

From Novel to Film: The Adaptation of *The Borrowers* in the Japanese Animation *Arrietty*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the differences between the original version and an adapted version of *The Borrowers*. After this story was adapted from novel to animation, because the context of the movie was in Japan instead of Britain and the medium was an animation film rather than a novel, some elements of the story were changed. This study will explore these changes in three sections. The first section is the discussion of Mary Norton, Miyazaki Hayao, and research about adaptation. The second section is the discussion of the cultural differences demonstrated in the novel and the animation. The last section is the discussion of the structural differences between the novel and the animation. All the changes caused by cultural and medium differences make the story of those little borrowers be presented in a very different way, which not only creates a new life for Mary Norton's novel in another medium but also reaches a new audience in Asia.

Keywords: *The Borrowers*, Mary Norton, Miyazaki Hayao, adaptation

從小說到動畫電影：《借物少女艾莉堤》之改編研究

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摘 要

本研究旨在針對瑪麗·諾頓（Kathleen Mary Norton）的經典小說著作 *The Borrowers*，與宮崎駿改編的動畫作品《借りぐらしのアリエッティ》，進行比較分析。在改編的過程中，有兩大因素導致原著作品及改編作品呈現相當不同的手法。其一為作者的文化背景不同；其二為敘事結構不同。藉由改編過程，因為文化背景及敘事結構的不同，宮崎駿用自己的方式，重新詮釋出一個更貼近東方生活的借物者故事。

關鍵詞：借物少女、宮崎駿、瑪麗·諾頓、小說改編

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1 Representation of *The Borrowers*

The purpose of this study is to examine how *The Borrowers*, written by Mary Norton in 1952, was represented in Miyazaki Hayao's animation film. After this story was adapted from the novel to the animation, because the context of the movie is in Japan instead of Britain and the medium is the animation film rather than the novel, some elements of the story were changed. This study is trying to find out what the changes are and what factors cause the changes.

1.1 Mary Norton and Her Works

Mary Norton was born as Kathleen Mary Pearson on December 10, 1903 in London, England. Her father was a doctor. When she was two, her family moved to her father's hometown in Leighton Buzzard. She grew up there until she was eighteen. The house she lived in was thought to be the setting of *The Borrowers*. After graduating from a convent school, she went traveling in Europe, and finally, she went back to London and was trained as an actress for the Old Vic Shakespeare Company. In 1927, she married Robert Charles Norton and they settled their family in Portugal. They had four children. Before World War II, Norton worked for the War Office before the family relocated to the USA. During the Second World War, she worked for the British Purchasing Commission in New York, while she wrote down stories that she told her children and began her writing career. In 1943, her first novel, *The Magic Bed-Knob*, was published. Since then, she has written children's fiction for the next fifty years. *The Magic Bed-Knob* was later combined with her second book, *Bonfires and Broomsticks*, published in 1945, to become *Bed-Knobs and Broomsticks* (1957), which was the inspiration for the film *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, released by Disney in 1971. Mary Norton passed away in Devon, England in 1992 while she was 88 years old (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017).

In 1952, the first novel in *The Borrowers* series was published by Joseph Malaby Dent, a British publisher, and the illustrator was Diana L. Stanley. In the

same year, Norton was awarded the Carnegie Medal, in recognition of *The Borrowers* as the most outstanding children's book by a British writer. The Carnegie Medal (1935) celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2007, and *The Borrowers* was selected as one of the top ten best ever winners of the medal (Book awards: Carnegie of Carnegies, 2007) since the creation of the medal back in 1936.

The Borrowers is about tiny people who “borrow” things from humans and keep their existence unknown. The central characters are the Clock family: father Pod, mother Homily and their daughter Arrietty. The Clock family live underneath the kitchen floor of an old house. They “borrow” the simple items they need from the humans who lived upstairs, such as letters to wallpaper their room, postage stamps to hang on their wall, and old chess pieces to be used as statues. Arrietty always wonders about the world upstairs and dreams of adventure. She persuades Pod and Homily to let her accompany Pod on his borrowing expeditions. Life changes for the Clock family after Arrietty's first borrowing trip when she meets the boy upstairs and develops a friendship with him. The following four sequels, *The Borrowers Afield* (1955), *The Borrowers Afloat* (1959), *The Borrowers Aloft* (1961), and *The Borrowers Avenged* (1982), are telling the stories about how the Clock family continues struggling to survive in the wild after they have been chased out of the old house.

