheeta invites recognition of their personality similarities, it also draws attention to their relational individualism when combined with such contrasting character identities. Similarly, the highly contrasted hair styles of Lettie and Sophie visualises their identity polarity.

Metamorphosis and hair cutting

Hair change and character transformation are linked in complex ways throughout Miyazaki's films. Dramatic hair cuts and colour shifts carry strong symbolic meaning in film and across culture, making it an important subject of analysis for understanding character. As the author of critical anime fan blog 'Gagging on Sexism' recognises, both Sheeta and Sophie begin their stories with long braided hair and are burdened in some way.⁴¹ For

⁴⁰ Eder, "Understanding characters," 34.

⁴¹ "What's in the Hair: A Look at the Symbolism of Hair in Hayao Miyazaki's Work," *Gagging on Sexism*, published August 4, 2011, <https://gaggingonsexism.wordpress.com/2011/08/04/whats-in-the-hair-a-look-at-the-symbolism-of-hair-in-hayao-miyazakis-work/>.

Sophie, it is the responsibilities she carries and her low self-esteem. For Sheeta, it is her powerful crystal and connection with Laputa. Sheeta and Sophie stand out against Miyazaki's oeuvre as the vast majority of Miyazaki's female characters have cropped hair. Short haired protagonists such as Kiki of *KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE* (1989), or the titular *NAUSICAA* (1984) begin their stories as already confident and free, with conflict arising after the beginning of the film. Whereas, we can understand Sheeta and Sophie as facing conflict (whether internal or external) before they are introduced, subsequently undergoing great change by the end of their narratives: Sophie finding confidence and love, and Sheeta being free from pursuers and her connected to Laputa.

If we acknowledge the symbolic restriction and control that long braided hair suggests, the cutting of hair can symbolise freedom from such burdens and control.⁴² Free-flowing hair mirrors Sheeta's new found freedom by the end of the film. Bravely facing him, Muska shoots off Sheeta's braids trying to get her to surrender the powerful 'Volucite' crystal (figure J). If her braids represent the burden of being chased and her connection to Laputa, the severing of her hair can symbolise liberation from the past and new freedom. Choi affirm this, adding that hair cutting can symbolise a girl's rite of passage and change in status.⁴³ We can interpret this for Sheeta as a symbol of her growth from her experiences of sacrifice, bravery and new trusted relationships.



Figure J: Sheeta's braids are shot off.



Figure K: Sheeta with short hair.

However, as Sheeta's hair is cut under violent and involuntary circumstances, the interpretation of Sheeta's hair transformation can change from liberation to control. Synnott contends that cutting hair can symbolise social control over the individual.⁴⁴ Thus, before Muska is defeated and Laputa is let go, the shooting of her braids can represent the power Muska has over Sheeta. Yet, Sheeta is willing to sacrifice herself to stop the tyrannical Muska. Miraculously escaping the effects of the destruction spell, Sheeta watches Laputa float away, taking her severed braids and Muska (figure K). Her remaining short hair thus becomes a symbolic reminder of her burdened past, her resilience, as well as a new future of freedom from control. In this way, hair cutting can possess somewhat

⁴² Ebersole suggests braids can signify sexual repression and control, but this can also be considered in more general (not necessarily sexual) terms. Ebersole, "Long Black Hair Like a Seat Cushion," 94-95.

⁴³ Choi, "Symbolism of Hairstyles in Korea and Japan," 98.

⁴⁴ Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," 381-382.

ambiguous or transforming meanings between liberation and control as Sheeta takes back her power.



Figure L (Appendix 2.19): Sophie sleeping- long brown hair again.



Figure M: Calcifer is energised by Sophie's braid. Sophie is left with cropped hair.

Eventually claiming a different form of freedom, Sophie too undergoes dramatic and symbolic hair changes. Unlike Sheeta's external burdens, Sophie's hair symbolises an internal burden of low self-esteem and a belief that she is not attractive. She also undergoes a much more extensive metamorphosis throughout the film as she is transformed by a curse. The theme of transformation is significant for understanding Sophie's character growth. We see the curse lift at several moments when Sophie is not focused on her self doubt, and when she is sleeping and dreaming (Appendix shots 2.19, 2.27, 2.30, and 2.35, example figure L). In this way, the changes in Sophie's hair signify a growing confidence and belief in herself in response to her blossoming connection with Howl and the bravery in her actions to help those around her. While initially she believed old age 'suited her', she slowly begins to see herself as more than just a plain and unattractive old lady.

