



# Concept (間) MA: Philosophical Identification and Analysis in Animated Films Howl's Moving Castle (2004)

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**Abstract:** In the context of Japanese film, MA is an important concept to highlight because of its great influence on filmmaking and audience experience. In the visual arts, "MA" can be interpreted as "space" or "interval"; MA can also be said to be the core of aesthetic principles. The purpose of this study is to find and identify the philosophical aspects of the concept of MA in the scenes found in the animated film Howl's Moving Castle (2004) to gain an understanding of visual aesthetics as well as to understand how the concept of MA works and is used in the visual aesthetics of Ghibli animated films. The research methodology on the concept of MA involves a multidimensional approach that includes visual language methods, literature study, and content analysis, as well as a combination of theories on emptiness and tensegrity structure. The analysis shows that the number of scenes containing MA factors is 17 scenes; the total scenes in the movie are about 2,301 scenes, with the assumption that each scene averages 3 seconds. The 17 scenes only take up a portion of 0.73%, a relatively flat number; then, if we take the duration of time for each scene, a value shows the total scene that contains MA factors is 333 Seconds or 5.55 minutes while the total duration of the Howl's Moving Castle animated film is 01:55:05 minutes or about 6,905 seconds the MA transition scene is 4.8% of the total film. The research can provide an in-depth insight into the use of MA in the context of animated films, where it can provide an understanding of how seemingly simple visual elements, such as empty space, can have a strong impact on the audience's experience and level of engagement, or understanding of the story and characters.

Keywords: animation; concept MA; Howl's Moving Castle; Hayao Miyazaki; Studio Ghibli

**Abstrak: Konsep (間) MA: Identifikasi Filosofis dan Analisis dalam Film Animasi Howl's Moving Castle (2004).** Dalam konteks film Jepang, MA merupakan konsep yang penting disorot karena pengaruhnya yang besar terhadap pembuatan film dan pengalaman penonton. "MA" dapat diartikan sebagai "ruang" atau "interval", yang juga sebagai inti dari prinsip estetika. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mencari dan mengidentifikasi aspek filosofis, konsep MA pada scene yang terdapat pada film animasi Howl's Moving Castle (2004) untuk mendapatkan pemahaman tentang estetika visual sekaligus untuk memahami bagaimana konsep MA bekerja dan digunakan dalam estetika visual film-film animasi Ghibli. Metodologi penelitian tentang konsep MA melibatkan pendekatan multidimensi yang mencakup metode bahasa visual, studi literatur dan analisis konten, serta kombinasi teori tentang *emptiness* dan *tensegrity structure*. Analisis menunjukkan banyaknya scene yang mengandung MA factor adalah 17 scene, total scene dalam film ada sekitar 2,301 scene dengan durasi rata-rata setiap scene sebesar 3 detik. 17 scene tersebut hanya memakan porsi sebesar 0.73 %, dengan total scene yang terdapat MA faktor sebanyak 333 Second atau 5.55 menit sedangkan total dari durasi film animasi Howl's Moving Castle sebanyak 01:55:05 menit atau sekitar 6,905 detik maka scene transisi MA sebesar 4.8 % dari total keseluruhan film. Penelitian ini dapat memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang penggunaan MA dalam konteks film animasi, dimana hal tersebut dapat memberikan pemahaman bagaimana



elemen-elemen visual yang tampak sederhana, seperti ruang kosong, dapat memberikan dampak yang kuat terhadap pengalaman penonton dan tingkat keterlibatan, atau pemahaman penonton terhadap cerita dan karakter.

Kata kunci: animasi; konsep MA; *Howl's Moving Castle*; Hayao Miyazaki; Studio Ghibli

## 1. Introduction

In the context of Japanese film, the concept of MA is an important one and is often highlighted for its profound influence on the filmmaking process and how the viewing experience is produced. The term “MA” comes from Japanese and can literally be interpreted as “space” or “interval” (Maruyama, 2020). However, in the context of art, especially in the visual arts, such as music, layout, or performing arts in Japan, MA has a deeper meaning. It can also be said to be the core of the Japanese principle of beauty or aesthetics (Croteau, 2022, pp. 4–5). Japanese aesthetics often utilizes silence to express certain emotions, meanings, or atmospheres without having to rely on excessive scenes or dialogue (Pugsley, 2016, p. 35); in addition, Japanese aesthetics often utilize empty or negative space to create tranquility and emphasize beauty in simple forms and position themselves outside the western paradigm (Frisch, 2019, p. 12). MA in the domain of objectivity includes the projection of existence in one, two, and three dimensions or even across dimensions (Nitschke, 2018). The concept of MA refers to the empty spaces or intervals that exist between objects or elements in a work of art (Graham, 2014, p. 41). MA is not simply a physical empty space, but rather the use of that space to create tranquility, awareness, and a profound aesthetic experience (Leardi, 2019). Japan is the country that owns and gave birth to the culture of MA, and the Japanese know very well how to embody the culture of MA into unique forms that can be found in every exquisite sensibility, image, color, and meaning expressed through traditional Japanese culture and art (Kodama, 2017a, p. 170).

