

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The first time I read *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), I never imagined this novel is a popular material for children for entertainment and education in Western culture. To mention several indications that I assume this novel is not relevant for children are, Crusoe disobeyed to his father, the violence, murdered, and the cannibalism on the island he was cast away. But, my assumption is defeated by the fact that as Andrew O'Malley says in his book *Children's Literature, Popular Culture, and Robinson Crusoe* (2012), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has been one of the literary work that took part toward children attitude in Western civilization over the last three centuries (14). O'Malley argues that Crusoe figure used by the adult to make the children independent, self-sufficient, and religious (46-47).

Robinson Crusoe was written by Daniel Defoe and it was published on 25th April 1719 in London. Eventually, this novel gained its popularity and distributed to other countries. Carl Fisher, a professor of Comparative Literature at California State University, explained why *Robinson Crusoe* was so adorable in the eighteenth century. Fisher states that *Robinson Crusoe* gives an image of the condition of the eighteenth century (102). The era where people in Europe went to the sea and explored a new place. Through the main character of this novel, a reader is put into

the obstacles in the sea and in the stranger place, how Crusoe survives in the isolated island by himself, builds a place that could be habituated, and made it sustainable. Moreover, the reader could identify their “anxieties, doubts, travails, and desires” (102) through the hero.

Robinson Crusoe was translated into almost all languages in Europe and others like Icelandic, Coptic, Maori, and Arabic. It makes sense then, why *Robinson Crusoe* has influenced so strong on other cultures. Fisher claims that almost every culture (especially in Europe) produces literary text rooted from *Robinson Crusoe* story (109).

Since *Robinson Crusoe* provided the main concept for commercial entertainment in the eighteenth century, many writers in Europe developed or imitated this novel form. Adventure and survival story, especially sea travel became common in that era. Several novels imitated Defoe’s novel; *The Adventures, and Surprising Deliverances, Of James Dubourdie* (1719), *The Adventures of Alexander Vendchurch* (1719), *The Hermit* (1727), *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* (1750), and many more in French and German. This kind of story, which rooted in *Robinson Crusoe*, is called Robinsonade.

Robinsonade in Oxford Online defines as a novel that depicts a similar character with Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* or a story about being trap on a desert island or in a similar kind of inhospitable place (“Robinsonade”). Robinsonades usually explored the detail of Defoe’s novel. It could be refocused in human nature or nature

itself, the economic, social relation, even gender changes. The purposes behind Robinsonades according to Fisher are to “entertain children, emphasize educational models, highlight female heroines, create utopian or dystopian worlds, and go beyond the novel to film, television, even video games adaptation. . .” (100).

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, where the film and television play a major part in our culture, more Robinsonades are produced and presented in this contemporary media. Robert Mayer, Professor of English at Oklahoma State University, claims that *Robinson Crusoe* was the most popular text from the eighteenth century that adapted into many films (222-223). Some of those films were: Otis Turner’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1913), George Marion’s *American Robinson Crusoe* (1917), Edward Cline’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1924), Bryan Foy’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1924), Walter Lantz’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1925), M. Wheterel’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1927), Edward Sutherland’s *Mr. Robinson Crusoe* (1932), Franks Moser’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1933), Luis Bunuel’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1952), *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960) produced by Disney Studio, Byron Haskin’s *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (1964), Jack Gold’s *Man Friday* (1975), Stewart Raffill’s *The Adventure of the Wilderness Family* (1975), Franks Zuniga’s *The Futher Adventures of the Wilderness Family* (1978), Jack Couffer’s *Mountain Family Robinson* (1979), Randal Kleiser’s *The Blue Lagoon* (1980), Caleb Deschanel’s *Crusoe* (1989), George Miller/Rod Hardy *Robinson Crusoe* (1996), Rober Zemeckis’s *Cast Away* (2000), and *Survivor* (2000) an American TV series. Mayer observes that most of the *Robinson Crusoe*

film adaptations refocus on how Crusoe survives and conquers the isolated island (225). For example, in *Robinson Crusoe on Mars*, *Man Friday*, and *Cast Away*, the problem in the survival of Crusoe is how he solves his solitude.

On the other hand, *Robinson Crusoe* is a popular material for children's entertainment and education. There are Robinsonades films produced for younger audiences. They are *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960) directed by Ken Annakin, a popular American TV sitcom *Gilligan's Island* (1964-1967) directed by Sherwood Schwartz, and *Robinson Crusoe* (2003) produced by Delta Studios. While the previous Robinsonades films focused on the survival and the conquering of the island, Sophia Nikoleisvili in her dissertation examines these children Robinsonades are portrait the survival on the island as an exciting experience, to fulfil the younger audience who hunger for discovery and exploration (105-106).

