



## Marriage and Women's Subalternity in the Ecranisation of Layla Majnun's Story

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### **Abstract**

#### **Purpose**

*This article aimed to explain the textual changes in adapting Layla Majnun's story to the film Layla Majnun (2021). In addition, this article questioned the textual ideology of both works concerning marriage and women's subalternity.*

#### **Method**

*This article was qualitative research using the literature method. The corpus of this article were the novel Layla Majnun by Nizami Ganjavi and the film Layla Majnun (2021) by Monty Tiwa. This article used Linda Hutcheon's adaptation theory, the concept of subaltern initiated by Gayatri C. Spivak, and feminist concepts related to marriage.*

#### **Results/Findings**

*The results of this article show significant changes in the form of the adaptation of the story of Layla Majnun to the film. The changes are in the form of narrative structure, the meaning of marriage, and women's voices. The story of Layla Majnun focuses more on the storytelling of male characters, while the film focuses more on the storytelling of female characters.*

#### **Conclusion**

*The textual shift from novel to film influences changes in the ideology of the text concerning marriage and women's subalternity. In the Layla Majnun novel, women are unable to speak out (subaltern) against repression from men concerning marriage. At the same time, the film Layla Majnun attempts to bring out women's voices to articulate their will in marriage.*

#### **Keywords**

*Ecranisation, Marriage, Subalternity, Feminism*

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### Abstrak

#### Tujuan

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap perubahan tekstual pada karya adaptasi kisah Layla Majnun ke film Layla Majnun (2021). Selain itu, artikel ini menyoal ideologi teks dari kedua karya tersebut terkait dengan pernikahan dan subalternitas perempuan.

#### Metode

Artikel ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode kepustakaan. Korpus artikel ini berupa novel Layla Majnun karya Nizami Ganjavi dan film Layla Majnun (2021) karya Monty Tiwa. Artikel ini menggunakan teori adaptasi Linda Hutcheon, dan konsep subaltern yang digagas oleh Gayatri C. Spivak, serta konsep-konsep feminisme yang berkaitan dengan pernikahan.

#### Hasil/Temuan

Hasil artikel ini menunjukkan adanya perubahan yang signifikan dalam bentuk adaptasi kisah Layla Majnun ke film tersebut. Perubahan itu berupa struktur naratif, makna pernikahan, dan suara perempuan. Kisah Layla Majnun lebih memusatkan pada penceritaan tokoh-tokoh laki-laki, sedangkan film lebih berfokus pada penceritaan tokoh-tokoh perempuan.

#### Kesimpulan

Perubahan tekstual dari novel ke film memengaruhi perubahan ideologi teks terkait dengan pernikahan dan subalternitas perempuan. Perempuan dalam novel Layla Majnun tidak mampu bersuara (subaltern) atas represi dari kaum laki-laki dalam hubungannya dengan pernikahan, sedangkan film Layla Majnun berusaha memunculkan suara perempuan untuk mengartikulasikan kehendaknya dalam pernikahan.

#### Kata kunci

Ekranisasi, Pernikahan, Subalternitas, Feminisme

### المخلص

#### الهدف

تهدف هذه المقالة إلى الكشف عن التغييرات النصية في اقتباس قصة ليلي مجنون في فيلم ليلي مجنون (2021). و بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتساءل هذا المقال عن أيديولوجية نصوص هذين العاملين فيما يتعلق بالزواج وتابعة المرأة.

#### الطريقة

هذه المقالة عبارة عن بحث نوعي باستخدام أساليب المكتبة. و يتكون متن هذا المقال من رواية ليلي مجنون لنظامي كنجوي وفيلم ليلي مجنون (2021) لمونتي تيوا. و تستخدم هذه المقالة نظرية التكيف التي طرحتها ليندا هاتشيون، ومفهوم التابع الذي بدأته غاياتري سبيفاك، بالإضافة إلى المفاهيم النسوية المتعلقة بالزواج.

#### النتائج

أن هناك تغييرات كبيرة في شكل تكيف قصة ليلي المجنون في الفيلم. و هذه التغييرات جاءت في شكل البنية السردية، ومعنى الزواج، وأصوات النساء. و تركز قصة ليلي مجنون أكثر على سرد الشخصيات الذكورية، بينما يركز الفيلم أكثر على سرد الشخصيات النسائية.

#### الخلاصة

إن التغييرات النصية من الرواية إلى الفيلم تؤثر على التغييرات في أيديولوجية النص المتعلقة بالزواج وتابعة المرأة. أما النساء في رواية ليلي مجنون فهن غير قادرات على التحدث (التابعة) فيما يتعلق بقمع الرجال فيما يتعلق بالزواج، بينما يحاول فيلم ليلي مجنون رفع أصوات النساء للتعبير عن رغباتهن في الزواج.

