

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Adaptation is a process of making stories in a new form. Change is a very natural and inevitable part of the adaptation process. Hutcheon (2006) stated that stories undergo several changes from the original work to adjust the duration and accommodate commercial needs or other cinematic considerations. However, when the change is too significant from the source, it is called infidelity in adaptation, which is a change that occurs as a result of reinterpretation, causing a shift in the theme, message, or meaning of the story.

The existence of infidelity has been a serious debate because it is considered to betray the original work, but with the development of the times, infidelity has begun to be seen as part of the creative process and cultural negotiation. These changes not only create stories with new nuances but also offer new experiences, especially for audiences familiar with the original work. This statement is also supported by Hutcheon's statement that adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication. This statement also emphasizes that adaptations will never be exactly the same as the original work.

The works that are the subject of this study are the novel *The Idea of You* and its film adaptation. *The Idea of You*, published in 2017, is a novel by Robinne Lee, an American author and producer. This novel is her debut work, which has attracted a lot of attention. The novel tells the story of a widow named Solenè Marchand who falls in love with Hayes Campbell, a 20-year-old member of the boy band August Moon. The novel raises the issue of unusual age differences, which is still taboo in society. In 2024, *The*

Idea of You released a film adaptation of the novel. Directed by Michael Showalter and starring popular actresses Anne Hathaway and Nicholas Galitzine. Although it still tells the same story of age-gap romance, the film emphasizes the aspects of romance and the pursuit of personal happiness.

The author compares the film to the original story and finds that there are a number of significant changes that cause a shift in meaning, theme, and message. Interestingly, even though these changes greatly affect the storyline, the film is actually more popular than the novel, which achieved 50 million viewers in Prime Video. Therefore, this phenomenon raises questions about how an adaptation can produce the same essence of the story but also be different at the same time. Infidelity in adaptation involves a process of reinterpretation as a form of creativity on the part of filmmakers. However, what form does this reinterpretation take, and what considerations are made to produce a work that is both good and commercially successful?

This research will elaborate on this phenomenon by using Hutcheon's perspective of adaptation theory in a qualitative method. This research, which is entitled *Infidelity in the Adaptation of The Idea of You: From Novel to Film*, answers questions such as: How is the novel *The Idea of You* adapted into its film version? And to what extent does it demonstrate narrative and thematic infidelity?, How did creative negotiations in the adaptation process of *The Idea of You* influence audience responses to shifts in theme, characterization, and moral message in the film?.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

The film adaptation of the novel *The Idea of You* (2024), directed by Michael Showalter, and the original novel tell the same story but through different media. This adaptation process has resulted in several significant changes, particularly in terms of theme and message, and is considered as the infidelity of adaptation. While the novel focuses on the impact of relationships on their personal lives and the pressure society places on them, the film adaptation emphasizes romantic elements and the search for happiness. These forms of infidelity raise questions about how these deviations create new interpretations from the original work and how such changes might be well-received by the audience.

1.3 The Review of the Previous Study

When adapting a novel into a film, several processes ultimately determine whether the filmmaker remains faithful to the original work or alters it to convey a different message. This infidelity in adaptation occurs when the filmmakers do not fully adhere to the original story. In this review of previous studies, the author divides it into three parts, namely Film Adaptation, Infidelity of Adaptation, and *The Idea of You*.

a. Film adaptations

The first article, titled "Ecranisation of Plot from Novel to Film of *Maze Runner: The Death Cure*" by Neha and Kasih (2024). This study explores the forms of ekranisation, the transformation of the novel *The Death Cure* into a film. The researchers found that in the adaptation process, there were reductions, additions, and modifications. Through analysis using comparative literature theory and ekranisation theory, it was found that although the film retains some similarities with the original novel, there are

additions and reductions in plot and characters, as well as significant conflicts due to considerations of duration and cinematography. The research results indicate that adaptation is not merely a technical issue but also involves the creative and interpretative processes of filmmakers.

