

Literature Adaptation Methods to Film: A Study between Western Short Story and Malay Film

Mohamed Nazreen Shahul Hamid, Rohaya Md Ali, Phat Awang
Deng

School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy (SLCP), Universiti Utara Malaysia
Email: phat@uum.edu.my, nazreen@uum.edu.my, aya@uum.edu.my

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Abstract

This study examines the adaptation of William Faulkner's short story "Barn Burning" into U-Wei Haji Saari's film "Kaki Bakar." Utilizing the theoretical frameworks of John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes, and Brian McFarlane, this research investigates the narrative, thematic, and cultural transformations involved in the adaptation process. Through a comparative analysis, the study identifies elements that were retained, added, discarded, and modified in the film adaptation to reflect Malaysian societal issues and cultural identity. The findings reveal that U-Wei's adaptation not only preserves the core narrative of Faulkner's work but also infuses it with local cultural elements, addressing contemporary issues such as ethnic tensions and identity politics. This research contributes to the broader field of adaptation studies by highlighting the importance of cultural specificity and the adaptive strategies employed to resonate with new audiences. The study underscores the dynamic interplay between text and film, demonstrating the transformative power of adaptation in bridging cultural divides and fostering deeper understanding.

Keywords: Adaptation Studies, Film Adaptation, Cultural Context, Malaysian Cinema, Narrative Transformation.

Introduction

Film adaptations of literary works have long been a compelling area of study, offering a rich interplay between text and screen. This process of adaptation not only involves the translation of a narrative from one medium to another but also entails a cultural and contextual transposition that can offer new insights and interpretations. While Western literature has often been the source material for numerous adaptations, the adaptation of such works within non-Western contexts presents unique challenges and opportunities.

One such notable adaptation is U-Wei Haji Saari's film "Kaki Bakar" (1995), derived from William Faulkner's short story "Barn Burning" (1939). U-Wei, a critically acclaimed Malaysian director, is known for his bold adaptations of Western literary works, which he reinterprets through the lens of Malaysian culture and societal issues. "Kaki Bakar" stands as a testament to his innovative approach, transforming Faulkner's exploration of class struggle and familial loyalty in the American South into a narrative that resonates deeply with Malaysian audiences.

Despite its critical acclaim, "Kaki Bakar" has not been extensively analyzed in academic literature, particularly in terms of its adaptation process from Faulkner's original work. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the adaptation strategies employed by U-Wei, using the theoretical frameworks established by John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes, and Brian McFarlane. These frameworks will help in dissecting the narrative, thematic, and cultural shifts that occur in the transition from "Barn Burning" to "Kaki Bakar."

The significance of this study lies in its dual focus: it highlights the creative processes involved in adapting a Western literary work to a non-Western context, and it also brings to light the socio-cultural commentary embedded in U-Wei's film. By analyzing the elements that were added, discarded, retained, and modified, this study seeks to understand how U-Wei navigates the complexities of cultural adaptation while maintaining the essence of Faulkner's story.

Moreover, this research underscores the broader implications of adaptation studies, suggesting that film adaptations can serve as powerful vehicles for cultural expression and critique. In the context of "Kaki Bakar," the film not only adapts a story but also engages in a dialogue with the societal issues prevalent in Malaysia, such as ethnic tensions and identity politics.

Thus, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on film adaptations by providing a detailed case study of "Kaki Bakar." It offers insights into the adaptive choices made by U-Wei, highlighting the transformative power of adaptation in bridging cultural divides and fostering a deeper understanding of global narratives within local contexts.

Literature Review

The study of film adaptations, particularly the transformation of literary works into films, has garnered significant scholarly attention. This section reviews key literature on the theories and practices of literary adaptation, focusing on the works of John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes, Brian McFarlane, and other relevant scholars. Additionally, this review will contextualize U-Wei's adaptation of William Faulkner's "Barn Burning" into "Kaki Bakar" within the broader field of adaptation studies.