#### الكلمات الرئيسية

الأكرنة، الزواج، التبعية، النسوية

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is something that attracts the attention of feminists. They believe that marriage is an institution that results in the exploitation and oppression of women in society. Marriage restricts women's fundamental rights, and they are required to be unpaid domestic servants (Wollstonecraft, 1992, p. 217). According to Beauvoir (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 121), marriage is a bond that results in women being used as objects of ownership by men so that women have the right to be exploited.

Marriage in some societies is pursued through the culture of arranged marriages. Matchmaking is a way of marriage that brings together a male and female partner with the intervention of a third party, generally parents (Ciren et al., 2016, p. 114). Matchmaking is often detrimental to women. Goode's view (1991, p. 99), about matchmaking is that arranged marrying generally oppress women because arranged marriages are like a market system in which men determine bargaining.

Marriage is often a significant topic in literary works. For example, Raqqasy's Jahiliah poem tells the story of women's oppression of men in marriage. In addition, the story of women's oppression in relation to marriage is also found in the Indonesian literary work *Siti Nurbaya* by Marah Roesli and the English literary work *Romeo & Juliet* by William Shakespeare (Buana, 2010, pp. 227–228). In reality, women's oppression concerning marriage is still an interesting discussion today. The emergence of numerous works that continue to address this issue, including Monty Tiwa's film *Layla Majnun* (2021), is evidence of this women's issue.

Nizami Ganjavi's novel *Layla Majnun* inspired the film of *Layla Majnun* (2021). The film carries the theme of love and marriage through the arranged marriage system, as found in the story of *Layla Majnun* circulating in the community. Love and marriage are essential aspects that drive the story in both works. However, it cannot be denied that adapting work certainly has some differences that can result in changes or shifts in the messages, both textually and ideologically. Damono (2016, p. 127) states that in the process of transferring the vehicle to film, there are adjustments in the form of additions and subtractions that are used to convey the ideology of filmmakers related to the cultural results of a particular era that are worthy of being adapted to the big screen.

Marriage through the arranged marriage system in the story of *Layla Majnun* is interesting to study further. The story of *Layla Majnun* tends to depict Layla as a woman who faces repression by her father in determining her life partner, so Layla is unable to speak out against her will to marry the man she loves, Majnun. Based on this depiction, it can be seen that the female character Layla experiences silence, which is defined as being a subaltern. For Spivak (1988, p. 74), subaltern refers to everything related to access restrictions. Women in the story of *Layla Majnun* are faced with silence due to the demands of obedience to men. Meanwhile, in the film *Layla Majnun* (2021), although Layla also faces repression from the male character Pakde Ahmadi in determining her life partner, she tends to be able to resist arranged marriage and choose Majnun of her own free will as her life partner. The story is then seen as an exciting study of transformation through the portrayal of the female character Layla in marriage in both works.

Several previous studies discuss the story of *Layla Majnun*, both the novel *Layla Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi and the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) by Monty Tiwa. Luthfiah and Gojali (2022), and Nuratika (2022) show the content of Sufistic love in the story. Majnun's love for Layla is solely his love for God. In contrast to Luthfiah and Gojali (2022) and Nuratika (2022), Lestari and Rahmawati (2021) revealed that Qays' love tends to be selfish because he is obsessed with his desire to always be with his lover. This kind of love is very contrary to the concept of love in the Quran. Several researchers have also conducted research on the film *Layla Majnun* (2021). Through the film, Nurhayati and Anggik (2022) show the existence of gender stereotypes that result in women getting discrimination and injustice. However, Putri's research (2023) and Oktaviani (2022) show that the film represents women's struggle to gain their careers, freedom, and decision-

making rights.

So far, a search for previous research on the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) has yet to find research related to the film that is juxtaposed with the text of Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla Majnun* story. Based on the issues previously described, the difference in the depiction of female characters in Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla Majnun* and Monty Tiwa's *Layla Majnun* creates the problem of silencing women's voices concerning marriage. Thus, this study will uncover the differences between the two works through textual comparison and how marriage and women's subalternity are portrayed in the two works.

## METHOD

This research is qualitative research using the literature method. Qualitative research is used to understand the meaning behind a person's words and actions that often have a certain meaning (Sugiyono, 2016, p. 15). This research uses two data sources consisting of primary and secondary data. Primary data is the novel *Layla Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi, translated by Nina A. R. and the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) by Monty Tiwa, while secondary data is information that researchers find from various works of literature.

The story of *Layla Majnun* in the novel *Layla Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi and the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) were critically analysed using several stages. The first stage is close reading to see the narrative structure of the two works, using an ecranisation approach to see the changes occurring in the two works. Ecranisation is a transformation from novel to film (Eneste, 1991, p. 60). Furthermore, to interpret the similarities and differences of the transformation, this study borrows the theory of adaptation initiated by Linda Hutcheon (2006) by focusing on Hutcheon's framework of what (what form and pattern of adaptation), when (when the adapted work was produced), where (where the adapted work was produced), and why (why the work was adapted). Hutcheon's four theories interpret the forms and patterns of adaptation by connecting the context of the adaptation work's time and place of production.

