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Edited by Rosemary Ross Johnston
and John Stephens

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CREArTA welcomes information about forthcoming conferences. It also welcomes correspondence on any issue raised by its writers.
Fashioning a Spiritual Self in a Rational and Technological Society: Cultural Dichotomies in the Japanese animation Kiki's Delivery Service

Dr Mio Bryce

In recent years, unworlthy, mysterious powers and existences (e.g., witches/wizards, fairies, goblins, dragons, and ghosts) have re-emerged globally as a popular motif in (children's) literature and films. In many stories, the significance of trust in oneself and others is highlighted as a core of human being, in opposition to awesome dark, magical and/or technological powers. This suggests that in the cultural dichotomies between human spirituality and technological society, the supernatural presences reflect our uncertainty about ourselves and our desire for protecting and revitalising our fragile psyche and subjectivity from the intensifying pressure of cultural homogenisation and systematic/regulated and/or mutual surveillances produced by information technology in our daily lives. A society grounded in reason and technology thus often seems to promote a life of self-enclosed materialism and militates against more spiritual possibilities – spiritual, in the sense of enabling persons, as Schnieders puts it, 'to transcend themselves through knowledge and love, that is, to reach beyond themselves in relationship to others' (2003, p.165). The possibility of fashioning a spiritual self in a rational and technological society is a principal concern of the Japanese anime Kiki's Delivery Service (Majo no Takkyūbin, hereafter Kiki), produced by Hayao Miyazaki in 1989, based on Eiko Kadono's episodic story with the same title, published in 1985.

The anime Kiki, the story of a girl who at the onset of puberty embarks on a career as a witch, well exemplifies how '[t]exts pivoting around witch-figures are always intertextual' and the witch-figures represent wholeness against the fragmented culture and facilitate the rehabilitation of cultural conflicts and 'anxiety about (post-)modernity' (Stephens 2003, p.195). In the anime, intertextual affiliations disclose key tensions in Kiki's experience of the transition from girl to woman and hence, in her development of emotional and spiritual maturity. Her attempt to find her place in the world is explored through multiple dichotomies in addition to the basic childhood/adulthood divide: nature/culture; innate spirituality/social constructivism; authenticity/superficiality; rationality/irrationality; humanity/otherness; traditional
cultural dichotomies in Japanese animation

culture/contemporary culture; and individuality/intersubjectivity.

Kiki, the only daughter of a witch and a human father, plays a pivotal role between the two worlds she inhabits: the archaic, natural, and spiritual domain of the wise witch, and a culture anchored in reason and technology. This particular dichotomy implies a fissure in modern Japanese culture, as in spite of the explicit employment of a Western concept of the witch and a fantastic genre drawing upon an old European atmosphere, the anime is deeply rooted in a Japanese cultural framework in which social harmony is regarded as crucial.

The story is set in an unknown location, of European character, in the mid twentieth century, and exhibits a strong sense of retrospection and other-worldliness. Because of her compassion and sincerity, Kiki's 'flying' delivery service becomes a significant device for communication. By delivering objects and messages, she facilitates and witnesses people's communication and cultivates her own. Technology, represented by the enthusiastic interest in flying machines shown by Kiki's new friend, Tombo, is still young and inspires human dreams, but a more sombre future in which technology acts as an oppressively dominant power is presaged in Miyazaki's major addition to the story, a giant airship which hovers over the town, attracts the excited attention of the town's people, but finally goes out of control. The film articulates a mutual tension and acceptance between the worlds of magic and technology, but privileges the former as exemplified by Kiki's inherent power of flight and use of this power to rescue Tombo when he dangles from the wrecked airship.

Making some comparisons with Kadono's original story, this paper examines Miyazaki's reshaping of the story to accentuate the dichotomies within which Kiki's fashioning of a subjectivity mediates between, on the one hand, imagination and empathy and, on the other, a more mechanised and regulated existence. Through her experiences and associations with people, Kiki's self-development points toward a potential integration of the dichotomies.