Kuznets's study (1985) compares the frame of the series. According to her, “the first three novels, *The Borrowers*, *The Borrowers Afield*, and *The Borrowers Afloat*, take some pains to erect a narrator-within-a-narrator frame around the chronicle of *The Borrowers*.” However, “*The Borrowers Aloft* and *The Borrowers Avenged* abandon that mode, relying straight forwardly on the omniscient and distant narrator” (p. 65). Other studies discuss the socialization covered by the contexts of *Borrowers* series. According to Travis (2007), some articles announce that borrowers are like nobles who live by receiving benefits from others' labor; however, human beings are workers who live by working hard to earn their daily necessities. She tries to analyze the meaning of roles in *Borrowers* series, and indicates that Mary Norton makes Pod

a hard worker who belongs to the lower class in society. “He tries to rigidly enforce the Clocks’ place in the class system because it is the only life he knows, and the one in which he feels safe.” “Pod understands the dangers of trying to escape one’s rightful place in the class system” (189).

1.2 Miyazaki Hayao and His Works

Born on January 5, 1941 in Tokyo, Miyazaki Hayao (宮崎駿) was the second child in his family. His mother, Miyazaki Dola (宮崎美子), played an important role in his childhood. Before he was six, his mother always read him a lot of stories. The classic stories, such as *The Little Prince* (1943), *Monte-Cristo* (1844) and *Heidi* (1880), were the paths which led him to a kingdom of imagination. Due to the activity, he cultivated the habit of reading and developed the ability of imagination. After he was six, his mother was absent from home and spent most of the time in hospital because she contracted tuberculosis. This experience affects the plots in Miyazaki’s works. In his films, there is usually a role of an elder woman. For example, in *Laputa: Castle in the Sky* (天空の城ラピュタ) (1986), Ma Dola (ドーラ) is a woman who admires the courage of the two brave teenagers. In *My Neighbor Totoro* (となりのトトロ) (1988), Nanny (カンタのおばあちゃん) is an old lady who always keeps an eye on the sisters while their father is at work in Tokyo. Moreover, in *Kiki’s Delivery Service* (魔女の宅急便) (1989), Madame (おソノ) is a lovely old lady who is impressed by Kiki’s ingenuity with the old bread oven. Those women, somehow, seem to represent Miyazaki’s regret because in his childhood, his mother, who stayed in hospital because of illness, could not be there with him most of the time. According to Li (2011), by adding the roles of elder women, Miyazaki conveys his yearning for maternal love.

After graduating from Gakushuin University (學習院大學) in 1963, he started to pursue his dream by joining Yoei Company, Ltd. (東映株式會社) where he met Takahata Isao (高畑勳). In 1971, Miyazaki and Takahata left Toei Company, Ltd. and joined A Production (Aプロダクション). In this company, they met Suzuki

Toshio (鈴木敏夫). In 1984, Miyazaki and his team were forced to be disbanded so Suzuki Toshio decided to found Studio Ghibli to let Miyazaki and Takahata bring their talent for Japanese animation into full play (Ray, 2018). Ghibli, the name that Miyazaki gave to the studio, means “hot wind blowing through the Sahara Desert.” It is used for Italian scouting airplanes during World War II. Miyazaki, who loves airplanes, named the studio after it due to the intention to “blow a sensational wind into the Japanese world of animation” (Ghibli 101, 2016).

Being one of the world's most respected Japanese animation filmmakers, Miyazaki Hayao is often called the “Japanese Walt Disney.” He is famous for creating compelling characters, engaging stories, and breathtaking animation, all of which have earned him international acclaim while setting box-office records. During the period from 1986 to 1992, Ghibli releases some full-length films, such as *Laputa: The Castle in the Sky*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, and *Porco Rosso* (紅の豚) (1992). All of those stories were written by Miyazaki and the films were directed by him as well.

