



THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF JO MARCH'S CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL AND FILM OF "LITTLE WOMEN"

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Abstract

Literary adaptation involves changes in the process of transferring some elements from the source text into the new medium, one of the examples is the adaptation of the narrative elements such as the main character. This study analyzes the adaptation process from the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott adapted to the film *Little Women* by Greta Gerwig the main purpose of the research is to analyze the similarities and differences found in Jo March's character between the novel and its film adaptation. This study used the qualitative descriptive method combined with the theory of adaptation by Hutcheon (2013). The findings of this study were the narrative elements adapted, namely Jo March as the main character in the novel and film. In conclusion, the similarities and differences found in Jo March's character from the novel and film were the consequences of the process of adaptation that involved some adjustments to fit with the new medium.

Key words: Little Women, Main Character, Adaptation, Comparative Literature

A. INTRODUCTION

Literary works are cultural products that are produced through some creative and imaginative idea of writing, but the output is not only limited to written work but also verbal depending on the author's intentions and intended to have aesthetic or artistic value. Even though literary works are well known to be imaginative and aesthetic but in fact, literary works are divided into fiction and nonfiction works. Fiction comes from imagination, such as mysteries, science fiction, romance, etc. Meanwhile, nonfiction comes from facts, such as biography, business, cooking, tips, news, and so on (Desmawati, 2018:91).

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Every literary work has its own uniqueness that makes them different from each other. Literature represents a crucial document of human observations, thoughts, emotions, and experiences associated with the aspects of human life that hold meaningful and lasting significance for everyone (Pratami, Djohan, & Purwaningsih, 2017:110). Based on the previous opinion, literature or literary works are based on people's complexity, which indicates that every literary work is different because people have their own thoughts, emotions, and experiences, leading to different results. The distinction of literary works can be analyzed and studied for their literary techniques and their historical, cultural, and social influences. They are often characterized by their use of language, structure, and themes.

One of the popular form of literature from time to time is the novel. According to Fadhillah (2018:105), the novel is a fictional prose narrative form, comes from the Italian language *novella* which means new and later defined as a short story in a prose narrative form, usually length (contains more than 50.000 words) which is not so short and not so long either and build with some complexity that deals with human experience and idea. Not all literary texts that have more than 50.000 words can be considered a novel because Nurgiyantoro (2009:23) discusses that a novel or any narrative story is built with two essential elements that are related to each other namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic element is elements that build the novel itself; the reader finds these elements as a fact that appear in the novel. Intrinsic elements contain story, plot, character, theme, setting, point of view, language style, etc. Meanwhile, the extrinsic element is an element that indirectly builds the novel from outside the structure of the novel itself. A Novel tells a story through the use of characters, setting, plot, and theme or often called narrative elements (Fadhillah, 2018:105). Usually, a novel tells a story about the protagonist who faces some challenges and obstacles in order to achieve their goals with the help of some supporting characters. The challenges and obstacles faced by the protagonist are the aspects that drive the plot of the story, and the sequence of the plot gives the characters in the story a space to grow with the plot.

A film or movie, also known as a motion picture, is a form of expression that has a similar aspect to other artistic media, for the basic elements of other media become its own (Petrie & Boggs, 2018:3). Generally, a film presented on-screen utilize moving images to convey a story, ideas, or messages. The film also included various scenes, camera movement and placement, editing, dialogues, music, and action (Hunt, Marland & Rawie, 2010). Nelmes (2012:80) describes films that usually tell stories but not all. Films that tell stories are called narrative films, and there are films which not tell stories, such as documentation and abstract animations. Then, he continued that films can be a narrative if they can present a series of events that are connected with each other or known as event sequences. And the other condition is communication. Communication in films is slightly complex because it combines audio and visual and sometimes text also. In the art of filmmaking, novels have a great impact on the film's storytelling structure and narrative elements (Nelmes, 2012:80). This statement also indicates that there are some connections between novels and films. Every narrative

structure in a novel, such as a plot, character, setting, theme, etc., can be found in a narrative film.

The essential meaning of adaptation is the move from one form to another, but it not only moves the elements as it was but also provides the process of changing and modifying elements experienced from one literary work to another so that it can present some new experience when enjoying the new form. Hutcheon & O'Flynn (2013:2) mentioned that every piece of art draws inspiration from existing works of art, and the story must be born from other stories. The adaptation process from novel to film carried many aspects, especially the narrative structure, movies convey narratives, and how the cinema presents the narratives, both in the case of storytelling structure and narrative elements, has been highly affected by the novel (Nelmes, 2012:80). Even though the narrative structure of a novel might be the same when it is adapted to a film, but the result and the experience gained by the audience must be different when reading the novel and watching the film.

