

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to this research. It contains the research background, problem, purpose, significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

In literary work there are two essential aspects that build the literary work itself, it is extrinsic and intrinsic (narrative) elements. Both of these elements are always mentioned by the expert when talking about literary work. Susanto (2019) states that narrative elements are the elements that build the literary work itself. So, it can be concluded that narrative elements cannot be separated from literary work. There are some elements of narrative that are always mentioned by the expert, such as plot, character, characterization, setting, and theme. The narrative elements can be found in both novel and film.

Little Women written by Louisa May Alcott in a form of a 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. The story of *Little Women* novel tells a story about March's sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy who live sufficiently with their beloved mother, Marmee, in the town called Massachusetts while their father is out there serving the country during the American Civil War. The story of the March sisters used the linear plot structure to narrate the progress of growing up and pursuing their dreams. As they grow up, they befriend Laurie their neighbor, Meg marries John Brooke, Beth dies of her illness, Amy marries Laurie, and Jo marries Professor Bhaer and they live happily together. Each characters reflect the themes of the story which are sisterhood, romantic love, and family. The symbol used also helps to get different ways to understand the character's behavior in the story.

The work of *Little Women* is published in the form of a novel and then adapted into a film. *Little Women* film is an adaptation work directed by Greta Gerwig and published theatrically on 25 December 2019 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 build a family with a teacher, John. Jo March wandered and start a career as a writer in New York City. Beth who loves to play piano and Amy studying to become an artist in Paris. The film used a non-linear plot structure to tell the story of the March sisters, jumping back and forth technique also emphasizes the deeper exploration of the characters and their motivation. The use of symbols in the story is to get a better understanding of the conditions and situations faced by the characters. The film puts a modern spin on the story by exploring the theme of female's agency and empowerment.

The novel and film of *Little Women* share many similarities and differences due to the consequences of the adaptation process. As the core elements of literary works, the narrative elements were the ones who were the most influenced by this adaptation process. For instance, the plot structure used to convey the story of March's family in the novel and film is different, the novel uses the linear timeline to show the process of their growing up in order, meanwhile the film applies the non-linear timeline to emphasize the character's decision and journey. The characters from the novel and film also have some differences, which is reflected in the character of Jo March who portrayed more independence and liberty relevant with the theme of the film which draws more focused on female's agency and empowerment. The symbolism from the novel and film is consistent, both used it to give a new perspective to understand the condition and situation of the characters, the main different is lies on the context given to interpret the symbol.

There were many previous studies that shared some similarities and differences with this research. One of the studies about Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* was "Women, Family, Marriage and Social Life of the 19th-century middle-class society in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and *Good Wives*," by Teislerova in 2013. The focus of this study was on middle-class women in 19th century England and America, related to marriage,

means of finding the ideal husband, thought of unmarried women or called “spinsters,” and also the growth of women's rights in these two countries. This study analyzed the features that were similar between the two novels. First, it talked about the typical roles of married women such as wife, mother and housekeeper. Second, the depiction of family relations, especially between siblings and parents, and other kinsmen also. Later the reasons for getting married also appeared and also with the prospect of it, such as social status and having children with a beloved person. Third, in this part, the focus was the working woman. And for the last part, it was focused on the social class of the main characters and how each character dealt with their social life and got benefit from it.

Next, another study related to this literary work was “Feminism Values in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*” by Santi & Rahmi in 2019. This research aimed to describe the feminist values that were conveyed by the main character in *Little Women* novel written by Louisa May Alcott, with applied the qualitative method. The main problem found by the author of this novel was the character's struggle with their poverty, the stereotyped of women, also the marginalization of their rights. Also, the result of this study showed that the feminist values in *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott contained Equality which the main character of the novel needed to have similar equality between women and men. Differences in this novel are portrayed by the main character, such as a psychological way of thinking and appearance differences. Choice here means that women should have the right to have an independent choice based on their-self Care Time and Experience.

Another study that was related to Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* was “An Analysis Image of Women in Little Women novel by ‘Louisa May Alcott’,” by Simanungkalit & Putra in 2020. This research focused on analyzing the female characters in the novel *Little Women* by using the feminist approach and used the theory of the image of women. The author stated that the character of the novel was a reflection of real-life Louisa May Alcott, who worked so hard on her dream and didn’t believe in marriage. The focus of this study was on women.