Like her mother, Kokiri, Kiki is a witch. As a relatively new, Western concept, witch was introduced into Japan and transformed in a fashion similar to the figure of the vampire which came to Japan in the 1930s to play a double role as both the Western Other and the Japanese Other (Kotani 1997). The Japanese term for witch, majo consists of ma (magic/evil) and jo (woman) and has been used since the early twentieth century to refer to both the witch in Christian perspectives and the sorceress in Western folklore. In Japan, majo, even in the case of the old witch in 'Hansel and Gretel', is generally represented in a comical mode, thus keeping her distinct from both the darker images of Western witches and the mysterious, supernatural, and often scary female figures in Japanese folklore. Moreover, lighthearted depictions of the witch flourished through Japanese children's stories, manga, TV shows, films, and games, under the influence of the American TV comedy Bewitched (screened in Japan in 1966-1968). The animated Samantha flying on her broomstick became imprinted in Japanese minds as a typical witch and inspired two
basic types of Japanese girl witches: Mitsuteru Yokoyama's Mahōtsukai Sally (literally, magic worker Sally), a visitor 'from the witch world' with the power of self-metamorphosis, and Fujio Akatsuka's Himitsu no Akko-chan (literally, Secret Akko), the story of an ordinary girl who is given a magical mirror and taught an enchantment to take any shape she desires (Katō 1997). Magical transformation subsequently became a significant aspect of witch girl stories as they evolved, mostly for young audiences.

Freed from the Christian tradition and connected with comical cuteness and/or the notion of healing power, the Japanese image of witches evolved and interrelated with other characters with special powers, such as vampires, angels, cyborgs, robots, half-humans, and human beings with special attributes (magical and/or technological). The term majo, however, rarely appears in popular magical girl stories, suggesting a general inclination to separate magical girls, who inhabit society as humans, from the remaining shadow of Western witches, and to elaborate the concept to encompass any human/non-human girls with supernatural power, either inherent or obtained. Kiki, however, declares Kiki to be a witch yet stresses her humanness. By highlighting her archetypal witch-appearance and limiting her magic to the ability to fly, the anime isolates her from the popular magical girls and embodies an ordinary girl's spirituality. It also excludes any association with wickedness, although the struggle against evil is the main topic of both Western and Japanese witch stories, regardless of the type of witch depicted.

The story of Kiki thus evolves not as a supernatural drama but as an ordinary girl's personal self-development. Her dichotomous blending of otherness and humanity is symbolised by the colours black and red. Her otherness is denoted by her black dress, broomstick, and black cat Jiji, whereas her humanness, particularly her human girlhood, is expressed by her large red ribbon, red shoes, red hairbrush, and her father's red transistor radio. Her childlike face and short, boyish hair represent the ordinariness of a lively girl in contemporary society. Moreover, she has been transformed into one of Miyazaki's children, and is depicted as seemingly younger and clumsier than the Kiki of the original story.

Miyazaki defamiliarises the coming-of-age story by his depiction of a female protagonist setting up her own business (Napier 2001) and extends the representation of development by introducing problems and conflicts not present in Kadono's novel, where Kiki is a capable witch, skilful in flight and knowledgeable in herbal medicine. In the anime, by contrast, her only skill is her power of flight, for which she depends on her mother's broomstick, and when Tombo breaks the broom by stealing it and attempting to fly, Kiki loses her power. This change shifts the meaning of her power from something simply inherent to a capability, like artistic talent, which requires nurturance. Thus, to lose her mother's broomstick signifies departure from daughterhood, and her subsequent frantic attempt to fly suggests a desperate soul searching. She can only fly again when she must do so to save Tombo's life, setting
aside all troubling thoughts for and about herself. Miyazaki (1989) states, 'In this movie, magic just means some kinds of talents that today's girls have ... Kiki is a girl who tries to be herself by flying'.

Flying alone in the sky is free but lonely. As McCarthy suggests, '[f]light is a metaphor with a triple purpose here – for independence, for the loneliness of being different, and also for talent of any kind' (1999, p.157). Kiki's uniqueness is that she uses such an individualistic power for her delivery business, and thereby connects herself to others and makes connections between others, unlike more capable witches whose self-regarding use of flight isolates them from ordinary people. In this context, Kiki's incapability can in fact offer a new way of living as a witch in modern society, with her energy, resolution and effort to establish her self-reliance.