Theories of Adaptation

Adaptation theory has evolved to encompass various frameworks for understanding the transfer of narratives from one medium to another. Desmond and Hawkes (2006), provide a foundational approach to adaptation, defining it as the transformation of printed literature into film. They identify three strategies for analyzing film adaptations: concentration, interweaving, and point-of-departure. Each strategy involves different levels of fidelity to the

source material, ranging from retaining most elements to using the original as a mere inspiration for creating something entirely new.

McFarlane (1996) further develops the comparative approach, emphasizing the need to analyze what is retained, added, omitted, and altered in the transition from text to film. His framework is instrumental in understanding how adaptations navigate the constraints and opportunities of different media. McFarlane argues that successful adaptations maintain the core narrative and thematic elements of the source material while effectively utilizing the visual and auditory capabilities of film.

Linda Hutcheon's (2006) work, "A Theory of Adaptation," also contributes significantly to this field. Hutcheon views adaptation as both a product and a process, stressing that adaptations are not merely secondary works but creative reinterpretations that stand on their own. She highlights the adaptive choices made by directors to resonate with contemporary audiences and the new contexts in which adaptations are produced.

Adaptation Practices and Cultural Context

The practice of adaptation involves more than just translating a story from one medium to another; it requires cultural and contextual sensitivity. Stam (2005), discusses how adaptations often reflect the socio-cultural milieu of the time and place in which they are created. This perspective is crucial for understanding U-Wei's adaptation of "Barn Burning" into "Kaki Bakar," as it situates the narrative within the Malaysian cultural context.

U-Wei's decision to focus on ethnic differences rather than social classes, as in Faulkner's original, exemplifies Stam's argument. By highlighting the tensions between Javanese immigrants and the local Malay community, U-Wei not only adapts the narrative but also critiques contemporary Malaysian society. This approach aligns with the views of Cardwell (2002), who argues that adaptations can serve as commentaries on current social issues.

Case Studies and Comparative Analysis

Several case studies illustrate the application of these theoretical frameworks to specific adaptations. For instance, Rosenthal's (1995), exploration of docudrama adaptations underscores the importance of maintaining the emotional and thematic essence of the source material while making necessary changes for the film medium. This approach is evident in U-Wei's retention of key plot elements from "Barn Burning" while modifying the setting and characters to suit the Malay cultural context.

Similarly, studies on adaptations of classic literature, such as Naremore's (2000), work on film adaptations, provide insights into the creative liberties taken by directors. Naremore emphasizes the need to balance fidelity to the source material with the creative demands of filmmaking. U-Wei's adaptation exemplifies this balance, as he retains the core narrative of Faulkner's story but infuses it with local cultural elements to create a film that resonates with Malaysian audiences.

The literature on adaptation theory and practice provides a robust framework for analyzing U-Wei's adaptation of "Barn Burning" into "Kaki Bakar." Theoretical insights from Desmond and Hawkes, McFarlane, Hutcheon, and Stam, among others, underscore the complex interplay between fidelity to the source material and creative reinterpretation. U-Wei's

adaptation demonstrates how cultural context and societal issues can shape the adaptation process, resulting in a film that both honors and reimagines the original narrative. This review highlights the importance of understanding adaptation as a dynamic and contextually grounded process that extends beyond mere translation from text to film.

Theoretical Framework

Adaptation, in general, can be defined as the process of adjusting to new or different conditions. Within the context of literary adaptation to film, it essentially refers to the transformation of various literary genres into film form (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 1). The evolution of adaptation over time has certainly elicited diverse reactions. A classic and still relevant perspective comes from Syd Field, who described adaptation as the process of altering some content from one medium to another (Field, 1990, p. 148). According to Field, adaptation involves the ability to adjust by modifying, coordinating, and changing elements to achieve a well-structured, functional, and aesthetically pleasing outcome (Field, 1990, p. 148). This suggests that not all content from the literary work needs to be fully retained; new scenes can be added to the film if appropriate. This approach aligns with the idea that screenplay writing involves selecting elements to create a compelling story. Therefore, for Field, the literary work serves merely as a starting point for creating a new work, which is the film.

