

From Narrative Slave to Movie: Adaptation Theory

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Abstract: *Literary work and movie have their own characteristics even though both have the same storyline. Literary work reveal the story in the narrative form while movie, reveal the story through audio and visual. Today many literary works adapted into movie. One of literary works adapted into movie is Twelve Years a Slave. Twelve Years a Slave is a work was written by Solomon Northup which is based on his journey life when he was become slave for twelve years. This work was adapted into movie, in 2013 with the same title. This study aims to find the differences and similarities of both version of literary work and its movie and to identify the process of adapting of literary work (narrative slave) into adaptation work (movie). The method used was document analysis and showcase the screenshot with using the structuralism which focus on the intrinsic elements of the story and comparing it with intrinsic elements on movie adaptation. This data analysis shows that there are many changes that occur in the adaptation work during the adaptation process. That was because the changes of medium and how to deliver the message be adjusted with duration and the existence of other supporting things such as the addition, reduction and improvisation of the scene.*

Key words : *Adaptation, Literary work, Movie*

1. Introduction

Literary work is reflection of human life, it is described the story of human life. Literature is created by using language as a medium and art as part of it. Through the language, the authors can express their experience, feelings, ideas, and insight about social realities, so the reader can get the meaning that occurs in the literary works. Wellek and Warren state that: Literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation and literature represents "life" [1] and "life" is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner of subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literature "imitation". The word "imitation" here means that

sometimes literature itself, to reflects, copying, or representing real life that has ever happened or ever experienced. Fathu assumed that it is difficult to trace an original story from the language to another medium [2].

Nowadays, most of literary text adapted into movie or film. With the advent of times, the movie business are now many varied, both in and outside public. There are lot of film adapted from literary works. Many literary text having exciting story and a groove interesting, so that make the director adapting the literary works into film. The market of film adaptations may have their own areas in the society as long as their interests toward movie adapted from literary work. In generally, film is a new way to enjoy the arts.

One kind of literary work adapted into movie is narrative slave. In the narrative slave, the author stringing all aspects intrinsic about characterization, plot, theme, setting and description of the event through a series of words, which were recorded so that the reader can imagine freely and thoroughly without any restriction and in the end the reader can understand the content of reading written by the author. While in the movie, the director tries to make the depiction in the narrative slave using different techniques namely audio and visual. Audio is a depiction of events through a sound effect that describe the events that currently happening. While visually depicting the scene with the actress and the actor who played into characters who portray a story that has been directed by a director, so that the audience does not need to spend more time to read a novel and form a depiction of his own imagination of what he reads. This is because the director has made a definite filming. The director not only makes the film itself but also raised a novel or short story that is interesting to be appointed as a film.

Muhardi and Hasanuddin suggest that literary works such as novel and narrative slave is unity problems that create a series of problems with cause and effect factors. It is caused by the number of problems [3]. In other words, a novel and

narrative slave is more difficult when it is adapted into a movie.

Julie Sanders explain adaptation is as a “certain process that involves a transition or transformation from one genre to another, such as the changes of novels into film; drama into musical; dramatization of prose narratives into prose fiction; or the inverse movement of making play into prose narrative” [4]. According to Linda Hutcheon “to adapt” is to adjust, to alter, to make suitable [5]. Adaptation also refers to the process and the product, such as : *formal entity or product, process of creation, process of reception.*

From the earliest days of cinema, adaptation has been nearly as common as the development of original screenplays/scenario. Adaptation is possibly seen as interpretation, involving, at least one person’s reading of a text, choices about what elements to transfer, and decisions about how to activate these elements in medium of images and sound stated by Hawkes, [6]

Recently, there are many literary works adapted into movie such as *Harry Potter* by J.K Rowling. *The Lord of The Ring* by J.R.R.Tolkien, *Twilight*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The great Gatsby*, *Anna Karenina*, *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Northop and others. *Twelve years a slave* is a narrative slave in 1853 by Solomon Northop and the narrative slave was adapted into movie with the same title in 2013 [7]. That narrative slave tells about a black captive as a slave for 12 years. Although it was filmed with the same story, it must be fulfilled by many changes due to differences in medium and duration.

Therefore, the researcher want to identify the differences and similarity of narrative slave and the movie. In this case, the narrative slave and the movie has the same title (*Twelve Years a Slave*). The purpose of this study is to analyze the process of adaptation from narrative slave into movie.

2. Gap of the study

This research not the first research that analyzes about adapting literary works into movie. There are some paper about *adapting process* that have been done before.