The three witches depicted in the story – Kiki, her mother Kokiri, and a young witch Kiki meets on the night of her departure – present themselves as legitimate members of society, regarding witchcraft as a qualification and profession. Kokiri is a herbalist, the young witch is a fortune-teller, and Kiki operates a delivery service. The idea of Kiki's delivery service is inspired by her encounter with the young witch. This witch's personality is changed from the friendly, humble yet unskilled in flying in the original, to the confident and superior in the anime, bringing in a feeling that the outside world is potentially a hostile place. All three witches are attired in the distinctive, traditional items as their professional uniform, which in part functions to make visible a social minority. Their uniforms are however personalised with Kiki's red ribbon and shoes, Kokiri's black scarf, and the young witch's jewellery. In this world, magic is inherent but must be developed through training, although whether a girl becomes a witch or not is entirely her own decision. Because witches are becoming scarce in the modern world, a witch apprentice must make her home where no other witch lives, thereby both fostering her independence and promoting coexistence by showing the presence of 'Others' in society. Further, because of the disappearance of darkness and tranquility due to industrialisation, witchcraft is seen to be diminishing (and Kiki herself has failed to acquire her mother's skills in herbal medicine/potions).

The focus of the witch training is on how she is to establish herself in human society, using her magic as a profession. It is not 'training' in a usual sense, but a 'transition'. The training distinguishes witches in Kiki from the general Western and Japanese witches, whose training focuses on the improvement of their magical power and skill, and the witch/wizard network, and is conducted professionally, either in one-to-one training (e.g., Esk's education by Granny Weatherwax in Terry Pratchett's Equal Rites), or in a school (e.g., the School for Wizards in Roke Island in Ursula LeGuin's Earthsea trilogy, Unseen University in Pratchett's The Witches Trilogy, and Hogwards in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series). In Kiki, magic is passed on exclusively through the maternal line and handed-down knowledge. There is no suggestion of witch gatherings, friendships with other witches or with ordinary
humans in schools such as Japanese magical girls have, and this isolation makes it difficult for the young witch to make friends within her age group and/or professions, despite the requirement that she has to fit into society.

'Magic is in a witch's blood, not in her broomstick nor her spells,' Kiki tells a newfound friend, the painter Ursula. Kiki also tells Tombo that she had no fear of flying when she started, and that no ordinary person can fly even with her broomstick, a fact confirmed in a vignette showing a maid's unsuccessful, surreptitious attempt to mount the broom. Kiki, as a witch, belongs to the sphere of nature and innate spirituality. An important aspect of her spirituality is her bond with the natural world, particularly with winds, from gentle breezes to violent storms. The anime creates scenes where she happily stands in the wind and enjoys the view of the ocean. Her intrinsic ability to 'feel' winds is contrasted to Tombo's need of an anemometer. 'All witches fly,' she informs a hotel receptionist. Flying is thus defined as an essential qualification of a witch, and is not only Kiki's speciality. Kiki's witch uniform is thus made to connect her body to the wind. It is plain and loose without cuffs, collar and belt/sash and with three quarter length sleeves and flared, slightly shorter midi length skirt. It allows her magic power to radiate from her body, as we see her hair rising and dress swelling just before she takes off. It also exposes her body to the movement of the winds, like a stream of water.

Kiki's bond with nature is underpinned by Jiji, a black cat, who has been the companion of her childhood and will leave to lead his own life once Kiki has become independent. Jiji is more childlike, sympathetic, and cautious than Kiki, which makes them a good team. He behaves like Kiki's younger brother and the symbol of her home and parents' love for her, unlike the generally domineering Western familiaris used as a 'vehicle of magic' (Pickering 1996). Jiji understands other creatures' languages and interprets these to Kiki. In her first delivery commission, Kiki ignores a warning passed on by Jiji from some geese, is blown away by a sudden squall, and loses a soft-toy that looks like Jiji. Her request of Jiji that he take the toy's place until she finds it leads to an extended comic sequence which endears Jiji to the viewing audience. Kiki's failure to heed the warning stresses her inexperience in dealing with the dynamics of nature and her need for Jiji to supplement her. In two later scenes where she revels in the breeze, Jiji is not around, indicating his departure is necessary to develop her own spiritual bond with nature.

