

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE FILMS "A MAN CALLED OVE BY HANNES HOLM" AND "A MAN CALLED OTTO BY MARC FORSTER"

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Abstract

This study aims to conduct a comparative study of the main characters in two films which are different versions of the same work, namely A Man Called Ove (2015) directed by Hannes Holm and A Man Called Otto (2023) directed by Marc Forster. Both films are positioned as interconnected texts, with an intertextual approach used to analyze narrative changes between the original and remake versions. This intertextual method allows researchers to explore how the spoken texts in the two films interact with each other and shape each other's meanings. The results of this study reveal significant changes from the original to the remake. This study also found changes in several important aspects: first, the depiction of the main character's job which is substantially different; second, there are variations in the atmosphere and conversation between the main character and his wife when they first meet; third, the way the main character tells his life story to his neighbors which is different in both versions; and fourth, changes in the development of the narrative told by the main character through the will he wrote. This study provides insight into how remake film adaptations function not only as copies, but also as new constructions that introduce changes in character and narrative depictions. This study contributes to understanding the dynamic relationship between the original text and its adaptation, and how these changes can affect audiences' interpretations of the characters and story.

Keywords: Comparative studies, Intertextual, Original and remake, Narrative changes, film

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan studi perbandingan terhadap karakter utama dalam dua film yang merupakan versi berbeda dari karya yang sama, yaitu A Man Called Ove (2015) yang disutradarai oleh Hannes Holm dan A Man Called Otto (2023) yang disutradarai oleh Marc Forster. Kedua film tersebut diposisikan sebagai teks yang saling berhubungan, dengan pendekatan intertekstual yang digunakan untuk menganalisis perubahan-perubahan naratif antara versi asli dan remake. Metode intertekstual ini memungkinkan peneliti untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana teks lisan dalam kedua film tersebut saling berinteraksi dan saling membentuk makna satu sama lain. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan adanya perubahan signifikan dari versi asli ke versi remake. Penelitian ini juga menemukan adanya perubahan dalam beberapa aspek

penting: pertama, penggambaran pekerjaan karakter utama yang mengalami perbedaan substansial; kedua, adanya variasi dalam suasana dan percakapan antara karakter utama dan istrinya pada saat pertama kali bertemu; ketiga, cara karakter utama menyampaikan kisah hidupnya kepada tetangganya yang berbeda dalam kedua versi; dan keempat, perubahan dalam pengembangan narasi yang diceritakan karakter utama melalui surat wasiat yang dituliskannya. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana adaptasi film remake tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai penyalinan, tetapi juga sebagai sebuah konstruksi baru yang memperkenalkan perubahan-perubahan dalam penggambaran karakter dan narasi. Studi ini berkontribusi dalam memahami hubungan dinamis antara teks asli dan adaptasinya, serta bagaimana perubahan-perubahan ini dapat memengaruhi interpretasi penonton terhadap karakter dan cerita yang ada.

Kata kunci : Studi perbandingan, Intertekstual, Versi asli dan remake, Perubahan naratif, film.

A. INTRODUCTION

Remaking a film is a common phenomenon in the current technological era and the wide access to knowledge of films from abroad has led to the idea emerging to remake the same film, where a film is produced first and then remade again in a different version. A remake film has several meanings, including: first, as a film based on a previous scenario (Verevis, 2006); second, as a new version of an existing film (Grindstaff, 2001); and third, as a film that doubles the previous film (Horton & McDougal, 2022). Remaking a film has various goals and different reasons, this depends on the production party or the party who wants to remake the film. Then, in the process of remaking a film there are several things that need to be paid attention to and considered.

The main selection criteria for a film will be designated as a remake if two or more of a number of sources are identified as reliable from a particular film genre. The film criteria that have been identified will be continued in the film making process. Remake films usually consist of text or structures produced in accordance

with the findings of previous film narrative models (Forceville, 2001). Every film that undergoes a remake is a representation that is considered an adaptation of a previous film, where the two are related to each other, especially in the narrative or cinematic elements. Another approach also shows that film remakes usually lie in the text or structure produced in accordance with the findings of previous film narrative models (Cuelenaere, 2021).