The latest Robinsonade for children was produced in 2016, entitled *Robinson Crusoe*. *Robinson Crusoe* is an animated film directed by Vincent Kesteloot, the producers are Ben Stassen, Gina Gallo, Mimi Maynard, Domonic Paris, and Caroline Van Iseghem, and distributed by StudioCanal. This film was released in Europe as *Robinson Crusoe*, while in North America released with the title *The Wild Life*. The public who wrote their reviews and discuss it on the internet mostly call this film as *The Wild Life*. I choose to call this film *The Wild Life* to make it easy to differentiate between the novel and its film adaptation. Besides, this film is marked with Parental

Guidance (PG) which means this film is suitable for general but may contain some materials that parents may not let their young children watch it.

In the animation version of *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Wild Life* brings a similar issue to how Crusoe survives in an isolated place. But, unlike the previous children Robinsonade films which present the exploration and discovery, *The Wild Life* presents the survival of Robinson Crusoe is mostly depended on another character, especially animal characters that inhabit on the island. Contradictory with the novel, which presents Crusoe that passes the obstacles mostly by himself.

The important thing that changes in *The Wild Life* is who tells the story. In Defoe's novel, the story is told by Robinson Crusoe, but in this film adaptation, a parrot named Mak owns the story. It also impacts the other formal elements, such as the depiction of the animals. Generally, in Defoe's novel, the animals are seen as the source of food for Crusoe to live on the island. While in *The Wild Life* the animals play a major part in the survival of Crusoe on the island. Mak with other animals is help Crusoe to manage the food, build a plantation, build a shelter, and fight the cats who try to attack them.

The Wild Life that adapted *Robinson Crusoe* in this way did many alterations on the elements of the source. As Linda Hutcheon emphasizes the context that affects the formal element of the adaptation, the changes are caused by a particular audience (142). The particular audience in *The Wild Life* is special for the younger audience. It

makes the way to presents Crusoe in this film is the way how the film adapts the *Robinson Crusoe* for children.

This research will examine how *Robinson Crusoe* adapted by the *The Wild Life* to entertain or educate the younger audience. By revealing the formal elements from *Robinson Crusoe* and how it is transformed into the film adaptation, and what are the additional elements are used by the film to present *Robinson Crusoe* in this particular way. Based on the explanation above, I would like to entitle this research **“Reimagining Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) From the Animal Perspective in *Robinson Crusoe/The Wild Life* (2016)”**

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Robinson Crusoe is the character in the novel *Robinson Crusoe* that tells the story. Describe his life and his journey, which means the narrator, is Robinson Crusoe. While in the film adaptation *The Wild Life*, a parrot named Mak that tells the story of Crusoe survival. This way of retelling also changes the way Crusoe survives on the island, the change of conflict, and the addition of character. In short, the formal elements on *Robinson Crusoe* are changes or refocuses by the filmmakers of *The Wild Life*.

The depiction of the animals in *Robinson Crusoe* is as the source of food by hunting them or tames. The other animals that interrupt or distress Crusoe on the island will be killed by Crusoe. While in its film adaptation *The Wild Life*, the

animals play a major part. These animals have a community, have their ritual and life, even can talk in English to each other, except with Crusoe, and help Crusoe who needs help to live on the island. By this depiction, this film is generating a kind of fable model on retelling *Robinson Crusoe*, and the addition of conflict of animals even generates new direction on the theme.

By the explanation above, this research will focus on the way *The Wild Life* retells its source *Robinson Crusoe* in the matter of the transformation of formal elements from the source into its film adaptation, including the change of the narrator, re-characterizing Robinson Crusoe, the refocusing the plot, addition the animals characters, and the refocusing the theme. The way *The Wild Life* adapted *Robinson Crusoe* also uses some additional elements, such as the talking animals, animal conflict, and new direction the theme of survival. I will examine these additional elements that use by this film adaptation.

1.3 The Scope of the Research

In understanding this phenomenon of adaptation, I begin with formal elements on Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and how it presents in its film adaptation *The Wild Life*. Then, I will look carefully at additions elements that use by the film adaptation.

