



## From Children's Book to Film: A Study of Adaptation of *Peter Rabbit*

**Akhmad Suwistyo**

Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Andalas

[suwistyo.student.sasingunand@gmail.com](mailto:suwistyo.student.sasingunand@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The success of films adapted from literary works, including children's books in captivating audiences and dominating international cinema motivates this article. As a result, it is critical to comprehend how The Theory of Adaptation is applied to adapt literary works into the visual framework of the film. According to certain adaptation models given by experts, adaptation of a literary work such as a children's book into film can be done in two ways: first, by focusing on fidelity to the source, and second, by taking the source's contextuality and intertextuality into account.

Keywords: *adaptation, book, film, movie, Peter Rabbit.*

### INTRODUCTION

The history of cinema in its one hundred years appears to be extremely young when compared to the history of print tradition from five hundred years ago and the history of literature from a thousand years ago. Despite the fact that this cinematic technology is still very new, the 'moving image' phenomena is quickly taking the lead in shaping narrative culture. Other artistic disciplines, particularly literary arts, have contributed to this fast development in a way that cannot be separated. Understanding a film entails comprehending the literary language of expression, and vice versa: films have a significant impact on the literary language of expression. It follows that it is not strange that these two pieces of art frequently influence one another. Many films are created from the adaptation of a literary work.

Morris Beja underlines that the phenomena of successful film adaptations taking over the global cinema business since the establishment of the Academy Award in 1927 in his book *Film and Literature: an Introduction* (Beja, 1979: 78). Giddings explains in *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* that fourteen of the twenty highest-grossing films of 1990 were flicks, and that three-quarters of the Oscar-winning best pictures at the Academy Awards were adaptations -- films that are based on books (Cartmell, 1999: 23).

In addition, Groensteen and Seger noted in their respective works *The Theory of Adaptation* (Hutcheon, 2006: 4) and *The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film* (Seger, 1992: xi) that, according to statistics from 1992, 85% of the best films were documented. The movie Oscar is a literary adaptation (novels, short stories, plays, etc.). Seventy percent of Emmy Award winners, who get the highest honor for television works, are also adaptations, while 95% of television miniseries are based on books.

*Nosferatu* (F. W. Murnau, 1922) and *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931), both adaptations of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897), as well as *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931), a film adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* (1936), and *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939), are some of the film adaptations that were financially successful and won numerous prestigious (1959). The James Bond films, which have been produced since 1962, are based on the novels by Ian Fleming (and his successors), including *Bond* (1953–present), *The Godfather* (1972; Francis Ford Coppola; Mario Puzo; *The Godfather*; and *The Lord of the Rings* (2001–2003; Peter Jackson; J. R. R. Tolkien; The Lord of the Rings trilogy; and many others).

### **Film Adaptation in English**

*Hamlet* is said to be the earliest English-language movie adaptation (1948). Shakespeare's plays were used as the basis for the movie *Hamlet*. Laurence Olivier is the director and producer of the movie. A movie version of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen was created more recently, in 2005, under the direction of Joe Wright.

The Two Ways of Seeing, according to George Bluestone, a pioneer in the study of cinema adaptations, questions the fundamental parallels and contrasts between seeing a film while reading a literary work and the search for connections between the two mediums (Bluestone, 1957: 1). Here is the dilemma that Bluestone presents at the opening of his essay:

“I have assumed, and attempted to demonstrate, that the two media are marked by such essentially different traits that they belong to separate artistic genera. Although novels and films of a certain kind do reveal a number of similarities. One finds the differentia more startling. More important, one finds the differentia infinitely more problematic to the film-maker. These distinguishing traits follow primarily from the fact that the novel is a linguistic medium, the film essentially visual” (Bluestone, 1957: vi)