The shape of space in Japanese culture directly impacts an individual's progress. The principles of space are universal; if applied effectively, they will improve the way one thinks and how one interacts with one's environment. Japanese people can visually identify the meaning of MA from kanji symbols (Matsumoto, 2020). The kanji script for MA (間) is a combination of two kanji letters: the letter “門,” which means gate (もん), and the letter “日,” which means sun (ひ). With the union of the two letters, the kanji MA can be understood as an open door - an opening - through which sunlight shines into a nothingness that can create a stillness that allows something with form to pass through (Hamaguchi, 2022). These depictions of Japanese culture, traditional values, and rituals are often the backdrop or an integral part of the narratives that create the concept of MA. Although the concept of MA is mainly present in Japanese art and aesthetics, it exists to influence human relationships and Japanese culture (Lee, 2015, p. 145). Aesthetic values are deeply rooted in the mindset of Japanese society as a form of culture, and cultural forms will become a collective communication tool that is intertwined in interactions in everyday life (Yudhanto et al., 2023, p. 81). The concept of MA as part of contemplative time, conditions, circumstances, and space is always considered intuitively, and human feelings will often determine the outcome of an action rather than pure logic and reasoning (Canning, 2016). Ultimately, the Japanese aesthetic tradition of “presentation” quality films appears as a broad generalization that there is a long heritage in Japanese cinematic film that has an interest in the materiality of aesthetic forms in a way that is different from films made in Europe and the West.

MA can also refer to pauses or silences in time or movement, which often play an essential role in Japanese films. In Japanese films, the concept of MA is often used to direct the viewer's attention, create emotional nuances, or communicate feelings and thoughts through space, pauses, or the use of stillness (Kernaghan, 2021). The use of empty spaces in visual layouts, such as quiet scene settings or pauses in dialogue, are often carefully utilized to provide emotional impact or direct the audience's attention to certain aspects of the story, so it can be inferred that MA can be a bridge to bring these things together (Reynolds, 2023, p. 10). For example, Japanese film aesthetics often emphasize the beauty of nature, with scenes of mountains, gardens, and other natural elements being an essential part of the story and visuals of the film. In Japanese animated films, there are simple scenes with little activity, or sometimes there are scenes without dialog. The scenes focus on the natural scenery with the wind blowing, leaves falling, rainy conditions, rivers flowing, or birds chirping around the characters, or other scenes such as a character contemplating, crying softly, or a character lying in a meadow looking at the sky. The scenes in the film can create a profound experience for the audience through the use of MA. When used appropriately, the concept of MA can increase emotional intensity, allow reflection from the audience watching the scene, or direct attention to aesthetic beauty. The use of MAs in Japanese films often represents a Japanese philosophy that emphasizes the importance of silence, simplicity, and space for reflection, popularly known in the Western world as "less is more" (Greenland, 2015, p. 810). In this case, MA is not simply an empty space but rather an awareness of the existence of spaces and intervals, which is profound and vital for the understanding and experience of aesthetics in Japanese film. The concept of MA as critical discourse is quite popular among artistic and intellectual circles, among architects, urban planners, musicologists, filmmakers and film critics, and photographers, to the contemporary dance world (Lucken & Rosen, 2021, p. 38). The concept of MA is present as a medium for expression in the form of spatial perception that connects time and space in particular (Kodama, 2017b, pp. 1–2). Time and space appear in the medium of animated films. The animated film used as the object of this research is *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004).

## 2. Literature Review

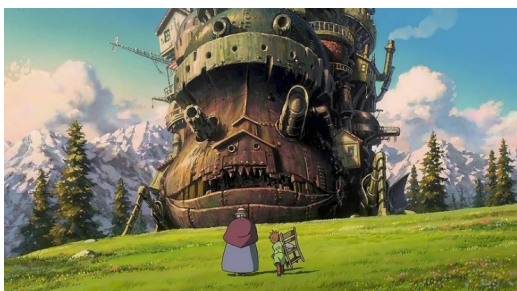
Research on the movie *Howl's Moving Castle* has been done many times before, but the concept of MA as the subject matter to be analyzed still needs to be found. The animated film *Howl's Moving Castle* is the object of focus to be explored, looking for how the concept of MA can work in Ghibli films. Can MA reflect the values and philosophy of Japanese culture? Of course, this question still needs to be examined, where it can help understand how values such as simplicity, silence, or connection with natural beauty in the worldbuilding of *Howl's Moving Castle* will be reflected in an animated film artwork.

