

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains five parts. Those are the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Books, in their various forms, have been an essential tool for storytelling, offering readers a window into diverse worlds and experiences. Despite the appeal of digital media, the written word still has the power to capture the attention of audiences, spark readers' imaginations, and protect the depths of our cultural heritage. Though many things have changed, words are still thought to be better suited for narrative than other formats (Baetens, 2018, p. 27).

(Shah & Khaskheli, 2023, p. 690) Meanwhile, in this era, there is a belief that written literary works are outdated, and overshadowed by the rapid advancements in technology. In order to meet the changing needs of society, the role of literature has evolved (Shah & Khaskheli, 2023, p. 690). The rise of digital platforms and multimedia entertainment has led us to view reading books as a thing of the past. People start to stop reading books and pay more attention to a media that is not only readable but also can be seen and heard at the same time, which is a film.

Film has been a common kind of entertainment in the modern day because of its fascinating audio and stunning visuals. Film is a far more effective medium for entertaining us anything a book cannot. These two seemingly disparate mediums intersect in the art of film adaptation. According to Linda Hutcheon (2006), adaptation itself means a repetition of a source into another medium without replication. The film adaptation is one of the kinds of adaptation that makes a process of repetition of a written literary work, such as a novel or short story, into a cinematic production. Many books have been adapted into films nowadays. Because technology is advancing, people are trying to make the best possible adaptations. In order to make a good adaptation, adapters must create a film that

has to come to terms with what was considered the “spirit” of the book and consider every level of the book's complexity (Marciniak, 2007, p. 60). The adapted films have to follow what the market is demanding. Some audiences seek a good story ending, some seek perfect cinematography, and some expect good acting skills. Moreover, the influence of chosen actors also plays a significant role.

There are various audience responses to film adaptations. Some audiences feel satisfied. Some adaptations are successful. One example is the *Harry Potter* films. The eight films based on Rowling's seven fantasy novels have grossed a combined \$7.7 billion at the global box office. The eighth film, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, which grossed \$1.3 billion in 2011, is the highest-grossing book-to-movie adaptation in history (Team, 2021).

On the other hand, some adaptations films end up unsuccessful. One of the reasons is because there are too many changes. The audiences sometimes feel unsatisfied because the story is not the same as the novel. One example of unsuccessful book-to-film adaptations is a film entitled *Eragon*. It is a 2006 action fantasy film directed by Stefen Fangmeier based on Christopher Paolini's 2002 novel of the same title. One huge issue with *Eragon* was that it drastically changed the book's ending and disappointed eager book fans. The movie was only rated 16% on an American review-aggregation website, Rotten Tomatoes (“Eragon,” 2006). Stephen Hunter said in his review, “Too bad the acting is so lame, the story so derivative, and the thing so long” (“Eragon - Movie Reviews,” 2006). However, changes in adaptation cannot be avoided. These changes make the analysis of adaptations interesting. By studying adaptations, we can identify the specific changes made by directors in the film version.

In this study, the writer chooses an adaptation of film entitled *A Man Called Otto* which comes from *A Man Called Ove* novel. *A Man Called Ove* (Swedish: *En man som heter Ove*) is a Swedish novel written by Fredrik Backman. This novel was released in 2012 by Forum. The English translation was released in 2013 by Atria Books. *A Man Called Ove* had a difficult start in the United States. It sold steadily but in small quantities for months. Next, the sales increased. Eighteen months after its initial publication, it made it into the best-seller list, where it has

been for forty-two weeks. Because of the continuous demand, Atria Books has reproduced the novel 40 times, and it is currently available in more than a million copies. (Alter, 2016)

A Man Called Otto is an American film adaptation of *A Man Called Ove* novel. It is a remake of the 2015 Swedish film entitled *A Man Called Ove* directed by Hannes Holm. *A Man Called Otto* was directed by Marc Forster and published in December 2022. It stars Tom Hanks as Otto Anderson. This film tells a story about Otto, a sixty-year-old man who lives in a rowhouse. He is depressed because of the loss of his wife, Sonya. Day by day, he tries to commit suicide but never succeeds. There are always distractions that interrupt his attempt. Most interruptions come from his new neighbor: pregnant Marisol, her husband Tommy, and their daughters Abby and Luna. They always need Otto's help. Otto's suicide plan is also interrupted by Anita, who is in a struggle because of her stroked husband, Reuben. The story ends with Otto who dies in peace after being involved in his neighbor's tasks without suicide (Forster, 2023).