In 1997, *Princess Mononoke* (もののけ姫) was released. This film broke the box office record in the history of Japanese film and won the Best Film Award in 21st Japan Academy Film Prize (日本アカデミー賞). The other film which also won the Best Film Award was *Spirited Away* (千と千尋の神隠し) (2002) in the 25th Japan Academy Film Prize (1978) and it replaced *Titanic* (1997) as the top-grossing film in Japanese cinema history. This film won some prizes not only in Miyazaki's native country but also in the West. At the 30th Annie Awards ceremony (2002), he was the winner of Writing for an Animated Feature Production as well as the Directing for an Animated Feature Production. Both of those are the items in Outstanding Individual Achievement category. At the 75th Academy Awards (known as the Oscars), *Spirited Away* was the winner of Best Animated Feature Film.

In 2010, Studio Ghibli released *Arrietty* (借りぐらしのアリエッティ). It was scripted by Miyazaki, directed by Hiromasa Yonebayashi (米林宏昌) and produced by Suzuki Toshio. This Japanese animation is based on *The Borrowers* by Mary

Norton. The setting of the film is in Japan, which is different from the setting of the original novel and it was the winner of the Animated Feature Film in the 34th Japan Academy Film Prize.

1.3 Research about Miyazaki and Adaptation

Miyazaki was chosen as the world's most influential person in The 2005 TIME 100 by *TIME* magazine (2005). The styles, characters, plots and connections with society in his creations are extensively discussed in the academic field. Some studies focus on the aesthetics in his works. For example, Huerta (2011) mentions that Miyazaki's works are "like an authentic piece of excellence of the cinema, it allows us to check aspects linked to the image as sequences, colors, textures, graphical compositions, and so many other aspects of visual literacy" (p. 57). Some researchers analyze the style of Miyazaki's works. For example, according to Hagiwara (2006), the animations made by Miyazaki are affected by both the traditional movie style in Japan and the modern movie style in the West. Some other studies focus on emotion of Miyazaki's films. For example, Swale (2015) points out that there is a clearly discernible stream of engagement with the past in *Spirited Away*.

Moreover, some studies seek to answer questions about what was happening when Miyazaki adapted the novel for his animation. For example, in Ke's study (2011), she compares Eiko Kadono's (角野榮子) original novel, *Kiki's Delivery Service* (魔女の宅急便, 1985), with Miyazaki's animation (2002), which has the same title as the novel. She claims that the plots and characters are changed a lot in the film and it is because Miyazaki wants to convey his thought. In Miyazaki's opinion, it is necessary for young girls to strive for independence and self-determination while they are growing up. What is more, in Burkham's study (2005), she compares the original novel, *Howl's Moving Castle*, written by Diana Wynne Jones in 1986, with Miyazaki's adapted animation in 2004, which has the same title. She claims that the main idea of the original novel may not be found in the film because Miyazaki omits the second important plot.

An adaptation, as defined by Desmond and Hawkes (2006), is “an interpretation, involving at least one person’s reading of a text, choices about what elements to transfer, and decisions about how to actualize these elements in a medium of image and sound” (p. 2). Adaptations are discussed widely in different kinds of media, from opera and TV series, to video games, and so on. In light of the important role literature has played to film making, the research related to the adaptation from novel to film has become a field to explore, especially because a novel or any other form of literature is a linguistic medium while the film is primarily visual, just as said by Macleod (2008), “the visual nature of the cinema (the camerawork, the use of light and shadow and, eventually, the incorporation of sound) makes film different from the literature it comes from” (p. 15). A lot of researchers have investigated the adaptation between different media. For example, Reichmann (2009) focuses on recent novel adaptations in British cinema and attempts to give a survey of the approaches they take. He suggests that “viewed from the theoretical standpoint of intertextuality these approaches of adaptations give strikingly different readings of the source texts” (p. 43). Another example is Jones’s study (2008). He tries to categorize film adaptations of comic art based upon the strategies used in the adapting process. He mentions that adaptations may be classified as predominately structural or thematic. “Film adaptations are considered to be thematic if they share in common particular characters and conflicts with their comic art source material.” and “film adaptations are considered to be structural if they use the same set of distributional functions as the comic art source material upon which they are based” (p. 109).

Also, in the film industry, lots of popular films are adapted from the adolescent literature. For example, in the third chapter of Chai’s research (2015), she tries to investigate the strategies in adapting the novel *Charlotte’s Web* to a movie in 2006. She mentions that, to attract people to see the movie, the director may add some elements of humor in the film. For example, the director adds some crows and funny conversations between them, which make the movie livelier and more amusing but

those crows and their dialogues are not shown in the novel (p. 97).