In the process of remaking a film, there are differences in the narrative or text conveyed, this then becomes the difference between the original film and the remake film. In literary works, even though there are differences in the narrative or text conveyed, there is certainly still a relationship between the original film and the remake film. In intertextual studies is a literary theory that tries to find interaction relationships between one literary text and another (Sehandi, 2016). This was then put forward in Mikhail Lampolski's discussion about intertextuality in film, a text is precisely the result of its ability to build relationships with other texts that came before, and sometimes with texts that came later (Verevis, 2006). Therefore, a comparison can be made

to find out similarities or changes that occur in a literary work.

Comparative literature is a form of analysis of two or more literary works to gain a deeper understanding between the two works, in this case the analysis carried out is to find similarities, differences, developments or other aspects. According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, there are three definitions of comparative literature. First, research on oral literature, especially the theme of folklore and its distribution. Second, an investigation into the relationship between two or more literary works, which are the material and object of investigation, including questions reputation and penetration, influence and fame of great works. Third, literary research in all world literature, general literature and universal literature, Wellek and Warren (2014). One form of comparative literature is a remake of a film, in this case the objects being compared are the original film and the remake of the film.

In the film "A Man Called Ove" by Hannes Holm which was produced in 2015 in Sweden which was then remade in an American version entitled "A Man Called Otto" in 2023, this film tells the story of an old man named Ove or Otto who is lonely and living alone after his wife died. Ove or Otto is described as someone who has a bad temper and is very obedient to the rules. After his wife died, he felt lost and attempted suicide several times. However, these efforts were often thwarted by his neighbors. This film focuses on depicting the life process of Ove or Otto who loses his direction and then regains his purpose in life after meeting and interacting with his new neighbors. The remake version still

maintains the main idea of the original version, but there are differences in the way the two films develop the main characters. The choice of this object as material for the researcher's study was based on several reasons, including: first, the story told in the film is very interesting, there are many life lessons that can be seen in the depiction of the main character. secondly, the film "A Man Called Ove" which was first produced in Sweden is the result of an ecranization of the novel by Fredrick Backman with the same title, then the film was remade in an American version with the title "A Man Called Otto, this proves that The story told has high popularity as evidenced by the fact that there are three versions that tell the story, namely the novel, film and remake of the film.

Based on this story and the reasons explained previously, in this comparative literature the researcher will make a comparison between the original film "A Man Called Ove" by Honnes Holm which was produced in 2015 and the remake film "A Man Called Otto" by Marc Forster which was produced in 2023. Researchers focus on how the main characters Ove in the original version and Otto in the remake version are depicted. The selection of this film as a research object based on the fact that both films were produced in two different countries proves that this film has good popularity. The original film was produced in Sweden, where this film was an adaptation of the novel entitled "A Man Called Ove" by Fredrick Backman, then it was remake and produced in America with the title "A Man Called Otto", this story has been published in several versions. Based on these reasons, the researcher wants to compare the depiction of the main character in terms of narrative or text

which is referred to as intertextual in the story between two different film versions.

There are several previous studies that are in accordance with this research. One of the previous studies that is relevant to this research using an intertextual approach is research conducted by Noor (2022) entitled "*Daur Ulang Film: Intertekstual Miracle in Cell No. 7*". In this research, researchers compared texts from original sources with a recycled film, which includes several aspects including the characters. The results of the remake of the film are considered successful in revealing the updated story structure of the previous version of the film. Even though there are several changes in the Korean version to the Indonesian version, the results of making the film still follow the structure based on the South Korean version of the film *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2013). In this research process, researchers used a broad and systematic approach to the phenomenon of remakes in cinematic form using intertextual theory.