Bluestone makes an assumption and seeks to highlight the fundamental distinctions that genetically separate novels from films. The novel is a verbal medium, whereas the cinema is a visual media. Even while there are some parallels between the two, the contrasts are really far

more pronounced. The difficulty for filmmakers to overcome this disparity is precisely this. Additionally, there are important distinctions between novels and films in terms of audience, norms, customs and resources and origins. When Bluestone first encountered these two mediums, he found it fascinating because they were:

"overtly compatible, but covertly antagonistic, Because of the variances, the gaps between the two mediums were exactly the same, and he and the adapters recognized a big challenge and possibility to combine the two. Because the adapter is a new writer as well as a translator, the modified form has the potential to be translated more creatively and productively." (Jenkins, 1997: 15)

Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan in *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, point out that the most important problem in adapting a literary work into a film is fidelity to the original source. In this book, Whelehan tries to break down the line of thought shared by critics and film lovers, by showing that text is more important than film, as well as showing the differences and values of each medium. He states that there are many 'practical realities' involved in turning a text into a commercially successful film, such as embedding an anachronistic (non-chronological) culture in novel writing and turning a structured, classic novel narrative storytelling culture into the narration of a popular genre film or film. recognized by the film market (Whelehan, 1999: 4).

A film critic, Gabriel Miller, views the film adaptation as a 'simplification process' of the novel. He believes that a film cannot handle complexities (such as thoughts, memories, dreams, or psychology) like a novel. Miller's opinion was refuted by Whelehan by saying that Miller did not really know how film works and strategy, because fictional assumptions can deal with the problem in a 'transparent way that does not require artificial mediation' (Cartmell & Whelehan, 1999: 6).

Whelehan believes that films are able to acquire deep meaning through the use of metaphors or symbolism. He stated that in order to achieve a successful adaptation of a novel, certain features that were considered important to the novel had to be translated into film.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

### *The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter and its movie adaptation*

In Beatrix Potter's children's book *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, the unruly and rebellious tiny Peter Rabbit is pursued when he enters Mr. McGregor's yard and is hunted around. He escapes and returns home to his mother, who makes him chamomile tea and puts him to bed.

The story was created in 1893 for five-year-old Noel Moore, who was the son of Annie Carter Moore, Potter's former nanny. After being rejected by many publishers, Potter reworked it and had it privately printed in 1901; nonetheless, Frederick Warne & Co. published a trade edition of it in 1902. The book was a hit, and several reprints were published in the years right after its release. One of the best-selling novels in history, it has been translated into 36 languages (Mackey, 2002:33) and has sold 45 million copies (Warne, 2003).

Since its publication, the book has produced a significant amount of goods for both kids and adults, including toys, dinnerware, cuisine, apparel, and films. When Potter invented a Peter Rabbit doll in 1903 and almost soon followed it with a Peter Rabbit board game, she was one of the first to be in charge of such products. For more than a century, Peter Rabbit has been a favorite among kids, and new book editions, television shows, and movies are all being made with him.

The novel's main characters are Peter, a mischievous, rebellious young rabbit, and his family. The mother rabbit warns Peter and her other three children, Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail, not to go inside Mr. McGregor's vegetable garden because his wife put their father in a pie after he went in. Peter's three younger sisters remain out of the garden and proceed down the path to pick blackberries. However, Peter, who had been acting pretty impolitely, walks into the garden to eat some fruit.

As a result of overindulging, Peter seeks for parsley to relieve his stomachache. Peter tries to flee but is seen by Mr. McGregor and loses his shoes and jacket in the process. He hides in a watering can in a shed, but when Mr. McGregor discovers him, he is forced to flee once more, becoming lost in the process. Peter notices that Mr. McGregor is "gone" when he becomes fatigued after chasing Peter and returns to his job, which gives him some time to flee to the gate. Peter sneaks past a cat and after spotting the gate he used to enter the garden from a distance, he moves toward it despite being seen and pursued by Mr. McGregor once more. He struggles to get through the gate as he makes his getaway from the garden. Mr. McGregor uses his abandoned clothes to outfit his scarecrow.

