

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of The Research

There are plenty of studies about the relationship between literature and movie. The relationship between literature and movie is commonly known as adaptation. Adaptation is a common term that we have heard so often at the present time and literary works cannot be separated from being adapted to other mediums. Some experts in adaptation studies have arguments about how a novel or play is produced into a movie and how faithfully the movie remakes the original. Peter Lev (2007) asserts that it is a must in adaptation studies exploring all sources for movies. Thus, it is not only from plays or novels. Movies are often accorded to multiple works such as news articles, paintings, historical events, photographs, and television shows. Someone will lose the richness of arts by limiting the source for adaptation if only using novels and plays (7). When literary works are adapted, the audiences' emotions when reading the original work and seeing the adaptation will be totally different. It also gives an opportunity for a certain story to be uttered and presented in a new way.

Literary works that are commonly adapted into movies are famous works, best-seller works, and most importantly, works that have interesting storylines. For example, the famous movie adaptation Harry Potter is adapted from a famous novel with the same title that is written by J.K Rowling. This has the purpose of gaining many audiences and getting many good responses from the audience.

There are many issues about an adaptation between novel and movie, in a book *Novels into film*, George Bluestone (1957) asserts that adaptation as "The Two Ways of Seeing" means examining the differences and the similarities that exist in movies and their sources and also examining the relationship between these two media. Bluestone assumes that novel and movie are two totally different medium. Which novel is a linguistics approach and movie is visual. This difference is an obstacle for filmmakers. The interesting thing between novel and movie according to Bluestone, movie and novel are seen to be compatible but actually, they are against each other. Because of the difference between novel and movie, filmmakers have ideas to create new creativity (cited from Hardianto, 2016: 152-153).

Many movie adaptations from literary works depict women's lives. The appearance of women in movies can be portrayed as strong characters and independent while, on the other hand, there are movies that portray women as weak and sensitive characters. The depiction of women as weak and sensitive characters can be seen through movies that contain the oppression of women. The representation of women as weak characters initiates various oppression. Barker (2003) defines oppression as social action that imposes strong restrictions on groups, institutions, and individuals. Accordingly, an organization, a government, and a group that have power tend to restrict the weak groups. Therefore the weak groups may be abused and can't be able to compete with other groups. Barker also states the weak individual or group are oppressed, exploited, and abused of privileges by a group or individual who has more

power. The main reason women get oppressed is that women's characters are dominated by men in the family and society. In her book Tong (2009) explains the source of black women's oppression is the patriarchal system. She states this system makes women get oppressed in many ways. For instance, women are only allowed to work inside their houses doing housework such as washing, cooking, cleaning, looking after children and consoling their husband by fulfilling his desires. To the point women are not allowed to work as a doctor, an artist, a writer, and leading a company. Women are treated lower than men because they are weak and hopeless. Thus, women's lives are in the second class because they cannot do anything but be silent and responsible for men's lives. However, even though women are portrayed as weak, sensitive, and hopeless those women struggle for their freedom therefore they can live the life they deserve.

One famous adaptation movie that portrays the oppression of women is a movie entitled *The Color Purple*. The movie was adapted in 1985 which only three years after the publication of the novel. The movie adaptation has the same title as the novel. The duration of the movie adaptation is 154 minutes length. *The Color Purple* movie adaptation is an adaptation movie from a novel with 304 pages that are written by American author Alice Walker. *The Color Purple* novel is published in 1982. Alice Walker was born on February 9, 1944 in Eatonton, Georgia, U.S. Walker is an American writer who writes novels, poems, and short stories mostly about the treatment of African-American culture. Alice Walker is a writer who is famous for her work entitled *The Color*

purple. *The Color Purple* is one of the best-selling novels and won the National Book Award for Fiction and the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The movie adaptation was directed by a famous director named Steven Spielberg. Steven Allan Spielberg or famously known as Steven Spielberg is a famous director and producer who was born December 18, 1946, in Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S. Spielberg is a famous director who directed many famous movies such as *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Color Purple* (1985). *The Color Purple* movie is nominated for 11 categories in Academy awards including best picture. Unfortunately, this movie fails to win any awards. Even though the movie adaptation did not win any Oscar awards, according to IMDb, This movie won ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards (1987) in the category "Top Box Office Films," Black Movie Awards (2005) in the category "Classic Cinema Hall of Fame," and many more.

The setting of *The Color Purple* is in rural South Georgia, where the author was born. The story occurs from 1909 to 1949. *The Color Purple* is a novel that portrays a life of Celie, the protagonist and the narrator of the story. She has a poor life and she is an uneducated black girl. The story starts when she is fourteen years old. Celie likes to write letters to God since Alphonso; her stepfather does her injustice. Her father beats Celie and rapes her. Her father has impregnated Celie twice at such a young age. Celie's mother is dead because she gets seriously ill. After the death of her mother, her life gets worse. Other characters also have similar struggles with Celie. They are Sofia and Celie's sister Nettie. Overall, the story is about the lives of women who hard to live their

life happily not just because their lives are dominated by men it also because they get discriminated because they are black.