By the end of the film, Sophie has broken her own curse as she realises that she loves Howl, and that she has power of her own.⁴⁵ Overcoming her self-doubt and low self-esteem; this character change is further symbolised by the cutting of her braid. Sacrificed for a spell giving Calcifer strength (figure M), Sophie's hair reiterates Ebersole's idea that hair is a powerful and magical tool of the self, possessing a person's life force.⁴⁶ Leach also discusses this idea through Wilken stating:

Wilken's own explanation of 'hair sacrifice' also presupposes that hair is a universal symbol, though not specifically a sexual one. He claims that the ritual cutting of hair is a substitute for human sacrifice on a pars pro toto basis, the hair being appropriate for the purpose because the head is the seat of the soul.⁴⁷

This final sacrificial act of metamorphosis symbolises Sophie's letting go of her old self and her repressive self-critical views. While her hair remains grey as if a scar of her past and

⁴⁵ The original story of the book suggests that the curse was only temporary but the film never truly explains the conditions of the spell or how to break it.

⁴⁶ Ebersole, "Long Black Hair Like a Seat Cushion," 75.

⁴⁷ Leach, "Magical Hair," 149.

mark of strength, cutting her hair symbolises a new self-confidence and opening up to love. This is reflected in the dialogue when Howl remarks, "Oh, Sophie. Your hair is just like starlight. It's beautiful." Without dismissing the comment like she did in the past with both Lettie and Howl, Sophie embraces Howl exclaiming, "I love you, Howl. How wonderful!" We can interpret this as Sophie recognising her value beyond her appearance. In this way, the metamorphosis and cutting of hair can symbolise a release of burden, gained confidence, and courageous growth for both Sheeta and Sophie as their characters develop. Thus, hair meanings can change alongside character, reflecting ambiguity and complexity in both.

Hair as part of Ghibli style and shōjo genre

Analysing how these characters relate to and diverge from shōjo representations can illuminate the conventional and non-conventional ways in which hair symbolism works. It is therefore important to contextualise Miyazaki's characters within the broader contexts of shōjo anime and Studio Ghibli. Shōjo characters are conventionally cute young girls, with their narratives centring on their relationships and experiences.⁴⁸ Although Toku says shōjo can cover "a wide range of archetypes from the magical girl to the romantic ideal girl and more,"⁴⁹ Miyazaki's shōjo characters stand out in unique ways.

While Miyazaki is often associated with shōjo, his representations of female characters can both reflect and depart from convention. Importantly, while most shōjo narratives are centred around young girls, Miyazaki expands this to include young-adult women and elderly ladies. Hairston offers three categories of shōjo character that Miyazaki engages with: young shōjo under the age of six, prepubescent girls (including Sheeta), and older teenage shōjo (including Sophie and Lettie). He goes on to introduce the seemingly contradictory 'elderly shōjo' that we can see with both Dola and Sophie. Presenting greying and wrinkled older women contrasts heavily with the shōjo convention of cute, young girl protagonists. In this way, Miyazaki challenges norms by exploring female stories beyond just children, exposing a wide scope of femininity and womanhood that Hairston argues "go beyond the clichés and stereotypes of anime."⁵⁰ Depicting females as complex characters with diverse perspectives and appearances, Miyazaki brings depth to femininity that is often stereotyped in shōjo anime through archetypes such as the 'cute girlfriend' or 'magical girl'.

Miyazaki's use of more realistic hair further challenges shōjo norms and complicates the notion of relatability, presenting a unique realism. With the possibilities of animation, anime character design can be much more imaginative and fantastic than film. Across much of anime, hair is given particular freedom with characters sporting unnatural

⁴⁸ Napier, *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke*, 118.

⁴⁹ Masami Toku, "Introduction: The Power of Shojo and Shojo Manga," in *International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture*, ed. Masami Toku (New York: Routledge, 2015), 4.