*Howl's Moving Castle* (*Howl no Ugoku Shiro*) is Studio Ghibli's ninth animated feature film, released in 2004. With a score of 8.2/10 on the IMDB website and 87% on the Rotten Tomatoes website, which indicates that the film *Howl's Moving Castle* received a very positive response from animation film lovers. Hayao Miyazaki, the founder of Studio Ghibli, directed *Howl's Moving Castle*. Hayao Miyazaki is a Japanese animated film director, producer, animator, and screenwriter who is considered one of the most influential figures in the animation industry. He is known for his captivating and imaginative work that inspires many people around the world. Miyazaki is known as the co-founder of Studio Ghibli, an animation studio known for its creative and high-quality work in animated films such as *My Neighbor Totoro* (1989), *Spirited Away* (2001), *Princess Mononoke* (1997), and many more. Miyazaki's works often present stories that are touching, imaginative, and artistic. His films are not only aimed at children but also captivate audiences of all ages. *Howl's Moving Castle* is adapted from a novel of the same name written by British fantasy fiction author Diana Wynne Jones and published in 1986; Miyazaki's animated films have a significant adaptation component throughout his filmography, usually from literary sources

such as fantasy novels (Hernández-Pérez, 2016, p. 27). *Howl's Moving Castle* tells the story of Sophie, a young girl who falls victim to a curse from a witch that makes her old and decrepit. Despairing of her old age, Sophie decides to run away from her home in the city and explore the wilderness and mountain peaks in search of a cure for her curse. Here, she discovers a castle with legs that walk and move, owned by a young wizard named Howl. Inside the castle, Sophie meets a variety of unique and magical characters. She then embarks on a journey to find a way to remove the curse that afflicts her while exploring a magical world full of intrigue and conflict. Howl's castle is described as a building with steampunk construction consisting of sheet metal and bolts (Griffin, 2020). The film adaptation of *Howl's Moving Castle* remains popular to this day and is often said to be one of the best Studio Ghibli films (Bendix, 2023, p. 33). *Howl's Moving Castle* is about 1 hour and 59 minutes long and is set in a world conceptualized by a 19th-century European neo-futurist painter where magic, science, and technological advances coexist (Wilson & Wilson, 2016, p. 191). What is most interesting about *Howl's Moving Castle* is that there is no clear line between 'good' and 'evil': each character has a multi-layered moral side, and the character traits evolve throughout the movie, transforming from antagonistic characters to likable side characters such as Calcifer, Howl, and the Garbage Witch (Campisi, 2020). *Howl's Moving Castle* uses landscapes that have emotional and metaphorical dimensions. The landscape becomes a symbol and visual representation of each character's inner emotions and experiences (Bartolomei et al., 2023, p. 6).

The fantasy theme in *Howl's Moving Castle* also contains the doctrine of maximalism with the application of non-reality innovations derived from imagination. The resulting composition is so beautiful and complex that it can create a romantic tone of beauty, like being present in an unrealistic dream, beautiful but dangerous (Jiaqi Xia, 2021, p. 97). Within the confines of the screen, every frame in *Howl's Moving Castle* is a painting, so every detail counts. The active design approach combined with the holistic design approach shows the substantial relationship between people and their places. Movies, such as *Howl's Moving Castle*, try to magnify and bring this relationship to the foreground, where spaces and intervals play an active role in everyday life (Abbara, 2021, p. 28). Studio Ghibli's films often encourage its audience to look back at events in everyday life with a different perspective from the repetition and familiarity they are used to (Crombie, 2021, p. 7). Miyazaki, through *Howl's Moving Castle*, writes a treatise on the painful and disappointing process of maturing while addressing contemporary socio-political and cultural issues (Ejaz, 2022, p. 10), in-depth research on Japanese philosophy and culture related to the concept of MA will help in interpreting the use of MA in Ghibli films from the point of view of culture and values, especially in the film *Howl's Moving Castle* which is used as a research sample.