Based on that explanation above derives several questions:

1. How is *Robinson Crusoe* retold in *The Wild Life* (2016)?

2. What are the additional elements that are used to retell the *Robinson Crusoe* in *The Wild Life* (2016)?

1.4 Objective of the Research

This study's purpose is to expose the way *Robinson Crusoe* is adapted for entertaining and educating children in the medium of film, through its adaptation *The Wild Life*. How are the elements from *Robinson Crusoe* that reused by its film adaptation *The Wild Life* and what are the elements that generate by this way of retelling *Robinson Crusoe*. I believe this film retells *Robinson Crusoe* from the animal perspective to generate several values that appropriate to the younger audience.

1.5 Review of Previous Studies

To support this research, I need some previous studies which are related to this topic. These previous studies are aimed as the medium of comparison and to achieve a deeper understanding of the application of theory, method, and analysis of the topic which are related. Also, I review other studies conducted by other researchers to find a different point of view and opinion to enrich the analysis.

The first article is by Marcus Nordlund (2011) entitled *Self-Possession in Robinson Crusoe*. Nordlund examines *Robinson Crusoe* with the Biocultural approach that focuses on the evolution of human nature, the main philosophy and religion in the eighteenth century, the author's background, and the artistic choice. He

claims that in *Robinson Crusoe* there are selfishness and altruism, but not reciprocal. The selfishness is presented by *Robinson Crusoe* who does anything to make a benefit for him. While other characters are to help Crusoe to fulfil the Crusoe need. Crusoe relation with another character is not mutual benefit, rather one-way benefit. Crusoe will help another character if there is a benefit to him. This research gives the understanding to observe the kind of relationship of Crusoe to other characters in the novel, which emphasizes the selfishness and independence of Robinson Crusoe.

Secondly, a thesis by James O Foster entitled *Ideology and Structure in Robinson Crusoe: Defoe's Resolution of The Trade-Morality Conflict* (1970) tries to build a dialectic response to another article that shows paradoxical meaning on *Robinson Crusoe*. One study argues that *Robinson Crusoe* brings a capitalistic value, and another study argues this novel offers a Religious value, without trying to complicate both themes. While, Foster finds this novel is Puritan writing that presents the allegory of human fall, the loss of paradise, the exile, and final restoration to paradise. The religion (Puritan) illustrates by Defoe to supports the economic and moral theme and vice versa. The religion that teaches Crusoe the value of stability, security, duty, and obligation. So, Foster successfully proves that both of the themes seen as the paradoxical before are reciprocal each other.

The next literature is a dissertation by Sophia Nikoleishvili (2007) entitled *The Many Faces of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe: Examining The Crusoe Myth in Film and on Television*. Nikoleishvilli builds her understanding of the adaptation of

Robinson Crusoe as the product of intertextual dialogism, as Robert Stam definition. It means, the films and TV product that adapted this novel is a work produced by the interpretation of the filmmaker. She examines these films of adaptation on several categories in the kind of the major motif and exploration of the films. The exploration is: Friday relation with Crusoe, simplifying Defoe's story for children, reconstructing the romance of Crusoe, science fiction like Crusoe on Mars, and the reality show of Crusoe. By the result, she claims that *Robinson Crusoe* is rich material for the sources of new work of art, serves infinite interpretations. The transformation of Defoe's story also shows modern-day values, or appropriating to its new audiences.

The other article is written by Alex Mackintosh. In his essay *Crusoe Abattoir: Cannibalism and Animal Slaughter in Robinson Crusoe* (2011) reveals the strategy of Crusoe to dominate the island, particularly to the animals and the cannibals. It represents the work of colonial in conquered and institutionalized the colonial region. Mackintosh found the act of Crusoe kills the animals to produce food as the act of domination by the human to the habitat. And when the animals are tamed by Crusoe, this is seen as a higher level of domination by disciplined the animals. This act is not only found toward the animal. The same level is also seen toward Friday, the cannibal that saved by Crusoe. Moreover, Friday is not only taught by Crusoe but became Crusoe's servant.

Last article entitled *Robinson Crusoe on Television* (2010) by Robert Mayer. This article discusses the alteration of *Robinson Crusoe* in several American television

programs; *Gilligan's Island* (1964-1965). *Survivor* (2000-2001), and *Lost* (2004-2005). Mayer states these TV series have many commons with Defoe's novel, especially the ideas that related to Western civilization. He finds these TV series have contested the ideas of individualism toward communitarian, and validation of the contemporary reality versus critique. And the result represents the domination of communitarian values, and as the tool to criticize contemporary life.

