

# Comparison of "Northanger Abbey" in Novel and Film Adaptations

## 比较小说和电影对人物刻画的异同——以Catherine为例

## 比较小说和电影在主题表达的差异

### 电影：

1. 主题1：探讨阅读哥特式小说对年轻人的影响。the impact of Gothic novels on young minds

电影将重点放在讨论流行文化对年轻人的影响。正如电影开头部分Catherine的父母富有深意的对话中所体现的那样：-I wonder if it can be good for her, my dear, to read quite so many novels? -What could be a more innocent or harmless pastime for a young girl than reading? 在艺术表现手法方面，电影通过视觉和音乐效果强化了原著中的哥特元素，比如在剧本中添加梦境和幻想。

2. 主题2：themes of imagination versus reality, :and the importance of personal growth.电影在情节方面选取原著中**围绕Catherine**的场景和情节来叙事，将重点放在Catherine的成长变化上。The film highlights her journey from naivety to a more grounded understanding of love and relationships, from fantasy to reality。提醒我们沉浸于小说的幻想世界overly influence one's perception of the real world.以及在现实生活中的经历给予人的重要教育意义。

## Theme 1: The Impact of Emotional Overindulgence in Arts

In the film adaptation of "Northanger Abbey," the focus shifts to the discussion of how popular culture influences young minds, particularly through the lens of Gothic novels. This theme is highlighted in an early, poignant conversation between Catherine's parents, who express concern about her reading habits:

- *Mother*: "I wonder if it can be good for her, my dear, to read quite so many novels?"
- *Father*: "What could be a more innocent or harmless pastime for a young girl than reading?"

The film uses visual and auditory elements to enhance the Gothic atmosphere present in the novel. For instance, dream sequences and fantastical visions are incorporated into the script to underscore the impact of Gothic literature on Catherine's imagination. These artistic choices not only emphasize the allure of Gothic novels but also highlight the potential dangers of becoming too engrossed in fictional worlds, suggesting a commentary on the broader influence of popular culture on youth.

## Theme 2: Imagination Versus Reality and the Importance of Personal Growth

The film's narrative structure closely follows Catherine's experiences and development, emphasizing her personal growth as she transitions from innocence to a more mature understanding of life. This journey from fantasy to reality is central to the film's portrayal of Catherine. Her evolution underscores the contrast between her initial naivety, fueled by Gothic novels, and her eventual grasp of genuine love and relationships.

By showcasing Catherine's development, the film serves as a reminder of the importance of balancing imagination with reality. It illustrates how immersion in the fantastical can skew one's perception of the real world, yet also how real-life experiences provide essential lessons and growth. This duality is critical, as the film suggests that while novels offer escapism and inspiration, they must be tempered with real-world experiences to foster true personal development.

### 小说：

除主人公Catherine之外，还通过大量正面和侧面描写刻画了Isabella等次要角色的富有层次的形象。通过刻画这些次要角色的形象，展现出不同于电影的多样化主题

### 主题1：批判以财富、地位为目的的婚姻。

#### 证据：

代表人物：Isabella、General Tilney

#### 1. Isabella：

Isabella appears to underestimate the importance of character traits that signal a man's willingness to commit to a woman. She loses interest in James Morland when she discovers that his family is not as wealthy as she supposed and quickly transfers her attentions to the more affluent Captain Tilney. When the latter abandons her, she complains in a letter to Catherine that "it is very difficult to know whom to trust"

想通过与有权势人家的联姻得到地位的提升：

与Catherine结交为了追求James；后发现James并不那么富裕，转而追求更有财富更帅的 Captain Tilney  
(补充原文细节)

Isabella Thorpe clearly wishes to improve her status and access to resources by marrying a man superior to her in rank and fortune, a practice known in the social sciences as hypergamy (Barash and Barash 45). Henry Tilney identifies Isabella as a social climber when he states that she would be faithful to Captain Tilney only until "a baronet should come in her way," which as Catherine realizes means that Isabella seeks to marry chiefly "for ambition"(212).

## 2. General Tilney:

听信Thorpe的鬼话的前后变化。批判贵族家庭的婚姻观。social superiors who wish to maintain the status quo and prevent those beneath them from gaining access to their privileges

General Tilney discovers that Catherine is not an heiress as he supposed and, highly incensed at the deception that has been practiced on him, banishes her from his house.