⁵⁰ Hairston, "Miyazaki's View on Shōjo," 102.

colours and exaggerated hair styles. While Miyazaki's characters are inhabitants of fantasy worlds, Napier suggests that Miyazaki's females are "indeed 'real' and richly believable within the confines of the narrative."⁵¹ His character designs lack the extreme hyper-stylisation of other anime styles, presenting believable movement, colour and style. This - in conjunction with the depth and complexity of his characters that possess very human emotions and personalities - helps evoke both a sense of relatability and estrangement according to Napier. Miyazaki's careful restraint with expressive animation (including hair) and his highly realised characters retain the balance between imagination and familiarity. His films are not just for fantasy escape, but present dynamically realistic worlds with sympathetic characters.

However, Miyazaki's characters do indeed make use of the creative and expressive possibilities of anime hair. Specifically, his characters present a form of the 'expressive hair' anime convention. This motif is recurrent in many of Miyazaki's films and can be generally defined as hair that is "independently mobile and responsive to their moods," according to a popular media trope site.⁵² In this way, as animator Chia-Horng Lin describes, much like with the face, the animation of hair can be used to convey emotions like fear, happiness and surprise.⁵³ This can be seen when Sheeta's hair stands up (as if connected to her nervous system) in response to Pazu almost falling from a ledge (figure N). In this way, we see how hair can be used as an expressive tool for Sheeta, conveying her tense panic.



Figure N: Sheeta's panic and expressive hair.

Using hair as a lens, we can see how Miyazaki's characters adapt and expand shōjo conventions, providing a unique sense of depth and realism. While his emphasis on female characters and expressive hair animation reflect similar shōjo conventions, Miyazaki's characters also stand apart with their subtle hair colours, nuanced personalities, and diverse representations of femininity.

⁵¹ Napier, *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke*, 126.

⁵² "Expressive Hair," TV Tropes, accessed January 16, 2021, <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/ExpressiveHair>.

⁵³ Jerome Chia-Horng Lin, "Surprise as a Facial Expression on Animation: Examples from Studio Ghibli Animated Films," manuscript published online, accessed January 18, 2021, <http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/98-233/docs/CIC0203.pdf>.

Conclusion

Using hair as a lens for character analysis reveals the ways in which Miyazaki's female characters in *LAPUTA* and *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* subvert and bring depth to genre, identity, and personality expectations and understandings. The complex hair meanings of Sophie, Lettie, Sheeta, and Dola reflect the depth of their characters, deconstructing common or conventional understandings of femininity. Linking the characters of Sophie, Lettie, Sheeta, and Dola with discussions of hair meaning, this analysis demonstrates how hair functions as a powerful and complex communicative device relating to character individuality, relationships, change, and genre conventions.

Observing how hair colour and style relates to character personality and identity demonstrates hair as a complex and sometimes contradictory symbol of the self. Both complimenting and challenging associations, hair can draw attention to character aspects of femininity, attitude, and identity: especially when these expectations are subverted. Notably, while braids reflect Sheeta's innocent youth, the same hairstyle is used mockingly for the confrontational Dola. Furthermore, the vast and multifaceted landscape of hair meanings makes definitive interpretations challenging. As such, the various aspects of hair add depth to the communication of Miyazaki's characters by relating to multiple interpretations of hair symbolism.

Reviewing the relationships between these four characters further exposes hair as signifying both similarities and differences in identity and personality. Interestingly, comparing the two central female character pairings of each film shows that both highly contrasted *and* similar hair can draw attention to dissimilarities between characters. While the matching braids of Sheeta and Dola invite questioning of how such seemingly incompatible characters could relate, the differences between Lettie and Sophie more explicitly visualise their relational individuality.

Character metamorphosis as connected to symbolic hair change also demonstrates hair as communicating character development. Mapping what specific hair changes mean for Sheeta and Sophie shows hair cutting to be a particularly significant symbol of growth and gained freedom in Miyazaki's films. External changes in hair appearance thus help communicate these character's internal and external burdens, and the subsequent alleviation thereof.

Situating the previous observations within the broader context of anime illuminates the way in which these female representations both relate to, and differ from shōjo genre conventions. Here, hair contributes to the unique sense of realism, complexity, and variety in Miyazaki's female characters. This is conveyed through use of subtle animation, and dense and diverse character development. While characters like Sheeta do somewhat adhere to shōjo conventions of often young female protagonists and expressive hair movement, this discussion shows that Miyazaki's shōjo characters present distinct representations of femininity and hair that set his works apart.