In the Chai's research, she tries to investigate the strategies in adapting a novel version of *Charlotte's Web* to an animation version (1973). She points out that some plots have to be omitted because the length of animation is limited. The other example is from Ross's research (2004). It compares the animated Disney features, *Alice in Wonderland*, with its source, and suggests "the original story is in fact far more tolerant of anarchy, in the sense of irrationality, than the Disney version" (p. 57).

Dozens of studies investigate Miyazaki's works. Some of his animations adapted from novels are already discussed, but most of those studies focus on the animation itself without fully discussing the relationship between the original novel and adapted animation, and none of those studies is about *Arrietty*. Besides, although there are a lot of studies examining adaptation from novel to film, most of the original novels and adapted films they discuss are presented in the same language and cultural context. This paper, however, will pay attention to the differences between the novel *The Borrowers*, written in the English language under the British culture, and the animation *Arrietty*, presented in the Japanese language under the Japanese culture. In the following sections I will discuss two factors which affect the adaptation: one is culture and the other one is narrative structure.

2 Cultural Differences Between Novel and Animation

When a story is presented in different forms, some changes happen. Some of them are caused by cultural factors. In the adaptation from *The Borrowers* to *Arrietty*, lots of changes happen and they are possibly caused by localization and different cultural backgrounds of the author and the screenwriter. In this section, I will explore the adaptation caused by cultural factors, which are culture-specific items, characters' interaction and the colonial backgrounds of the author and the screenwriter.

2.1 Culture-Specific Items

The Borrowers is a story written during the period of The British Empire. In such a background, it is very common that we can find lots of items which are related to British culture. According to the novel, Arrietty has a bookcase and there is a set of miniature volumes which the Victorians love. Miniature books appeared in Europe during the Middle Ages. They are tiny in order to be easily carried (Small Talk about Miniature Books, n.d.). The height and width of a miniature book does not exceed three inches (7.5cm). Although measuring only few inches in height, the text is perfectly legible with the aid of the magnifying glass inset into the metal locket (Miniature books, n.d.). Because the size of borrowers is very small, the books are very suitable for them to “borrow” and read. In the novel, Norton mentions the bookcase and miniature volumes when she describes the living room of the borrowers’ house, “beside the fire, in a tilted wooden bookcase, stood Arrietty’s library. This was a set of those miniature volumes which the Victorians loved to print, but which to Arrietty seemed the size of very large church Bibles” (p. 18). Two more examples related to British culture in the novel were several portraits of Queen Victoria as a girl (p. 15) and a musical snuffbox (p. 40). Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to her death in 1901, making her the longest reigning British monarch to date. “Essentially, Queen Victoria provided stability to Great Britain and its immense empire during an era of great social and technological change. The impact Queen Victoria had prompted the postal service to create a stamp in her honor to commemorate all of her achievements” (The Complete Guide to Buying Queen Victoria Stamps, 2016). Because Queen Victoria’s stamp is a vital part to the history of the postal system in Great Britain as well as the United Kingdom as a whole, it is normal for Norton to describe it in the novel. As for the musical snuffbox, it is one popular item collected by Europeans in the eighteenth century. During the time, “most people were used to hold snuff (powdered tobacco), although some held small sweets or bonbons. They were presented as gifts to friends and lovers, and by monarchs to ambassadors and courtiers” (Gold boxes, n.d.). Obviously, these

European traditional items do not show in the film. Because of localization of the story, the items related to the Victorians are not shown in the Japanese animation.

Instead of presenting those British items in the animation, Miyazaki adds some culture-specific items related to Japanese culture to the story. For example, in the animation, there are a stone lantern and a small stone arch bridge in the garden. Decorations made of stone are essentials of a Japanese garden and they show the Japanese spirit of both practicability and aesthetics. The stone lanterns made of granite play a major decorative role in the layout of Japanese gardens (Japanese Stone Lanterns, n.d.). And the stone bridges to cross streams can be found in the Japanese landscape garden (Japanese Stone Bridges n.d.).