The next previous study that is relevant to this research is research conducted by Rahmawati, etc (2020) entitled "Comparison Of The Characters Of The Main Characters In The Novel *Hujan Bulan Juni* By Sapardi Djoko Damono And *The Film Hujan Bulan Juni* Directed By Reni Nurcahyano: Intertextual Study". In this research, researchers compared the main characters in novels and films with the same title. The results of the research that have been analyzed by the researcher are the differences between the main characters in the novel and the film, where the characters experience transformation, haplogy and modification which gives uniqueness between the novel

and the film. In this research process, researchers used an intertextual theory approach and reception theory using qualitative descriptive methods in analyzing and obtaining data.

Based on the two previous studies, the researcher conducted a comparative study of the main characters in the same two films "A Man Called Ove" which is the first version and "A Man Called Otto" which is the latest remake version using an intertextual approach. In the first previous study, researchers compared all the intrinsic elements in a literary work. In the second previous study, researchers conducted research using different objects where novels were transformed into films. In this research, the researcher will focus on one intrinsic element in the main character analysis, where the researcher carries out an in- depth study of the main character between the original film and the remake film and then finds changes, differences or similarities.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the process of remaking a film, Robert Eberwein points to the affinity between the terms 'adaptation' and 'remaking' when he defines the latter as 'a kind of reading or rereading of the original [text]' (Verevis, 2006). Apart from that, there are concerns raised by Stern, Stern's comment indicates that a crucial issue when dealing with adaptations and remakes is the identification and status of the original text. A second animating discourse of adaptation theory is typically concerned with the degree to which the adaptation relates to the (literary or other) original (Verevis, 2006). Based on what was stated by Stern, it can be seen that in the process of remaking a film, the text

or narrative that is conveyed needs to be paid attention to. Even though in general the story conveyed is the same, sometimes there are differences or different ways of conveying the meaning of the story through the narrative or text conveyed.

In this research, the researcher uses intertextual theory, where the researcher analyzes the relationship and interaction of the two films. In Mikhail Lampolski's discussion of intertextuality in film, a text is precisely the result of its ability to build relationships with other texts that came before, and sometimes with texts that came later (Verevis, 2006). Intertextual studies are a literary theory that tries to find interaction relationships between one literary text and another (Sehandi, 2016). According to Kristeva, the most basic principle of intertextuality is that like other signs, each text refers to another text. (Raj, 2015)

The comparison in this research focuses on comparing the main characters of the two films. According to Roberts, Character in literature is a broad representation of a human being's speech, especially in terms of determining himself through that person's thoughts, speech and behavior (2021). Meanwhile, the main character is the driving character in the story, where this character element is an important element in building conflict and resolving conflict in a story. In character, there is what is called characterization or depiction of characters in a story, including films.

C. METHOD

The research method used is comparative method. Comparative literature denotes any literary work or works when compared with any other literary work or works. Hence,

comparative literature is the study of inter-relationship between any two or more than two significant literary works or literatures. The simple way to define comparative literature is to say that it is a comparison between the two literatures. Comparative literature analyses the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures (2016). Contemporary literary research is based on parameters and methods which do not appear to have evolved similar to other fields of inquiry. If the study of literature is concerned with literary behavior, for instance, the object of study cannot limit itself to a single author or to a limited number of authors and what surrounds them closely (Nemesio, 1999)

The data sources for this research are the film "A Man Called Ove" by Hannes Holm in 2015 and the film "A Man Called Otto" by Marc Forster in 2023. The data was then analyzed using an understanding of the oral narrative conveyed and the researcher's interpretation of the two films. Then the researcher made a comparison between the two films based on the data or evidence that had been found.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Comparative analysis of the films "A Man Called Ove" and "A Man Called Otto" through the main characters. The main character is someone who has an important role in developing conflict and resolving conflict in a story. The character Ove in the film "A Man Called Ove" or Otto in the film "A Man Called Otto" is the main character, where in the film the entire story depiction focuses on the main character.