Utilising a modified version of Eder and Tseng's character analysis allowed for a nuanced exploration of these connections by considering various influences on character interpretation. While limited in its scope, this analysis provided an introduction to exploring intersections of character, hair, and anime. Further research could extend considerations of hair symbolism to anime and animation at a larger scale in order to further understand Miyazaki's distinct style, and differences in hair symbolism between genres. Crucially, analysing male characters (both within and outside of Miyazaki's films) could also compliment or challenge the ideas presented here. Further concentrated exploration of hair as a communicative device in film would thus bring greater understanding of how this subtle yet familiar aspect of character functions.

7657

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APPENDIX I: Annotated shot list for LAPUTA

#	Time	Shot moments of hair change, hair agency, and hair relevance in relation to character.	Sheeta	Dola
1.1	00:00:42			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First shot of Dola. - Two floating braids. Aviator costume. - Colour skewed by lighting - pinkish grey. - Small in frame- establishing shot. - Her body and hair stand out as feminine amongst the other masculine figures.
1.2	00:01:12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First shot of Sheeta - Appears small in frame - child? - Red hairband colour emphasised amongst soft colours. - Dark brown hair. - Braid visible. - Purple dress 	
1.3	00:01:23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta appears to be a child when compared to the adults around her. - Scene action establishes Sheeta to be a captive and a target. 	
1.4	00:14:46		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressive hair - Pazu jumps off the roof and Sheeta's body, face and hair tense up. 	
1.5	00:19:05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta being identified through her hair. - "A cute little girl, brown hair, braids." 	
1.6	00:19:19		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta's hat falls off. Her hair being visible pushes the narrative forward by her being recognised. 	

1.7	00:19:28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "That's her!" - Sheeta being recognised by her hair. Hair emphasises in frame- in motion, contrasted against beige road. 	
1.8	00:21:35			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First clear shot of Dola. - Pink hair. - Masculine and feminine through her body and clothes. - Clearly identified as the leader (giving orders, dressed differently than her crew).
1.9	00:48:45		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First narrative comparison between Dola and Sheeta. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dola explaining how Sheeta's actions to save Pazu remind her of her youth. - First narrative comparison between Dola and Sheeta. - "If you boys want to get married, look for one like her."
1.10	00:48:47			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "So that girl will grow up... to be like Mama?"
1.11	00:52:10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young Sheeta. - Same dress, same headband. Demonstrates it is the same person (Sheeta). - Shorter hair in pigtails. Conveys time past as her hair grew. 	
1.12	00:58:44		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta being held up by her braid. - Captured again. 	
1.13	01:04:34		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta and Dola's braids moving in similar ways responding to the wind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta and Dola's braids moving in similar ways responding to the wind.

1.14	01:09:58			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portrait of young Dola showing her pinkish red hair. - Considering the realism of the other characters (and their hair colours), implied her hair has faded from natural red (conveyed through pink).
1.15	01:10:09		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta dressed like Dola following her on the airship. - Hair similarities made obvious. - Further draws attention to the comparison of their characters. 	
1.16	01:15:41			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dola's hair let loose at night. - Still wearing an aviator cap.
1.17	01:38:33		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressive hair- matching her facial expression: tension and panic. - Standing up like a scared cat: spikes and raised. - Responding to Pazu almost falling off a ledge. 	
1.18	01:39:30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta again being held by her hair. 	
1.19	01:52:59		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta finally stopping running away and standing to face Muska. 	
1.20	01:53:30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Muska shoots off a braid. - Sheeta flinches but does not stand down. Willingness to face death rather than submit. 	

1.21	01:53:32		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Muska threatening, and then shooting off the second braid. 	
1.22	01:54:30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta's hair now short and free from bound braids. - Headband remains. - Sheeta and Pazu face death to defeat Muska. 	
1.23	02:00:05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheeta's short hair flows freely. - Looking back watching Laputa float away. 	
1.24	02:00:56		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dola and Sheeta embrace. - Dola comforts Sheeta's hair loss, "You poor child, the worst is having your hair hacked off.": her hair was valuable/ significant. - They now have differing hair styles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dola and Sheeta embrace. - Dola comforts Sheeta's hair loss, "You poor child, the worst is having your hair hacked off.": her hair was valuable/ significant. - They now have differing hair styles.

