CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Literature refers to a wide range of written and oral expressions that frequently reflect the complexities of human experience and culture. According to Wellek and Werren (1949) literature is basically imaginative, which shows that literary works go beyond mere documentation of facts to create a unique world shaped by the author's creativity. There are several varieties of literature, one of which is prose, which is one of the most basic forms of written expression, distinguished by the use of conventional grammatical structure and the absence of metrical or rhyming patterns seen in poetry. According to Sugiarti and Eggy (2022) prose is defined as a form of literary text that contains a story or narrative carried by a particular character and is bound to a setting, stages, and series of events. Prose can be distinguished from poetry based on greater rhythmic variations and more lexical language. The evolution of prose in the current digital era illustrates the dynamic connection between technology and literary expression. Prose is always evolving, embracing the challenges and opportunities given by digital platforms.

Web novel is a serialized novel that published online, it can be published on the author's website or on a platform that dedicated for web novels such as WebNovel, NovelToon, GoodNovel, etc. Web novel is popular in the Asian market especially in China and Korea where online literature is becoming increasingly popular as a form of entertainment. One of the famous web novels in

Asia is *Omniscient Reader* (*전지적 독자시점*. *Omniscient Reader* is an apocalyptic fantasy fiction web novel, written by a Korean author under the pen name Sing Shong and published in 6 January 2018 on platform called Munpia. The novel is divided into 5 volumes and each volume containing a number of episodes. *Omniscient Reader* was exceedingly popular in the Korean web novel reader community and had exceeded 26 million views on Munpia by September 2019. It doesn't stop there, the popularity of this web novel has also reached other countries. Therefore, the WebNovel platform published the official English translation on 21 December 2018.

In February 2020, the day after the webnovel ended, its adaptation into a webtoon was announced with the title *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*. This web novel adaptation was produced by Redice Studio and published by Naver Webtoon, released in 26 May 2020. The English translation was released in 19 August 2020 by LINE Webtoon. Webtoon is a type of digital comic that originates from South Korea and is intended to be read on a smartphone or computer. Webtoons are published digitally on websites or apps and usually feature some common features such as each episode being published in one long vertical strip, utilizing a seamless canvas rather than multiple pages making it easier to read, some feature music and animations that play in each chapter. Unlike most East Asian comics, these webtoon comics are usually in color, not black-and-white, because they are published digitally on websites or apps.

One of the most intriguing aspects of this web novel is its subgenre, known as *reverse isekai*. This subgenre is the polar opposite of the *isekai* subgenre, in which the main character of a story is transported from his normal world to a fantasy world filled with magical powers. The word *isekai* comes from Japanese and means "other world." The *reverse isekai* is a scenario in which a character or the fantasy world itself travels to the real world. The plot of *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint* tells the story of a novel entitled *Ways of Survival*, written by anonymous author tls123 which was published over a decade. Kim Dokja was the only reader who read all the way through. Kim Dokja's unique knowledge of the novel becomes critical to his survival when the real world is incorporated into the premise of *Ways of Survival*. Kim Dokja collaborated with Yoo Joonghyuk, *Ways of Survival's* protagonist, to alter the novel's original plot and speed up the story's conclusion. As Kim Dokja and his party members progress through the scenarios, they face increasingly difficult threats and life-or-death challenges, fighting to stay alive and worked together in order to destroy the Star Stream that demands their suffering.

Adapting a written work to a different medium or format can result in changes to the story's content. Simple changes include changing the title, adding or removing images, and correcting grammatical errors. Adaptation, on the other hand, can involve significant changes to the original story, such as deleting or adding chapters, changing the protagonist, or changing the plot. Changes in story content are influenced by a variety of factors, including media adaptation, target audience, and the creator's vision. The adapter may also be required to reconcile

the author's vision with his or her own, as well as make changes to accommodate the new medium.

Then, as far as the author has read, there are several differences between the Web Novel *Omniscient Reader* as an original work and the LINE Webtoon *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint* as an adapted work. The differences include the explanation of Dokja's inner thoughts as the main character in this story which is more concise in the adapted work, whereas in the original work it is written in quite detail. Then in the adapted work there are several additional scenes such as the addition of interactions between characters which were not actually mentioned in the original work. However, there were also several parts cut from the novel which were ultimately not included in the adapted work. With these differences, the author wants to know more about the differences in the LINE Webtoon entitled *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint* as an adaptation of the Web Novel entitled *Omniscient Reader*.