The purpose of this study is to find and identify the philosophical aspects of the concept of MA in various scenes contained in the animated film *Howl's Moving Castle*; it aims to gain an understanding of the concept of visual aesthetics and how it processes in certain scenes in the film *Howl's Moving Castle* as well as to understand how the concept of MA works and is used in the visual aesthetics of Ghibli animated films, by taking the film *Howl's Moving Castle* as a research sample, it involves analyzing the nuances, character transitions, use of empty space, and intervals that affect the overall look and feel of the film. The implication of this research is a deep understanding of the aesthetics of animated films: This research can provide deep insights into the use of MA in the context of animated films. It can



**Figure 1:** One of the scenes in the movie has the two characters Sophie Hatter and Markl are looking at Howl's castle (Source: counteract.co, 2020)

help in understanding how seemingly simple visual elements, such as empty space, can have a strong impact on the viewer's experience and level of engagement or understanding of the story and characters. Contribution to Academia: This research can be an essential contribution to the field of film studies, animation, or popular culture and can add to the academic literature on the concept of MA in the context of animated films and provide a foundation for further research in this area.

### 3. Methods

The research methodology on the concept of MA involves a multidimensional approach that includes the visual language method. Visual language is a way to 'read' images, from various mediums of images, both traditionally made images to digital images such as movies (Haryanti & Nurlatifah, 2018, p. 280) to get a deepening of visual language, a step of literature study and content analysis is carried out, starting with an in-depth literature review of the concept of MA in visual arts, filmology, and Japanese culture followed by a content analysis of the movie Howl's Moving Castle specifically will help identify relevant examples of the use of the concept of MA. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of specific words, themes, or concepts in some qualitative data so as to measure and analyze the presence, meaning, and relationships of specific words, themes, or concepts (Harriger et al., 2018, p. 78). It is clear, then, that conducting proper content analysis is essential to enable effective search and effective retrieval of information that can meet users' needs in moving image archives (Domínguez-Delgado & Hernández, 2016, p. 1). Conducting a qualitative film analysis of the movie Howl's Moving Castle involves identifying scenes with the use of the concept of MA, noting the types of empty spaces present, and how MA is used to create atmosphere, focus, or emotional intensity. Content analysis is an interpretative qualitative method of identifying the design characteristics and visual representations of the animated film (Lucas & Rahim, 2017, p. 82) Howl's Moving Castle. Data Analysis and Interpretation: Analyzing data collected from various sources using a systematic approach. The interpretation of this data is to identify patterns or findings that are relevant to the use of the concept of MA. The research methodology on MA in Japanese Studio Ghibli animated films requires a holistic approach that blends film analysis, cultural research, and practical observation to gain a better understanding of how empty space is used in creating unique and immersive film experiences. For a comprehensive research method, a guiding conceptual framework is required to derive variables from theory. This framework further helps in understanding why the coded variables have theoretical as well as practical importance (Brigitte Naderer & Spielvogel, 2019, p. 239), as shown below;

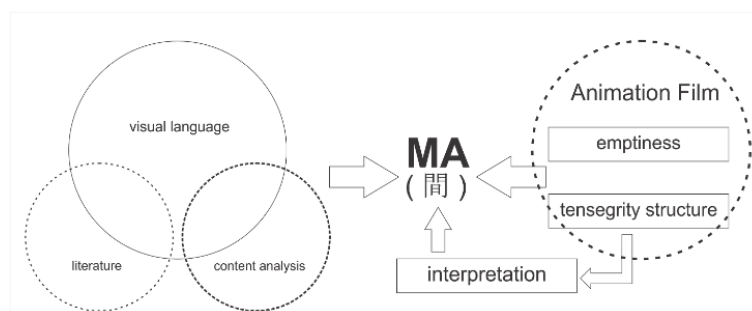


Figure 2: Framework for identifying MA in animated movies (Source: Based on own development)


The chart above is on the left side, covering the visual language aspect consisting of content analysis and literature study. In contrast, the right side is a combination method of the concept of MA間: an aesthetic of space-time proposed by Colleen Lanki (2013) and tensegrity conceptualized by Chiahuei Tseng et al. (2021) because it is based on content analysis and the media studied is an animated film, the systematic examination and interpretation of textual material will be more on visual material to reveal meaningful patterns, themes, and insights. Content analysis is an essential and effective way

to examine texts and visuals (Fazeli et al., 2023, p. 6). This method provides a structured approach to analyzing film works as a visual communication design medium that allows researchers to dig deeper into the content and extract valuable information. One is to understand the theme and message of the concept of MA contained in the movie *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004). By carefully examining the movie scenes, researchers can identify recurring motifs, symbols, and metaphors that contribute to the overall meaning of the work. This analysis provides a deeper understanding of the creator's intentions and the animation techniques used to convey those intentions. In addition, content analysis allows the researcher to explore the social, cultural, and historical context of the film work, as the concept of MA is an intersubjective event that provides an empty and silent place to produce events and rhythms (Kono, 2019, p. 247). MA can act as an objective and subjective meaning whose use can objectively describe the space between two objects but also subjectively when describing relationships (Akama, 2014, p. 2).