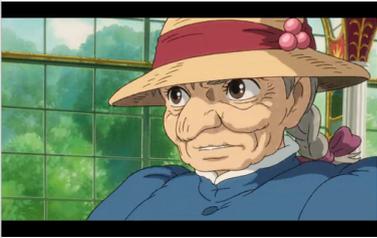
APPENDIX II: Annotated shot list for HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE

#	Time	Shot moments of hair change, hair agency, and hair relevance in relation to character.	Sophie	Lettie
2.1	00:01:41		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First shot of Sophie - Green simple dress and apron. - Framed as plain girl around elaborate hats and decorations. - Long brown braid 	
2.2	00:01:50		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I'll finish this. Go have some fun." Excluding herself. Indicates her responsibility and social restriction. 	
2.3	00:03:27		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie smiling in the mirror. Trying to be cute and attractive. 	
2.4	00:03:28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From smile, quickly frowns and hides her face with her hat. Indicating low-self confidence in her appearance. 	
2.5	00:07:25			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First appearance of Lettie. - Blonde hair in Edwardian up-do and costume with accessory. - Feminine and matching aesthetics of other background women. - Popular with men asking her for dates and attention.
2.6	00:07:42		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framing the two sisters together makes their differences in appearance (including hair) apparent. - Sophie appears more plain. - Suggests character differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framing the two sisters together makes their differences in appearance (including hair) apparent. - Lettie appears more feminine and refined. - Suggests character differences.

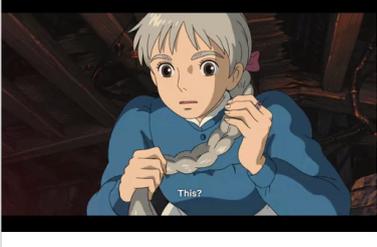
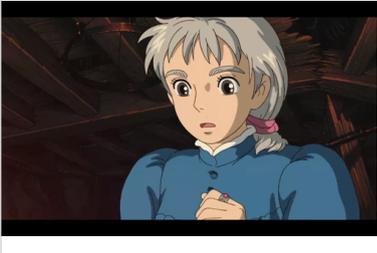
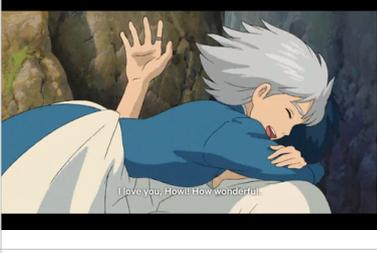
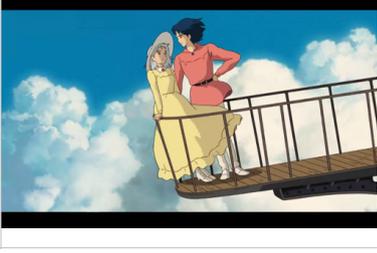
2.7	00:08:02	 <p>If that was the wizard Howl, he'd have eaten me right up.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close up of Lettie. More decoration detailed design than Sophie. - "If that was the wizard Howl, he'd have eaten it right up."
2.8	00:08:05	 <p>Don't worry, Howl's only after beauties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression of low self-confidence. Believes she is not beautiful. - "Don't worry, Howl's only after beauties." 	
2.9	00:08:08	 <p>There you go again.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lettie cares for her sister and acknowledges her negative opinion of her self. - "There you go again."
2.10	00:08:54	 <p>It meant so much to Papa. Besides, I'm the eldest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression of Sophie's responsibilities. - "It meant so much to Papa. Besides, I'm the eldest." 	
2.11	00:09:02	 <p>Sophie, you've got to look out for yourself.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Sophie, you've got to look out for yourself." - Lettie trying to encourage Sophie to respect herself before submitting to other's expectations.
2.12	00:10:38	 <p>And you're quite cheap-looking yourself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Witch acknowledges Sophie's plain appearance. - "And you're quite cheap-looking yourself." 	
2.13	00:11:12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie body transformed into an elderly lady- short, stocky, wrinkled skin, harsher voice. - Short grey hair in the same braid, but much shorter now. 	

