
**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN THE WILD ROBOT NOVEL AND MOVIE
ADAPTATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDIES**

Evan Adhyt Rahmat

Universita Bangka Belitung

Email: evanandromax0@gmail.com

Tri Arie Bowo, M. Hum

Universita Bangka Belitung

Email: triariebowo@ubb.ac.id

Andri Fernanda, M. A.

Universitas Bangka Belitung

Email: andriferienda92@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persamaan dan perbedaan dalam penggambaran perkembangan karakter utama, Roz, dalam novel "The Wild Robot" karya Peter Brown dirilis pada tahun 2016 dan adaptasi filmnya pada tahun 2024. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan pemahaman tentang adaptasi karakter dalam sastra bandingan. Dengan memanfaatkan teori sastra bandingan oleh Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek dan teori adaptasi oleh Linda Hutcheon, serta kerangka desain penelitian kualitatif oleh Creswell, penelitian ini menerapkan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Pengumpulan data melibatkan analisis dialog dan elemen naratif dalam novel dan film. Dengan menganalisa persamaan dan perbedaan lalu pengurangan dan penambahan dalam adaptasi kedua karya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun karakterisasi inti Roz seperti naluri keibuan tetap dipertahankan, adaptasi film memperkenalkan variasi yang mencerminkan teknik penceritaan sinematik. Novel sangat bergantung pada prosa deskriptif dan monolog internal untuk menggambarkan pertumbuhan emosional Roz, sedangkan film menggunakan isyarat visual dan akting suara. Perbedaan ini menyoroti alat naratif unik dalam sastra dan film, memberikan wawasan tentang proses adaptasi.

Kata kunci: *Adaptasi, Pengembangan Karakter, Sastra Bandingan, The Wild Robot*

Abstract

This study aims to explore the similarities and differences in the portrayal of the main character, Roz, in Peter Brown's novel *The Wild Robot*, released in 2016, and its 2024 film adaptation. The purpose of this research is to enhance the understanding of character adaptation in comparative literature. Utilizing Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's theory of comparative literature and Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation, along with Creswell's qualitative research design framework, this study applies a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection involves analyzing dialogue and narrative elements in both the novel and the film. By examining similarities, differences, reductions, and additions in the adaptation of both works, the study reveals that while Roz's core characterization, such as her maternal instincts, is retained, the film adaptation introduces variations reflecting cinematic storytelling techniques. The novel heavily relies on descriptive prose and internal monologues to portray Roz's emotional growth, whereas the film employs visual cues and voice acting. These differences highlight the unique narrative tools used in literature and film, providing insights into adaptation processes.

Keywords: Adaptation, Character Development, Comparative Literature, The Wild Robot

INTRODUCTION

Literature traditionally refers to written works, especially those with artistic or intellectual value. The definition of literature has expanded to visual and cinematic arts which is films. Films share similarities with traditional literature works because films involved storytelling, character development, thematic exploration, and the communication of ideas.

Films also using storyline and narrative to convey message or evoke emotions to the audience. Film Theory is a written dialogue about and about images, objects, and ideas that occur in movies and the cinematic film industry (Colman, 2014). Films have their own uniqueness the way films fascinating and stun the audience by watching it. According to Donaghy, K (2015) films are not only watching but also creating motivation, variety, skills, give rich authentic resource with context/visuality, and enhance the audience cross-cultural understanding. Watching films give a better image of the story as it is visual and takes place in a short time frame, which helps the audience remember the story. Films typically feature a plot or narrative that supports the progression of the central theme (Boggs, 1996).

Adaptations in visual form in the world of literature are commonplace, whether from novels to films, from fairy tales to films, even from games to films. where this adaptation can also be said to be ecranization. Adaptation of literary works into various forms, including film and explores how adaptations can be seen as a form of rewriting and how they contribute to the evolution of stories across different media. Adaptation is a process creation which involves with recreation and reinterpretation (Hutcheon, 2006). Instead, critics and audience hope to find a previously known work that can be enjoyed in a new form. Adaptation studies can be regarded as a distinct subfield within their respective disciplines, allowing for a deeper understanding of how this process operates within specific art forms and how shifts in genre serve as adaptations in their own right (Kinney, 2013).

Comparative Literature by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, which provides a framework for comparing literary and cinematic narratives. Comparative literature is way how to compare two literary works but nowadays comparative is not only about compare two literary works on the same media but across another media. Comparative literature serves as a theoretical framework or methodology for comparing literary works that share elements to be compared, such as the narrative itself, cultural aspects, characters, or various other factors (Mahmudah & Kurniawati, 2023).