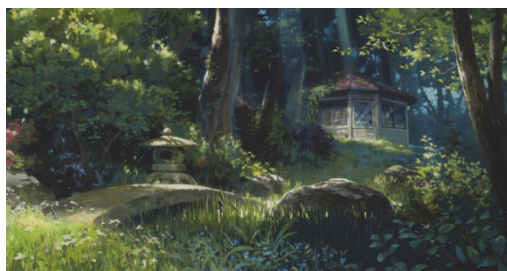


Fig. 1 A stone lantern and a small stone arch bridge in *Arrietty*.

Also, a fish shape soy sauce container is shown in Pod's kit. Grovenor (2016) discusses the soy sauce fish container in his article, "Asian countries are home to a wide variety of soy-based sauces, some used in cooking, and some used as condiments, each with slightly different flavours. The fish shape is there for one simple reason – because this particular sauce is meant to be consumed with the fish you get in your sushi roll" (n.d.). The fish shape soy sauce container is a specific item in Japanese food culture, and it always accompanies the sushi box. In the animation, this little container was used as Pod's water bottle.

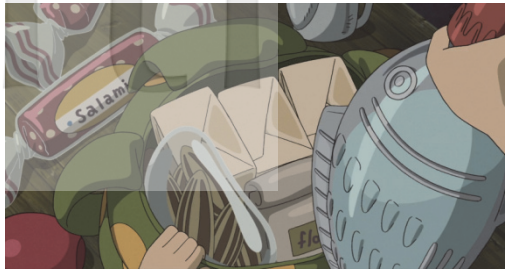


Fig. 2 A fish shape soy sauce container in *Arrietty*.

Third, chopsticks and chopsticks holders are typical items on a kitchen table in Japan. The former is shown in the animation when the little boy is having dinner with his family and the latter can be seen when he is opening the cupboard's door in the kitchen.



Fig. 3 Chopsticks in *Arrietty*.



Fig. 4 Chopsticks holders in *Arrietty*.

To sum up, the animation presents some specific Japanese items which were not mentioned in the original text. Obviously, the adaptation from a British novel to a Japanese animation causes the changes of cultural items, and it is a clear proof of localization.

2.2 Characters' Interactions

The different cultural backgrounds cause the changes of not only the specific items, but also the changes of the interactions between characters. In the novel, when Pod and Homily have an argument about whether they should tell Arrietty the danger about “being seen” or not, it is Homily who stands up and makes the decision:

“Pod,” said Homily solemnly, “we haven’t told Arrietty.”

“Oh, she knows,” said Pod; he moved uncomfortably. “She’s got her grating.”

“She doesn’t know about Eggletina. She doesn’t know about being ‘seen.’ ”

“Well,” said Pod, “we’ll tell her. We always said we would. There’s no hurry.”

Homily stood up. “Pod,” she said, “we’re going to tell her now” (p. 34).

So that means Homily is the decision maker. The other example which shows Homily is the one who makes the decision happens when Homily and Pod are having a discussion about whether they should let Arrietty be a borrower or not:

“The way I look at it,” said Homily, “and it’s only now it’s come to me: if you had a son, you’d take him borrowing, now wouldn’t you? Well, you haven’t got no son—only Arrietty. Suppose anything happened to you or me, where would Arrietty be—if she hadn’t learned to borrow?”

Pod stared down at his knees. “Yes,” he said after a moment, “I see what you mean” (p. 51-52).

From the original text we can see that usually it is Homily who makes the decision and she also has the right to refuse. However, in the film when Pod and Homily discuss the same issue, it is Pod who makes the decision, opposite to the Pod in the novel, to let Arrietty know about the threat and learn to be a borrower, and Homily respects her husband although she doesn’t agree to his decision. The Japanese society is basically a “patriarchal society.” In such a society, the decision maker in the family is always the father. “A patriarchal family is a form of the family in which the male who heads it controls or manages the family members” (Sechiyama, 2013). This leadership is manifested as an absolute authority and the family members personally submit to and obey the patriarch.

The interaction between Pod and Arrietty is also changed. In the novel, when the first time Arrietty goes out with Pod, he tries to comfort her by saying some

warm words and patting her shoulder:

Oh, the warmth of the stone flags as she ran across them...the gladdening sunlight on her face and hands... the awful space above and around her! Pod caught her and held her at last, and patted her shoulder. “There, there...” he said, “get your breath—good girl” (p. 62).