Bishara examined a paper with entitled a comparative study of *Othello* and *Kaliyattam (2014)*”. her research attempts to study an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Othello* (1603) into the Malayalam film *Kaliyattam* (1997) by Jayaraj as inter-semiotic translation with using Roman Jakobson’s theory, this

paper analyzes how the play has been reformulated to suit the medium of film set in Kerala culture and how far Jayaraj has succeeded in handling the span of time between 16th century and the 20th . As well as Elisa Aguilar also writing a paper entitled *with tears and a journey* “recreating Shakespeare life on screen” Elisa explores the way the film recreates Shakespeare’s life taking into account the most recent studies about the biopic genre and the latest theories of adaptation. She uses an intertextuality perspective to analyze the film ‘Shakespeare in love’ [8].

The next researcher is *Bao Bao* with the article “*The Differences between Novels and Films Enhance Literature Teaching by Using Films*. In her paper, she believes many films are based on novels. However, each of them uses different ways to tell the similar stories. The paper discusses the differences from several aspects in terms of their nature, ways of narration, as well as the effect they bring about and it mainly focuses on the special benefits of using films in English language teaching [9].

Four researcher with adaptation issues is Zeynep Doğan with “*A Passage to Screen : Adapting E. M. Forster*, Zeynep uses intertextual approach. His paper demonstrates the specific narrative and representational aspects of two very-well known adaptations based on English author E. M. Forster’s novels: *A Passage to India* and *A Room with a View* that challenge and reinterpret the motives of their source texts in relation with the issues and debates regarding to the heritage film by displaying woman’s sexuality [10].

Next researcher was Neil Hollands explore *Adaptation of Novels into Film—a Comprehensive New Framework for Media Consumers and Those Who Serve Them*. Neil did a study test about the correlation of consumer reviews of novels and the films adapted from them to determine whether the rating of one media form can predict the rating of its partner film or novel. A data set of 1470 movie adaptations released between 1981 and 2000. The results of his analysis defined a framework of 14 personal, creative, formal, and environmental differences between novel and film, and three key commonalities: narrative core, symbiotic effect, and comparative act [11].

The next researcher is Natalie Neill, *writerly adaptation*. She focused upon a group of recent adaptation films and which openly interpret and comment upon the literary sources and which can be seen as the challenge to the traditional adaptation studies. She use Roland Barthes concept, structuralism approach and fidelity criticism to

reflect an interest in the formal or medial, differences between literature and film [12].

This paper might have the same subject matter of the researches with adapting process, but this research is different from the previous related studies. The focusses of this research are the changes of the story that occur due to different medium. The researcher describes it with the text of novel compared with the the movie into audio and visual and see the procees of adapting novel into movie which enables the similarities and differences both of medium.

3. Objective of the study

The objective of this study was To find out the differences between the narrative slave *Twelve Years a Slave* as a source and the movie and how the process of adaptation.

4. Method

This research used descriptive qualitative method in conducting this research. The data will be presented in descriptive and comparative qualitative method. Comparison analysis technique was used to compare one element to others.

5. Source of Data

The researcher collected the data by doing library research. It was done by reading many books and other materials related to this writing. The data were classified into two types. They were primary data and secondary data.

Primary data were the important data of a research or the data that were directly related to the object of research. The primary data were taken from the narrative slave *Twelve Years a Slave* and its movie *Twelve Years a Slave* including the character and characterization, the theme and the setting of the stories. The primary data comprised with all the words, dialogues, and sentences occurring in the film adaptation related to the problem.

Supporting data included all sources which supported the main data. The supporting data were taken from other sources, such as books, article, encyclopedias, internet, and other sources related to this writing as well as from library research.

6. Data Analysis

In processing data the writer conducted some steps as follows:

1. Reading the narrative slave *Twelve Years a Slave* repeatedly

2. Watching the film continuously to understand the content of film
3. Taking notes of the important information in both primary and supporting data source
4. Comparing both of narrative slave and film and it will be presented in the table in order to make easier in identifying the characteristic both of the medium .

7. Result and discussion

Table 1. List of the character in the narrative slave and in the movie

character	Role	Narrative Slave	movie
Solomon/Platt	Main character	√	√
Anna	Solomon's wife	√	√
Elisabeth	Solomon's child	√	√
Margaret	Solomon's child	√	—
Alonzo	Solomon's child	√	√
Mr.Brown	People (1) who sold Solomon as slave	√	√
Mr.Hamilton	People (2) who sold Solomon as slave	√	√
Patsey	Young slave who is always hated by Mrs.Epps	√	√
Bass	Kind and wise man	√	√
Mr.Ford	Kind and wise master	√	√
Mr.Epps	Cruel master	√	√
Tibeats	Cruel overseer	√	√
Mr.Chappin	Kind overseer	√	√
Mr.Burch	Dealer of slaves in Washington	√	√

From the table 1, it can be shown that most of characters in the narrative slave also dispalyed in the movie version.