Field's ideas on adaptation were further developed by Alan Rosenthal in his book *Writing Docudrama: Dramatizing Reality for Film and TV* (1995). Rosenthal (1995, p. 14) views adaptation as a process involving modification, cutting, shaping, refining, and simplifying. He considers this transformation into a new product an art and a technical aspect of the adaptation process. Rosenthal (1995, p. 14) proposes two approaches to adaptation: either closely following the original work (which he considers less favorable) or creating something new (which he finds preferable). However, the new product must remain true to the original's spirit and emotion. Thus, Rosenthal sees adaptation as creating an original screenplay derived from another source.

As previously mentioned, this study employs the adaptation theories introduced by Desmond and Hawkes and McFarlane. These theories were selected for their clarity and detail. According to Desmond and Hawkes (2006, p. 128), there are three strategies to study the adaptation process of short stories into films. Researchers can choose from these strategies when analyzing a film adaptation. The three strategies are as follows:

Concentration Strategy

The filmmakers retain most of the narrative elements from the short story, concentrating these elements at the beginning, middle, or end of the film, and add invented elements to the rest of the film (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 128). This strategy involves maintaining almost all the elements of the short story while focusing on the beginning, middle, and end, and creating additional elements for the film's overall storyline. For example, Robert Siodmak employed this strategy in his 1946 film adaptation "The Killers," based on Ernest Hemingway's short story (Harrington, 2011, p. 23).

Interweaving Strategy

The filmmakers retain most of the narrative elements from the short story, disperse these elements throughout the film (though not necessarily in their original order), and interweave invented elements or expansions of existing elements (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 128). This strategy means the director adapts almost all elements from the short story but modifies them to suit the film's format. Some directors expand on the ideas in the original story or omit elements they deem unnecessary. The retained and developed elements are not necessarily arranged in the same order as the original work. Frank Perry used this strategy in his 1968 film adaptation "The Swimmer" from John Cheever's short story (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 133).

Point-of-Departure Strategy

The filmmakers drop most of the narrative elements from the short story, retain perhaps the plot premise, a character's name, or just the title, and use these elements as a starting point to create an invented narrative (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 128). This strategy involves keeping only the plot premise, character, or title from the short story and building a new narrative around these elements. Despite the extensive changes, this process is still considered an adaptation. According to Slethaug (2014, p. 69), this strategy is often used by bold directors with high creativity. Christopher Nolan employed this strategy in his 2011 film adaptation "Memento."

This concludes the explanation of Desmond and Hawkes' adaptation theory. Moving on to McFarlane's adaptation theory, McFarlane (1996, p. 12) asserts that studying the adaptation between literary works and films necessitates comparing the two. This comparison helps researchers determine the adaptation method or strategy used by the film director. The comparison should focus on four areas:

1. Parts retained from text to film
2. Added sections from text to film
3. Excerpts from text to film
4. Sections modified from text to film

Thus, this study employs the adaptation theories of Desmond and Hawkes and McFarlane to analyze the process of adapting the short story "Barn Burning" into the film "Kaki Bakar."

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the adaptation process of William Faulkner's short story "Barn Burning" into U-Wei Haji Saari's film "Kaki Bakar." The methodology is designed to explore the narrative, thematic, and cultural transformations that occur in this adaptation, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. The analysis is framed by the theoretical perspectives of John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes, and Brian McFarlane, whose adaptation theories provide a comprehensive framework for examining the modifications made during the adaptation process.

Research Design

The research design is structured around a comparative analysis of the short story "Barn Burning" and the film "Kaki Bakar." This comparison focuses on identifying and categorizing the elements that were retained, added, discarded, and modified in the adaptation process.

The study also includes a contextual analysis to understand how the cultural and societal differences between America and Malaysia are reflected in the adaptation.

Discussion and Findings

Through the combination of the two theories of adaptation that have been stated, the analysis is carried out in arguing the adaptation process carried out by the film director in modifying the content and structure of the short story "Barn Burning" from America to the film "Kaki Bakar" which is set in the Malay world. The breakdown of the comparative analysis is divided into the added part, the removed part, the retained part, and the modified part.