Crucial stages in Kiki's transition to maturity are denoted by forces of nature, in the form of two rainstorms. The first occurs on the night of her departure and compels Kiki and Jiji to take shelter in a halted cargo train with some cows. The darkness, warmth, the smell of the hay, and the throb of the train create a womb-like enclave for Kiki to refresh herself before setting off for her real trials in an unknown place. Awakened by cows tickling her foot, she happily finds the ocean, her desired destiny, suggesting her aptitude to integrate technology into nature/magic. The second storm presents a greater crisis, causing Kiki to miss going to a party
(integration into ‘normal’ adolescence), developing a fever, and then suffering an acute identity crisis: she loses both her mother’s broomstick and the ability to fly, and her ability to talk with Jiji. These changes signify her departure from childhood dependency, requiring her to confront herself, the magic and nature in herself, to reassess them consciously, before she can develop as an autonomous individual in a rational and technological society.

Nurtured by a home grounded in spirituality, nature, and tradition, Kiki goes into the world brimming with excitement and anticipation. She chooses to make her new home in the hilly seaside city of Koriko, dominated by tall brick buildings and narrow, paved streets. In common with Miyazaki’s other works, Koriko embodies the holistic sphere in its integration of realistic physical and psychological detail with a nostalgic atmosphere. Even machines (e.g., ovens, cars, buses, trains) are round shaped and convey some warmth, and mingle with a green landscape. Kiki’s hopeful expectation meets disillusionment, however, when her self-introduction on a city street is met with people’s apparent hostile suspicion in the original, and their polite indifference in the anime.

Kiki’s training brings about her various confrontations with irrationality, social constructivism, capitalism, superficiality, and contemporary culture. Her first experience of the negative aspects of modern technology occurs when she flies through the dark, suffocating smog from tall, factory chimneys of an industrialised city, just after her departure from her hometown and its tall trees. She then suffers a rainstorm, which is the betrayal of her trust in the radio weather forecast, another technology. Just after her arrival in Koriko, she nearly collides with a bus (named Ghibli!), is scolded by a policeman for breaching traffic rules, and is refused accommodation in a hotel without a guardian or identification. These experiences establish that social regulations take precedence over her rights and prestige as a witch, and redefine her as a mere thirteen-year-old, unwanted child (Miyazaki Hayao Anime Kenkyūkai 2002). Her accidental encounter with Osono enables her to stay in Koriko but even after this turning point, her radio suddenly starts to speak in English, stressing her alienation. Her unregulated otherness is further depicted by her leaping onto the road, unlike others who faithfully use the pedestrian crossing.

Kiki’s training also entails financial struggle. In the anime she supports herself from her delivery service and, except for her flying, her life is no different from an ordinary working girl’s life within the social reality of a capitalist society. This is another deviation from the original in which Kiki does not accept money for her work. Bringing in the financial issue, Miyazaki consolidates the realism within the fantastic sphere, which extends the audience of the anime beyond children (Ishihara 1997). Kiki’s first morning in the bakery displays her seriousness – counting money, pragmatic consultation with Osono about her delivery service, buying a map and daily necessities, and realising how expensive life is. Kiki works hard, and is honest and responsible, carrying a heavy box of potatoes to an upstairs flat, and declining
money without work. Such behaviour is the key to her social acceptance. She gains people's love and trust in a traditional, moralistic society not because of her magic but through her effort and kind-hearted personality (Kiridōshi 2001).