Second, we can find that giving a kiss goodnight to each other is a habit between them:

Arrietty caught her breath and Homily turned on her swiftly: “It's no good, Arrietty, I'm not going to emigrate--not for you nor for anyone else!”

“Ah,” said Pod and began to laugh, “so that's it!”

“Shush!” said Homily, annoyed, and glanced quickly at the ceiling. “Not so loud! Now kiss your father, Arrietty,” she went on briskly, “and pop off back to bed” (p. 52).

Another example representing their family interaction is:

“Good night, Papa,” said Arrietty, kissing his flat white cheek.

“Careful of the light,” he said mechanically, and watched her with his round eyes until she had closed the door (p. 28).

Those actions present Pod as a warm father. However, the Pod in the animation seems to be a cold father. He doesn't show too many emotions on his face, and he seldom expresses his care with either words or actions. When Pod returns home, Arrietty runs to him cheerfully and says “Welcome home!” but her father does not answer anything and just glances at her for one second. Arrietty does not care about the cold response and wants to ask more questions about borrowing, but she is

interrupted by her father before she could say a complete sentence. It is obvious that Pod has been changed from a warm father to a cold father because of different cultures between Britain and Japan.

2.3 Colonial Background

Mary Norton was born in the British Empire during British colonial rule in India (1858-1947). According to Rathore (2017), British policy in Asia during the nineteenth century was chiefly concerned with expanding and protecting its hold on India, which means during these eighty-nine colonial years, the British Empire kept inseparable relationship with one of its colony, India. In such a background, it is natural for Norton to mention something about India in the British culture that she describes. For example, the background of Mrs. May and her brother is set in the British Empire during British colonial rule in India. When Mrs. May talks about her brother, she says:

“There was something about him—perhaps because we were brought up in India among mystery and magic and legend—something that made us think that he saw things that people could not see” (p. 7).

In the same paragraph, she also says:

“He wasn’t a very strong little boy: the first time he came home from India he got rheumatic fever.”

Another example of Mrs. May and her brothers’ daily life connected to India is in the conversation between the boy and Arrietty:

There was silence while Arrietty waited, trembling a little. “Can you read?” the boy said at last.

“Of course,” said Arrietty. “Can’t you?”

“NO,” he stammered. “I mean—yes. I mean I’ve just come from India.”

“What’s that got to do with it?” asked Arrietty.

“Well, if you’re born in India, you’re bilingual. And if you’re bilingual, you can’t read. Not so well.”

Arrietty stared up at him: what a monster, she thought, dark against the sky.

“Do you grow out of it?” she asked.

He moved a little and she felt the cold flick of his shadow.

“Oh yes,” he said, “it wears off. My sisters were bilingual; now they aren’t a bit. They could read any of those books upstairs in the schoolroom” (p. 74-75).

The third example can be found in the plot in which the boy tries to explain to Arrietty how big the world is:

“Listen!” he said. And he told her about railway stations and football matches and racecourses and royal processions and Albert Hall concerts. He told her about India and China and North America and the British Commonwealth...” (p. 86).

Those places which the boy mentions are all related to Great Britain. However, these dialogues which describe the boy’s India life do not show in the Japanese animation.

To make a long story short, the causes of the adaptation in Miyazaki’s *Arrietty* can be discussed in two parts. First, Norton was born in the British Empire during British colonial rule in India. At the end of British colonization in India, Norton was already a middle-aged woman. Therefore, in her daily life, it was very normal to see lots of things related to India. In the novel, Norton connects Mrs. May and her brother to India, and it suggests that their background of growth is related to the British colonization of India. Second, Miyazaki was born in the period of World War II when Japan also had many colonies. However, he doesn’t mention any of those

colonies in the film. In the process of his growth, he had not been affected by the colonial culture because the war was over when he was four years old. In the period between WWI and WWII, Japan was a very powerful country in Asia. If Miyazaki had wanted to present the original plot in the animation, he could have changed the colonial background from Britain and India to Japan and China or Korea. However, he didn't add any plot related to any colony. To sum up, this Miyazaki's work, *Arrietty*, has not been affected by the colonial culture, which is originally clearly shown in Mary Norton's novel.