Added Part

There are several elements in the movie "Kaki Bakar" which are added elements based on the short story "Barn Burning." The first significant addition is the incorporation of the term "Java" in the title given to the character Kesuma. This can be observed after Kakang meets with Tok Empat and the village community in the hall. As Kesuma leaves, he is called "Jawa kaki bakar" (Javanese arsonist) by one of the Malays in the village, a deviation from Faulkner's short story where Sarty is simply referred to as a "barn burner" (Faulkner, 1971, p. 501). This addition emphasizes the presence and identity of the Javanese community in Malaysia. U-Wei's choice to highlight ethnic identity through this term serves to underscore the societal tensions and prejudices within the Malay community, a contrast to the social class focus in Faulkner's story. The addition of the term "Javanese" provides a layered context, illustrating the challenges faced by Kakang in maintaining his Javanese identity and ideology. This addition is crucial for the film's narrative, as it reveals the mockery and discrimination faced by Kakang's family, reflecting broader societal issues. The Malay community's perception of Kakang's family as "Jawa kaki bakar" links their wrongdoings to their ethnic background, reinforcing negative stereotypes. This narrative choice aligns with scholarly discussions on ethnic identity and prejudice in film adaptations (Leitch, 2007; Hutcheon, 2006).

Another significant addition is the emphasis on religious aspects. In "Kaki Bakar," all characters are depicted as Muslims, a reflection of the predominant religious practices in the Malay world. This is particularly evident in the character of Kakang, who prioritizes religious education for his children over formal schooling. The dialogue between Kakang and his wife, where he insists on teaching religious knowledge to Kesuma, highlights this focus:

Mother: Dear, Kesuma has to go to school.

Kakang: I can teach him religion. You and his sisters can teach him to pray. He can pray now. ("Kaki Bakar," 2001)

This religious aspect is absent in "Barn Burning," where Faulkner does not address the religious practices of American society. U-Wei's addition of religious elements serves to adapt the story to the Malay cultural context, where religion plays a central role in daily life. This modification aligns with the theoretical perspectives of adaptation that emphasize cultural specificity in film (Stam, 2005; Cardwell, 2002).

The incorporation of these religious practices not only adds depth to the characters but also reflects the importance of Islam in the Malay world. By portraying a family deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, U-Wei bridges the cultural gap between the American setting of "Barn

Burning" and the Malay setting of "Kaki Bakar." This adaptation strategy demonstrates the significance of cultural and religious identity in shaping narratives (Naremore, 2000; Elliott, 2014).

Removed Part

In the adaptation process, U-Wei not only added elements but also made significant omissions to better suit the storyline of "Kaki Bakar." One of the most notable changes is the removal of certain characters from Faulkner's short story. In "Barn Burning," Abner's family includes seven members: Abner, his wife, two daughters, two sons, and his sister-in-law, Lizzie. However, in the film "Kaki Bakar," the character of Lizzie is entirely omitted.

In Faulkner's narrative, Lizzie has been a long-standing member of Abner's household. Her presence is particularly evident in a critical scene where she converses with Sarty's mother, insisting that they let Sarty go and even offering to go herself if necessary. Despite her presence, she is not a central character in the short story and appears only in a few instances. Lizzie's role becomes more pronounced at the story's climax, where she opposes her sister's plea to prevent Sarty's escape.

U-Wei's decision to discard Lizzie from the film can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, Lizzie is a minor character whose removal helps streamline the narrative. By focusing on the core family members, U-Wei ensures that the audience can easily follow the story without being overwhelmed by too many characters. This aligns with Desmond and Hawkes' (2006), interweaving strategy, which emphasizes the importance of selecting significant elements from the source material that will have the most impact on the audience.

Moreover, films, unlike literary works, have time constraints and must engage the audience visually and emotionally within a limited duration. Too many characters can dilute the narrative and confuse the audience. By reducing the number of characters, U-Wei can develop the remaining characters more fully, giving them distinct roles that contribute to the film's themes and emotional depth. This focus on essential characters enhances the storytelling and ensures a coherent and impactful narrative (Cardwell, 2002; McFarlane, 1996).