#### 4. Results and Discussions

The concept of MA in *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) can be identified through the deliberate use of empty spaces, intervals, or silences in the visual composition and arrangement of scenes. The specific number of MAs in the movie is calculated using interpretation and viewing experience. The viewing experience here is technically watching repeatedly or repetitively scene by scene using the help of multimedia tools, in this case, the video player software, to identify scenes and moments of varying silent spaces or intervals. In Miyazaki's works, including *Howl's Moving Castle*, the concept of MA is often realized in scene settings that provide space for the audience to reflect, feel, or explore the message conveyed through the use of empty space or calm in certain scenes. This use of MA often provides emotional depth and enhances the audience's experience of absorbing the story. So, the conclusion is that the use of the visual language method in the assessment of the number of MAs in the movie *Howl's Moving Castle* can be identified depending on the audience's interpretation and experience of the use of empty spaces or intervals presented in the movie. Video data uses the type of streaming found on the Netflix website; video data comes with a resolution of 1080 X 720 p; for video players using the GOM player application because it has a screenshot feature, then video segmentation checks are carried out to determine the timestamp and time running of each scene, where the timestamp and time running will be movie data that can answer research questions. After that, a total of 17 scenes were collected, and then the analysis was determined in the category of emptiness and tensegrity structure; the next stage focused on data extraction to formulate a qualitative description analysis in the selected sequences presented in a comprehensive table.





Table 1: Breakdown analysis of MA factors pada film *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004)

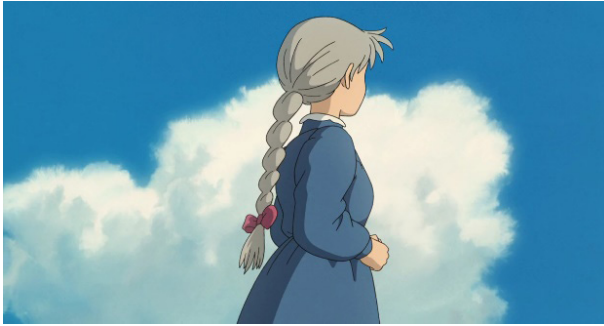



No	Scene/Sequence	Time Running	Emptiness	Description
1		18 second	The silence between sounds.	Provides a broader view and perspective on the worldbuilding of the world in <i>Howl's Moving Castle</i> .
		Tensegrity Structure		
		Movements		
	Timestamp	00:00:46 - 00:01:04		
	Frame	Extreme Long Shot (ELS)		
	Camera Angle	Low Level Angle (LLA)		

2		11 second    The silence between sounds. <hr/> Tensegrity Structure Subjectivities	Giving the audience time to let off steam, breathe and soak in the world of the movie.
	Timestamp Frame Camera Angle	00:09:25 - 00:09:34 Medium Close Up (MCU) Eye Level Angle (ELA)	
3		09 second    The silence between sounds. <hr/> Tensegrity Structure Events	Tidying up the pacing in the movie.
	Timestamp Frame Camera Angle	00:17:30 - 00:17:39 Long Shot (LS) High Angle (HA)	
4		32 second    The stillness between actions. <hr/> Tensegrity Structure Events	Provide a broader view and perspective on worldbuilding in movies.
	Timestamp Frame Camera Angle	00:17:44 - 00:18:26 Long Shot (LS) Eye Level Angle (ELA)	
5		11 second    The stillness between actions. <hr/> Tensegrity Structure Events	Tidying up the pacing in the movie.
	Timestamp Frame Camera Angle	00:18:50 - 00:19:01 Extreme Long Shot (ELS) Low Angle (LA)	

6		13 second    The stillness between actions.	Provides a sense of tranquility.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Expression	
Timestamp		00:25:12 - 00:25:25	
Frame		Medium Close Up (MCU)	
Camera Angle		Eye Level Angle (ELA)	
7		15 second    The space between objects.	Strengthen our connection with her world.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Events	
Timestamp		00:36:05 - 00:36:20	
Frame		Long Shot (LS)	
Camera Angle		Bird Eye Angle (BEA)	
8		25 second    The stillness between actions.	Giving time to release tension.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Expression	
Timestamp		00:36:55 - 00:37:20	
Frame		Long Shot (LS)	
Camera Angle		Low Angle (LA)	
9		40 second    The silence between sounds.	It gives you time to let off steam, breathe and immerse yourself in the world of the movie.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Matter	
Timestamp		00:39:11 - 00:39:50	
Frame		Long Shot (LS)	
Camera Angle		Eye Level Angle (ELA)	