The authors agree with this research that the adaptation process will inevitably involve changes. If the entire content of the novel were to be made into a film, the duration required would be longer and boring for the audience. Therefore, duration limitations constitute a significant consideration when adapting a novel into a film. However, Neha and Kasih's research only discusses the forms of change that occur. The research does not mention how these changes can form a new interpretation in terms of meaning, message, and theme. Therefore, this study will further analyze the changes in the adaptation process that can create messages and themes that are different from the original work, while still maintaining the essence of the story

Second, an article titled An Adaptation Study on “Cold Mountain” from Novel to Movie by Liu.H (2024) emphasizes that novels and films are two different things. This study focuses on the statement that novels convey stories through narrative, while films do so through visuals. The results of the study show that the adaptation of the novel Cold Mountain into a film involves several processes, such as deletion, addition of plot and characters, and the use of montage as a technique to depict a more concise visual representation of the story, such as the use of flashback montages, montages to depict atmosphere, and so on. These changes were made to adapt the story to its new form as a film. However, Liu's research still focuses on the technical changes that must occur in the adaptation process, namely deletion, addition, and montage. Therefore, the author would

like to explore further how the technical changes in the adaptation of *The Idea of You* actually form a new interpretation that is relevant to today's socio-cultural context.

The third related study is an article by Nisa and Irfan entitled “Discourse Analysis of Character Dialogue from Novel to Film Adaptation: Using A Walk to Remember as a Research Tool” (2025). Using Brown and Yule's discourse theory, the researchers discuss the complexity of adapting novels into films. During the adaptation process, the removal, addition, and modification of dialogue create differences in audience interpretation between the novel and the film. This study also highlights the context and intertextuality in shaping a new experience for the audience. Several changes are made to enhance the visual presentation without altering the essence of the original narrative. This study emphasizes the importance of analyzing narrative elements to deepen understanding of the adaptation process, as the transformation from novel to film involves various developments into a new medium. Although Nisa and Irfan's research emphasizes the analysis of dialogue discourse in adaptation, this study has not further examined how these changes in dialogue can produce new meanings or themes. Therefore, this study will highlight how changes in discourse during the adaptation process present the theme of infidelity, specifically changes that create new interpretations, thereby forming messages, themes, and meanings that differ from those in the original work.

The fourth related study is an article titled Application Of An Adaptation Approach Through Narrative Comparisons In The Novel and Film *Twilight* by Hartati, Kustanti, and Permanualuddin (2024). Using Eneste's theory of ecranization and Seymour Chatman's theory of interpretation, this study analyzes the adaptation process of the novel *Twilight* into film form, focusing on changes and similarities in narrative elements. The findings show that the adaptation of twilight underwent a number of changes from the

original work in the form of reduction, addition, and modification. These changes are made to adjust the duration and format limitations of the film, but the film still maintains the core of the story without destroying the essence of the original story, for example, the reduction of several scenes that are considered not to have a major contribution to the storyline, and the addition of scenes to support cinematography. Hartati's research, among others, still focuses on narrative changes that aim to retain the original essence of the Twilight story. Thus, the research still focuses on the structural and technical aspects of adaptation and does not discuss how these narrative changes affect the resulting meaning and themes. Therefore, the author's research analyzing *The Idea of You* will explore further how adaptations can create shifts in themes and messages that can be categorized as infidelity.

b. Infidelity in the adaptation

The following study was conducted by Fitriana, Satyawati, and Fatimah (2022) titled Comparison between *the Crazy Rich Asians novel by Kevin Kwan and the Crazy Rich Asians film*. In this research, several changes were found from the original novel. The novel expanded the geographical landscape to include Malaysia, but this part was omitted in the film adaptation. The film changes the depth of the narrative and its cultural context due to omitting some important locations. In addition, the film adaptation also omits some important events that affect the audience's perception. Film adaptations tend to be more concise, so the exploration of character complexity is not as deep. This research concludes that change is inevitable in the adaptation process. Filmmakers need to make adjustments by simplifying some aspects of the novel. However, the research is still too focused on narrative changes due to plot reductions and other technical matters. Although in line with the author's research on infidelity, this study will focus more on the

causes of infidelity through an analysis of changes in plot, setting, theme, and message from the novel to the film.