With the issue of adaptation, the writer wants to do a research further regarding the adaptation of the web novel *Omniscient Reader* into a LINE webtoon illustrated by UMI and Sleepy-C with the title *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*. In this research the writer will use an Adaptation theory by Hutcheon (2006). Adaptation is the process of rewriting the same story from a different perspective. Hutcheon defines adaptation as the act of transforming an older text into a new one through interpretation and adjustment. This can relate to one of three things:

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1. The process of transposition, which is the conversion of a recognized work into a tangible object by changing its shape.

2. A method of production that involves interpretation and recreation in the creative process

3. Is an example of an intertextual form.

In this study, the writer's focus will emphasize more on intertextual form which are divided into two, namely the addition and reduction of the original work to the adapted work. The term intertextuality describes the connections and allusions made by various literary writings. The phrase refers to a text's ability to interact with, reference, or directly address another text in a more or less direct manner. A text may allude to or be influenced by another text in intertextual studies through direct quotations, paraphrases, imitations, or even puns. These may allude to other literary works, historical writings, myths, pop culture, or even other artistic creations (Valenzia, 2023). Comparative Literature theory which is centers around comparing two works of literature that are related. Comparative theory is used to compare the intrinsic elements of the *Omniscient Reader* web novel and what narratives are used to dramatize the story content in the LINE webtoon *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint* which provides a different perception, and also to provide a new picture of the original work. These two theories are used to analyze the differences between original works and adapted works. To limit this research, the writer will focus on adaptation of the 1st episode *Starting the Paid Services* and the 31st episode *Tomb of the Scenario* from the web novel and LINE webtoon *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*.

1.2 Identification of the Problems

As explained in the research background, a web novel is a form of written work that is published online. It can be on the author's personal blog or specialized platforms such as WebNovel, NovelToon, GoodNovel, etc. Likewise, webtoons are both forms of written work that are complemented by visual works in the form of images drawn directly by an illustrator. The issue raised in this research is what if a written work is adapted to different media. Because nowadays quite a few written works are adapted into other media, such as being adapted into webtoons, films, series, manga and so on. There are many things that can happen in adapting a work. For example, additions or subtractions to the story, additions or deletations of characters, changes in setting and other things that can change the content of the story. Therefore, a comparative literature theory is needed to analyze the comparison between original works and adapted works.

Comparative literary theory is a theory that focuses on comparing two literary works that are related. In this research, what is compared is a written work by Sing Shong entitled *Omniscient Reader* with an adapted LINE webtoon illustrated by UMI and Sleepy-C entitled *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*. Therefore, this research analyzes what the results would be if detailed written works were adapted into visual works that did not only focus on writing to tell the content of the story. This aspect of adapting to different media is analyzed based on Hutcheon's theory which is used as a guide to identify this aspect.

1.3 Limitation of the Prolems

This research analysis only focuses on the differences that exist in adapting a work from one medium to another. The object used is a web novel entitled *Omniscient Reader* and its LINE webtoon adaptation entitled *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*, more precisely in the 1st episode *Starting the Paid Services* and the 31st episode as the current episode in Webtoon *Tomb of the Scenario*. The analysis is based on the theory of Adaptation Theory by Hutcheon and Comparative Literature. This research is limited by analyzing the intrinsic elements that are affected by the adaptation process.

1.4 Research Problems

The research questions to be answered in this study are formulated in the form of two focus questions in connection with the identification of the problems described above:

1. How is the adaptation process from web novel *Omniscient Reader* into LINE Webtoon *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*?
2. What differences that appear between web novel *Omniscient Reader* and LINE Webtoon *Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint*?

1.5 Objective of the Study

The writer's goal in conducting this research is to answer research questions while also achieving several other objectives. As a result, the primary goals of this research are as follows:

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1. Find out what adaptation process that occur when a written work is adapted into a different medium.

2. Find out the differences that appear between original work and adaptation work.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was carried out in order to gain significance for English majors, fellow students, and other individuals. As a result, the importance of the focus to be obtained from this research is:

1. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as an instrument for applying comparative literature theory to an adapted literary work. In this way, it can also enrich references in the English Department at Pasundan University about appreciation, analysis, and criticism of literature.

2. The findings of this study can be used to demonstrate the application of Adaptation theory to the analysis of a work adapted to a different medium. As a result, it is hoped that this research will serve as a resource for other students and researchers conducting research on a similar topic.