Additionally, the researcher borrowed ideas from feminist theory pertaining to marriage and the Gayatri C. Spivak-initiated concept of the subaltern in order to deconstruct the ideology of the text. Spivak (1988, pp. 74–78) argues that the subaltern is not just a matter of the oppressed class or the other but refers to everything whose voice is limited by the access that represents it. Third World, women as subalterns are never really allowed to express themselves. The marriage relationship for Beauvoir (2011, p. 121) is a relationship that results in women being used as objects of ownership by men, so women have the right to be exploited.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The story of *Layla Majnun* generally tells the tragic love story between Layla and Majnun. The character of Majnun in the Arab World is generally associated with a figure in the Arabian Peninsula, namely Qays bin al-Mulawwah from the Najd tribe in the Arabian peninsula. By the time of Nizami Ganjavi, various versions of Majnun were scattered throughout the region, but his composition remained the most famous (Ichsan, 2020, p. 235). The story of *Layla Majnun* is one of the classics that is still popular today. The story has various versions spread all over the World. However, Nizami Ganjav's *Layla Majnun* is the most popular. Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla Majnun* has been translated into Indonesian by several authors. Therefore, translated works of Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla Majnun* can be found in various versions in Indonesia. Monty Tiwa's film *Layla Majnun* (2021) is an adaptation of Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla Majnun*. The adaptation of the story of *Layla Majnun* to film is inseparable from textual and ideological changes.

### Textual Comparison of *Layla Majnun* Novel and Film

The story of *Layla Majnun* in the novel by Nizami Ganjavi, translated by Nina A. R.,

consists of 33 parts, all of which tell the life of Qays (Majnun) and Layla from birth to death. Unlike the film *Layla Majnun* (2021), which considers the duration of airtime, Monty Tiwa chose to tell the life of Layla and Samir (Majnun) as adults only with a little flashback storytelling to explain the suffering of Layla and her mother for losing a father figure in the family.

The film *Layla Majnun* (2021) has differences in character, plot, and setting from the novel *Layla Majnun*. These differences affect the emergence of women's voices in the story of *Layla Majnun*. The story of *Layla Majnun* in the novel tends to be dominated by male characters. In the transformation of the story of *Layla Majnun* into a film, there is a reduction in male characters and the addition of female characters. Hence, the characters in the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) tend to be dominated by female characters. Male characters in the novel *Layla Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi consist of the characters Qays (Majnun), Sayyid Amri (Qays' father), Salim Amri (Qays' uncle), Layla's father, Ibnu Salam, and Nawfal. Meanwhile, male characters in the film include Samir (Majnun), Ibnu Salam, Vishnu Salam, Ahmadi (Layla's father), and Ilham. The female characters in the novel are Layla, Qays' mother, and Layla's mother. While in the film, there are many female characters, including Layla, Fatmi (Layla's mother), Qays' mother, Narmina, Niken, Ailin, Winda, Nita, Sabina, and Nona. The changes in these characters indicate a change in the focus of the story of *Layla Majnun* from the life of Majnun's character to Layla's. As a filmmaker, Monty Tiwa focuses on female characters who have been marginalised in the story of *Layla Majnun*.

Male characters play an essential role in the movement of Layla Majnun's story in the novel because the storytelling centres on the life of the character Qays, who tends to operate in the public sphere. The dominance of male characters in the novel can perpetuate the place of men in the public sphere, and the place of women is the home. Contrary to the novel, the film which features a majority of female characters, demonstrates that contemporary women can participate actively in public life. It can be proven through the concentration of the storytelling of Layla's life, which operates in the public sphere. In addition, the father figure in the novel has a critical role that can determine the storyline of Layla and Majnun. Layla's life is inseparable from her father's demands, and Qays's is inseparable from his father's expectations. Father figures are figures who have the highest authority in the family. Layla, as a daughter, must obey her father. It is the father figure who can determine the daughter's life partner. However, in the film, the father figure is deleted. Layla's father in the film is said to have died when Layla was a child. The removal of the father figure also eliminates his role in determining his daughter's life partner, as in the story of *Layla Majnun*. Pakde Ahmadi, who also determines Layla's life partner, replaced the father's role in the film. It shows that the father's position in both ancient Arab culture and modern Javanese culture remains the highest authority in the family. The removal of the father figure in the film and his replacement by Pakde Ahmadi show a hierarchy of male authority in the family in Javanese society. Women are the "property" of the father, brothers, and uncles of the father's lineage. Therefore, child marriage is often a "field" for men who "control" women in these families. These men determine the fate of women, including when they are children (Palulungan et al., 2020, p. 13). However, the authority of a Pakde or Uncle is less strong than that of a father, which can lead to opposition or resistance on the part of women in the family.