Subsequently, an article was written by Arlando and Agung entitled "Adaptation Analysis of Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince Novel by J.K. Rowling into Film by David Yates" (2024). This article employs Linda Hutcheon's adaptation theory, which posits that adaptation is not merely repetition. Through a comparative method, the researchers compared the novel and the film, then used Roland Barthes' myth theory to analyze the ideology highlighted in the adaptation process. The results of the study show that the process of adapting the novel into a film altered the novel's form, reducing scenes, adding characters, and shifting settings. These changes brought about a new interpretation of Harry Potter from feudalism in the novel to capitalism in the film. Additionally, the novel is a highly popular work that motivates filmmakers economically by targeting a broader audience through the use of advanced technology to create a more realistic fantasy world in visual form. In line with the author's research on adapting the novel *The Idea of You* into a film, several changes were identified to attract a broader audience. However, the economic aspect is not the main focus of this research. This research focuses on the infidelity in the adaptation of the you, which creates a new interpretation. The process will explore the adjustment in terms of social and cultural aspects, as well as commercial needs.

Next, an article by Ramdani, Andang, and Agry titled *The Characterization Adaptation In The Novel And The Film Of 'And Then There Were None'* (2023) explores the differences and similarities in the characterization of the main character from the novel to the film adaptation. Using Linda Hutcheon's adaptation theory, the study identified that in the adaptation process of *Then There Were None*, there were omissions,

additions, and modifications to suit the film medium, as well as narrative and commercial purposes. This emphasizes that the adaptation process requires an understanding of how the core of the original story is maintained without sacrificing its essence. Ramdani et al.'s research is beneficial as a reference for research on the adaptation of *The Idea of You*. However, this research differs, although it employs the same approach; the works studied are two distinct works. In addition, this research not only focuses on the narrative aspects but also on the significant changes from the novel to film, which leads to a new message and theme.

c. *The Idea of You*

Robinee Lee's *The Idea of You* was released in 2017. The novel tells the story of the romance between Solene Marchand and Hayes Campbell, which highlights the significant age disparity. Solene is 39 years old, while Hayes is 20. Their romantic relationship is faced with various social conflicts, particularly regarding the impact of their relationship on their children. After its release in 2017, the novel did not immediately experience a surge in sales. Sales only exploded in 2019 during the COVID period, due to a conspiracy between Hayes' character and one of the famous boy bands, Harry Styles.

In 2024, the film adaptation of the novel *The Idea of You* premiered on Prime Video, a streaming platform. The film managed to reach 50 million viewers within 2 weeks. When compared to the original story in the novel, the story is quite different. In fact, both carry different messages. In particular, despite carrying a different message, the film's idea received a lot of praise. However, no academic research exists on this work, and most reviews are still personal articles or blogs.

The Neverending Bookshelf (2021) reviewed *The Idea of You*. She argues that this book is not just a romance novel but also a social criticism. The novel explores a taboo love story with such a significant age gap. The story satirizes the double standards that exist in society in viewing relationships based on age and gender, where aging men are considered more mature, while women are deemed less attractive. The story is not only about love, but also addresses loss and social expectations that often overlook middle-aged women. The novel offers an extraordinary experience to readers through its emotionally charged narrative.

Benjamin (2024) wrote an article about the film *The Idea of You*. According to him, this film brings back the quality of romcom films, as they have lately prioritized quantity over quality. In the film, there is a slight adjustment to the age gap of the characters, which differs from the book, but the central conflict in the story still influences people's opinion of Solenè. Anne Hathaway as Solenè also keeps the audience from wondering why Hayes fell in love with Solenè. The film also touches on misogyny and ageism lightly.

Overall, the available reviews remain general and primarily focus on the issue of age-gap romance. Although the film review mentions adjustments, the article does not delve into the adaptation process in depth. Meanwhile, this study not only discusses the external aspects of these two works, but the author will also compare the two works and analyze in depth how the adaptation process occurred so that it can be categorized as infidelity of adaptation.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How is the novel *The Idea of You* adapted into its film version? And to what extent does it demonstrate narrative and thematic infidelity?
2. How did creative negotiations in the adaptation process of *The Idea of You* influence audience responses to shifts in theme, characterization, and moral message in the film?

1.5 The Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is limited to the analysis of the infidelity of adaptation in *The Idea of You*. This study will analyze how an adaptation is categorized as infidelity through changes in theme, message, and meaning by comparing scenes. This study will also explore how infidelity in the adaptation affects the audience's perception and views by looking at a number of reactions on social media.

1.6 The Objective of the Research

This research analyzes changes in narrative aspects that cause infidelity to the original work. It compares narrative elements such as plot and character portrayal in the novel and film. This study uses Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory and several relevant studies to strengthen its analysis.