3 Structural Differences Between Novel and Animation

In the previous section, we have discussed the three differences caused by cultural factors. In this section, we are going to find out what are changed due to the different narrative structures. The changes can be discussed in two aspects: referring to previous versions of films and trying to be faithful to the original novel with compensation strategies.

3.1 Differences Caused by Referring to Previous Versions of Films

Norton's novel is the original, but Miyazaki's film is the reproduction from several sources. When a screenwriter tries to adapt a novel to an animation, he/she would probably use materials from not only the original text but also the previous adapted versions as references. In this way, the screenwriter imitates some visual features of previous works and keeps them in his adapted version. In addition to the novel, Miyazaki's animation takes a film and a TV mini-series as its references: one is the film produced by 20th Century Fox Television, originally released by NBC (National Broadcasting Company) Television in the United States, and directed by Walter C. Miller in 1973; The other is the mini-series produced and released by BBC Two (a second flagship television channel of the British Broadcasting Corporation) Television, directed by John Henderson in 1992. Both of these works are adaptations

of *The Borrowers* and have the same title as the original novel.

In Chapter One of the novel, at the beginning, the narrator is Kate, and then it turns to Mrs. May. Finally, she introduces the most important roles, the borrowers. Not until the readers turn to Chapter Two do they read the story of borrowers. However, in the beginning of the NBC film, a boy and the housekeeper, Mrs. Driver, are on the way to Great-Aunt Sophy's house by carriage. This piece of plot does not appear in the novel but appears in Miyazaki's film. In the beginning of the Miyazaki's film, a boy and his grandaunt are on the way to her house in a car. Both of the NBC film and Miyazaki's animation do not present the dialogue between Kate and Mrs. May, and these two characters do not even exist. It is obvious that Miyazaki imitates the opening of the NBC film instead of the one of Mary Norton's novel.



Fig. 5 The beginning scene of the NBC version.

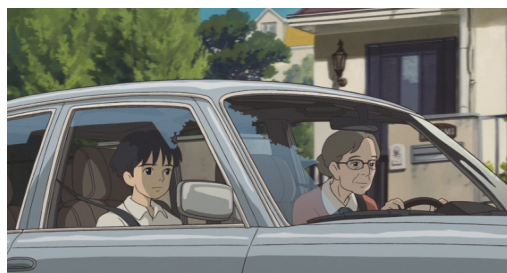


Fig. 6 The beginning scene of Miyazaki's version.

The other source is the mini-series produced by BBC television in 1992, directed by John Henderson. It was adapted from *The Borrowers* and its first sequel, *The Borrowers Afield*. In this series, most pieces of plot and roles are basically the same as the novel, except that the borrower Spiller is introduced in the first episode. Spiller is a young borrower who always carries a bow and arrows. He lives in the wild and does not show up until the first sequel of *The Borrowers* of the novel. In *The Borrowers Afield*, the first time readers know about him is when Pod's family are running away from their house to the bush where Spiller lives. However, in the BBC series, Henderson arranges an extra piece of plot to introduce Spiller. Spiller

shows up and borrows a human's old boot which is hanging on a carriage. Similar to this arrangement, in Miyazaki's film, he also introduces the borrower Spiller, who shows up to give a hand to Pod when Pod's leg is injured. Spiller enriches the plot and explains how Pod gets home safely. Obviously, we can see that Miyazaki has changed the temporal sequence of Spiller's debut by imitating the BBC series.



Fig. 7 Spiller of the BBC version.



Fig. 8 Spiller of Miyazaki's version.

Comparing Miyazaki's animation with the previous film and TV series, it is obvious that he imitates the NBC's work and starts the story with a boy in a car. Besides, he also refers to BBC series as one of his source texts. In the process of adaptation, Miyazaki not only takes the original text as his source, but also refers to the other adapted versions as his sources. In this way, Miyazaki has kept the original frame and enriched the plot by adding some elements from the other adapted versions.