A Man Called Otto is a successful film based on the gross and ratings. It has \$113,190,218 worldwide gross, with a breakdown of \$64,267,657 domestic gross (56.8%) and \$48,922,561 international gross (43.2%) ("*A Man Called Otto*," 2022). In the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), *A Man Called Otto* gets 7.5 stars out of 10 from 158k raters ("*A Man Called Otto*," 2023). In Rotten Tomatoes, *A Man Called Otto* also gains a high score. It gets 69% Tomatometer from 208 reviews. There are 144 reviewers who said it is good, and 64 reviewers who said it is bad. In addition, *A Man Called Otto* gained a 97% audience score from 5,000+ verified ratings. Richard Roeper in his review said "It's another memorable performance from the veteran actor, backed by a crackling good supporting cast. If not for Tom Hanks, *A Man Called Otto* might be a boring tale of one grumpy man's perseverance against the elements trying to take him down. But it's because of Hanks that the film succeeds" ("*A Man Called Otto* - Movie Reviews," 2022).

(Prameswati & Thoyibi, 2023).(Aathira A. S. & Poongodi, 2021)As a best-seller novel, *A Man Called Ove* must have been discussed by many readers. There are several studies that have been conducted analyzing *A Man Called Ove* novel on

various topics. Those are *Expressive Acts Used by the Characters in Fredrik Backman's "A Man Called Ove"* (Wati, 2018), *The Portraiture of Aging: A Psycho-Analytic Study of A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman* (Aathira A. S. & Poongodi, 2021), and *The importance of social empathy in Fredrik Backman's A Man Called Ove* (Prameswati & Thoyibi, 2023).

(Azizah & Hawasi, 2023).(Feby, Uzira, Nasir, & Erdiana, 2023)(Wulantari & Maharani, 2023)Meanwhile, the film adaptation of *A Man Called Ove*, *A Man Called Otto*, has also been an interesting topic for several discussions. Those are *Exploring maxim flouting in "A Man Called Otto" movie: A pragmatic study* (Wulantari & Maharani, 2023), *Analysis of Moral Values in the Movie "A Man Called Otto (2022)"* (Feby, Uzira, Nasir, & Erdiana, 2023), and *The Dominant Personality of Otto in A Man Called Otto Movie* (Azizah & Hawasi, 2023).

The writer also found two previous studies that discuss the comparison between *A Man Called Ove* Novel, its Swedish film adaptation, and its American film adaptation. The first study is *When the Film is Better than the Book – A Man Called Ove* (Bijman, 2017). In this website article, the writer compares the novel and the Swedish film adaptation. The second previous study is *"A Man Called Otto" & "A Man Called Ove": A Tale of Two Adaptations* (Laman, 2023). The writer of this website article compares the Swedish film adaptation and the American film adaptation.

Based on some of the theses and journal articles above, the author found some gaps between previous researches and this study. First, there are no studies that compare *A Man Called Ove* novel and its American film adaptation, *A Man Called Otto*. By comparing the novel and the American film adaptation, the writer will gain more analysis than the previous comparison studies. Second, there are no studies that analyze the motives of the adaptation of *A Man Called Ove* novel into *A Man Called Otto* film. In addition, the successful journey of *A Man Called Otto* film awakened the writer's curiosity because the original story in the novel and the film adaptation come from different countries: Sweden and The United States of America. The writer intends to discover the background behind this book-to-film adaptation. The theory of adaptation is used because it is suitable for identifying the

adaptation process. In this study, the writer will apply the theory of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon. In her book entitled *Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Linda clearly explains how adaptations are made. In her book, Linda explains the possible motives of the adapter to make adaptations. In addition to this study, the writer also compares those two sources of data based on the selected narrative elements by Kenney (1966).

1.2 Research Questions

In this thesis, the writer proposes two research questions, those are:

1. What are the similarities and differences between *A Man Called Ove* novel and *A Man Called Otto* film?
2. What are the motives of the adaptation of *A Man Called Ove* novel into *A Man Called Otto* film?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

There are two objectives as follow:

1. To identify the similarities and the differences between *A Man Called Ove* novel and *A Man Called Otto* film.
2. To identify the motives of the adaptation of *A Man Called Ove* novel into *A Man Called Otto* film.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the existence of the adaptation theory by Linda Hutcheon, especially the adaptation from a novel into a film. Besides that, this study can also enrich the existence of the narrative elements theory by William Kenney which can be used to compare the narrative elements between a novel and a film.

Practically, this study can be used as a reference for those who want to discuss the same theory or the same source of data. Moreover, this study is expected to increase the interest in reading novels and watching their film adaptations, especially the cross-cultural adaptations.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is the theory of narrative elements by Kenney (1966) to identify the similarities and the differences between *A Man Called Ove* novel and

A Man Called Otto film and the theory of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon to identify the adaptation process behind them. Meanwhile, the limitations of this study are the similarities and the differences only focus on the character, plot, and setting, and the adaptation process only focuses on the motives of the adaptation.