The decision to omit Lizzie also reflects practical considerations in filmmaking, such as budget constraints. Producing a film with numerous characters requires more resources, including actors, costumes, and screen time. By limiting the cast to the most crucial characters, the production team can allocate resources more effectively, ensuring higher quality in other aspects of the film. This approach is common in film adaptations, where economic and logistical factors play a significant role in the adaptation process (Stam, 2005; Hutcheon, 2006).

In conclusion, the omission of Lizzie's character in "Kaki Bakar" illustrates the strategic choices made by U-Wei to adapt the narrative for a different medium. By focusing on essential characters and discarding minor ones, he aligns the film with the cultural context and practical realities of filmmaking. This selective adaptation ensures that the film remains faithful to the core themes of the original story while being accessible and engaging for the audience.

Retained Elements

In the process of adapting "Barn Burning" into "Kaki Bakar," U-Wei retained several elements from Faulkner's short story, including the plot and certain characters. These retained elements help maintain the core narrative and themes, providing continuity between the original text and the film adaptation.

A plot in a literary work can be defined as an arrangement of events that take place, while a plot for a screenplay can be understood as a sequence of events that drive the action and turn it in another direction (Field, 1990, p. 106). Through these definitions, plot can be formulated as the organization of events in both literary works and films. The production of a coherent and engaging plot enables readers and viewers to better understand the storyline. Linear, sequential plots are generally more appealing to readers or viewers because they are easier to follow (Wallis & Pramaggiore, 2011, p. 134). Consequently, this type of plot is often emphasized by authors and film directors.

Research indicates that the plot of "Barn Burning" and the film adaptation "Kaki Bakar" is chronological or linear, with all events occurring in sequence from beginning to end. U-Wei preserved this plot structure, making no changes to the order of events. This decision ensures that the narrative flow of the film mirrors that of the short story. By maintaining this linear plot structure, U-Wei ensures that the audience can easily follow the story's progression, preserving the integrity and coherence of Faulkner's original narrative.

Compared to novels, short stories have a simpler and more compact plot due to their limited length. Authors of short stories avoid numerous subplots, focusing instead on the main narrative. It is not surprising, therefore, that "Kaki Bakar" maintains the same plot as its source material. Short stories typically offer fewer elements for manipulation in film form, leading directors to follow the existing plot closely (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 133). Despite this, U-Wei's directorial skill is evident in his ability to translate text into compelling visuals. For U-Wei, the primary adaptation involved highlighting Malay and Javanese landscapes rather than altering the plot.

Additionally, U-Wei retained the depiction of the Kakang family's temporary residence after being forced to move from their initial village. This scene closely mirrors Faulkner's description in "Barn Burning." In the short story, Abner's family relocates after Abner causes trouble, living temporarily in a self-built tent in a grove of oaks and beeches where a spring runs. The nights were still cool, and they had a small, carefully managed fire. Faulkner highlights this as a habitual practice of Abner's father, even in freezing weather.

U-Wei depicts a similar scenario in "Kaki Bakar," where Kakang's family resides in a tent made from second-hand materials after leaving their old village. This scene, appearing at minute 08:24 in the film, emphasizes the hardships faced by the main character, reinforcing the original story's themes of struggle and resilience. U-Wei chose to retain this element to convey the protagonist's suffering and perseverance, aligning with the original text's message. Another retained element is the fight scene between Kesuma and local children, paralleling a similar event in "Barn Burning." In Faulkner's story, Sarty fights with village children after being called a "barn burner." The intensity of the fight is depicted with Sarty whirling around, unable to see clearly, and leaping towards the face of a boy larger than himself. Despite being

hit, Sarty feels no pain, only a drive to defend his family's honor until his father pulls him away, commanding him to get in the wagon.

Similarly, in "Kaki Bakar," Kesuma fights with local Malay children after being called "Jawa kaki bakar" (Javanese arsonist). This fight, occurring at minute 06:03, is brief but significant, as it highlights Kesuma's struggle to defend his family's honor. The scene underscores the Javanese identity and the values instilled in Kesuma by his father, who teaches him to be strong and protect his family's dignity.