The Wild Robot by Peter Brown is a novel that was later adapted into a film in 2024 by DreamWorks Animation. This adaptation raises questions about how the character “Roz” evolves in both media. The primary difference between the novel and its film adaptation lies in the storytelling techniques used to depict the character's journey. The challenge in adapting for the screen lies in maintaining the depth of the characters while translating the emotions and relationships into visual terms. The film condenses the novel’s detailed descriptions into shorter, more immediate portrayals while maintaining the essence of Roz's development. This study aims to compare the characterization of Roz in both versions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive qualitative method is used method to conduct this study design due to analyse comparative literature with the object of two literary works which novel and film. This method focuses comparing to find similarities and differences between two literary works main characters and how to compare it. Creswell (2012) states that the qualitative method relies on text or words (e.g., transcriptions from interviews, audio) and image data (e.g., photographs).

Rather than relying on statistical procedures, qualitative research often involves written or spoken words to understand a problem, situation, or phenomenon and describe them in narrative form. Using this method is effective in analysing. Hence, this method allows the researcher to find a deeper understanding of similarities and differences of the Roz’s character in “The Wild Robot” novel version and movie version.


RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Characterization in Roz

a. Similarities in Characterization

Both the novel and the film depict Roz as a robot who initially lacks emotions but gradually develops maternal instincts and empathy. In the novel, this transformation is conveyed through internal monologues and descriptive narration. For instance, when Roz realizes that she has caused the death of a goose family, she experiences profound remorse:

Novel	Movie
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<p><i>The robot stared at them with her softly glowing eyes, and something clicked deep inside her computer brain. Roz realized she had caused the deaths of an entire family of geese. (c. 24, p.42)</i></p>	<p>No dialogue on the scene where Roz stared at a dead goose she accidentally kills</p>  <p>00:12:14</p>
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In both popular fictions, Roz realise she caused a death to geese. In the novel Roz killed an entire family of geese while in the movie despite there is no dialogue the scene tells that the Roz killed a goose. Roz of both popular fictions realise that she killed the goose. This is related with Zepetnek’s discipline on psychology how Roz in both literatures have feeling of guilt even though she is a robot.

b. Differences in Characterization

The primary difference lies in how Roz's emotional growth is conveyed. The novel relies on descriptive prose and internal monologues to illustrate Roz's emotional development. In contrast, the film employs cinematic techniques such as body language, facial expressions, and voice acting. For example, in the novel, Roz learns about humor from a stick insect:

Novel	Movie
<p><i>“Thank you, stick insect,” said Roz as she placed him back where she found him. “You have taught me an important lesson. I can see how camouflage helps you survive; perhaps it could help me survive also.”</i> (c. 17, p. 29).</p>	<p>Fink, “Come on. Find that...inside you.” Roz, “Searching” Fink, “Anything yet?” Roz, “No” Fink, “Just have a little fun for once” Roz, “Gosling 0-1-8-6. There, you see what I did?”, “His numbering out of sequence, Ha Ha Ha” (00:28:20 – 00:28:41)</p>




In the film, this scene is omitted, but Roz learns about humor from Fink, the fox who becomes her companion. This occurs at 00:28:20, where Fink encourages Roz to "have a little fun," and Roz attempts to make a joke by scrambling Brightbill's identification numbers.

2. Setting

a. Similarities in Setting


Both the novel and the film use a remote island as the primary setting. In the novel, the island is described as a wild and challenging environment where Roz must learn to survive. The description of the island in the novel is highly detailed:

Novel	Movie
<p><i>The robot slowly turned her head completely around. She saw the ocean stretching to the horizon in every direction. And in that moment, Roz learned what you and I have known since the beginning of this story. In that moment, Roz finally realized that she was on an island.</i> (c.9, p.15)</p>	<p>Roz, "Return to factory activating return transmitter" 00:08:16</p>  <p>00:08:16</p>

Both works show similarities on the setting. In the novel shows through narrative text "The robot slowly turned her head completely around. She saw the ocean stretching to the horizon in every direction." And the movie shows the same thing through the scene at 00:08:16 where in the scene Roz turned her head around and shows cinematically the setting just like the novel.

b. Differences in Setting

The primary difference lies in the addition of visual elements in the film. For instance, in the novel, Roz learns about animal language through observation:


Novel	Movie
<p><i>She discovered that all the different animals shared one common language; they just spoke the language in different ways. You might say each species spoke with its own unique accent.</i> (c. 20, p. 34)</p>	<p>Roz analysing animals' language after entering "learning mode"</p>  <p>00:06:32</p>

In the film, this process is expedited with a scene where Roz activates "learning mode" at 00:06:32, sitting still while analyzing the sounds of animals around her. This scene adds a technological element not present in the novel.