Based on the description above, the writer intends to examine the alterations of *The Color Purple* movie adaptation to its source. In her article Boutan (2011) writes Alice Walker states anyone who watches the movie adaptation without reading the novel may miss the favorite part, but the things that are existed only in the movie will be its own gift and Walker hopes people will be able to accept that. For this reason, the writer is interested in examining an adaptation work of *The Color Purple* novel. Through the alterations, the writer wants to demonstrate how Steven Spielberg's uniqueness in adapting the novel into a movie and how black women's lives are presented.

In addition, *The Color Purple* describes how oppression happens to black women. Even at such a young age, black women experience kinds of oppression. The social condition forced a few characters to live a horrible life. *The Color Purple* explains the struggle and gradual triumph of women characters in society by passing oppression. Black women's oppression and black people's discrimination are both big issues these days. Actually, those two issues occurred a long time ago and unfortunately it is still happening until today. Thus, according to this statement, the writer has the reason to choose this topic to be examined.

1.2 Identification of the problem

The Color purple adaptation surely has alterations from its source. The alterations occur in the adaptation because there is a different interpretation from

the movie director and there is a different medium from text to screen. The first thing that will be examined in this research is how faithful the director is in adapting the image of the characters from the novel to its movie adaptation. For instance, in the novel, the relationship between Shug and her father is not highlighted well. In the movie adaptation, Spielberg highlights the relationship between Shug and her father. Her father does not like Shug's lifestyle and he ignores Shug's existence because of it. At the end of the movie, Shug finally reconciles with her father. This scene does not appear in the novel.

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* elevates a story about women who are treated dreadfully by the society around them. They are treated dreadfully because men feel superior as well as white people. This research focuses on examining the kinds of oppression that happen to black women. They are oppressed by men or discriminated because they are black. The problems in the novel are the form of rape, incest, pregnancy in young age, being called slave just because they are black, etc.

1.3 Scope of the research

There are many issues that can be discussed in *The Color Purple* movie adaptation. Therefore, the writer intends to limit the issues and focus on examining how images of the characters and oppressions are portrayed in the movie adaptation. The writer is interested in examining how these two elements play important roles in the success of Steven Spielberg's movie entitled *The Color Purple*. The alterations can be seen through how the director, Steven Spielberg projects the characters' images. The images of the characters influence plot, theme

and other elements of the story in the adaptation version. Furthermore, the writer has the intention to also focus on examining the oppressions that are experienced by black women. However, *The Color Purple* movie depicts Black women's oppression explicitly.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the scope of the research above, the writer will discuss several questions. The questions are listed as follows:

1. What kinds of alterations have been made by Steven Spielberg in projecting the characters' images in the novel *The Color Purple* into the movie entitled *The Color Purple*?
2. How is the black women's oppression in the novel portrayed in the movie *The Color Purple*?

1.5 The Objective of the Research

The aim of this research is to show whether the movie adaptation entitled *The Color Purple* by Steven Spielberg is faithful to the novel or not. The objective of the research relates to the research questions. Therefore, the writer focuses on how Steven Spielberg adapts *The Color Purple* novel into the movie, particularly about the images of the characters and the oppression of black women. In order to reach the goals, the writer is going to prove it by examining both the novel and movie about the characters' images and black women's oppression in *The Color Purple*.

1.6 Review of The Related Studies

In writing this research, the writer has read several related studies to

increase and enrich the knowledge that relates to the object the writer is discussing. However, the related studies that the writer reads are the related studies that discuss the same object with different theories and same object that has a similar problem. This sub-bab is a comparison to attain a depth understanding. The writer reviews some research written by other researchers to identify different opinions and views.

The first related study is an article entitled “Feminism Issues Analysis in Celie Character Through *The Color Purple* Novel by Alice Walker” (2019), written by Latifah. This article shows the feminism issues in *The Color Purple* through the main character named Celie. This article consists of extrinsic and intrinsic aspects. In examining the extrinsic aspect, the researcher shows it through 7 feminist issues. These feminist issues are sexual assault, wife abuse, family, consciousness-raising, violence, independence, race and ethnicity. One of the feminist issues that happen to Celie is wife abuse. In her research, the researcher finds this issue happens in the dialogue "Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr. ___ say, cause she my wife" (Walker, 1982:22). In examining the intrinsic aspect, the researcher uses the main character to analyze the woman's oppressions. The researcher states Celie's character as religious, hardworking, passive, under pressure, independent, and successful. The researcher argues black women have double burdens and double dependence. First, the burden of black women's physical appearance as black people and second, the burden of their sex as women. Black women have been subjected to an oppressive group just because of their physical appearance. The researcher creates columns and table to explain Celie's

characteristics. Thus, the article is easy to understand. Despite the good things, the weakness of this article is the researcher does not explain her explanation properly. In the introduction, she says there are seven feminist issues that will be discussed. But in the analysis, she only explains six feminist issues. The researcher does not discuss the violence issue in the analysis section.