The stories in the films "A Man Called Ove" and "A Man Called Otto" present the conflicts experienced by the main characters in

almost the same way. In both films, the main character Ove or Otto is an elderly man who is experiencing sad times after the death of his wife. At the beginning of the film, Ove or Otto is depicted as an angry old man who gets annoyed with everything, even the smallest things that happen around them. This is the impact of the main character being abandoned by his deceased wife. Apart from that, the main character's behavior also stems from the unfair treatment experienced by his wife. Apart from that, the main character tried to commit suicide several times because of the depression he was experiencing. Every time he tries to commit suicide, flashbacks appear showing happy times in the past when his wife was still alive. The original version of the film and the remake version of the film are the same two films, although in general the scenes in the remake film have many similarities to the original version of the film, but there are several scenes or dialogues for the main characters that have changed.

Based on the stories in the two films, there are differences that can be immediately identified, namely the change in name from Ove (in the original version) to Otto (in the remake version). Apart from the name changes that occurred, there were other differences or changes that occurred, such as the reduction, change and development of scenes explaining the main characters.

Reduction

In the analysis of the main characters, there are scenes of the main characters that were removed from the original version of the film to the remake version. The missing scenes are Ove or Otto's childhood scenes. in the original version of the

film, the depiction of the main character's childhood is explained in detail regarding his family and life, whereas in the remake version the explanation or description of Ove or Otto's childhood is omitted. The depiction of the main character's childhood is told through flashbacks, where in this scene the main character explains the relationship between himself and his father. Ove's father is a mechanic and works at the train station. In the film there is a scene about how Ove's character was formed from his father's upbringing. The depiction of Ove's childhood is seen in minutes 21.15 to 26.26, starting when Ove's mother died, telling about his father and the life that Ove and his father experienced, until the death of Ove's father due to an accident on the train.

"My dad wasn't the kind who showed grief. Nor I was One thing is certain, though : Whatever we do in this life, no one gets out of it alive. My dad didn't talk much. He focused mainly on the house, and on engines. Probably because neither of them talked much, either."

(Ove's statement is a flashback that Ove tells in the film, where Ove's character begins to be portrayed by involving the character of Ove's father).

Ove: "Why you didn't tell them about Tom?" Ove's father: "Well, we're not the sort who tell people what others do." Ove: "I was going to keep that wallet."

Ove's father: "Yes, I know. But you'd have returned it eventually." Ove: "Yes."

Ove's father: "Honesty is the best policy, you know. Sometimes, however, honesty just needs a little assistance."

(Dialogue between Ove and his father, when Ove's father gives advice or lessons to Ove about honesty).

Change & Development

Changes and developments in films often occur in films that are remakes. In the film "A Man Called Ove" which was later remake into "A Man Called Otto" there are several differences even though it is the same film. These differences can be seen from the changes and developments that occurred in the remake of "A Man Called Otto".

The main characters are both depicted as experts in machines, but there are differences in the way the main character's jobs are depicted in the two films. In the original version of the film, the main character's job was depicted when he was young, where the main character worked at a train station where his father previously worked. Meanwhile, in the remake version of the film, the main character's job is shown when he is old, where the main character works as an engineer at a company and then retires. This difference can be seen in the following dialogue text.

Original version "A Man Called Ove"
Ove: "This is yours. That's half Dad's salary for this month. You always paid him in advance." The Manager: "No, we can't take that." Ove : "It's only right." The Manager: "Maybe we can find another solution?"

This dialogue is a conversation between Ove and his father's manager. The manager gave Ove a job as a solution to his father's salary after he died to work on the train where his

father worked. This scene can be seen at minutes 35.25 to 36.30).

Remake version "A Man Called Otto"
Otto: "What's all this?"

Co-worker : "it's, well, retirement cake, I guess. Call it what you like.

Otto: "Have fun! Doing what?"

Co-worker: "Have fun with the rest of your life. We wanted to, you know..."

Otto: "Celebrate?" Co-worker : "Give you a nice send-off." Come on, Otto. You're the one who decided to leave. And you did get a nice severance package." Otto: "You took me off operations. You cut back on my hours. So, yes, I took the severance package." Co-worker: "I'm sorry you see it that way. But you've been quite an asset to this Company over the year.