2.14	00:11:31		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial shock in her wrinkled hands. 	
2.15	00:12:43		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie and Lettie's mother. Similarly feminine, elaborate and beautiful appearance and style to Lettie. Different to Sophie. - Suggests Sophie is different to the rest of her family. 	
2.16	00:13:45		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acceptance of new appearance. - Optimistic - "You're still healthy, and these clothes finally suit you." 	
2.17	00:23:45		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Markl questions if Sophie is a witch since she got into the magically protected castle. Reflects witch stereotypes of old women. - "That's strange. You're not a witch, are you?" 	
2.18	00:40:02		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie expresses feeling more peaceful than she ever had. Comfortable with embodying the life of an old lady? - "I've never felt such peace." 	
2.19	00:42:49		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie shown as her natural young self. Does she curse break when she is sleeping, dreaming, or not conscious to her low self-esteem? 	
2.20	00:42:52		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close up on Howl's face looking down at Sophie. - Perhaps the framing of the shot here suggests that Howl can see through the curse and this scene is from Howl's perspective? 	

2.21	00:43:17		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The curse returns when Sophie is awake (and conscious of herself). 	
2.22	00:46:11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Howl's hair colour is accidentally changed from blonde to orange, and then black. 	
2.23	00:46:44		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Howl expresses to Sophie, "What's the point in living, if you aren't beautiful..." - Hair colour demonstrated to be an important aspect of beauty and self-confidence. 	
2.24	00:47:31		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frustrated Sophie responds, "I've never once been beautiful!" - Expressing her low self-confidence again. Cries. 	
2.25	00:53:21		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The women of the city and wearing pastel colours, frills and bows with elaborate hats and sophisticated hairdos. - Sophie's plain hair, hat, darker dress, and elderly shape stands out. 	
2.26	01:03:24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie speaking about howl confidently. - "Howl won't turn into an evil monster." - Curse begins to lift. 	
2.27	01:03:25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her confidence lifts the curse and she returns to being young with long brown hair for a moment. - "He'll battle the demons on his own." 	

2.28	01:03:27		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Madam Sulliman tells Sophie, "You're in love with Howl." - Sophie recoils and returns to an elderly lady. - Sequence suggests that her growing love for Howl is breaking the curse. However, Sophie is still guarded. 	
2.29	01:11:47		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie sleeping return to youth again. 	
2.30	01:13:33		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie in a dream sequence is youthful. Suggesting she is still young in her subconscious dreams before her unconfident ego steps in. 	
2.31	01:14:16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie confesses her love for Howl in the dream. - "But I love you." 	
2.32	01:14:20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before she wakes up she has returned to elderly form. - "How!" 	
2.33	00:14:28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie wakes up with a start. - In elderly form. - Suggests that the previous sequence was a dream. 	
2.34	01:15:15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The curse is getting weaker. She stands a lot more upright and confident than when she was initially turned into an old woman. - Sophie's character is gaining strength. 	

2.35	01:21:13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She is either unknowingly lifting her curse, or we are seeing Sophie through Howl's eyes that may be able to see through the curse. - Motif of curse lifting while dreaming as Sophie says, "It's like I'm dreaming." 	
2.36	01:23:05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie still struggles with confidence. - "I'm not beautiful and I'm only good at cleaning." 	
2.37	01:23:08		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Howl to Sophie, "Sophie, you are beautiful." 	
2.38	01:23:15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie dismisses the comment still believing she is more suited to embody an old lady body. - "The good thing about being old is that you've got so little to lose..." 	
2.39	01:31:19		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The curse is weak when Sophie is caring for those around her and not focuses on her shortcomings. - War turmoil is mounting. 	
2.40	01:32:47		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie embraces Howl, becoming more expressive of her love. - Curse lifts further... she does not revert back to her elderly body from this point. - Sophie no longer has short hair and wrinkles, but grey hair remains. 	
2.41	01:39:11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calcifer the fire demon is weakened. In order to give him more strength, he requires "something of yours, Sophie." 	