On the one hand, Layla's characters in both the novel and the film represent the oppression of women under male domination through the characters of Father and Uncle. Her character is in line with Kate Millet, who considers that the main institution of patriarchy is the family (Humm, 2002, p. 143). The character Layla in the novel is a representation of Arab women. Layla experiences oppression in the form of domestication and arranged marriage by her father. In Arab culture, women are placed in harem (something to be guarded) and imprisoned within the boundaries set by men (Karomah & Warthiningsih, 2014, p. 2).

Meanwhile, the movie portrayals of Pakde Ahmadi's oppression of Layla, a representative of Javanese women, demonstrate how submissive, polite, and silent women must behave in Javanese culture. This condition is related to Handayani and Novianto's (2004, p. 130) explanation that Javanese women are delicate, polite, maintain harmony, uphold the family, have high loyalty, and make great sacrifices. On the other hand, Layla's character in both the novel and the film is portrayed as a brave woman. Layla's courage in the novel is depicted through Layla's resistance to refusing her body to be touched by Ibn Salam. Layla's courage in the film is shown through Layla's resistance to proposing separation from Ibn Salam.

Layla, Samir and Qays as Majnun, and Ibn Salam as Layla's husband are characters in the story of *Layla Majnun* that are represented in the film. Majnun's character in the novel and film is depicted as a figure intoxicated by love. However, there is a weakening of Majnun's mad love for Layla in the film, which affects Samir's awakening to resume his life as before. It is characterised by the novelty of Samir becoming a guest lecturer in Indonesia after choosing to be alone in a desert as in the novel. A significant difference in characterisation lies in the character of Ibn Salam. In the novel and film, Ibn Salam is portrayed as rich. However, Ibnu Salam is a good figure in the novel and respects women. It is different in the film, which presents the character of Ibnu Salam as an antagonist who dominates women. The storyline shows that Monty Tiwa uses the character of Ibnu Salam to strengthen the story of women's oppression in marriage relationships that can trigger the emergence of women's voices as a form of resistance to their oppression under male domination.

The plot of *Layla Majnun* in both the film and the novel uses a progressive plot. However, there are significant differences between the two. The movement of *Layla Majnun* in the novel begins with the growth of love between the characters Qays and Layla. Qays' unusual love for Layla makes Qays considered by the community a madman. It causes Layla's father to forbid their love and match Layla with Ibnu Salam. Qays and Layla's love story in the novel ends tragically, unable to unite in the World. At the same time, the story's movement in the film begins with the arranged marriage between Layla and Ibnu Salam, conducted by Pakde Ahmadi. Layla accepts his proposal, so Layla's love for Samir, which has just grown after accepting Ibnu Salam's proposal, becomes forbidden. The love between Layla and Samir in the film ends happily with the union of their love, and they can form a happy household. The plot change shows that the love between Layla and Qays is the central conflict that drives the story in *Layla Majnun's* novel. In the film *Layla Majnun*, the central conflict is Layla's arranged marriage to Ibn Salam. The plot of both works is inseparable from the issues of forbidden love and arranged marriage. Forbidden love, as the central conflict in the novel, obscures the oppression of women caused by arranged marriages. In contrast, the film portrays arranged marriage as the central conflict, emphasising that arranged marriage results in women's oppression. The change in plot shows that Monty Tiwa wanted to highlight women's issues and their relationship with marriage in the film. Meanwhile, the issue in the novel that stands out is love.

In addition to differences in character and plot, Monty Tiwa's film *Layla Majnun* (2021) differs from the story of *Layla Majnun* in the novel regarding place and time settings. In the novel, the location of Layla and Qays' life story is on the Arabian Peninsula. The story occurs in the past, when the Arabian Peninsula was still prone to tribal wars. Meanwhile, the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) tells the story of Layla's life in Indonesia and Majnun's in modern-day Azerbaijan. The film locates Layla, who lives in a rural area in Semarang, Central Java. It is characterised by houses, schools, transport, and nature that refer to a rural environment. In addition, Layla's place of residence in the film can be known through Layla's introduction to Mr. Embassy, who states that she is from Semarang. The difference shows an expansion of women's issues in the Arabian Peninsula and Indonesia. The film *Layla Majnun* (2021) chooses a rural setting to emphasise Layla's

conditions of poverty in contrast to the novel's story of *Layla Majnun*, which describes the Arabian Peninsula's conditions with all of its wealth. In gender and poverty issues, the household is one of the sources of discrimination and subordination against women. Poor women experience poverty due to social structures that place women below men and social, economic, and political systems that make the poor the disadvantaged party (Dewayanti, 2003, p. 78). In addition, concerning women's issues, the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) takes place in rural Java, indicating the similarity between the fate of Javanese women and Arab women oppressed by men through arranged marriages. Both Javanese and Arab social lives are still thick with order and manners. Strong Eastern customs are the rules of society that are considered to shackle the space for women to move (Suhada, 2021, p. 18). This context triggered the filmmaker to adapt the story of *Layla Majnun* by adopting a Javanese cultural setting and presenting resistance to the arranged marriage culture found in Javanese society.