U-Wei's decision to retain these elements aligns with his goal of producing a film that resonates with Malaysian audiences while highlighting Javanese cultural identity. By preserving key scenes and plot structures, U-Wei ensures that the film retains the original story's impact and message. This approach is consistent with the interweaving strategy described by Desmond and Hawkes, which involves integrating the narrative elements of the source material with modifications suitable for the film medium (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006).

Modified Elements

Through analysis, it has been identified that the film director, U-Wei, implemented several modifications to adapt the short story "Barn Burning" into the film "Kaki Bakar." These changes primarily pertain to the background elements, which include time, place, and societal context (Lupack, 1994, p. 69). All three elements are interconnected and play a crucial role in bringing the story to life.

Background of Community

The most significant modification occurs in the background of the community. While Faulkner's short story vividly depicts American society with distinct social classes, U-Wei's adaptation focuses on ethnic differences relevant to Malaysian society. Faulkner's narrative highlights the upper and lower classes through characters like Major de Spain and Abner. Major de Spain represents the upper class, living in luxury with servants. In the 1930s America, wealthy families often had black servants, reflecting the social hierarchy and racial discrimination prevalent at the time (Berg, 2017, p. 67). This dynamic is portrayed through Major de Spain's interactions with his servants and the material possessions that signify his status. Major de Spain's household is managed by an elderly black servant who insists that visitors wipe their feet before entering the house, underscoring the rigid social structures of the era.

Conversely, Abner's family represents the lower class, struggling with poverty and oppression. This is exemplified when Major de Spain demands compensation from Abner for ruining his carpet, valuing it at a hundred dollars, a sum Abner could never afford. Consequently, Major de Spain charges Abner twenty bushels of corn against his crop, adding it to his contract to be deducted from his earnings at the commissary. This interaction highlights the economic disparity and exploitation faced by the lower class. Abner's inability to pay for the damages underscores the financial struggles and societal oppression he endures.

In contrast, "Kaki Bakar" shifts the focus to ethnic differences, highlighting the dynamics between Javanese and Malay communities in Malaysia. Kakang, the protagonist, is depicted as a Javanese immigrant with a strong sense of identity and pride. This ethnic distinction is emphasized in a conversation between Kakang and his son, Kesuma:

Kakang: You're weak. Where's your Javanese spirit? You should have chosen to stick with your family, without family you are nothing. ("Kaki Bakar," 2001)

Kakang's insistence on maintaining Javanese identity and values, despite living in Malaysia, highlights the cultural tensions and the importance of ethnic identity. The use of the Javanese dialect by Kakang further underscores his cultural roots, contrasting with the Malay characters who speak the local language.

Tuan Kassim, representing the Malay ethnic group, is portrayed as a corrupt individual benefiting from government subsidies. This is evident in Kakang's remark about Tuan Kassim's house:

Kakang: Beautiful and clean isn't it? Subsidy money. Black in color. That's the color of the sweat. The sweat of his former servant" ("Kaki Bakar," 2001)

Kakang criticizes Tuan Kassim for exploiting government resources, contrasting his own hard-earned struggles with Tuan Kassim's opportunistic behavior. This critique reflects broader societal issues in Malaysia, where ethnic differences and corruption are significant concerns.

Character Modifications

Another modification involves the characters. In "Barn Burning," Major de Spain's servant is an old black man, described as having neat grizzled hair. In "Kaki Bakar," this character is changed to a young woman, aligning with the common practice in Malaysia where most domestic workers are women. This adaptation reflects societal norms in Malaysia, where women are typically employed for household chores.

Modification of Background Elements

The background elements also undergo changes to fit the local context. In "Barn Burning," Abner steps on horse manure before entering Major de Spain's house, which he then smears on the carpet. Abner's deliberate act of stepping on the manure and tracking it into the house signifies his defiance and resentment towards the upper class.