The inexperienced Kiki is supported by two strong women, Osono and Ursula. Osono's bakery is situated on a hill. Being close to nature (with a view of ocean and sky) and the old ways (represented materially by their wood-fire oven and socially by their daily contacts with customers), it provides a safe home for Kiki to nurture her independence. The pregnant Osono is like a substitute mother and looks after her wellbeing (e.g., caring for Kiki during her fever and arranging her meeting with Tombo). Ursula acts like Kiki's mentor for her spiritual development. Ursula is a young painter, living alone in a forest with crows (witches' old retainers). She respects 'blood', the innate power, as an essence of any individuals' volitional works. She finds an enhanced inner depth in Kiki's struggles over her lost magic and comforts her injured self-esteem, as she mends her soft-toy. She is inspired by Kiki and draws her picture. With her, Kiki starts to use buses, cars, trams, and public telephones, expanding her mobility and contacts with people and technology. Further, Miyazaki's Ursula seemingly represents the grown up Kiki, by having Kiki and Ursula both voiced by Minami Takayama. For Kiki, both her room in Osono's house and Ursula's cabin mean her new 'home', as indicated by her washing of the floors of both places, using a scrubbing brush similar to the head of the push broom she uses to rescue Tombo which then replaces her mother's broom.

Unlike these women, Tombo, Kiki's first close friend and the boy for whom she feels affection, plays an ambiguous role in facilitating her maturation, which is focused through her emotional instability. Kiki's loss of magic immediately follows her lonely walk home in anger, loneliness, and confusion about herself, which is triggered by the disruption by Tombo's female friends of the first happy time she spends with him - their mutual experience of 'flying' on his propeller-driven bicycle and their intimate conversation. Kiki's rescue of Tombo thus indicates her acceptance of herself as she is, including her negative, immature parts, as she transcends her psychological limitations in order to fly to reach him. Napier suggests that 'Kiki's loss of power/confidence occurs during puberty, a period when many young girls question their innate competence. Even though Kiki's sexuality is kept deliberately low-key, it is significant that the return of her powers comes about through her involvement with a boy' (2001, p.133).

Tombo is also narratively important, by representing clear dichotomies between nature/magic and technology and their potential coexistence, as exemplified by Kiki's effortless flying on the broomstick and Tombo's vigorous, sweaty pedalling of his bike-like flying machine. He is fascinated by 'flying machines', wearing glasses, riding on a bicycle with and without a propeller, and the airship which hovers over the town. However, parallel to Kiki's approach to technology, Tombo also plays a mediating role from the technological side towards the realm of magic. He admires
Kiki’s magic as integrity and sees technology as compensation for his lack of magic. His androgynous is indicated in his nickname, Tombo, and his clothes. Tombo means a dragonfly but also evokes Tombo megane (dragonflies’ spectacles), large, round lenses in a thick frame of striped brown and yellow, popular in the mid 1960s in Japan. The image evokes the trademark horn-rimmed glasses worn by American silent film comedian Harold Lloyd, and Tombo’s precarious dangling from the dirigible in turn evokes the best remembered image from a Lloyd film, his dangling from the minute-hand of a large clock, high above the street in Safety Last (1923). It suggests his intrinsic interest in flying like a dragonfly, and his incapability supplemented by technology (his spectacles). Similar to Kiki’s, Tombo’s trial comes as a confrontation with technology, when he is hung from his dreamed-of dirigible. His scientific interest in ‘flying’ initially connects him to Kiki but their personal relationship grows. In the scene in which he first appears, he is a fascinated witness of Kiki’s descent, reminiscent of the image of a heavenly bride in folklore.

Kiki’s feelings about Tombo are ambivalent. Her antagonistic attitudes towards him and his friends reveal her sense of alienation and inferiority as a feminine subject, but her friendship with him develops in parallel to her own recognition of who she is. To enable this, Miyazaki has strengthened Tombo’s personality so that he is now a self-determining individual. He has much in common with Kiki, and while he maintains friendships with others, he initiates and develops his friendship with her by visiting her in the shop, phoning her, inviting her to a party, and riding his bicycle as she flies alongside. He supports her in her independence and in the choice of a job most appropriate to her talent. His individualism is contrasted to his fashionable friends, who represent a picture of the young, wealthy, and confident, having grown up in an affluent society, and who rely on group consensus and material goods provided for them. They seemingly reflect an existential emptiness in the life of contemporary Japanese youth. They exhibit hostility towards Kiki, the outsider, who has gained the interest of their popular friend Tombo, and, as a group, look down on her as a poor, working girl.