General Tilney frequently asks his young guest if Mr. Allen's possessions are as impressive as his own (e.g., 170, 183).

### 论证:

In "Northanger Abbey," Jane Austen critiques the pursuit of marriage based on wealth and social status, illustrating the moral and emotional pitfalls of such motivations through the characters of Isabella Thorpe and General Tilney.

Isabella Thorpe epitomizes the opportunistic social climber. Initially, she befriends Catherine Morland with the ulterior motive of pursuing Catherine's brother, James. Isabella's interest in James wanes significantly upon realizing that his family is not as wealthy as she had hoped. Her mercenary nature is further revealed when she quickly redirects her romantic interest toward the more affluent and handsome Captain Tilney. When Captain Tilney inevitably abandons her, Isabella laments in a letter to Catherine about the difficulty of knowing whom to trust. This complaint rings hollow, given her own manipulative behavior and her prioritization of wealth over genuine affection.

Austen further exposes Isabella's superficial values through her dialogue and interactions. Henry Tilney astutely labels Isabella a social climber, noting that her loyalty to Captain Tilney would last only until a baronet appeared, suggesting she is driven primarily by ambition. This revelation helps Catherine realize that Isabella's primary goal in marriage is to elevate her own social standing, a practice sociologists term hypergamy.

General Tilney's actions further underscore the critique of marriage for material gain. Misled by John Thorpe into believing Catherine is an heiress, General Tilney welcomes her into his home with an eye toward securing her as a suitable match for his son. His hospitality, however, turns to hostility when he discovers the truth about Catherine's modest financial situation. Incensed by what he perceives as deception, he expels Catherine from his house, highlighting his own obsession with wealth and status.

General Tilney's behavior exemplifies the attitudes of the social elite, who seek to maintain their privileged status by ensuring their children marry into wealth. His frequent inquiries about Mr. Allen's possessions reveal his preoccupation with material wealth and his desire to secure an advantageous marriage for his family. This mercenary approach to marriage, focused solely on financial and social gain, is presented as shallow and morally bankrupt.

Through the characters of Isabella Thorpe and General Tilney, Austen critiques the societal norms that prioritize wealth and status over love and personal compatibility in marriage. Their actions serve as a cautionary tale about the dangers of valuing material gain above genuine human connections, illustrating the emotional and ethical shortcomings of such pursuits.

## 主题2：批判现实中虚伪、欺骗和社会攀附的现象

### 证据：

Jane Thorpe的几个特点：

**1. 追求事物的表面，为了在别人面前显得神气、阔气。被描绘成一个爱吹牛、自私且不诚实的人。他频繁夸大和捏造事实，试图通过谎言和夸张来给人留下好印象。**

More seriously, Thorpe reveals his brutality when he refuses to stop the carriage after Catherine sees Eleanor and Henry and instead “only laughed, smacked his whip, encouraged his horse...and drove on” (86), an action that Jeffrey Herrle interprets as abduction and “figurative rape” (240). Thorpe’s selfishness, duplicity, and aggression are further displayed when he goes behind Catherine’s back to tell Eleanor that Catherine cannot keep her engagement to walk with her and her brother the next day and then grabs Catherine’s hand and physically restrains her from pursuing Miss Tilney. In addition, the fact that he insults his mother and sisters, telling the former she looks like “an old witch” and the latter that they “both looked very ugly” (44), indicates his ill-treatment of women with whom he is intimate.