The second related study is an article entitled “An Analytical Study of 2013 Cinematic Adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*” (2016). Written by Ehsan Alinezhad and Alireza Anushiravani. This article shows the similarities and differences between *The Great Gatsby* novel and its movie adaptation. The researchers found that the movie adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* novel achieves a different experience for the reader and the movie audience. The researchers state that the romantic side of *The Great Gatsby* novel is not the same as in the movie. The romantic side of its movie adaptation is more explicit. In order to write this article successfully, the researchers utilize the adaptation theory by Linda Hutcheon. The researchers also find four main parts of Hutcheon's theory that are used in *The Great Gatsby* movie adaptation by Baz Luhrmann (2013). These four main parts are What? Who and Why? When and Where? How?. The researchers elaborate the explanation of the four main parts clearly. The writer argues this article is a great example of studying comparative literature, especially adaptation studies. The researchers successfully explain their explanation about the differences and the similarities between *The Great Gatsby* novel and its movie adaptation. Their explanations are easy to comprehend. This article has similarities with this research. This article uses the same adaptation theory that is

stated by Linda Hutcheon. Thus, this article can be used as a reference for this research.

The third related study is an article written by Sebastian Saliba entitled "A Strange Way of Loving: The Brontean Sadistic Heart of Jacques Rivette's *Hurlevent*" (2012). The researcher examines the French movie adaptation of Emily Bronte's novel entitled *Wuthering Heights*. Its movie adaptation has a different title. The movie adaptation entitled *Hurlevent* is directed by Jacques Rivette (1985). In particular, the director remakes the main character and main themes in the dominant visual images. This research also shows the alterations that have been made by the director influence the fidelity and the creativity of *Hurlevent* as an adaptation of novel. The researcher finds that Rivette creates different depth of ambivalence when he emerges the failing Catherine reflects on the portrait of what her childhood looks like at Olivier's house. The researcher states that the thing that makes Rivette's Catherine interesting is not only because he remakes the notion of Catherine as childlike but also the manner of her supernatural dimension. The result of this research is this movie adaptation attaches closely to Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* in relation to characterization. However, one thing that makes this article is really helpful is at the beginning of the article; the researcher gives explanations about the fidelity of movie adaptation from some experts. This article has a similar discussion to this thesis. The similarity is this thesis also aims to demonstrate the alterations that have been made by the director as well as the creativity that makes the movie adaptation appealing to be watched.

The fourth study is an article entitled “An Adaptation Study on *Cold Mountain* from Novel to Movie” (2022) written by Haoling Liu. This research elevates how to adapt a novel entitled *Cold Mountain* written by Charles Frazier to a movie adaptation with the same title directed by Antony Minghella in 2003. This research focuses on examining the plot adaptation and montage techniques from the novel to movie adaptation. In the plot adaptation, the researcher finds a scene and also a character in the novel that is not shown in the movie adaptation. For instance, the sad love story that happens to Odell. In the chapter exile and brute wandering. The researcher argues this chapter is indispensable in the novel because this chapter demonstrates the themes of love and war. However, a movie has a time limit and this chapter has a really long story. Thus, the director decides to delete the character and the story. Next is the montage technique. Minghella utilizes this technique with fast shots combined with unique soundtracks to elevate the nuance or amplify the message being delivered. Therefore, the montage technique can reinforce the mood in the film. The researcher finds this technique is used before the title of the film is shown which one of Ada’s letters is conveyed. The writer argues this article is really a great article because the researcher can demonstrate the plot adaptation and montage techniques that are applied in the movie adaptation vividly. The researcher gives the example of each explanation very clearly. As the researcher mention in their article, if they are new to the movie studies, this article is adequately great for a person who is new to movie studies. The writer thinks this article has the same topic as her research, but the theories are different which makes this article can increase her knowledge about movie

studies.

In conclusion, there are many articles about oppression and adaptation that have existed. Most of the article discusses oppression that is existed in the novel, while this research discusses oppression according to movie adaptation from novel. In addition, the articles that discussed movie adaptation have not yet discussed *The Color Purple* movie adaptation. The thing that makes this research distinguishes from other movie adaptation articles is how the director enacts the alterations in projecting the character's images and black women's oppression.

