

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The history of literature and film is massive to discuss recently. In comparison to the long-established history of literature, the relatively young century-old history of film is apparent. Although cinema technology is still in its infancy, it is propelling narrative culture forward at a breakneck pace. This work is developed in part by other works, especially literary works. Understanding a film means understanding an expression of a literary work, and an expression of a literary work is greatly inspired by a film, which is why these two works are recognized to influence one another. Many films are produced as a result of an adaptation of a literary work. The process of adapting a novel to a film is not simple. For a long time, many films have been created as a result of adaptation from a drama text, short story, or novel. Ideally, the text for a film should be written specifically for film because it uses a different medium to deliver a message than literary work. The Swedish filmmaker, Ingmar Bergman, added that the film's uniqueness is crucial as, in his view, the film has no connection to literary work. (Kernodle, 1967: 520).

Literary works that have been adapted into films become popular in society. In the past, people could only experience many literary works through novels. However, many producers or directors are interested in reproducing them into a film. There are many literary works in the past were successfully adapted

into a film such as; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1903) directed by Edwin S. Porter and D. W. Griffith, *Alice in Wonderland* (1903) by Cecil Hepworth and Percy Stow, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1909) by Rouben Mamoulian.

In the twenty century, the emergence of film adaptations of literary works has been increasing. This phenomenon developed rapidly after World War II Welsh and Lev. In their book *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues in Adaptation* (2007) said that adaptation has always been central to the process of film making since almost the beginning and could well maintain its dominance into the cinema's second century. The statement above explains that the quantity of films that use literary works as a source of creation has a very large percentage value, especially in the United States as the architecture of world cinema.

Over time, experts have their criteria or opinions regarding film adaptations of literary works. In a book entitled *The Art of Adaptation Turning Fact and Fiction into Film* (1992) written by Linda Seger. She explains adaptation is a process of transition, conversion from one medium to another. She no longer talks about the difference between the two mediums, the text, and the film, because from the beginning the two had different characters. So that when united or linked, it is certain that it will produce a change. A new form or trait will eventually emerge as a result of adaptation the spirit of the original text is expected to remain present in the new work. Seger called it "take me as I am". It was added to Seger that in adaptation three processes that need attention, there are rethinking, re-conceptualizing, and understanding the adapted source text (1992).

Little Women was written by Louisa May Alcott in 1868 and 1869, the book was published in two parts, by an American writer. Alcott wrote many popular novels, such as *Little Man*, *Jo's Boys*, *Eight Cousins*, *How*, etcetera. Those books were awarded as notable works. Since she was a little child, writing has been her interest, and her works have brought her literary success. In 1994 movie *Little Women*, based on her eponymous novel of the same name became a big critical and commercial success and was nominated for three Academy Awards.

Little Women has been adapted six times into a film. Valerie Jones (2019) in her article entitled *Why do we keep remaking Little Women* said that “the reason *Little Women* still remaking until today is because of that sense of connection and community that the characters have” (Deseret News). The latest version was published in 2019, the five previous versions came out in 1917, 1918, 1933, 1949, and 1994. The movie adaptation has a similar title to the novel. In the latest version, the duration of the movie is 135 minutes long. The movie was directed by a young successful director named “Greta Gerwig” who is also known as an actress and writer. She was born August 4, 1983, in Sacramento, California, United States. Gerwig is a young famous director who directed *Lady Bird* (2017) and *Little Women* (2019). *Little Women* won Critics' Choice Movie Award for Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Achievement in Costume Design, Best Lead Actress, Movie of the Year, etcetera. (IMDb). The writer thinks that *Little Women's* 2019 film gets a modernization from previous adaptations such as the narrative of the story being changed to non-linear which will be a new thing in adapting this novel to the film so far. In this case, the writer would like to analyze

Little Women's film in 2019 which is the last version adaptation of the film.

Little Women tells about four sisters who live in a modest house with their mother. Their father became a Civil War soldier in Washington. They are busy daily working, studying, and waiting for their father's news. Four people mean four different characters. Meg is the eldest child who is elegant and feminine. Jo is a tomboy, temperamental, and a literary enthusiast. Beth, the third child is shy, obedient, and good at playing the piano. The talent for playing the piano and Beth's soft heart made Mr. Laurence think of his granddaughter and then rewarded Beth with a piano. Amy, the last youngest child is trying to look mature and enjoys painting. In sum, the characters have each problem as a woman who lived in the 19th century. Gender roles and femininity became the main issues portrayed in the novel and its adaptation.