Chapter 9 第一次出游：

### 直接描写：言语：

1. “索普的思路此后全都回到了关于他自己的马车的优点上，她也因此要赞扬他的马跑动时热情奔放，并且说马的步伐加上马车弹簧的性能很好，使马车的行驶潇洒自如。她尽量紧紧跟着他的思路不停地称赞。要抢在他之前，或者是要超越他，那是不可能的。他在这方面的学识和她的一无所知，他语言表达的迅速，以及她本人言语的小心谨慎，都使她不可能有那样的能力。”
2. “他的马车在装备上总的来说是全国最好的，车厢是最好的，马是跑得最快的，而他本人则是最好的驾车人。“索普先生，你是不是真的觉得，”过了一会儿之后凯瑟琳试图把这个话题看作是已有了定论，想稍微换一换说话的内容，这样说道，“詹姆斯的车子会坏呢？”“车子会坏！啊！天哪！你在生活中有没有碰上过这种有点靠不住的事？车上没有一根铁是牢靠的。至少在这十年里车轮已经磨损得相当厉害了，至于车身嘛！说真的，你手指头一碰它就会散架。我从没见过这样糟糕的破车！感谢上帝！我们有一辆好车。白送我五万英镑叫我赶它两英里路我也不干。”
3. “整件事情，他似乎已经忘得一干二净；他接下来的谈话——确切地说是他的自说自话——自始至终都围绕他自己和他自己所关心的事。”
4. “凯瑟琳听得目瞪口呆；同一件事情的如此极不相同的说法，她不知道该如何去理解，因为她从小到大并不懂吹牛说大话的人的习气，也不知道太爱虚荣会致使人说多少无聊的

大话和多少无耻的谎话。”

5. “尽管凯瑟琳心里并不常常评判他人，对于男人应该是什么样的这个问题，也没有一个固执的看法，但是她一面耐着性子听他自以为是了不起的滔滔不绝的大话，一面心中不免对他是不是一个真正可爱的人有些狐疑。这是一个很大胆的臆测，因为他是伊莎贝拉的哥哥；而且詹姆斯也说，他的举止态度像她这样的姑娘都会喜欢的。然而，尽管如此，他们出门还不到一个钟头，她就隐隐地感到与他在一起是极无聊的，而且这种无聊感继续不停地加深，一直持续到又回到普尔特尼大街。这一极无聊的感觉诱使她对这样了不起的人物略有点抵制，怀疑他是否有让人人都喜欢的本领。”

**侧面描写：** During their first carriage ride, Thorpe asks Catherine, “Old Allen is as rich as a Jew—is not he?”, and he goes on to ask if the Allens have children and if Mr. Allen is Catherine’s godfather.

## 2. 为了得到Catherine，千方百计阻止Catherine与亨利蒂尔尼的交往、甚至诋毁对方。

Chapter 11: 第二次出游，明知Catherine有约在身却硬是要拉她一起走。

“停一停，停一停，索普先生，”她急躁地喊道；“那是蒂尔尼小姐；那是她。你怎么可以说他们都走了呢？停下来，停下来，我现在就下车，我要去找他们。”可是她叫了有什么用？索普听了反而甩了一下鞭子，那马也跑得更快了。”

## 3. 他的自我价值来源于他人的夸赞：

Chapter 12

“啊，一点没错！上将觉得你是巴思最漂亮的姑娘。”

“噢！胡说！你哪能这么说？”

“你猜我怎么说？（放低了声音）‘说得对，上将，’我说，‘我很赞成你的话。’”

## 论述：

### Theme 2: Critique of Hypocrisy, Deception, and Social Climbing

In "Northanger Abbey," John Thorpe embodies the themes of hypocrisy, deception, and social climbing, serving as a critique of these behaviors through his actions and interactions. Thorpe is portrayed as someone who is overly concerned with appearances and status, frequently boasting and lying to impress others. His self-aggrandizement is evident in his exaggerated descriptions of his carriage and horses, where he insists that his equipment is the best in the country. This relentless self-promotion reveals his shallow nature and obsession with social standing.

Thorpe's duplicity is further highlighted by his actions during his outings with Catherine. His refusal to stop the carriage when Catherine sees Eleanor and Henry, despite her pleas, showcases his selfishness and disregard for others. Jeffrey Herrle's interpretation of this moment as a figurative abduction underscores Thorpe's aggressive and controlling behavior. Moreover, Thorpe's habit of going behind Catherine's back to manipulate situations in his favor, such as telling Eleanor that Catherine cannot keep her engagement, demonstrates his

deceitful nature. His physical restraint of Catherine to prevent her from pursuing Miss Tilney further illustrates his manipulative tactics.

Thorpe's treatment of women, especially his own family, reveals his deep-seated misogyny and lack of respect. He insults his mother and sisters, calling his mother an "old witch" and his sisters "ugly," indicating his contempt for those closest to him. This behavior contrasts sharply with the superficial charm he tries to project to others, exposing his true character as one who lacks genuine regard for others.