10		45 second	The silence between sounds.	Giving time to release tension.
		Tensegrity Structure		
		Matters		
Timestamp		00:41:00 - 00:41:45		
Frame		Long Shot (LS)		
Camera Angle		Eye Level Angle (ELA)		
11		20 second	The silence between sounds.	Gives time to release tension, increases emotional intensity.
		Tensegrity Structure		
		Matter		
Timestamp		00:47:35 - 00:47:55		
Frame		Long Shot (LS)		
Camera Angle		Eye Level Angle (ELA)		
12		10 second	The stillness between actions.	Provide a sense of calm and release tension.
		Tensegrity Structure		
		Events		
Timestamp		01:15:05 - 01:15:15		
Frame		Long Shot (LS)		
Camera Angle		Eye Level Angle (ELA)		
13		15 second	The stillness between actions.	Tidying up the pacing in the movie.
		Tensegrity Structure		
		Matter		
Timestamp		01:20:31 - 01:20:45		
Frame		Extreme Long Shot (ELS)		
Camera Angle		Eye Level Angle (ELA)		

14		25 second    The stillness between actions.	Gives time to release tension, increases emotional intensity.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Events	
Timestamp Frame Camera Angle		01:21:11 - 01:21:35	
		Medium Close Up (MCU)	
		Eye Level Angle (ELA)	
15		6 second    The space between objects.	A moment of silence to reflect on ourselves.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Events	
Timestamp Frame Camera Angle		01:35:55 - 01:36:01	
		Long Shot (LS)	
		Low Angle (LA)	
16		10 second    The stillness between actions.	Gives time to release tension, increases emotional intensity.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Events	
Timestamp Frame Camera Angle		01:45:10 - 01:45:20	
		Long Shot (LS)	
		Eye Level Angle (ELA)	
17		27 second    The space between objects.	Tidying up the pacing in the movie.
		Tensegrity Structure	
		Matter	
Timestamp Frame Camera Angle		01:54:38 - 01:55:05	
		Extreme Long Shot (ELS)	
		Low Level Angle (LLA)	

From the table above, several postulates can be concluded as follows: The results of the analysis show that the number of scenes containing the concept of MA is 17 scenes, and the total scenes in the movie are around 2,301 scenes with the assumption that the average of each scene is 3 seconds. Then, the 17 scenes only take up a portion of 0.73%, a relatively flat number. Let us take the duration of time for each scene. A value shows the total scene containing the MA factor of 333 Seconds or 5.55 minutes, while the total duration of the *Howl's Moving Castle* animated film is 01:55:05 minutes (without including the last credit title) or about 6,905 seconds. The MA transition scene is 4.8% of the total film; the number 4.8% has the same value as the duration of one song; the duration of one song in the entire duration of the film has a significant impact in providing the creation of space and time artistically into a visual story that gives a depiction of the entire total film of how the story is generalized narratively to then end with the plot and ending of the story. In the tensegrity structure section, the majority that occurs is the "Events" structure with a total of 9 pieces or around 52.9%, which shows the tensegrity function refers to the transition moment of the hollow structure because the existence of MA does not separate the subject from the object, it helps in triggering the formation of "intersubjectivity." Intersubjectivity describes the relationship that is established when everyone involved mutually accepts, interacts, and joins with the subjectivity of others to transcend oneself and become a collective "we" (Tseng et al., 2021, p. 429).

At the level of the emptiness element, "The silence between sounds" is found in 6 scenes or about 35% of the total scenes. This shows that the concept of MA appears as a "gratuitous movement" in the film *Howl's Moving Castle*, where instead of every moment of each scene being determined by the story, the audience is invited to breathe and then pause to relax. Though the pause at the moment actually has nothing special happening or even no plot development, there is only the idea of time and space, so the element "The silence between sounds" is also called a moment for contemplation. "The silence between sounds" is an emphasis on emotion and tension, so a space of silence or solitude can increase the emotion or tension in the scene or animation work. The contrast between sound and silence can have a more substantial emotional impact; silence is used to highlight or give focus to certain details in the scene, providing time for the audience to absorb or notice something important in scenes 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 1. Sophie's character creates a space of silence, which is then built upon to assist in creating a unique atmosphere, reinforcing the desired atmosphere or mood in the scene. The opportunity for reflection in providing a welcoming silence for the audience to delve into the message or grasp the deeper meaning of the scene; if that happens, then an enhancement of the visual narrative will be created so the use of silent space can help in developing the visual narrative, allowing the animated scene to appear to "speak" without any sound.