Javanese society is very thick with puppetry traditions. The film *Layla Majnun* (2021), which takes place in Javanese culture, is inseparable from the puppetry tradition. The story of puppetry is used in the film as women's resistance to arranged marriages that oppress women. It can be seen from the presence of Layla's father's expression about the puppet story he told Layla when she was a child in the flashback storytelling.

*Layla: Akulah Dewi Sembadra*

*Bapak Layla: Cintaku pada Rama adalah Suci, dan aku adalah perempuan yang tidak mau begitu saja dinikahkan karena harta*

Layla: I am Dewi Sembadra

Layla's Father: My love for Rama is Sacred, and I am a woman who does not want to be married off for wealth (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 03:00-03:25).

Dewi Sembadra is one of the characters in puppetry who can determine her fate to marry a man she loves (Fauzi, 2020, p. 4). The quote indicates an attempt by the filmmaker to reconstruct the position of women in the institution of marriage. Women have the right to choose their life partners.

Thus, it cannot be denied that the form of adaptation work has several changes from the original work. The changes in the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) are characterisation, plot, and setting changes. The change is an attempt by the filmmaker to change the position of the female character Layla, who is under male domination, to uphold equality.

### **The Marriage in the *Layla Majnun* Story**

The story of *Layla Majnun* in both the novel and film tells the story of Layla's arranged marriage to Ibn Salam, a wealthy man. Matchmaking is a marriage that brings together a male and female couple with the intervention of a third party, generally parents (Ciren et al., 2016, p. 114). Layla's father arranges Layla's marriage with Ibn Salam in the novel. Ahmadi, Layla's Pakde, handles the matchmaking in the movie. The marriage between Layla and Ibnu Salam in the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) differs from the marriage in the novel. Layla's marriage to Ibn Salam in the novel occurs with the agreement of Layla's father and Ibn Salam. Layla's father has an important role in determining Layla's life partner. Of the many men who come to propose to Layla, only the father character can reject or accept the proposal. Layla was unable to determine her life partner. The marriage between Layla and Ibn Salam had no intervention from Layla, who was the party who would carry out the marriage. On the other hand, in Layla's marriage with Ibnu Salam in the film, although both were through an arranged marriage by Pakde Ahmadi, Layla took part in determining her life partner.

The marriage in the novel shows that marriage can occur without either party loving

the other. Layla does not love Ibnu Salam, but on the contrary, Ibnu Salam loves Layla very much. Unlike in the film, marriage occurs without the love of both Layla and Ibnu Salam. As a result, it is possible to conclude that men in the novel use marriage as a means of obtaining the women they desire. Meanwhile, marriage in the film is used as a way for men to utilise a woman's potential for their interests because Layla, in the film, is portrayed as a smart and popular character in the community. Ibnu Salam uses his marriage to Layla to increase his popularity and gain public aspirations as a candidate for Regent.

In both novel and film, men arrange marriages, which is an integral part of marriage. Social factors that encourage arranged marriages include economic limitations experienced by families, gender inequality, and family honour (Awaru, 2020, p. 250–251). The financial constraints experienced by Layla's family, coupled with gender inequality, are factors in the occurrence of arranged marriages in the film. Meanwhile, the factors that lead to arranged marriages in the novel are gender inequality and family honour, which Layla must maintain for the good name of her tribe. Matchmaking, in general, oppresses women because the matchmaking system is like a market system in which bargaining is determined by men (Goode, 1991, p. 99). The position of women in arranged marriages as commodities that men can buy. As in Layla Majnun, when Qays' father realises that his son has gone mad because of Layla, he goes to Layla's father to ask for his daughter as Qays' life partner.

*“Apa pun yang Anda minta sebagai mahar akan saya berikan, dan lebih banyak lagi. Saya bukanlah orang yang menuntut adanya perayaan: saya datang ke sini sebagai seorang pembeli. Dan jika Anda menyadari apa yang baik untuk diri Anda, saya yakin Anda pasti tahu itu, maka nyatakan harga Anda dengan jelas dan berikan apa yang saya minta”*

"Whatever you ask for as a dowry, I will give, and more. I am not one to demand a celebration: I came here as a buyer. Moreover, if you realise what is good for you, as I am sure you do, then state your price clearly and give me what I ask" (Ganjavi, 2012, p. 26).

The fact that Qays' father identified himself as the buyer makes it abundantly clear that the two fathers used Layla as a commodity in their trade. The transaction between Qays' father and Layla's father was not successful because the wider community knew Qays as a madman, so Layla's father considered that if he accepted Qays' father's offer, then Qays would become his son-in-law, and having a mad son-in-law was a shameful act for the family. The rejection by Layla's father also shows that Layla had no say in the match. Layla was not given the right by her father to accept or reject someone's proposal. Layla was unable to do anything, not even to express her heart's deep love for Qays.