Thus, the writer intends to examine the fidelity of *Little Women* to its adaptation. In the film adaptation, it is also possible to reduce or add intrinsic or extrinsic aspects without losing the aesthetic of the story. According to Cartmell and Whelehan, "the most important issue in the adaptation of a literary work into a film is the loyalty to the original source - the novel" (1999). In this book, the text is more important than the film, in addition to showing the differences and values of each medium. He states that there are many 'practical realities' involved in transforming a text into a commercially successful film, such as the composing of anachronistic (non-chronological) culture in novel writing and the cultural composing of a structured and classical narrative storytelling of novels into the storytelling of a film of a popular genre or recognized by the film market

(Whelehan, 1999: 4).

This film has feminist messages. Feminists tend to explain a power imbalance regarding gender in a particular culture as it is reflected by literary texts (Eisenstein, 1984: 196). At this time, literature has been faced with the era of patriarchal culture. *Little Women* shows how women struggled in the 19th century when women were supposed to be good mothers and women were only speaking when they were spoken to (Rahayu, iv). *Little Women* film illustrates the validity of gender stereotypes, Jo, at times, does not want to become a conventional female. In her desires and her actions, she frustrated typical gender expectations. In her statements, the writer can see how women get underestimated of gender and struggle in their lives. Jo who one uprising woman that against the system of patriarchal and believes that women must deserve the right and appreciation as a man deserves.

Essentially gender is the type between two sexes of male and female. Although, gender is not only a matter of sex, behavior and character are also included in terms of gender which are attached to males and females who are formed socially and culturally. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary "Gender is defined as the grouping of nouns and pronouns into masculine, feminine and neuter" (173). In the 2019 *Little Women* film, Gerwig shows the society in the film that has always treated women and men differently, giving birth to a dominant side between men and women. Men who have greater power than women are frequently referenced in the literature. It will be interesting to study femininity also the focus of the writer in analyzing the film *Little Women*.

The majority of women in the 19th century could not against their nature as women which women were seen as possessing traits such as tenderness, patience, and kindness. It can hinder a women's freedom to express herself if they exceed these boundaries. The writer assumes that the women in *Little Women* movie have gender role issues and their romances in the story and more highlighted in the movie than other issues such as the necessity of work, the importance of being genuine, sisterhood problems, and etcetera.

Based on the description above, the writer aims to explore the differences between women and men that can be seen from society's perspective on the characteristics of women and men in *Little Women* and its movie adaptation. Josh Savitt (1982) states that "female characters in the story have held tightly to several role models as their guides. While male characters have been given free rein to be and become what they like, even to fail if they choose, on the other hand, female characters have been written to play and re-play the same themes, limited as they are" (1). Thus, women almost have no place in expressing their thoughts in literary works that are dominated by men. Similarly, the role of women is limited in social activities in the community where they are strongly bound by femininity itself.

In addition, *Little Women* describes how gender roles happen to female and male characters as well as how femininity is portrayed in female characters in the story. The social condition pushed a few female characters to change their attitude to be more masculine. *Little Women* expounds on the struggle and limitation of women characters in society by facing the patriarchal system. Gender

equality and Patriarchy are both big issues these days. Indeed, those two issues happened a long time ago, and regrettably, they continue to exist now. Hence, according to this statement, the writer has a rationale for selecting this topic to be examined.

1.2 Identification of Problems

The novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott describes a story about women and families in the 19th century in New England Town, Massachusetts, United States. The daughters of Marmee March are portraits of women who are different characters, have different dreams, and different hobbies, but still support each other and do not demean each other. The problem to be addressed through this study is how the author portrays gender roles and femininity in the novel and film *Little Women*. These issues also carried out the feminist thought to solving the problem in this research.

The writer assumes the alterations of *Little Women* should be done to fit the aims of the director. The alterations occur due to the transition of different media from text to screen. The writer will examine how the director adapts the story of fidelity even though there are many changes in the progress of adaptation. I assume one significant alteration between the novel *Little Women* and its film adaptation is the plot was changed from linear to non-linear. In the novel, the Marches young women deal with their problems, in the film show Jo as an adult woman struggling to make ends meet by selling stories and teaching children in New York at first.

1.3 Review of Previous Studies

Several previous studies relate to the topic and theories that the writer raised. The first review is a thesis by Muhammad Rizal (2017) entitled “*A Film Adaptation on Characterization of Main Characters from The Lauren Kate’s Fallen*”. This thesis describes how the film adapts the novel *Fallen*. First, the author will discuss how the main characters in both the novel and the film are characterized. He is able to know the differences and how the adaptation of the characterization of the main characters is done after discovering the characterization of the main characters. This research employs Linda Hutcheon's adaptation theory, which states that adaptation is a formal entity or product, a process of creation, and a process of reception, and that adaptation is a type of intertextuality of literary work. The researcher also employs the concept of characterization to identify characterization in both novels and films. Characterization is described based on the main characters' personalities and relationships with other characters. In the results of his research, Rizal found based on the theory and method used, that the adaptation is done dramatize, visible, audible, succinctly, and forthrightly. It is based on Linda Hutcheon's adaptation principles. Rizal also contends there are three inter-textual principles are used in this adaptation: transformation, haplology, and modification. This article gives information about how to characterize a character from a novel to a movie adaptation starting with knowing the main characters from the novel and film as well. It is the main thing to understand how to analyze the alterations from novel to film especially in characterization. The researcher successfully elaborates

on the steps of characterization. Rizal explains characterization in Lauren Kate's *Fallen* very clearly that the characterizations will be changed when they are adapted to the film. Furthermore, this study gives more information about characterization in adapting research.