Moreover, for the last previous study that was related to Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* was "Owning Your Story: Agency, Power and Freedom in Greta Gerwig's Faithful and Radical *Little Women* Adaptation," by Cooney in 2022. This study focused on how Greta Gerwig's adaptation of *Little Women* was so different from the novel and the previous film's adaptation. Her adaptation was both faithful and radical to the original work of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, a close explanation of art imitating life, the epistolary and intertextuality, and cinematography and storytelling showed the transformative nature of her adaptation work. *Little Women* film adaptation by Greta Gerwig retold adult women's agency, power, and freedom that were different from some previous adaptations and even from the original novel.

One novel, two parts, five theatrical stage productions, four opera and musical performances, four television miniseries, ten literary retellings, forty-eight radio dramatizations, and seven feature films. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* has been through so many adaptations, which indicate that her work is a lifetime favourite for readers and adapters. And the most recent film adaptation of *Little Women* (2019) by Greta Gerwig brings many improvements and ideas that fit with today's generation without forgetting the original story. The film, directed by Greta Gerwig (2019), is different from the previous film adaptation directed by Gillian Armstrong (1994). The huge difference is the structure of the story plot present in the films. The use of parallel timelines makes the story more complicated than the 1994 version. And Gerwig's version of Jo was not only the fictional character but the combination of Gerwig, Jo and also Louisa May Alcott experiences, which makes the character deeper and more fascinating. And the screen time given to each sister results in the development of the characters being more intense and detailed. The two forms of literary work that are going through the adaptation process can produce different experiences when enjoyed, and this research aims to find the similarities and differences that appear as the effect of the adaptations from both literary works through their narrative elements. The process of adaptation is the process of moving the narrative elements such as character, theme, symbolism and story plot from the novel with some addition, subtraction, modification and also the

support from the cinematic elements so the result of adaptation work can provide a brand new experience for the audience. This research of adaptation between the novel and film of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* will be entitled "*The Adaptation Of Narrative Elements In Little Women Novel (2014) To Little Women Film (2019).*"

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the description of the research background before, the move of telling to showing from novel to film in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* going through some changes to adapt to the new medium so it can provide some new experience for the audience and also reach some new audience that is different from the audience of the original work. Therefore, some problems can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the adaptation process on the narrative elements in *Little Women* Novel (2014) and *Little Women* Film (2019)?
2. What are the differences of the narrative elements in *Little Women* Novel (2014) and *Little Women* Film (2019)?

1.3 Research Purpose

Adaptation means the change of the medium of literary works, which indicates that the result of adaptation is expected to provide a new experience for the audience. Therefore, it is important to arrange the adaptation research so the problem before can be analyzed. The main purposes of this research are:

1. To know how the narrative elements adaptation process in *Little Women* Novel (2014) and *Little Women* Film (2019).
2. To identify the differences of the narrative elements in *Little Women* Novel (2014) and *Little Women* Film (2019).

1.4 Research Significance

This research, of course, was conducted to gain a benefit. This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, this research can be used to increase the knowledge in the study of English Literature analysis, especially for the comparative literature. This research was also expected to spread awareness of the appreciation of adaptation works. In addition, the results of this research are expected to develop the idea of treating a film not just as entertainment but also as a literary work.

Practically, this research is expected to be a comparison of other research that has a similar problem. And finally, this research can also be used by other researchers to give new ideas and also provide some new knowledge about English Literature.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation about the study between the researcher and the readers, the following key terms are defined:

- 1 Comparative Literature is an interdisciplinary field of study that involves the critical analysis and comparison of literature and other cultural texts from different linguistic, national, and cultural traditions. It involves the study of the relationships between different works of literature and their historical, social, political, and cultural contexts.
- 2 A narrative element is a component or building block of a story that helps to shape its structure, meaning, and impact. There are several key narrative elements that are commonly used in literature, film, and other forms of storytelling, including Plot, Character, Setting, Point of View, Theme, and Symbolism.
- 3 Adaptation refers to the process of taking a work of art or literature, such as a book or plays and creating a new version of it in another medium, such as a film or television show. The adaptation can involve changing

certain elements of the original work, such as the plot, characters, setting, or theme, in order to better suit the new medium and audience.

- 4 Novel According to Fadhilla (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.
- 5 Film 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). A film usually uses compositional elements like line, form, mass, volume, and texture, which are the basis of visual arts. The film also plays with light and shadow that are familiar in painting and photography.