In literary work, there are two essential aspects that build the literary work itself; it is extrinsic and intrinsic (narrative) elements. There are some elements of narrative that are always mentioned by the expert, such as plot, character, symbol, and theme. The narrative elements can be found in both novels and films. The focus of this research is one of the narrative elements, namely character. Character in literary works can be defined as a human representation based on the author's behavior, actions, and descriptions of the character itself, the terms known as outwardly and inwardly (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006). Getting to know a character outwardly is through what the character does, says, and looks like or also through the opinions and reactions of other characters. And knowing a character inwardly is through the author's presentation or through a narrator's direct explanation. However, when describing a character, every author has their own way of writing and portraying the character in the story. The character can be categorized into several types, namely role, function, characteristic, and development, and these types can be categorized based on different views and perspectives in describing the character (Nurgiyantoro, 2009).

Little Women written by Louisa May Alcott is a form of novel that is divided into two parts. The first part was published in 1868 and the second was published in 1869 published by the Robert Brothers. *Little Women* has many adaptations, especially for the film, the newest film adaptation of *Little Women* was published in 2019 directed and written by Greta Gerwig, and starred with many amazing actors and actresses, such as Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson, Timothee Chalamet, and many others. *Little Women* is a romance and family drama film that tells the life story of the March sisters named Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy in Concord, Massachusetts in the 19th century. They have their own dream, Meg March marries and builds a family with a teacher, John. Jo March wandered and started a career as a writer in New York City. Beth who loves to play piano and Amy studying to become an artist in Paris.

In analyzing the character of Jo March from the novel and its film adaptation, the researcher uses the theory of adaptation by Hutcheon (2013). This

research analyses the content of the stories to identify the characters of Jo March in the novel and film. This research's main purpose is to identify the similarities and differences in Jo March's character portrayed in the novel and its film adaptation.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method that refers to the content analysis of the literary form with the theory of adaptation by Hutcheon (2013). This method relies on the process of analytical description to identify the interpretation and meaning of the text and image data (Creswell, 2018:254). The main source of the data was the narrative text of the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott and the scene and the script from the film *Little Women* by Greta Gerwig with the support of the theory of comparative literature by Susan Bassnett and the theory of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon.

According to Creswell (2018, 267), data analysis in the qualitative method is to make sure that the data collected are fit with the analysis. For analyzing the data, the researcher used narrative and cinematic approaches to discover the process of adaptation in *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott in the novel and film. The use of a narrative approach in this research was to analyze and describe the whole story contained in the novel and film based on the character elements. This research used and collected many data, either primary or supporting data related to the research, and analyzed the data in the form of narratives and film scenes in the story that were relevant to the research purpose.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The main character is basically a character that gets full attention throughout the story, either be the cause of events or as the subject of events. One of the main characters in the novel and its film adaptation is Jo March. Jo March is the second eldest of the March sisters and is known for her ambition, independence, and loyalty. The similarities and differences were found in her character portrayed by the novel and its film adaptation. This research discussion is limited to the character's role, function, characteristics, and development, and these types can be categorized based on different views and perspectives in describing the character (Nurgiyantoro, 2009).

1. Research Finding

Novels and films were very different media for telling a story. In the adaptation process, some changes are needed to fit the format of the new media. These changes include performed, addition, subtraction, and modification. The data found will be divided into two tables, namely similarities and differences based on the types of the data. In the similarities tables, there are 4 data from the novel and film labeled with the initial code: 1CS, 2CS, 3CS, and 4CS. Moreover, in the differences table, there are 4 data from the novel and film labelled with the initial code: 1CD, 2CD, 3CD, and 4CD.