After arriving home, Peter's mother puts him to bed since he is ill. He is not well enough to have dinner. What had Peter done with his clothes? Old Mrs. Bunny was curious (his jacket and shoes). Peter's actions of entering Mr. McGregor's vegetable patch and disrobing within have angered her. In the past two weeks, Peter had misplaced a second jacket and pair of shoes. Mrs. Rabbit gives Peter a spoonful of chamomile tea to ease his stomachache. While waiting, Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail eat a delicious meal of milk, bread, and blackberries.

Only Mr. McGregor knew the whereabouts of Peter's jacket and shoes; Old Mrs. Rabbit was unaware of their whereabouts (other than the fact that Peter had simply misplaced them). And Mr. McGregor has put up a scarecrow to frighten the blackbirds using the jacket and shoes which Peter lost.

This children's book was turned into a movie up till 2018. The name of the main character in the original novel, Peter Rabbit, served as the inspiration for the title of the movie. In the movie, Peter is shown with a stronger personality. Peter is an unruly, sneaky, and naughty bunny. Will Gluck, the film's director, thus concentrates on Peter's activities in his movie. The book's complete story may not necessarily be told in an adaptation, though. Will Gluck uses his own techniques to create his movies in a way that appeals to modern viewers. He created a sequel to *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* using the same basic idea, although he did not repeat the Beatrix Potter children's novel.

You'll see how the movie continues the story from the kids' book. This method is applied in an effort to preserve a book's immortality. Additionally, as we are all aware, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* has been subject to several modifications, including changes to the properties, the site of Beatrix Potter's house, which is protected by the British royal family, movies, and much more. All of this is done in an effort to preserve *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*'s immortality.

### ***Adaptation, Ecranization, and Transfer of Rides***

Pamusuk Eneste used the word *ecranization* to describe the process of turning literary works into motion pictures in his book *Novel and Film* (1991). In fact, the word itself is derived from the French word *cran*, which means sail. Eneste defined *ecranization* as the process of turning a book into a movie (Eneste, 1991: 60).

The transition from novels to films, he said, undoubtedly brought about a number of alterations, including additions, subtractions, or reductions, as well as differences due to the compressing of events and duration. The phrase "transfer of rides," as introduced by Sapardi Djoko Damono, describes the change from one form of art to another.

Vehicle transfer is mentioned by Damono as a method of transitioning from one kind of art to another (Damono, 2005: 96). *Wahana* means "vehicle," hence "vehicle transfer" refers to the act of switching from one kind of "vehicle" to another kind (Damono, 2012: 1). Furthermore, according to Damono, an artistic creation is a "vehicle"—a device that can transport anything from one location to another. A vehicle is a medium that is used to convey, accomplish, or display thoughts or emotions. Transfer therefore has two main components: transfer and transformation.

Any artistic creation, whether it takes the shape of thoughts or forms, may be transported and moved about. In dance, play, or cinema, for instance, fiction is transformed. Poetry that develops from paintings or music or even from novel films can be transferred, and vice versa. It was additionally mentioned that alterations will be made in the transfer of the rides. In other words, the labor of one and the task of transferring the car will differ from one another. For example, the transfer of a novel vehicle to a film, the characters, setting, plot, dialogue, and so on must be changed in such a way that it fits the needs of other types of art (Damono, 2005: 98).

## CONCLUSION

The concept of adaptation demonstrates how no work of art in the world is entirely original and autonomous; rather, every work of art is derived from earlier works of art. All artistic creations are the consequence of adaptation, repetition, and variety. What is currently accessible is in the form of a film; tomorrow it may take the shape of a stage performance; the day after tomorrow it may take the form of a television program; or it might take the form of an interactive game. Every adaptation process is anticipated to result in the formation of such a network of creations. Re-adaptations of previously-adapted works will continue indefinitely.

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