This dialogue is a conversation between Otto and his co-workers. Otto visited his office and when he arrived at the office, Otto received a surprise from his colleagues because Otto had retired. This dialogue can be seen from minutes 08.20 to 10.09.

Another difference between the two films is when the main character first meets his wife. In the original version, Ove meets his wife at the train station where Ove is asleep. When Ove wakes up, he feels confused and sees a woman sitting in front of him. whereas in the remake version, Otto first sees the woman across the train tracks, then Otto approaches her on the train to return the book that he accidentally dropped. Another difference can also be seen from the conversation the main character has with his wife. The differences in the scenes displayed can be seen in the following dialogue text.
Original version "A Man Called Ove":

Ove: "How long have we been traveling?" Sonya: "About an hour.

Why?" I could have woken you up, if I'd known you had to get off, but you were sleeping so sweetly. Have you overslept now?" Ove: "No, It's no problem. Sonya: "Don't worry about that, now. I'm reading The Master and Margarita. Do you know it? Ove: "No." Sonya: "In that book, there's a fare-dodging cat. Have you read anything by Mikhail Bulgakov?" Ove: "No, I've read nothing by him. Sonya: "I'm studying to be a teacher." Ove: " And I'm getting off here."

This dialogue is Ove and Sonya's first conversation, where the topics they discuss are mostly about Sonya, who is a prospective teacher and likes books. This scene can be seen at minutes 40.30 to 42.17.

Remake version "A Man Called Otto":

Sonya : "Is that mine?"

Otto : "Yes, I saw you dropped it, so I..."

Sonya : "Thank you so much. I'm halfway through reading it. I would hate not knowing how it ends. Oh, here. Why don't you join me? I'm sonya." Otto: "I'm Otto". It was my father's name." Sonya : "I'm on my way to visit my father right now. I go every Thursday. Do you take this train a lot? Otto: "Oh, no, I had to come into town for my Army physical." Sonya: "Oh, that must be so hard, not knowing what you're gonna face over there. When are you leaving?"

Otto: "I'm not for a while."

This dialogue is Otto and Sonya's first conversation, where the topics they discuss are Sonya going to visit her father and Otto having taken a military physical test. This scene can be seen at minutes 27.26 to 30.35.

The next difference is when the main character tells about the incident he and his wife experienced to a neighbor who cares about the main character. in the original version of the film, the incident that happened to the main character is told in detail, where Ove is sitting with Parvaneh (Ove's neighbor) and telling the story, then in the film flashbacks appear from the beginning of Ove's story until the end of the incident in detail and clearly. whereas in the remake version, the events experienced by the main character are told concisely and clearly. Otto and Marisol (Otto's neighbor) are standing together then Otto explains about the incident that happened to him and his wife, there are several flashbacks but not as many as the flashbacks that occur in the original version of the film. The differences in the scenes shown can be seen in the spoken text narrated by the main character.

Original version "A Man Called Ove":

"It was her idea initially. To travel together, just the two of us, before the baby arrived. She was determined that we should go by bus. It was more romantic, she said, and I didn't argue. It made more sense financially, too. In Spain, Sonja thought one should do what the Spaniards did, while I soon found out that Spain had quite a lot to learn when it came to Swedish building norms. It was grand, though. We ate out in the evenings. We'd saved some food from our lunch buffets and had a lovely dinner outside. And then, one day, it was time to go home."

"I think I sat with her like that for a week. No one dared to speak to me, which was just as well. Until one day. They told me she'd never wake up

again. But then, the unfathomable happened. And the following day, I had to tell her what had happened. About a life which was no more."

"And six months ago, she passed away. She had cancer. I promised to follow.

(The scene where Ove tells his story can be seen from 01.31.40 to 01.42.45).

Remake version "A Man Called Otto":

"We had never had a vacation. Sonya was six months pregnant. And she wanted to do something special before the baby came. So we booked a trip to Niagara falls. On the way back, the bus crashed. There'd been a recall on the brake lines, but the company never had them fixed."