Table 1 The Similarities of Jo March's Character between the novel and film

No	Code	Quotation		Type
		Novel	Film	
1	1CS	<i>'Nothing more, except that I don't believe I shall ever marry. I'm happy as I am, and love my liberty too well to be in a hurry to give it up for any mortal man.'</i> (Alcott, 2014:641).	<i>JO: Nothing more -- except that... (honest) I don't believe I will ever marry. I'm happy as I am, and love my liberty too well to be in any hurry to give it up. (1:29:12 – 1:30:57).</i>	Role
2	2CS	<i>'Scold as much as you like, you'll never see your silly old book again,' cried Amy, getting excited in her turn. 'why not?' 'I burned it up.' 'What! My little book I was so fond of, and worked over, and meant to finish before Father got home? Have you really burned it?'</i> said Jo, turning very pale, while her eyes kindled and her hands clutched Amy nervously. <i>'Yes, I did! I told you I'd make you pay for being so cross yesterday, and I have, so..'</i> (Alcott, 2014:130).	<i>AMY I BURNT IT UP! I BURNT UP YOUR BOOK! I TOLD YOU I'D MAKE YOU PAY AND I DID! JO You wicked girl! You wicked, wicked girl! I can never write it again! I'll never forgive you as long as I live! They are fighting, full-out fighting, during these last lines, as their sisters and Marmee attempt to stop it. (46:55 – 47:15).</i>	Function
3	3CS	<i>'No, Mother, it is better as it is, and I'm glad Amy has learned to love him. But you are right in one thing. I am lonely, and perhaps if Teddy</i>	<i>JO: Perhaps... perhaps I was too quick in turning him down. MARMEE: Do you love him? JO: If he asked me again,</i>	Characteristic

		<p><i>had tried again, I might have said 'Yes', not because I love him any more, but because I care more to be loved than when he went away.'</i> (Alcott, 2014:768).</p>	<p><i>I think I would say yes... Do you think he'll ask me again?</i> <i>MARMEE: But do you love him?</i> <i>JO (tearing up): I know that I care more to be loved. I want to be loved.</i> <i>MARMEE: That is not the same as loving.</i> <i>JO (crying, trying to explain herself to herself): Women have minds and souls as well as hearts, ambition and talent as well as beauty and I'm sick of being told that love is all a woman is fit for. But... I am so lonely. (1:47:12 – 1:49:22).</i></p>	
4	4CS	<p><i>'We shall see. Haf you patience to wait a long time, Jo? I must go away and do my work alone. I must help my boys first, because, even for you, I may not break my word to Minna. Can you forgif that, and be happy while we hope and wait?'</i> <i>'Yes, I know I can, for we love one another, and that makes all the rest easy to bear. I have my duty, also, and my work. I couldn't enjoy myself if I neglected them even for you, so there's no need of hurry or impatience. You can do your part out West, I can do mine here, and both be happy</i></p>	<p><i>FRIEDRICH: Jo!</i> <i>Jo sees Friedrich, also standing under an umbrella, but alone. She runs towards him. She feels her emotions rising, she starts to cry, despite herself.</i> <i>FRIEDRICH (CONT'D): Jo, why are you crying?</i> <i>JO: Because -- because you are going away.</i> <i>FRIEDRICH: I would never leave if you wished me to stay.</i> <i>JO: I wish you would stay.</i> <i>FRIEDRICH: But, but I have nothing to give you but my full heart and these empty hands.</i> <i>JO: (she puts her hands in</i></p>	Development

	<p><i>hoping for the best, and leaving the future to be as God wills.’ ‘Ah! Thou gifest me such hope and courage, and I haf nothing to gif back but a full heart and these empty hands,’ cried the Professor, quite overcome.</i></p> <p><i>Jo never, never would learn to be proper, for when he said that as they stood upon the steps, she just put both hands into his, whispering tenderly, ‘Not empty now,’ and stooping down, kissed her Friedrich under the umbrella (Alcott, 2014:842).</i></p>	<p><i>his, and steps under the umbrella) They aren’t empty now. They kiss one of those epic perfect kisses. The train arrives, and he doesn’t get on it. BAM. (02:04:08 – 02:04:30).</i></p>	
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Table 2 The Differences of Jo March’s Character between the novel and film

No	Code	Quotation		Type
		Novel	Film	
1	1CD	No quotation was found.	<i>Jo jerks awake to find Beth gone - she goes downstairs and sees Marmee there. Jo looks at Marmee, and her mother, for the first time in Jo’s life, breaks. Jo becomes the parent at that moment, comforting her mother, who is trapped in the unimaginable pain of losing a child. (1:30:00 – 1:30:30).</i>	Role
2	2CD	No Quotation was found.	<i>Jo sits, hands folded, trying to cover the ink stains. Mr. Dashwood</i>	Function