In "Kaki Bakar," this is modified to Kakang stepping on chicken droppings, which is more relevant to the Malay village setting where chickens are commonly reared:

Servant: "That's chicken shit. Get out!" ("Kaki Bakar," 2001).

This change not only aligns with the local environment but also emphasizes Kakang's deliberate defiance in a culturally appropriate manner.

Setting Modifications

The setting of the story is also adapted to reflect the Malaysian context. In "Barn Burning," the setting is a rural area in America, characterized by large brick houses and distinct vegetation. The landscape includes groves of oaks and cedars, flowering trees, and shrubs, with the houses often surrounded by fences and gates marked by brick pillars.

In "Kaki Bakar," the setting is a typical Malay village with green vegetation and dry weather, illustrating the adaptation to a local context. The dusty roads and traditional village houses

reflect the environment in Southern Malaysia during the 1990s. This modification ensures that the setting resonates with the audience and accurately portrays the cultural and geographical landscape of the region.

In conclusion, U-Wei's modifications in "Kaki Bakar" are thoughtfully executed to reflect the local context and cultural nuances of Malaysian society. By adapting the community background, characters, and setting, U-Wei bridges the gap between Faulkner's original story and the Malaysian audience, creating a film that is both culturally relevant and impactful.

Conclusion

This study explores the intricate process of adapting William Faulkner's short story "Barn Burning" into U-Wei's film "Kaki Bakar," highlighting the various strategies and modifications implemented to ensure cultural relevance and resonance with Malaysian audiences. By employing the theoretical frameworks of Desmond and Hawkes, McFarlane, and other scholars, the analysis delves into the adaptation techniques, focusing on added, discarded, retained, and modified elements.

The findings reveal that U-Wei meticulously crafted "Kaki Bakar" to reflect the socio-cultural landscape of Malaysia, shifting the focus from the social class issues prominent in Faulkner's narrative to the ethnic tensions between the Javanese and Malay communities. This change not only contextualizes the story within a Malaysian setting but also critiques contemporary societal issues, particularly the treatment of immigrants and the exploitation of government resources.

U-Wei's adaptation retains the chronological plot structure and key scenes from "Barn Burning," ensuring that the core narrative remains intact. However, he introduces significant modifications to the characters and setting, replacing elements such as the American rural environment with a typical Malay village and altering character roles to better fit the local context. These changes demonstrate U-Wei's ability to balance fidelity to the source material with creative reinterpretation, making the story accessible and impactful for a new audience. The study underscores the importance of cultural specificity in adaptations, showing how directors can use the medium of film to address local issues while staying true to the essence of the original work. U-Wei's "Kaki Bakar" serves as a powerful example of how adaptation can bridge cultural divides, offering new perspectives and fostering a deeper understanding of complex social dynamics.

Future research could expand on this study by examining other adaptations of literary works within different cultural contexts, exploring how various filmmakers navigate the challenges of adaptation to address local and global audiences. Additionally, comparative studies between different adaptations of the same literary work could provide further insights into the creative processes and decisions involved in bringing a story to life across different mediums.

In conclusion, the adaptation of "Barn Burning" into "Kaki Bakar" illustrates the dynamic interplay between text and film, culture and narrative, showcasing the transformative power of adaptation in creating meaningful, culturally resonant stories.

This research contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge on film adaptation by demonstrating the critical role of cultural specificity in the adaptation process. The study offers a nuanced understanding of how theoretical frameworks, such as those proposed by Desmond and Hawkes and McFarlane, can be applied to explore the intricate dynamics between the source text and its adapted version in a different cultural context. By focusing on the adaptation of Faulkner's "Barn Burning" into U-Wei's "Kaki Bakar," this research highlights the importance of contextual relevance in adaptation, showing how a director can creatively reinterpret a story to resonate with local audiences while addressing pertinent socio-cultural issues. This work not only enriches the discourse on adaptation studies but also provides a model for future research in exploring the adaptation of literary works across diverse cultural landscapes. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this study offers new perspectives on the adaptation process, emphasizing its potential to foster cross-cultural understanding and dialogue.

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