The second related study is an article by Daniela Maravilha (2019) entitled "*Education and Comparative Literature: Classical and Modern Feminine Portraits – Rapunzel from the Grimm Brothers to Disney's Film Adaptation*". This research depicts evolution in education, literature, cinema, and its characters. The researcher follows the social evolution, acquiring the characteristics of the various times and, as a result, the characterization of the characters changes. Her comparison is made between Rapunzel from the Grimm Brothers and Rapunzel from *Tangled* to validate this evolution. The researcher notices the most striking evolution in recent years is the profile of women and their stereotypes. This evolution can be seen in the adaptations of traditional tales (such as the Grimm Brothers' tales) that have become great and popular narratives in modern times. The woman's figure represents the woman's princess, which has a significant impact on the lives of children because they serve as a model to emulate (especially for girls as a model of femininity). They send messages and pass values through their actions and the overall narrative. This article also asserts that those who adapt stories, such as those who create them must be aware of the current situation and use appropriate discourse to convey the right messages. As a result, there is a significant difference between the Classical Age princesses and the Modern Age princesses. In my opinion, the researcher can elaborate on how to

compare the evolution of age by using Rapunzel's cinematic adaptation as her media effectively. This article helps the writer understand some aspects of comparing the stories to movie adaptations.

The third related study is an article by Gehan Margoushy (2019) entitled "*Novel to Film Adaptation Analysis of Young Adult Fantasy Novel The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*". The author states that the middle-aged fiction has been extensively researched in the literature about several genres, including fantasy novels. The result is the researchers have focused on film adaptation theory and its critical analysis within this field of study. In light of the foregoing, this study examines how C.S. Lewis' novel *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (1951) is a film adapted into the film "Prince Caspian" (2008), employing elements of film adaptation theory analysis. The researcher employs a model based on film adaptation to answer the following question: How does the use of film adaptation theory contribute to the polarization of certain ideologies in "Prince Caspian"? The research focuses on various disciplines, including film adaptation studies, fantasy novels, and young adult fiction. The researcher finds by answering Hutcheon's questions that the film is not a mere replica of the novels and the changes in the movies add to their cultural impact on the audience. In the writer's opinion, this research is a great example to study an analysis of literature, especially adaptation studies. The researcher successfully explains her explanation about how to employ the elements of the film adaptation in *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*.

The fourth related study is an article by Intan Pertiwi and Diah Tyahaya

Iman (2021) entitled “*Cinematic Adaptation of Markus Zusak’s Novel, The Book Thief: A Newfangled Perspective on The Nazi War, Anti-Semitism, and Narrative*”. The purpose of this article is to analyze the film version of Markus Zusak’s novel *The Book Thief* on a qualitative and descriptive level. The authors compare the text as a corpus to Percival’s film, delving into cinematic themes and motives. They concentrate on three incentives in the film adaptation: economic enticement, cultural capital, and personal and political motivations. Then, they back up their theory with sequences from the film and secondary evidence. Through Death or the Narrator, Zusak’s work explores the tragedies and anti-Semitism during the Holocaust. In the results of this research, they argue that Percival’s film successfully represents the heart of *The Book Thief*, such as the power of words. They also concluded from the alterations Percival made, the film turns into a family film that earns acquisition. Percival cuts the violent parts so that the picture may be enjoyed by people of all ages. The authors contend that the film emphasizes humanism and strong familial relationships between Germans or between Germans and Jews. In his film, Percival brilliantly portrays women’s resistance, bravery, love, and affection. Besides, the authors also found that the director fails to present the narrator as a unique character like in the book. This article has a clear discussion of how *The Book Thief* was adapted to a film, it can be seen how the author explains one by one the comparison between Markus Zusak’s novel and its adaptation by using Percival’s film and examining cinematic elements and motivations in detail.