			<i>reads her story with a pen in hand, gleefully crossing out and making notes, changes. Every time his pen scratches, Jo feels her heart breaking (02:40 – 03:49).</i>	
3	3CD	<i>'Why don't you write? That always used to make you happy,' said her mother once, when the desponding fit overshadowed Jo. 'I've no heart to write, and if I had, nobody cares for my things.' 'We do. Write something for us, and never mind the rest of the world. Try it, dear. I'm sure it would do you good, and please us very much.' 'Don't believe I can.' But Jo got out her desk and began to overhaul her half-finished manuscripts. (Alcott, 2014:764).</i>	<i>She feeds a published story into the fire. Then she burns more stories, printed, unpublished, half-finished, she burns them all. It is a potlatch, a total burning down of everything she has made up until this point. She finds one last piece, and is about to give it over to the fire, when she reads on top: "For Beth." She stops. She takes a fresh sheet of paper and starts writing. (1:51:30 – 1:52:00).</i>	Characteristic
4	4CD	<i>'Dear fellows! It does my heart good to see them forget business and frolic for a day,' answered Jo, who now spoke in a maternal way of all mankind. 'Yes, I remember, but the life I wanted then seems selfish, lonely, and cold to me now. I haven't given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait, and I'm sure it will be all the better for such experiences and</i>	<i>JO: You keep your \$500, and I'll keep the copyright, thank you. Also, I want ten percent of royalties. DASHWOOD: Five point five percent and that is very generous. JO: Nine percent. DASHWOOD :Six percent -- and that's it. JO: If I'm going to sell my heroine into marriage for money, I might as well get some of it. DASHWOOD: Six point six percent.</i>	Development

		illustrations as these.’ (Alcott, 2014:858).	JO: Done. DASHWOOD: And you don't need to decide about the copyright now. JO: I've decided. I want to own my own book. (02:05:45 – 02:06:10).	
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2. Discussion

In a narrative story, one of the crucial elements that carry the story plot to move forward is the characters. In describing the characters, there are several types that are attached to the characters, this type can be categorized based on the several perspectives and views. The types of characters mentioned are role, function, characteristics, and development (Nurgiyantoro, 2009).

In data 1CS, the similarities were found in Jo March's role as a character between the novel and its film adaptation. From the quotation in data 1SC, the events from the novel and film adaptation are the same, which shows the situation where Laurie proposes his feelings to Jo, but she rejects it by saying that she loves her independence and does not believe in marriage. In this event, Jo March fills the role of the main character who becomes the focus of the event, which is her reaction towards Laurie's proposal. In addition, the film adapted this event without any modifications, which means that this is one of the crucial events that determine the role of Jo March's character as the main character in the novel and film.

Data 2CS shows the personality of Jo March who faced an unexpected situation at the moment. The novel and film adaptation share a similar event regarding the unexpected situation faced by Jo March. The event shows that Amy who feels furious and jealous of Jo, and because of that, she burns all of Jo's script into ashes. Jo later finds out that Amy already burned all of her script, she is angry and begins to fight with Amy. This event indicates Jo's personality which is ambitious and temperament. Jo's character function is also shown through the event, which is the protagonist who fits with the audience's ideal of a character, which means that Jo March's character is related to the reader and audience.

Data 3CS shows similarities in the characteristics of Jo March's character between the novel and its film adaptation. The event from the novel and film shows Jo March's dialogue with her mother. Jo tells her mother that she feels lonely and needs someone to be with her. She is even willing to accept Laurie's proposal if he proposes again, not because she loves him, but because she feels lonely. The events related to Jo's feelings in both the novel and its film adaptation above indicate her character to be a round character. Her love for independence brings her character to an ironic situation where she doesn't want to feel lonely, but at the same time, she only cares about being loved rather than loving someone to be with her. As a round character, the complexity of her character makes her character unique.

Last, in data 4CS, the narrative text from the novel and scenes from the film show Jo March who has some romantic interaction with Professor Bhaer. As the story unfolds, Jo realizes that she has been in love with Professor Bhaer, she takes the liberty to tell Professor Bhaer that she loves him and wants him to stay with her. Even though the novel and film wrap up their relationship differently, the most important thing here is both versions show that Jo March and Professor Bhaer have a special and romantic relationship. This event indicates Jo's development character. In the beginning of the story, she said that she didn't believe romantic relationship because she loves her independency so much. As the story unfolds, especially her relationship with Laurie, her lonely feelings, and in the end her special feeling towards Professor Bhaer. All of these events shows that Jo March's character is changed and develop as she encounter many problems in her process of growing up.