During their first carriage ride, Thorpe's questions about Mr. Allen's wealth and family further expose his materialistic and opportunistic mindset. His interest in the Allens' fortune and his probing questions about their childlessness and Mr. Allen's relationship to Catherine reveal his underlying motives of social climbing and financial gain.

Thorpe's attempts to isolate Catherine from Henry Tilney, whom he perceives as a rival, demonstrate his willingness to engage in deceit and manipulation to achieve his goals. By preventing Catherine from keeping her engagements and fabricating excuses, Thorpe seeks to control her social interactions and eliminate competition. His efforts to sabotage Catherine's relationship with Henry reflect his desperation to secure her for himself, regardless of her own wishes or happiness.

In conclusion, John Thorpe's character serves as a satirical critique of the hypocritical, deceptive, and socially ambitious behaviors prevalent in society. Through his actions and attitudes, Austen exposes the shallow and self-serving nature of individuals who prioritize appearances and status over genuine human connections and integrity. Thorpe's manipulative and misogynistic tendencies underscore the dangers of such behaviors, ultimately highlighting the moral and ethical failings of those who engage in social climbing at the expense of others.

### **主题3：slyly satirizing men's egotistical preference for women to whom they can feel intellectually superior**

#### **证据：**

He can be rather smug and condescending toward those he considers intellectually inferior, and his awareness of human foibles has fostered a tendency toward ironic detachment that reminds some readers of Mr. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Henry Tilney and Narrator's remarks：

#### **Chapter 14**

美丽的姑娘长了一个笨脑袋，其有利之处另一位女作家的生花妙笔已有著述。除了她所说的之外，就这个问题我只想补充一点，为男人们说句公道话。尽管大多数轻薄的男人认为，女人之蠢反倒很能衬托出她们容貌的美，但是，他们也有一部分人本身就极为明智、博学，因此不希望女人无知之外还有别的品质。然而凯瑟琳对自己的这一个优势并不了解，不了解一个容貌姣好、温柔多情，同时又很无知的姑娘，是绝不可能吸引不了一个聪明的小伙子的，除非外界

条件处处与自己作对。

“也许论天资，女人是既不健全，也不尖锐，既不强劲，也不敏锐。她们还可能缺乏观察力、洞察力、判断力、热情、天才和智慧。”

## 论述：

In Jane Austen's "Northanger Abbey," the theme of men's egotistical preference for intellectually inferior women is cleverly satirized through the characterization of Henry Tilney and the narrator's remarks. Henry Tilney often exhibits a smug and condescending attitude towards those he perceives as intellectually inferior. This behavior reflects a broader societal tendency, one that Austen critiques through irony and wit.

In Chapter 14, the narrator makes a sardonic observation about the societal preference for beautiful women with "stupid" minds, a notion previously articulated by another female writer. The narrator adds a pointed comment defending men, noting that while many frivolous men believe that a woman's stupidity enhances her beauty, there are still some men who are wise and learned enough to prefer women with other qualities beyond mere ignorance. However, Catherine, the protagonist, is unaware of this dynamic. The narrator mockingly suggests that a beautiful, gentle, and affectionate yet ignorant girl is bound to attract an intelligent young man unless external conditions are overwhelmingly unfavorable.

This passage is layered with irony. The narrator's seemingly sympathetic defense of men is undercut by the absurdity of the argument, highlighting the ridiculousness of valuing women for their ignorance. The narrative voice further satirizes this male preference by implying that men find intellectual superiority in women threatening, thus preferring them to remain uninformed and docile.

Moreover, Henry Tilney's behavior mirrors this satirical tone. His ironic detachment and awareness of human flaws remind readers of Mr. Bennet from "Pride and Prejudice," who similarly exhibits a sense of superiority over his less discerning family members. Tilney's interactions with Catherine often contain an underlying condescension, as he revels in his own intellectual prowess while subtly undermining Catherine's less sophisticated understanding.

Through these character dynamics and narrative commentary, Austen effectively critiques the egotistical and patronizing attitudes of men who prefer intellectually inferior women. The satire lies in exposing the shallow nature of such preferences, challenging readers to recognize and question these societal norms.