3.2 Differences Caused by Compensation Strategies

Comparing Mary Norton's novel with Miyazaki's film, we can see that the important characters and main plot are basically the same. But because the film needs to be more concise than the novel and the playing time of film is limited, Miyazaki has to delete some characters and pieces of plot which have less relation to the main story line. However, Miyazaki still tries to be faithful to the novel by putting some subtle details in different scenarios as compensation. "Compensation in

translation is a standard lexical transfer operation whereby those meanings of the SL text, which are lost in the process of translation, are rendered in the TL text in some other place or by some other means” (Klaudy, 2007).

Here is an example. In the novel, Kate and Mrs. May chat about the borrowers’ story when Mrs. May is knitting:

“Where’s your work, child?” asked Mrs. May one day, when Kate sat hunched and silent upon the hassock. “You mustn’t sit there dreaming. Have you lost your tongue?”

“No,” said Kate, pulling at her shoe button, “I’ve lost the crochet hook.” They were making a bed-quilt-in woolen squares: there were thirty still to do. “I know where I put it,” she went on hastily; “I put it on the bottom shelf of the bookcase just beside my bed” (p. 4).

In the final section of the novel, we can also read the part of their knitting:

“The last square,” said Mrs. May, smoothing it out on her knee, “the hundred and fiftieth. Now we can sew them together-”

“It’s the end of the story too,” said Mrs. May absently, “or the beginning. He never saw them again,” and she began to sort out the squares (p. 157).

However, these two people and their dialogues do not appear in the animation. Although Miyazaki deletes their conversation and directly starts the story with the boy’s narration, he still tries to keep the scene of knitting by presenting Arrietty’s contribution to the family through her sewing with Homily, which is very similar to the plot in the novel when Kate and Mrs. May are knitting.



Fig. 9 Arrietty and Homily are sewing in *Arrietty*.

The other example is the wood louses¹ which are mentioned twice in the novel. The first time a wood louse is described by Arrietty: “Homily always scolded her if she played with them because, she said, they smelled of old knives” (p. 69). The second time is when Arrietty goes out with Pod to learn to be a borrower:

On a piece of bark she found a wood louse and she struck it lightly with her swaying flower. It curled immediately and became a ball, bumping softly away downhill in amongst the grass roots. But she knew about wood lice. There were plenty of them at home under the floor (p. 69).

Although Miyazaki omits the description, he still tries to make the wood louse appear in the frame. In the animation, Arrietty is disappointed and sitting alone outside their house by herself after the first time she goes to borrow things with her father but is seen by humans. She is frustrated and holding a wood louse in her hands. From this example, we can see that Miyazaki still keeps the item which is mentioned in the novel, although in a different scenario.

¹ Any of various terrestrial isopod crustaceans of the suborder Oniscidea, having a gray or brown oval segmented body and commonly found in damp places such as under logs. Some woodlice can roll into a ball (The Free Dictionary, web, 2013).



Fig. 10 Arrietty holds a wood louse.



Fig. 11 A wood louse is in Arrietty's hands.

According to these examples, we can see that although Miyazaki deletes some scenarios due to the fact that a film has to be more concise than a novel, he still tries to follow the original version by attempting to maintain some elements in the film as compensation.

4 Conclusion

The aforementioned examples demonstrate clearly that there are differences between the original novel and Miyazaki's film. First, with the different cultural backgrounds, some things representing British culture are described in the novel but are not shown in the animation. And because of the same reason, some things representing Japanese culture can only be found in the animation and are not possible to be found in the novel. Second, the interactions between characters are changed because families in Japan are mostly male-dominated. Third, the colonial background in the novel does not exist in the modern Japanese society in the film.

As for the different narrative structures, first, the novel's sequences of plot and character are changed because Miyazaki takes the previous versions as references. Second, although Miyazaki deletes some roles and pieces of plot in the film, he still keeps some details in different scenarios to be faithful to the novel as compensation.

After the differences are demonstrated and analyzed, there are two limitations that should be addressed in the study. One limitation is that the references in

Japanese are not included in literature review. Since I do not read Japanese, I could not study the research written in Japanese regarding Miyazaki's works or *Arrietty*.

The other limitation is that the comparison between the novel and the animation only focuses on the pieces of plot and characters, without analyzing the literary differences of description and dialogues in the English novel and Japanese animation.

All in all, Miyazaki's film is undoubtedly another interpretation of Mary Norton's novel, which not only preserves the original spirit but also creates a new life for *The Borrowers*.

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