Two incidents – Kiki’s loss of the ability to converse with Jiji, and her rescue of Tombo – are related and indicate her imminent maturation as a woman. Until then, Jiji is like her brother. He likes hotcakes/pancakes and shares the same foods with Kiki. His transformation, demonstrated by his sudden meowing, the change in shape of his eyes from round to almond, and his abrupt departure from the table, just taking a half sausage (shared by Kiki) to his future mate Lily, alarms Kiki about her weakening magic and, consequently, her separation from the childhood association with nature and home. It signals the completion of Jiji’s task as Kiki’s only soul mate and vacates his place for her future partner. The vacancy is anticipated by Kiki’s table setting with two sets of plates and cups, as if Jiji were truly human. Kiki’s future match with Tombo, like her parents’, is predicted by her assigned training to establish herself where no witch lives. Their bond and a co-existence of magic and technology are also implied in that Tombo wears two striped T-shirts and shares the same three
colours (red, black and white) with Kiki; and in the closing vignette Kiki, in black dress and red shoes, happily flies beside Tombo, in black singlet and red shorts, pedalling a flying machine. Kiki pulls the machine up from the sea surface, showing the privilege of magic over technology. With this event, Jiji remains with his family, reaffirming their respective independence.

Kiki's journey represents a girl's transition from her childhood dependency towards self-reliance, going through a re-examination of her self and her innate talent, the magic of flying. Compared to the original, Miyazaki's Kiki is an ordinary girl, who is pretty but not remarkably so, worried about money, fancies her old-fashioned dress, admires pretty shoes and feels shy and envious about Tombo's trendy friends, works hard to earn her livelihood, and willingly helps others and enjoys reciprocal friendships with people, such as Osono, Madam, and Tombo. These people represent different groups in society and different types of relationships. Osono represents an old Japan with her old-fashioned name and her open-hearted and reliable mother-like figure, a typical image of a motherly woman in old downtown Tokyo. In contrast, Madam represents an old European elegance, femininity, and reliance on others. Tombo embodies youthful masculinity with full curiosity, enthusiasm, initiatives, and respect for others. In addition, Kiki's rescue of Tombo is broadcast on TV (technology), displaying her growing network amongst her clients, the owner of the push broom, and the citizens in general.

For her training, Kiki, the undeveloped, country witch-girl, bravely chooses a capitalistic city with the financial concerns and alienation that entails, even though the only magic she can rely on is her incompetent ability to fly. This is different from her mother's choice of a peaceful mountain town where a traditional trust in a good witchcraft remains alive. The differences are suggested in the opening, in which Kiki is alone in a little restless, cool wind, looking up at the sky, whilst her mother is inside the protected house, busy preparing her medicines and talking with an old, close client. Kiki's hope and energy direct her towards the challenge of a wider yet less friendly community. The lesser resourcefulness as a witch compels her to integrate her magic and humanness, to initiate the untraditional witch work of the delivery service, and slowly but eventually establish her own place. Her individuality is further displayed when, instead of a witch broom made of broom cypress, she has recourse to a push broom (used to wash floors in Japan), which, although initially accidental, becomes her trademark.

Kiki comes out from a secluded mountain town to a large city with an ocean view, signifying endless potential. She gains her position in the society of her choice, with her sincerity, politeness, diligence, and frank expression of emotions, and develops herself by being herself. By delivering parcels and rescuing Tombo, she liberates people from their self-enclosed materialism and fosters friendships with and among them. The whole-hearted public acceptance of Kiki indicates the turning point of witches' presence in the human world. Her happy settlement is reaffirmed by the
ending snapshots of Kiki and Tombo’s flights, cheered by Osono and others, including Tombo’s friends; Kiki’s continuing delivery of parcels/gifts with Ji Ji and his black kitten; a small girl’s toy push broom; and Tombo’s putting up Kiki’s metal business sign (featuring her slender silhouette on a push broom). Kiki’s letter arrives at her parents’ home, telling them that, although she is sometimes dispirited, she likes Koriko. The story ends with her in a white singlet and bloomers, sitting on the roof with Ji Ji and his black kitten and watching the Moon. She is still young yet content with herself. Kiki’s struggles with loneliness and lost confidence represent the difficulties facing young girls as they strive for independence and self-determination while they are still close to the dependency and safety of childhood,’ as Miyazaki says (1989). The cheerful ending is thus an encouragement for any person who shares Kiki’s journey with its ups and downs and tries hard to establish their identity and independence in coexistence with others by fully utilising their talents and energy, negotiating multiple dichotomies, and trusting in the human ideals of goodness, strength, integrity, and interrelationships.