"Sonya was paralyzed and we lost our son. After three months, she was finally able to come home. But they had started building the new condos and the community centre and the walkways, none of which were designed for people in wheelchairs."

"I wanted to obliterate them all. The builders, and the realtors, and the bus company, the bus driver. I never would have let it go, but for Sonya. Sonya said we had to keep living. That's what I did. I lived for Sonya."

"Six months ago she passed away. Cancer. I was going to join her. That's I had them disconnect my phone. But know I think she wants me to keep living."

(The scene where Otto tells his story can be seen from 01.39.20 to 01.41.35).

The last difference between the two films can be seen in the main character's spoken text in the letter he wrote before he died. In the original

version of the film, the main character does not narrate his last message much in the letter, he conveys about his illness, the funeral he wants, and some responsibilities he wants to convey to his neighbors. whereas in the remake version of the film, there are differences in the spoken text narrated by the main character, at the beginning of the narrative the meaning of the first version of the text is maintained, then there is additional text in the will where the main character writes that he will give all his property to Marisol. Based on these differences, it is known that there is a development of the text which is narrated by the main character.

Original version "A Man Called Ove":

"Don't worry about me having done something silly. When you read this, the doctor's prediction will have been fulfilled. He said my heart was too big. It may sound sweet, but it isn't all that good. Sooner or later, you pay. I'd like to have a proper funeral in a funeral church. None of this nonsense with ashes scattered in the wind. And I want a quiet funeral, with only those present who thought I pulled my weight. The cat has tuna twice a day and wants to shit in private. Please respect that. And above all, make damn sure the bastards don't drive on our paths."

(This scene can be seen from minutes 01.49.48 to 01.50.45)

Remake version "A Man Called Otto":

"Marisol, if you're reading this, don't worry. I haven't done anything stupid. It turns out having a big heart, isn't as nice as it sounds. The Doctors warned me it would get me in the end, So I

planned ahead, that's all. The cat eats tuna twice a day and likes to do his business in private. Please respect that. I would like a funeral. But nothing overblown. Just a remembrance of some sort for those people who thought I pulled my weight. My lowyer will give you access to my bank accounts. I never wasted money on crap, so you'll have enough to get the children through school. And do what you like with the rest. The house, and everything in it, is yours, so long as you promise never to sell it to those real estate bastards. And for God's sakes, Marisol. Don't let Tommy drive the Chevy. Or anyone else, for that matter. I'm trusting it with you alone. Because you are not an idiot."

This scene can be seen from minutes 01.55.40 to 01.57.53)

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the results, the update or development of the story of the main character that occurs in the remake film cannot be separated from the dialogue text delivered by that character. This update is not aimed at changing the whole thing or changing the meaning, but there are several modifications to adapt the storyline structure and culture in which the remake film was made. Therefore, this update shows that the relationships between texts established in the original version of the film are maintained in the remake version of the film. The difference in dialogue text delivered by the main character is the difference between the original version of the film and the remake version.

The film "A Man Called Otto" is a remake of the film "A Man Called Ove" which succeeds in providing a

new atmosphere, especially in the development or depiction of the main character, even though the structure of the story depiction is different from the original. Both the original and remake versions of the film still manage to maintain the essence of their respective stories. There are reductions made in the remake version of the film, namely flashbacks to the main character's childhood, but this does not affect the storyline. Then there are several differences in the changes and development of the main character, such as the job the main character does, when the main character meets his wife, and when the main character dares to tell about what happened to him, apart from that there is text development in the will written by the main character. All research results and data collected are proof that a film that undergoes a remake will not have the same overall story, but there will be differences or updates that make the film even more interesting.

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Comparative Analysis of The Main Character in
The Films “A man Called Ove by Hannes Holm”
and “A Man Called Otto by Marc Forster”

Nahdhiyah, Gusnawati.N, Annisa Latifa Zahra,
A Omar Pallawa, Dian Ilmarani Safril.

Wellek, René & Warren, Austin.
Teori Kesusastaan.
Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
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