Although the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) presents the character Layla, who takes part in determining her life partner, Layla's position as a daughter is not much different from Layla's in the novel. The character Layla in the film accepts Ibnu Salam's proposal because of Pakde Ahmadi's demands.

*Pakde Ahmadi: “Ia lulusan luar negeri, sugih, calon bupati. Ingat ya! Pak Ibnu ini sudah banyak menolong kamu dan Ibumu, sekolahmu dibayari dia, utang bapakmu dia yang lunasi”*

Pakde Ahmadi: "He's a foreign graduate, he's rich, he's a candidate for regent. Remember! Pak Ibnu has helped you and your mother a lot, he paid for your schooling, he paid off your father's debt." (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 11:39-12:10).

In this case, Pakde Ahmadi uses Layla as something that is exchanged for Ibnu Salam's services to his family. Thus, marriage in both the novel and film through the arranged marriage system positions women as objects that can be bought, sold, or exchanged.

The marriage in both the novel and film becomes a way for Ibnu Salam's character to



make Layla an object of ownership. In a marriage relationship, women are made objects of male ownership so that they have the right to be exploited (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 121). This is evident in the novel from the actions Ibnu Salam took to enjoy Layla's body. Ibnu Salam feels that he owns Layla, so he uses force to be able to touch Layla's body. Layla does not love Ibnu Salam, so she is unwilling to give her body to Ibnu Salam. In this instance, Layla demonstrates her resistance by refusing to share a bed with Ibnu Salam and even refraining from allowing him to touch her. However, Layla in the book continues to be a male possession in a marriage that her husband can enjoy, albeit only through sight. It is stated by Ibnu Salam:

*"Meskipun ia tak mencintaiku, tapi ia kini berada di rumahku. Aku memang bisa melihatnya, tapi aku tak boleh menyentuhnya. Jadi biarkanlah begitu kenyataannya! Lebih baik aku diperbolehkan untuk melihatnya tapi tak boleh menyentuhnya daripada tak boleh memilikinya sama sekali."*

"Even though he does not love me, he is now in my house. I can see her, but I cannot touch her. So let that be the case! I would rather be allowed to see her but not touch her than not be allowed to have her at all." (Ganjavi, 2012, p. 98).

Thus, the marriage in the novel makes Layla an object of male ownership by positioning her as a decorative item in the house.

The film *Layla Majnun* (2021) also shows that Layla is used as an object of ownership by Ibnu Salam, who has the right to be exploited in the marriage relationship. It can be seen through Ibnu Salam's actions towards Layla, who does not care about Layla's health condition.

*Ibnu Salam: Aku nggak mau ada drama-drama lagi yang aneh. Semua mata publik itu lagi tertuju sama kita. Semua lawan politik itu cari kelengahan. Kalau sampai ada skandal, sedikit saja. Mereka akan menghancurkan kita. Mengerti?*

Ibnu Salam: I do not want any more weird dramas. All eyes of the public are on us. All political opponents are looking for weaknesses. Suppose there is a scandal. They will destroy us. Understand? (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 1:34:19-1:34:46).

The quote demonstrates the exploitation of Layla by Ibnu Salam. As previously stated, Ibnu Salam used Layla as a tool to win support from the general public for his candidacy as Regent.

### **Women's Voices in the Story of *Layla Majnun***

Women are only used as prisoners of men, both by their fathers and husbands in the house. Layla's character in the novel does not have freedom in the public sphere. It shows that men domesticate women. In general, Arab culture places women in the domestic sphere, while the public sphere is the place of men. As expressed by Sa'dawi (2001, p. 25) some Arab countries proclaim that women's place is the home and build a harem in a more modern version. Layla, under the domination of her father, does not have freedom in the public sphere. Layla was locked up in the house for fear of her father meeting Qays, who was considered crazy.

Meanwhile, when Layla became the wife of Ibnu Salam, she became even more confined to the house. The conditions experienced by Layla in the novel are inseparable from the socio-cultural conditions at a certain time in Arab society. A woman must obey men, namely her father and husband. This rule is the same in Javanese culture, which tends to position men's positions as more privileged than women's (Tuapattinaya & Hartati, 2014, p. 35). When a woman is a child, she must obey her father; when she is an adult, she must obey her husband; and when she is old, she must obey her children. These three loyalties are a way of life for Javanese people towards a woman's loyalty (Suyanto & Astuti,

2022, p. 80).

In the film *Layla Majnun* (2021), there is a deletion of Layla's father. The removal of this character can affect the emergence of women's voices in resistance to women's oppression in Javanese culture. Layla and her mother, without a father figure, make their lives more miserable and fall into poverty, so they have to sell their house and live in Pakde Ahmadi's house. Pakde Ahmadi, in the film, has the authority to manage Layla and her mother. Layla was matched with Ibnu Salam by Pakde Ahmadi. Layla's match with Ibnu Salam is inseparable from Pakde Ahmadi's authority, which replaces Layla's father. However, the disappearance of the father figure and its replacement by Pakde in the film is a weakening of male dominance in a family. It is shown by the involvement of Layla's voice in deciding her life partner.