While the element "The stillness between actions" is found in scenes 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, and 16 or a total of 8 scenes or 47% slightly more than "The silence between sounds." "The stillness between actions" symbolizes the moments or intervals between movements or actions in a scene that are intentionally presented without meaningful activity. It is a term that highlights the importance of silence as a counterpoint to the action in *Howl's Moving Castle*. "The stillness between actions" is a contrast and emphasis on the main action, where the stillness or quietness between intense actions or scenes can highlight or provide a stronger contrast to the action taking place. Sophie's character's expressions can be the main focus, giving the audience time to interpret the emotions or thoughts hidden behind Sophie's actions or movements. Creating climaxes by creating short pauses between actions can build anticipation, adding to the dramatization of the return to the following action. Setting the narrative rhythm into pauses between actions allows the setting of each scene to be a processed part of the storytelling while giving the audience time to digest or evaluate what happened to reinforce the message or story conveyed through the movie. The use of silence or tranquility between actions or movements in an animated film allows the audience to understand better, feel, or live each scene more deeply, which can also add a dramatic dimension to the MA concept.

“The concept of “The Space Between Objects” in animated films refers to the empty space or distance between objects or elements in a scene that is intentionally arranged to influence the visual and narrative experience of the audience. The use of space between objects in an animated film can provide a variety of meanings, such as displaying a scene that can highlight or differentiate one object from another, provide a strong visual contrast, and direct the audience’s view on a well-arranged space can direct the audience’s eyes in a specific direction, strengthening their visual focus on critical elements or objects in the scene. The space between objects can give a feeling of relatedness or a certain sense of atmosphere in the scene, depending on the way the objects are arranged in that space. Placing objects in empty spaces also helps in building a strong visual narrative, organizing the composition of the scene, and giving emphasis to the message or meaning to be conveyed. The space maintained between objects can portray dynamics, interaction, or emotional distance between characters or elements in the scene. The deliberate use of space between objects or elements in an animated film is one of the ways a director or animator uses visual composition to reinforce the message, atmosphere, or emotion they want to convey to the audience. It is also a way to organize the audience’s focus and attention on the most critical elements in the scene.

In the frame element, the Long Shot (LS) type is used the most, with a total of 10 scenes or about 59% of the total scenes; LS provides the concept of character placement by keeping the character in a larger frame, LS allows the audience to see the character in the context of the environment where they live and do activities, showing the position and movement of the character in a particular scene, LS provides more detail than Extreme Long Shot, so LS can help the audience understand the scene or atmosphere better, so in essence it describes how they interact with the world around them. Basically, the use of LS in animated films has a similar purpose to the use in live-action films, which is to provide a particular visual perspective, display the scale of the environment, and highlight the position and interaction of the characters in the broader setting. The frames with the Extreme Long Shot (ELS) type are 3 in number at the beginning, middle, and end of the entire film, namely in scenes 1, 13, and finally 17. ELS is often used to show the location, extent, scale, or environment in which the scene takes place. ELS gives the audience a better understanding of the place where the story takes place. When a character or object appears very small in the frame, it can show the solitude or isolation of the character in a vast and empty environment so that the building of the story’s atmosphere will be able to give a dramatic feel to the scene, besides the use of ELS can refer to specific themes, such as the power of nature, emptiness, or other philosophical themes desired by the director. The use of ELS can provide a solid visual dimension in the movie narrative.

In the camera element, Eye Level Angle (ELA) appears the most, namely in scenes 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, or 10 scenes which definitively provide meaning about the audience’s connection with the character, in this case, Sophie who often appears dominantly in the 17 scenes. ELA brings the audience on the same level as the characters, creating a sense of connection and empathy with them. ELA can help the audience feel the emotions, experiences, and worldviews of the characters more deeply. The use of this point of view gives the impression that what the character sees is an ordinary or everyday perspective. It provides visual balance and helps the audience to experience the scene from a more natural perspective. It emphasizes the emotional state of the character. At the same time, ELA can highlight the strength or weakness of the character by positioning the audience to see the character in a particular situation. ELA continuity is often used consistently in multiple scenes to provide a stable and connected visual experience, especially in dialog or scenes where empathy with the characters is required; ELA can create a sense of equality between the characters or subjects in the scene, eliminating feelings of dominance or visual inequality. The use of ELA in animated films often gives the audience an immersive and connected experience with the characters. It also helps create visual balance and assists the audience in understanding the situation and emotions of the characters better.