In the beginning of the story, there is a picture of the main character in "*Twelve Years a*

Slave”. He is Solomon Northup. There is a page in the story describing Solomon is wearing his plantation suit.

Solomon Northup originally was born as a freeman and then he was sold as a slave for twelve years who changed his whole life which was happy to be a disaster. In the movie version, Solomon is also described as black captive who suffers from injustice, racism, and slavery for twelve years. Both in the narrative slave and movie version, Solomon illustrated with his plantation suit as below :



Source : narrative slave and movie of TYS

Northup wrote his story by remembering the time when he was rescued from slavery in the month of January, 1853, and he connected the story to his own experience as a slave into narrative slave to give truthful facts about slavery, injustice, and racism at that time. Initially, he wrote it by remembering his ancestors and his father, Mintus Northup, and how his father could become a freeman :

“As far back as I have been able to ascertain, my ancestor on the paternal side were slaves in Rhode Island. They belonged to a family by the name of Northup, one of whom, removing to the State of New_York, settled at Hoosic, in Rensselaer country. He brought with him Mintus Northup, my father. On the death of this gentleman, which must have occurred some fifty years ago, my father became free, having been emancipated by a direction in his will” (Northup, 1855 : 18).

The quotation above shows how Solomon Northup's father and Solomon are being as freeman. In the movie version, the plot is a bit different from the narrative slave. In the movie, the story began when Solomon had become a slave and he worked in cane plantation. In the movie, Solomon and the others slave was ordered to cut the canes as much as possible and separated the stems and leaves for replanting. Their works always controlled by plantation overseer and the master. Even in the movie, the memory of his ancestors, his father, Mintus Northup, and how he was born as a freeman are dispensed. The other different thing in both version of narrative slave and movie is about the scene of young woman slave who gave himself to Solomon to have sex with, but Solomon not attracted

to her because Solomon always remember his family. Yet in the narrative slave, the scene of the young woman slave can not be found.

The next page in narrative slave tells about Christmas in 1829 when Solomon is married with his wife, Anne Hampton, and how Solomon describes his wife. However, in the movie version, it is not explained when it is exactly Solomon married with Anne. Many things are omitted when this literary works adapted into movie, such as the memory of his father is eliminated. Even the number of Solomon's children are different between the narrative slave and the movie version. In the narrative slave, Solomon actually has three children, (two daughters and one son). They are: Elizabeth, Margareth and Alonzo. On the other hand in the movie version, Solomon only has two children, Margareth and Alonzo.

Generally the differences and similarities between narrative slave and the movie can be seen in the following table :

Table 2. The differences and similarities between narrative slave of Twelve Years a Slave and its movie version

No	In the narrative slave of TYS	In the movie of TYS
1	This doesn't happen	There is a scene about a woman slave who give herself to be ravished by Platt
2	Solomon has three children : Elizabeth, Margareth and Alonzo	Solomon has two children : Margareth and Alonzo
3	Solomon is sold to Tibbeats by Ford.	Ford sells Solomon to Epps to protect him from Tibbeats.
4	Solomon's wife decribed appereantly have mixed race, a colered girl	Solomon's wife has a black skin
5	Mrs. Epps always want to kill or send away Patsey	Patsey wants to kill her self
6	During Solomon transport to South, Solomon and other slaves had a plan to run away	They all decided to survive and endure and keep their heads down
7	During Solomon	This doesn't

	transport to South, Solomon and the other slaves was infected by small pox	happen
8.	Platt's friend who was redeemed by his master is John Williams	Platt's friend who was redeemed by his master is Clemens Ray

From the table 2 it can be shown that there are some differences story between the two version.

8. Conclusion

Twelve Years a Slave is one of literary works that adapted in movie version with the same title. Twelve Years a Slave is a work was written by Solomon Northup which is based on his journey life when he was become slave for Twelve Years. In 2013, this work was adapted into movie by English film director with the same title. In the process of adapting a literary works into movie, it will be occurs many changes due the differences between two mediums. Although it has some differences, however, the message of humanity to be conveyed are same. Besides that in process of adapting literary works into movie, it also may caused additional and reduction stories.

Furthermore, The researcher hopes this research may assist other next researchers in adaptation the literary work into movie version . Hopefully this research can be to a some extent illustrate various valuable significances of adaptation study of literary works and other popular entertainment.

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