*Pakde Ahmadi: "Penentuan tanggal, bagaimana kalau bulan depan"*

*Layla: "Tunggu, kita ini sedang merencanakan pernikahan kan? Pernikahan kan diputuskan oleh kedua belah pihak. Begitu bukan?"*

*Ayah Ibnu Salam: "Begini, biasanya Ibnu selalu mengikuti keputusan bapaknya."*

*Layla: "Ya, sekarang beda, Pak, karena ini menyangkut saya pribadi. Dan nanti saya akan menjadi calon istri Ibnu. Saya juga berhak untuk menentukan."*

Pakde Ahmadi: "Setting a date, how about next month?"

Layla: "Wait, we are planning a wedding, right? Both parties decide the marriage. Isn't that right?"

Ibn Salam's father: "Look, Ibn always follows his father's decision."

Layla: "Yes, it is different now, sir, because it concerns me personally. And I will be Ibnu's future wife. I also have the right to decide." (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 12:54-13:20).

Unlike the film *Layla Majnun* (2021), which presents Layla's voice clearly, Layla in the novel tends to be unable to speak. It shows that Layla's voice in the film is an attempt by the filmmaker to resist the culture of arranged marriage, which generally takes away women's rights. Women fight for their right to determine their life partners. The arranged marriage between Layla and Ibnu Salam was not entirely Layla's wish but rather the wish of Pakde Ahmadi. However, Layla can voice her will to accept Ibnu Salam by proposing a condition.

*Layla: "Aku terima lamaran kamu, tapi dengan dua syarat, aku mau tetap mengajar di sekolah seperti dulu seperti sekarang. Boleh kan?"*

*Ibnu Salam: "Boleh, terserah. Kalau bisa sekolah yang lebih modern lebih bagus."*

*Layla: "Yang kedua aku mau ke Azerbaijan."*

Layla: "I accept your proposal, but on two conditions, I want to keep teaching at the school like I used to. Is that okay?"

Ibn Salam: "That is fine, whatever. A more modern school would be better."

Layla: "The second one I want to go to Azerbaijan." (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 13:31-15:45).

*Layla Majnun* (2021) presents women's voices as a form of women's struggle for their rights in determining their life partners. Layla and the characters Namira and Nita, who reject arranged marriages with men they do not want, represent the struggle of these women. In addition, the quote above shows that Layla, in the film, rejects the domestication of women. The two conditions Layla put forth to Ibnu Salam demonstrate it. As in the quote above, the two conditions are continuing to teach and going to Azerbaijan. Both conditions show Layla's resistance to the domestication of women to be still able to play a role in the public sphere.

Marriage is an institution that strengthens women's position in the domestic sphere.

Kingston (2004, p. 158–161) argues that the marriage concept regarding rights and ownership ultimately reinforces women's position in the domestic sphere while men are in the public sphere. Layla's character in the novel represents women's place in the domestic sphere. Layla's marriage to Ibn Salam strengthens Layla's position in the domestic sphere. As explained earlier, Layla is used as a male possession as an ornament in the house. Layla becomes a prisoner of men.

*Ia juga merasa sakit karena cemburu, ia mencemburui kebebasan Majnun. Kekasihnya berada di belantara gurun dapat melakukan apa saja yang dikehendakinya, sementara dirinya menjadi tawanan. Telah begitu lama ia menjadi seorang tawanan hingga ia tak ingat lagi: awalnya ia menjadi tawanan Ayahnya, kini ia adalah tawanan suaminya.*

She also felt the pain of jealousy. She was jealous of Majnun's freedom. While she was a prisoner, her lover was in the wilderness doing whatever he wanted. She had been a prisoner for so long that she no longer remembered: first, she was her father's prisoner, and now she was her husband's. (Ganjavi, 2012, p. 165).

In addition, the quote shows the difference between women's position in the domestic sphere and men's position in the public sphere. Layla envying Majnun's freedom indicates that Layla has the will to be in the free public sphere. However, Layla is unable to voice her will. She remains a prisoner of her father and husband. According to Spivak's subaltern theory, the subaltern has no voice and is not a part of history. The statement 'cannot speak' is further explained by Spivak: the subaltern can speak, but the patriarchy has no space to listen to them (Morton, 2011, p. 74–75). Layla listened, smiling and nodding, but her heart was broken. She felt she would soon die because of her sorrow but could not express her feelings (Ganjavi, 2012, p. 92). Layla realises that men will not hear her voice, so she can only remain silent on her suffering as a captive in the house.