The fifth related study is a thesis by Ceenji Wiyures (2023) entitled

“Exposing the Image of Characters, Conflicts, and Settings to Live Action: A Film Adaptation of J.R.R Tolkien’s Novel The Lord of The Rings: The Return of The King”. This research aims to analyze the characters, conflict, and settings in the novel's cinematic version. In this research, the researcher compares two separate works that are examined and contrasted. The first is a literary work by J.R.R. Tolkien, a novel published in 1955 under the title *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, and the second is a cinematic adaptation made by Peter Jackson in 2003 under the same title. The researcher uses Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation and qualitative analysis and library research are used as research methods in this research. The researcher finds that the personalities of the characters in the movie are different from those portrayed in the novel such as the characters being weakened, and more anxious. The conflict in the adaptation is distinct from the one in the book. In the movie, the death of one of the villains is portrayed at the beginning of the movie while in the novel, this character’s death is narrated in the last two chapters. The setting as it was adapted from the movie matches the novel's description. In epic scenes, the movie emphasizes friendship, solidarity, and war. With a setting that engages the imagination, Jackson was able to make the character seem more human. This thesis gives more information about characters that can help to enrich the information in characterization.

The sixth related study is a thesis by Syifa Zahra Salsabila (2022) entitled *“Weaving Character's Images and Black Women's Oppression in The Cinematic Adaptation of The Color Purple”*. This research compares two works with different media; a book entitled *The Color Purple* was written by Alice Walker in

1982 and its film adaptation of the same title was directed by Steven Spielberg in 1985. The researcher aims to find out how Steven Spielberg changed the images of the characters and the oppression in *The Color Purple* novel to a movie adaptation. The research is conducted using the theory of fidelity proposed by James M. Welsh and Paisley Livingston, the adaptation theory proposed by Linda Hutcheon, and Francesco Casetti's four conceptual frameworks for understanding the relationship between literature and movies. To analyze oppression, the researcher uses the theory of five kinds of oppression proposed by Iris Marion Young. The researcher uses a qualitative method. The results showed that there are significant alterations in the characters. Also, the oppression that occurs in the movie can make the audience feel sympathy for the characters who are being oppressed. Additionally, this thesis shares the same goal of identifying the alterations between the novel and film.

The last related study is an article entitled "*Women's Lives: Sisterhood and Feminism*" (2013). This article was written by Eunice Barbara Novio. To reach the purpose, this article utilizes feminism theory by Bhasin and Khan (1986). This article examines the struggles and changes in the women's movement both in the Philippines and in the world in general. The researcher mentions that oppression and discrimination happen in all institutions of society: family, church, and educational institutions. The study explores the lives of seven sisters; the Cabrera sisters namely: Lorena, Abcede, Penelope, Minerva, Nelfa, Nemesia, and Lualhati. These women were born between 1920 & 1940. They survived the Second World War and witnessed the changes in their society until the present time. Throughout

the women's lives, they experienced oppression from the simplest forms to the worst. For instance, in the family or society particularly in Asia, sons are favored over daughters. Sons are given more responsibility in decision-making because they are believed to be the pillars of the families, while daughters are seen as reproduction vehicles only since they cannot carry the name of their fathers upon marriage. In the writer's opinion, this article presents about oppression and discrimination of women specifically in the Philippines. The researcher also makes a table or diagram to explain the concept of Organic Feminism which divided into two parts that are: Biological Sisterhood and Feminist Sisterhood. Well, it makes the readers easy to understand and have a clear understanding of sisterhood and feminism.

In conclusion, there is a lot of research on explaining the alterations of novels to their adaptation in film. Gender roles and femininity have often been discussed recently as feminist issues in society. After reading those related studies the writer concludes that this research will bring a new perspective of the *Little Women* film adaptation and the Gender roles & femininity experience.

1.4 Research Questions

There are several issues related to the process of adaptation, which occurs in adapting *Little Women* into its film. These issues are the alterations between the two works and the representation of gender roles and femininity. Therefore, there are two questions will be analyzed in this research, among them:

1. What kinds of alterations have been made by Greta Gerwig to represent gender roles from the novel into the movie?

2. How faithfully is femininity portrayed in the novel "*Little Women*" by Alcott, and how is it depicted in the movie?

1.5 The Scope of the Research

This research covers a limitation in analyzing the *Little Women* film adaptation to restrict the scope of the research. The writer intends to analyze how gender roles and femininity are portrayed in the film adaptation. The Greta Gerwig version' is the famous *Little Women* adaptation in film and it makes the writer particularly interested in exploring the film. The writer assumes some alterations can be seen in the way Greta Gerwig portrays gender roles. Moreover, the writer intends to concentrate on analyzing the femininity portrayed in female characters in *Little Women*. Nevertheless, femininity is one of the significant issues in *Little Women*'s film adaptation.

1.6 The Objective of the Research

The purpose of this study is to reveal how gender roles and femininity could be essential issues in adapting to the film *Little Women*. The objective of the research is connected to its research questions. Therefore, the writer focuses on how Greta Gerwig adapts *Little Women* to a film to portray the lives of women during the Civil War in the 19th century that depicted gender roles and femininity. To achieve the goals, the writer will compare the novel and the film *Little Women* to show the differences more clearly. The elements that will be compared are as follows: novel and film about the gender roles and femininity in *Little Women*.