At the same time, the slightest camera angle is the Bird's Eye Angle (BEA) type because it only amounts to 1 and is found in scene no 7. BEA shows the scale or extent of the scene or location. BEA helps the audience to see the entire scene or environment and what the character is actually feeling in the place where the scene takes place. In the case of scene 7, the BEA point of view can emphasize the separation or isolation of Sophie's character, especially in scenes 7 and 8, which are in the same continuity, Sophie and Markle's characters as they look small amidst the vast background. Hence, the BEA function helps in highlighting unique details or patterns in the ground or environment that would not be visible in a shot from any other point of view; by showing a more comprehensive view, the BEA point of view can give the audience additional information about the location, events, or more significant story direction of the world in *Howl's Moving Castle*. The use of BEA can be used to highlight changes or transformations in the environment from a broader perspective, such as changes in seasons or other environmental conditions. The use of BEA in animated films provides a unique and exciting perspective. It helps provide the audience with more information about the environment, location, or characters and can provide artistic value in more complex shots.

Silent space or silence can have different meanings and impacts depending on the context of the scene or the message that the animator or director wants to convey. The analysis shows that in *Howl's Moving Castle* and other animated films from Studio Ghibli, the concept of MA has a significant role in shaping the atmosphere, emotional depth, and distinctive aesthetics of Studio Ghibli's works. MA intelligently shapes the use of space to create emotional depth to create moments of tranquility and reflection. Quiet scenes, beautiful backgrounds, or pauses in the story provide opportunities for the audience to soak in the emotions and nuances of the characters. MA is often used as a contrast to more dynamic, dramatic, or action-packed scenes. It gives stronger emphasis to critical moments, helps direct the audience's attention, and increases the intensity of emotions, as seen in scenes 11, 14, and 16, and improves the pacing in the movie, such as scenes 3, 13, and 17. Aesthetics and visual details are also integral to the use of MA in Ghibli animation. The vast background settings, beautiful natural scenery, and the tendency to pay attention to empty spaces or pauses between visual elements form a stunning aesthetic, seemingly a touch of Japanese philosophy that emphasizes silence, simplicity, and natural values. It not only creates a mesmerizing visual experience but also conveys messages of wisdom and a sense of release, as shown in scenes 2, 9, 11, 14, 16. Finally, the concept of MA influences the rhythm of storytelling and the flow of the story from the beginning to the end of the film so that one of the functions of MA is to improve pacing in *Howl's Moving Castle*, the compilation of pauses and empty spaces provides opportunities for characters and audiences to reflect, strengthens understanding of the story, and strengthens the narrative that develops emotional connections.

## 5. Conclusion

The use of empty space in the film *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) can give a deep impression and emphasize certain feelings or meanings in the film's story. The silence or silent space can give a deep emotional impression. The frame arrangement or visual composition in the animated film *Howl's Moving Castle* also considers empty spaces or intervals to create balance, calmness, simplicity in the story, and beauty in each scene layout. MA can help create a particular atmosphere in a scene or animated movie, such as *Howl's Moving Castle*. By using the concept of MA, *Howl's Moving Castle* animated films often create visual and emotional experiences that are gentle, profound, and revered. Overall, the use of MA in *Howl's Moving Castle* films is not solely a visual technique but also an element that plays a vital role in creating a deep emotional experience for the audience. Elements such as simple, soft, and sometimes monochromatic color choices are capable of displaying a subtle, false beauty while still standing out visually. MA is one of the many things that make Ghibli's animated works so unique and meaningful

to its fans. Generally, in Japanese animated films, the concept of MA or empty space plays a significant role in shaping the viewer's experience and the overall feel of the work. Awareness of the existence of MAs allows the creators of Japanese animated films to create more immersive visual settings and present moments that play on the audience's feelings, stillness, and reflection. While Japanese animated films sometimes highlight philosophical thoughts, introspection, and reflections on the meaning of life or universal values, the aesthetics of Japanese films often also express emotions in profound and subtle ways, more than just the blatant external expressions. In animated films, the concept of MA is often reflected in quiet scenes, beautiful landscapes, or pauses without dialog that is meant to allow the audience to soak in the atmosphere, reflect, or explore the emotions of the characters. The use of the MA concept in Japanese animated films also affects the rhythm of the storytelling and the plot. These pauses or empty spaces can provide a solid contrast to more dynamic or dramatic scenes, create more profound tension, or highlight a critical moment that requires special attention. In essence, the concept of MA in Japanese animated films helps foster a sense of aesthetic beauty and awareness of the existence of space. It is not just about emptiness but also about presence, peacefulness, and an awareness of the deeper nuances of enjoying the medium of film as part of a visual experience. As such, the use of MA in Japanese animated films is not just a visual technique but also a philosophy that values stillness, balance, and the presence of empty space, which is essential in shaping the viewer's experience and understanding of the work.

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**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.