Meanwhile, the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) tends to represent the position of women in the public sphere. The filmmaker certainly adjusts the film to the cultural conditions of Javanese society in modern times, which provides more freedom for women to be in the public sphere. However, although Layla in the film is depicted as able to play a role in the public sphere, her role is still minimal. In the film, Layla can only be a teacher to girls in Javanese society. Meanwhile, male teachers can teach girls as Samir teaches and Layla teaches. In addition, higher education abroad can only be pursued by men, such as the characters Ibnu Salam and Ilham. This storyline shows that although Layla represents the role of women in the public sphere, there is still an unequal position between men and women in the public sphere. Thus, Layla in the film has more freedom in the public sphere than in the novel, where she cannot voice her will to be in the public sphere.

Women do not have the right to voice their will in choosing a partner. Marriages in both novels and films position men as the ones who "choose" while women are the ones who are "chosen", proving Holmes' view (2007, p. 40) of gender as something that is willed and shapes the social structure of society with a feminine or masculine dichotomy. The dichotomy is very clear in both the novel and the film. Layla's character's position is only as the chosen party. Unlike the male characters, who have the right to choose Layla as their future life companion, it is very clear in the film through Ibn Salam's expression, as follows:

*Ibnu Salam: Aku disini, memilih kamu, bukannya kamu yang bilang tidak.*

Ibn Salam: I am here, choosing you, not you saying no (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 1:48:07-1:49:00).

The quote shows the authority of men as the chosen party who can determine who they want to be with, whether based on love or not. Similarly, in the novel that represents this, various men flock to choose Layla as their life companion. However, as explained earlier,

Layla remains the chosen party, even though she cannot voice her will to accept or reject.

Based on this, marriage in both the past Arab culture represented in the novel and the present Javanese culture represented in the film both present gender injustice and result in the oppression of women. However, the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) highlights the voices of Javanese women as a form of resistance to the arranged marriage culture prevailing in Javanese society. The film *Layla Majnun* (2021) shows an effort to assert that women have the right to choose their life partners.

*Ibu Layla: Sekarang saatnya kamu tentukan pilihanmu!*

*Layla: Ibu yakin ingin melepas Layla? Kalau Pakde tahu, Pakde pasti marah sama Ibu.*

*Ibu Layla: Pakdemu biar Ibu yang urus. Kamu tak perlu khawatir*

Layla's mother: Now it is time for you to make your choice!

Layla: Are you sure you want to let Layla go? If Pakde finds out, he will be furious with me.

Layla's mother: I will take care of your father. You do not have to worry (Tiwa, 2021, secs. 1:44:20-1:44:30).

The quote shows that there is awareness among women between Layla and her mother for their rights as women to choose their life partners. Layla's oppression over her husband made her realise and triggered her to fight back. Layla, with the support of her mother, chose to separate from her husband and chose Samir as her life partner.

Thus, the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) tries to position the character Layla as a woman who can voice her voice to oppose the repression of the patriarchal culture prevailing in Javanese society, while in the novel *Layla Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi, the character Layla is positioned as a woman who is always silenced from the patriarchal culture prevailing in Arab society. Layla's character in both the novel and the film cannot be separated from the prejudices and demands of patriarchal culture regarding marriage. However, Layla's character in the novel and film responds differently in addressing the oppression she experiences. In the film, Layla is more courageous in articulating her voice by proposing conditions to Ibn Salam before accepting it, and Layla dares to oppose Ibn Salam to break the marriage relationship between them. While in the novel, Layla tends to be a silenced woman. She cannot speak up to accept and reject the arranged marriage and break away from her husband.

## CONCLUSION

Textual changes in the adaptation of the story of *Layla Majnun* to the film *Layla Majnun* (2021) are in the form of changes in characterisation, plot, and setting. These changes are based on culture, social structure, and the author's views. The novel *Layla Majnun* presents a picture of Arab women who are silenced by repression by men. Through the adaptation of the story, the film *Layla Majnun* tries to change the position of women by presenting the image of Javanese women who can voice their own will. Men entirely determine marriage in the Arab culture represented in *Layla Majnun*, so women do not have access to articulate their will in choosing their life partner. Layla, in the novel, experiences subalternity concerning marriage. Marriage also impacted Layla's silencing by her father and husband to be in the domestic sphere. In the adaptation of the film, Tiwa presents the image of marriage in a form that is not entirely the same. This dissimilarity is related to the context of different cultures and times. The representation of modern Javanese women through the character Layla is more able to voice her will to choose who to marry and decide to play an active role in the public sphere.

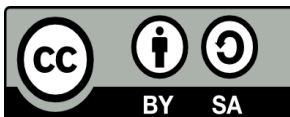
Thus, the novel *Layla Majnun*, adapted into the film *Layla Majnun* (2021), shows that the story is still relevant today, especially in Javanese society, related to the issue of marriage. Marriage, which is only determined by men both in classical Arabic culture and

modern Javanese culture, tends to oppress women, so there is a need for women's voices to be raised to end women's oppression in a society that is still thick with patriarchal culture.

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