Recently, there are a lot of researches about *Robinson Crusoe*, especially its Robinsonade and its adaptation, has been done. However, as far as I conducted this research, the study on *Robinson Crusoe* and the relation to its film adaptation *The Wild Life* have not been examined scientifically.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The study of literature and its relation to other disciplines or other forms of artistic expression is a kind of comparative study. According to Steven Totosy de Zepetnek in his book *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* (1998), comparative literature has “facilitate the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature. . .” (13). Zepetnek offers two basic principles in the research of interdisciplinarity; first, literature may be studied by attention to related disciplines (sociology, psychology, etc.) or artistic expression (film, music, visual arts, etc.). Second, in understanding the literary text, it is important to postulate the theoretical and methodological used in another discipline (79). He also emphasizes, in the comparative study, the “how” is the most important question, rather the “what” (16).

In this research, I will analyze the relation (the “how”) between a novel with its film adaptation.

Linda Hutcheon in her book *Theory of Adaptation* defines adaptation in three terms (8). The first term is adaptation as a formal entity or a product. Adaptation is the product of transposition from one medium to another medium, for example from a novel into a film. The second term is adaptation as a process of creation. In the process of adaptation is inevitably the act of appropriation and salvaging. This process will need the creativity of the adaptor to interpret the source and recreate the product to gain their purpose. Last, the process of reception of adaptation. In this process reception, for a particular audience, they will experience a kind of shadow from the source when watching or experiencing the product of adaptation.

In analyzing an adaptation from the novel into film or from telling to showing, Hutcheon states, in visualizing the textual image the filmmaker will re-accentuate and refocus the theme, character, and plot (40). The adaptation that has its alteration on the formal element is also caused by a context. She states that an adaptation is tied by context (time, place, society, and culture). In particular, the contexts are the demand of form, the individual adapter, the particular audience, the reception, and creation (142).

In understanding the formal element in the novel, I utilize Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren discussion in their book *Understanding Fiction* (1979). They explain there are plot, character, and theme, as the basic elements of fiction in general

form. The plot is the structure of action that builds unity in the fiction (34). Four stages that build the plot; exposition, complication, climax, and denouement (36). The characteristic of the character can be examined through the dialogue and action, indirectly, and perhaps in the explicit form, it would be easy to understand in the description (107). The theme is the idea of life that embodies the total narrative (177).

Since the medium of film (basically visual and audial, to be seen and heard) is different from a novel (basically words, to be told), I will observe the film through the concept of mise-en-scene by John Gibbs. In his book *Mise-en-scene: Film Style and Interpretation* (2002), he defines mise-en-scene as the composition of any element on the frame (1). The elements are lighting, costume, decor, and actors (action and performance). However, the set of the camera; position, movement, etc., also counted as the mise-en-scene concept. These elements are composite to deliver a message to the audience, in this case, to visualize the novel. In short, mise-en-scene is the tool for the filmmaker to design and modify our reading to a frame. But, since the film adaptation that I discuss in this research is an animation, several elements that Gibbs mention do not appear in animation, I will focus on the element of the actor including its action, performance, and costume as the tool to examine the film.

1.7 Methods of the Research

This study is library research which utilizes a qualitative approach and comparative method. I will begin this research by revealing the formal elements in Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*. Formal elements here are referring to

Hutcheon's statement in analyzing novel into a film, there are themes, characters, plot, and point of view. Then, I will examine how these formal elements are re-accentuates and re-focuses by the film adaptation *The Wild Life*. And what are the new elements that generate by its film adaptation to adapt *Robinson Crusoe* for the younger audience.

In order to analyze the issue of this research, I will follow several phases. The phases are collecting data, analyzing data, and presenting the result. The data will be collects and divides into two kinds: primary and secondary data. The primary data is maintained from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and its film adaptation *The Wild Life*. The secondary data is taken from the book, thesis, dissertation, article, and essay that related to this research.

In analyzing the data, I will apply the theory of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon. The first data is the formal elements from *Robinson Crusoe*, then analyze the changes produced by the demand of presenting *Robinson Crusoe* for a younger audience in the form of film adaptation *Robinson Crusoe*. The formal elements will be analyzes with an understanding from Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren discussion related to plot, character, theme, and point of view. For examining the film, I will apply the theory of mise-en-scene by John Gibbs. The last phase is presenting the result of the analysis. In the method of qualitative research, it will be conducted with words, phrases, paragraphs, and quotations from the book and the source, to build the argumentation, statement, and opinion.