The differences in Jo March's character are also found between the novel and its film adaptation, the changes are the consequences of the adaptation process where the content has to go through some adjustments to fit with the new medium.

In data 1CD, the quotation found in the film shows the situation where Jo has to comfort her mother after Beth is gone forever. She at the moment becomes an adult who can comfort others and herself. This event shows Jo March's capabilities to handle her own feelings and also her mother's feelings when both of them still grieving after losing Beth. The quotation found indicates Jo March's character as a main character with her maturity and independence as the focus of this event, and also the film draws more attention to Jo March's character which makes the film's story mainly focused on her. Meanwhile, in the novel, Jo is still considered a main character but with a different approach. Her teenage days influenced so much in determined her character as the main character in the novel.

Data 2CD shows the scene in the film where Jo goes to a publisher's house to publish her story. Unexpectedly, she saw a terrible scene where almost half of her story got cut off and the publisher only took half of her story with some notable changes. She can't do anything, instead of just holding herself back at the moment. Her reaction to the situation she faced at the moment indicates her character to categorized as a protagonist character to whom the audiences and readers can relate.

Data 3CD shows the scene where Jo March is still in mourning after losing Beth forever. In the novel, Jo March gets comforted by her mother, she also suggests Jo write again so she might be little by little move on from Beth's incident. Meanwhile, in its film adaptation, the approach of Jo March to go through her mourning was entirely different from the novel. The film shows Jo March who is still in mourning after losing Beth, she sits near the firepit and starts to burn all of her work because she feels that her writing is useless, and it can't save Beth. Paper after paper, script after script she throws them all to the fire, but she stops when she sees a piece of paper with a writing "For Beth" in it. Jo stops burning her script and starts to write again. The different approach to Jo March's character in facing her mourning indicates the difference in her characteristics. Both versions still categorized Jo March's character as a round character but with

different approaches and details. In the novel, Jo's character is portrayed as a woman who still needs a support system, in this case, her family, especially her mother. Meanwhile, the film emphasizes more on her independence, which is shown in the quotation in data 3CD. This indicates that her character is able to deal with her problems and make a decision by herself.

Last, in data 4CD, the scene in the novel shows Jo who is sitting with her family and talking about their early days as teenagers when they are still full of ambitions. Jo realizes that her ambitions and her dreams of life are bad for her, it seems selfish, lonely, and cold. She is happy with the life she has right now. Meanwhile, in the film, the scene shows Jo once again going through a discussion about publishing her story. She came over to the same publisher's house and the same editor, but the difference now is her willingness to fight for her story, where she insists on keeping the copyright for herself and negotiates with her royalties to get a better agreement. The novel and its film adaptation show the development character of Jo March. In the novel, Jo's character becomes wiser and more mature, which is shown by her realization that her ideal life is wrong and bad. In addition, the film emphasizes more in the development of Jo's character according to women's agency in the modern era. She is able to negotiate her royalties while keeping the copyright, which shows her independence and breaks all the stereotypes of women at the moment.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The adaptation process involves many elements in the process of work, it is not as simple as changing the medium, but it requires some re-interpretation and re-construction of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements from the novel to a film, it is also changing the method of storytelling from a text to an audiovisual; all of the process of adaptation above is based on the theory of adaptation from Hutcheon (2013). The theory helps the study to analyze the similarities and differences that occurred from the process of adaptation in the character of Jo March from the novel written by Louisa May Alcott entitled *Little Women* and its film adaptation directed by Greta Gerwig with the same title.

However, in the process of analyzing the character of Jo March from the novel and its film adaptation. There were 16 pieces of data used to analyzed Jo March's character from the novel and film adaptation. The data were divided into similarities (8 data), and differences (8 data). The data comes from the novel (8 data) and the film (8 data).

According to the analysis and conclusion made by the researcher above, the researcher hopes that this study can help to increase the knowledge and interest in the study of comparative literature especially in the adaptation of classic literature into popular literature nowadays. Finally, this research is expected to be research that can provide some practical and theoretical benefits for other researchers in the future with the same field of study, especially comparative literature and literary adaptation on a broader scope of study.

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