3. Plot

a. Similarities in Plot


Both versions share the same plot, where Roz faces challenges to survive and protect Brightbill, the gosling she raises. In the novel, the main conflict arises when robots from Roz's manufacturing company arrive to retrieve her:

Novel	Movie
<p><i>"Where will you take me?" said Roz</i> <i>"Do not ask questions." said RECO's robot</i> <i>"Why must I leave?" said Roz</i> <i>"Do not ask questions." said RECO's robot</i> <i>"I will not go anywhere until I get some answers." said Roz</i> (c. 69, p. 147)</p>	<p>RECO's robot, <i>"You do not belong here, this is wilderness"</i> Roz, <i>"And im a wild robot"</i> (01:19:36-01:19:42)</p>  <p>01:19:42</p>

In the film, this conflict is intensified with a dramatic scene where Roz and the island animals unite to fight the RECO robots. This occurs at 01:19:36, where Roz stands before the RECO robot and declares, "And I'm a wild robot." The movie gets a reduction to the plot that condenses this into a powerful declaration of identity. The adaptation simplifies the confrontation, emphasizing Roz's growth and defiance through a concise and visually impactful moment with the animals.

b. Differences in Plot

The primary difference lies in the addition of Fink, the fox, who becomes Roz's companion in the film. Fink does not exist in the novel but plays a crucial role in the film by helping Roz care for Brightbill and integrate with other animals. For example, at 00:22:01, Fink assists Roz in teaching Brightbill how to swim and fly.

Novel	Movie
<p><i>"I am in great need of your assistance!" said Roz. "Actually, the gosling is in need of your assistance!"</i></p> <p><i>"You do want him to survive, don't you?" said Longneck.</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, I do want him to survive," (c. 28, p.52)</i></p>	<p>Roz, <i>"as a local goose expert, how do I get... mmm...to eat, swim, fly?"</i></p> <p>Fink, <i>"I thought you'd never ask."</i> (00:22:01)</p>  <p>00:22:01</p>

By adding Fink, the movie adapts Roz's mentorship experience to suit its tone. This addition change introduces humour and shifts the narrative to a more dynamic, fast-paced interaction, aligning with cinematic storytelling. Also, by adding Fink in the crucial role adds more emotional layer where in the novel this was absent.

Another significant difference is the final confrontation with the RECO robots. In the novel, the confrontation ends on the island, with Roz deciding to leave to protect her new home:

Novel	Movie
<p><i>"But I care about this island far too much to put any more lives in danger. And so, my friends, I must leave." Voices cried out.</i></p> <p><i>"Don't go, Roz!"</i></p> <p><i>"Next time we'll be prepared!"</i></p> <p><i>"We risked our lives so you could stay!"</i></p> <p>(c. 77, p. 171)</p>	<p>Roz, <i>"They will just keep coming until they have me."</i></p> <p>Animals, <i>"And we'll be ready. We can fight them off as many times as we need to."</i></p> <p>Roz, <i>"You don't need to."</i></p> <p>Fink, <i>"What are you saying? You're... leaving?"</i></p> <p>Roz, <i>"Yes. To protect all of you"</i> (01:28:25-01:28:43)</p>



In the film, the confrontation escalates into a dramatic battle on the aircraft, culminating in Roz's escape with Brightbill. This change not only increases the action and suspense but also provides a more cinematic resolution to the story.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

These findings demonstrate that while the novel and film share similarities in portraying Roz's character, the differences in medium significantly influence how the story is told. The novel allows for a deeper exploration of Roz's thoughts and feelings, while the film relies on visuals and sound to create a more immediate emotional experience for the audience. These differences also reflect the strengths of each medium. The novel provides readers with the opportunity to reflect on the meaning behind Roz's actions, while the film creates an immersive experience through visual scenes and sound effects.

Peter Brown's novel uses prose to delve into Roz's inner thoughts and relationships, allowing readers to witness her growth through introspection. In contrast, the movie adaptation brings Roz's development to life through cinematic visuals, dramatic conflicts, voice acting, and background music. While the novel offers a deeper exploration of Roz's inner journey, the movie presents her character dynamically through visual storytelling and emotional immediacy, showcasing the uniqueness of each medium.

Suggestion

Several suggestions that can be made for further study such as the adaptation, psychological elements, representation of the two popular fictions. The adaptation can be chosen because the movie is an adaptation from the novel, the psychology factors can be chosen because the way Roz think, and the representation elements can be chosen because how the novel and the movie represent Roz as a robot and a mother. When conducting this study, it good to focus on the limit that has been set because if

what you analyse don't get limited, it will be very long. Yet, it is depending on the researcher when conducting the study whether the researcher is able to conduct it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Evan Adhyt Rahmat is an English Literature student at the most prestigious university in Bangka Belitung Island province, Universitas Bangka Belitung. He was born on August 30th, 2002. The love for English and literature made him interested in English Literature major in college.

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