Notes

i Miyazaki is Japan’s most successful animator and ōkite director. His works include Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind (Kaze no tani no Nausicaä, 1984), My Neighbour Totoro (Tonari no Totoro, 1988), Princess Mononoke (Mononoke-hime, 1997), Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi, 2000), Howl’s Moving Castle (Hauru no ugoku shiro, 2004) based on Diana Wynne Jones’s story, and Tales from Earthsea (Gedo Senki, 2006) based on Ursula K. Le Guin’s the Earthsea series.

ii The word ‘majo’ appeared in Ogai Mori’s Seinen (1910-111) for example. However, the word in the same kanji but in different pronunciation (manyo) existed before, as a Buddhist term to refer to an evil woman.

iii Yokoyama first published the story in a girls’ manga magazine, Ribon, from July 1966 and TV anime from December 1966. Sally’s name in Ribon was originally Sunny, but changed to Sally due to a copyright issue with Sony Corporation.

iv There are for example, vampires (e.g., Miyo in Narumi Kakinouchi’s Vampire Miyo), divinity/goddesses (e.g., Belldandy in Kosuke Fujishima’s Ah! My Goddess!, Ceres in Yu Watase’s Celestial Legend Ceres), cyborgs (e.g., Major Kusanagi in Masamune Shirow/Mamoru Oshii’s Ghost in the Shell), robots (e.g., Tima in Tezuka’s Metropolis, Chi in CLAMP’s Chobits), humans with special power from their previous life (e.g., Usagi/Serena in Sailor Moon), and humans with special attributes (e.g., Sakura in CLAMP’s Card Captor Sakura). Western or Western-sounding names are often used.

v A Dogo-O special edition titled Super majokko taisen (Super witch girl competition) lists 39 witch girl TV anime series, although none of the protagonists is referred to as simply ‘majo’, but two ‘majokko’ and thirteen titles with the word majo (magic).

vi Miyazaki’s children do not need to arrive at individuation; they are already individuals; they possess intelligence, sensitivity, and clear moral judgement; their personalities include both strength and vulnerability, innocence and self-awareness.’ Faced not with the stereotypical
stock character of ‘the child’, but rather with full, rounded, ‘adult’ characters that happen to be very young, a grown-up audience can easily feel true empathy for Miyazaki's protagonists.’ (Prunes 2003, pp.46-47)

The young witch is still amicable in the anime, but the change is taken further in the English dubbed version, in which she presents as arrogant and complacent.

In the English dubbed version, Jiji was voiced by Phil Hartman and refashioned as a cynical, bossy adult, probably based on the Western view of a witch’s familiar, which critically altered the implication and disturbed the consistency of Jiji’s characterisation.

Takahashi (1997) argues that Kiki’s loss of the power of flight can be attributed to a degree of misuse of the ability: she has not sufficiently considered the difference between the first stage when flight is an inherent skill and the later stage of purposive flight.

According to Miyazaki, it was set in the 1950s in an alternate Europe where World War II never occurred, although the actual scenery in the anime comprises various elements from different periods and locations, such as Stockholm, Naples, Paris, and San Francisco. As in Miyazaki’s other works (e.g., Kurone no buta/Porco Rosso), the scenery of Koriko represents a utopian, elusive space made out of realistic details without specific historical events and characters (Prunes 2003, p.48).

In the original, the artist is only called ‘ekaki-san’ (Ms Painter), and is more feminine, less unique and independent than Miyazaki's Ursula. The name Ursula may come from the science fiction and fantasy novelist, Ursula K. Le Guin (1929- ), whose Earthsea trilogy inspired him when he created Kaze no tani no Nausicaä (Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind) (Miyazaki 1986).

In his interview in 1990, Miyazaki said his intention was to create a lifetime cool wind to suit Kiki’s mental state as she prepares her mind for her departure (2002, p.30).

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