2.42	01:39:18		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie offers her hair as a sacrifice in order to give Calcifer strength. - This suggests her hair has inherent value and is a part of her self. 	
2.43	01:39:21		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie's hair is cut and it falls out of the tie. Calcifer eats it. 	
2.44	01:39:28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie is left with loose cropped hair while Calcifer is strengthened by her hair sacrifice. 	
2.45	01:53:10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Howl is saved and Sophie does not return to being an elderly lady. - Grey hair remains. - Howl says, "Oh Sophie, your hair is just like starlight. It's so beautiful" 	
2.46	01:53:13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie does not dismiss the comment on her beauty like in the past. She embraces Howl. Suggesting she has accepted herself as loveable and beautiful. - "I love you, How! How wonderful!" 	
2.47	01:54:53		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sophie's hair remains grey. - Sophie wears more feminine and fashionable clothing that matches the city aesthetic as seen previously: a yellow frill dress and white hat and shoes. - Sophie and Howl kiss. 	

APPENDIX III: Mapping Eder's four aspects of character

Character	Artefact (emphasis on hair aesthetic description) Initial appearance.	Fictive being	Symbol	Symptom
<p>Sheeta</p> 	<p>MAIN APPEARANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 year old girl Light skin Deep grey-ish blue eyes (although they appear black mostly) Dark brown plaits with fringe. Red headband and plait ribbons Initially wears a purple dress. Disguises herself as a boy in Patzu's clothes and a hat to cover her hair. Briefly wears a white dress. Changes into pink/red puff trousers and yellow puff sleeved pirate uniform with brown slippers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat reserved, aloof to strangers. Chased for her pendant by government, Muska and pirates They look for her as "cute little girl, dark hair, braids." - Hair as a way of identifying her. They discover her when he hair flies out of her disguise hat. Initially insistent on being alone/independent of Pazu due to the danger she brings. Kinship with Pazu Becomes aligned with Dola and her pirate gang after initially opposed. Princess of Laputa (narrative motive for Muska too) Brave, polite and good hearted. Uses wine bottle to attack muska. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bravery, youth, strength Girls can be heroic as well as boys The youthful can challenge adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braids meaning: youth and innocence, girly, practicality. Brunette personality: (Synnott) sensible, serious, intelligent. Shōjo convention of young girl. Expressive hair.
<p>Dola</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pink hair - faded from red in old age? (as shown in framed portrait in her room). Twin plait pigtails with purple ribbons. Stiff upward movement. Elderly, rough appearance yet strong posture. Harsh voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong and boisterous. Aggressive Hard working and determined "I want that crystal!" Leader of her clan (made up of her 'sons') "These stupid sons of mine." Shows a softer side on occasion: hugs, and compassion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appearances aren't always what they seem. Women can be tough leaders. Questioning femininity. Braids are not just for young girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red hair in women: fiery, passionate, aggressive (Synnott) Pigtail braids: "mockingly girly" (Odell and Leblanc) Practical style- hard working.
<p>Sophie</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain long green dress Mousey brown hair in a single braid down her back, with fringe strands. No makeup or jewellery. Dark eyes Protagonist- invites sympathy and identification. Focused on her perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent but kind of a loner. Excludes herself "Go have fun." Stands more upright as she gains confidence. Initially low self esteem: "I'm not beautiful." Sub-servant to those around her. Sister to Lettie. The "eldest." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence gives you strength. What you believe can become reality. Age gives you perspective- people treat you differently too. It's important to stand up for yourself and what you want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braids suggestive of repression (Ebersole and Choi). Practical for a working girl. Brunette personality: (Synnott) sensible, serious, intelligent.
<p>Lettie</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophisticated up do with headpiece. Pastel peach coloured hair. Frilly pink clothes, apron, jewellery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sister to Sophie (younger). More confident and fits in better than Sophie and gets more attention from others, particularly men: "Over here Lettie!" "you can use my office Lettie!" Fashionable. Femininity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautiful people get more attention. Beautiful people are often more confident. Modern fashion is idealised.- fashion can reflect personality (frilly and girly). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edwardian European fashion and style. Feminine colours

PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

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- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
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Student number: 6510914

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