# ECRANISATION STUDY OF SOCIAL SETTING OF *ME, AND EARL, AND THE DYING GIRL*

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**ABSTRAK**

*Ecranisation adalah proses perubahan kata-kata dalam novel menjadi gambar bergerak atau yang biasa kita sebut film. Dalam melakukan hal itu, perubahan tersebut mengalami tiga macam karakteristik yang menjadi analisis utama dalam studi ekranisasi ini, yaitu reduksi, penambahan, dan variasi perubahan. Artikel ini membahas hasil studi tentang bagaimana tiga proses dalam hal pengaturan sosial telah berkontribusi pada perubahan alur cerita. Data objektif dikumpulkan melalui pengambilan sampel secara terencana dalam penelitian kualitatif ini dari novel dan filmnya Me and Earl and the Dying Girl. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa alur cerita dalam film dikonstruksi secara sosial dengan cara yang berbeda dari cerita asalnya dalam novel. Ditemukan bahwa perilaku sosial dan karakterisasi dalam film tidak digambarkan dengan cara yang sama seperti dalam novel. Karena novel ini adalah tolok ukur untuk mengidentifikasi setiap perubahan pengaturan sosial dalam film, maka tersirat bahwa transformasi telah gagal dalam mempertimbangkan berbagai aspek sosial sebagai elemen yang melekat dalam alur cerita dalam novel.*

***Kata Kunci****: ekranisasi, film, latar sosial, novel.*

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*ABSTRACT*

*Ecranisation is transformation of written text in a novel into motion pictures in film. In so doing, the transformation undergoes three kinds of characteristics which become the main analysis in ecranization study, namely reduction, addition, and variation of change. This article discusses the results of a study on how the three processes in terms of social setting have contributed to the alteration of storyline. Objective data were collected through purposive sampling in this qualitative study from the novel and its film of Me and Earl and the Dying Girl. The results show that the storyline in the film is socially constructed differently from its origin in the novel. It was found that the social behavior and the characterization in the film are not depicted in the same way as in the novel. As the novel is the benchmark for identifying any changes of social setting in the film, it is implied that the transformation has failed in taking into various social aspects as inherent element of storyline in the novel.*

**Keywords:** *ecranisation, film, novel, social setting.*

## INTRODUCTION

All aspects that people create in this world will parts of their culture. As expression of cultural phenomena built on perceptions, attitudes, views, and responses, literary work is considered as creation that shapes humans. At a certain point, literary work is created as representation of certain perspective of experience. The reflection of each creation conveys a deep meaning because its existence cannot be separated from the involvement of socio-cultural interaction.

It is quite common nowadays for a literary work to be transformed into other media as a way to disseminate intercultural interaction. The transformation of a novel into a film is one of inevitable phenomenon. As time goes by, there are a lot of novels being adapted to audio-visual versions. One of the reasons is because the novel is a best-seller one which means that it has commercial value to be produced in audiovisual medium. However, of course, there will be differences between the novel version and the film version that leads to ecranisation.

From ecranisation point of view, creative process performed by directors in making adapted movies will always lead into addition, subtraction, and variation process (Eneste, 1991). This case often happens in the process of transferring a story from written to motion pictures, there is always the basic question of adherence to the source, or of what can be lost. Ecranisation is often described as deeply problematic; it is a real and common phenomenon that nevertheless constitutes a problem. That is why the study related to ecranisation is scientifically feasible—it is worth doing. The primal differences between the two media evoke empirical investigation concerning how film accommodates the original story line within audiovisual realization in a certain duration.

Many studies of ecranisation have been conducted by, to name a few, Ary Widawati (2004), Rizky Dwiwahyuni (2018) and Henni Hermawati (2015). Their findings show that transforming storyline from novel into film undergoes reduction, addition and variation of change. There are intrinsic elements in the novel that are

either not depicted; added; or varied which lead to different configuration of how the storyline is communicated to the audiences.

The present study also investigates the intrinsic element, particularly on social setting. It aims to find out how the storyline is socially constructed in the film due to characteristics of ecranisation of reduction, addition and variation in the novel and its film of *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl.*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Setting

Roberts and Jacobs (2001) state three basic types of setting. The first one is nature and the outdoors. The natural world is an obvious location for the action of many narratives and plays. It is important to explain more about natural surroundings (hills, valleys, mountains, fields), living creatures (birds, dogs, horses), and also the times, seasons, and conditions, in which things happen (morning or night, summer or winter, sunlight or cloudiness, heat or cold)—any or all of which may influence character and action.

The second one is the object of human manufacture and construction. It includes details about objects of human manufacture and construction to reveal or to highlight qualities of characters and also to make literature lifelike. Houses, both interiors and exteriors, are common, as are possession such as walking sticks, gardens paths, necklace, or even hair ribbons.

The last one is the cultural conditions and assumptions. Just as physical setting influences character, so do historical and cultural conditions and assumptions. For example, the broad cultural setting of Jackson's in the book "The Lottery" is built on the persistence of a primitive belief in our modern and scientific age.

Nurgiyantoro (2005) states that setting is divided into setting of place, setting of time, and setting of social. The three are interrelated and influence each other.

### 1. Setting of Place

Setting of place is where the location takes place which is narrated in the literary of fiction. It may be the exact name of certain places (Arizona,

Ankara, Bandung, Aceh). Even sometimes it can be just a simple initial (city A, J, K, L), meaning that the readers should imagine by themselves, and it can also be the certain locations without the clear name (district 1, west forest, near the river).

Consequently, setting of place should also relate to the social setting because every place should have their own social setting. The authors must know the situation of the place clearly, to describe the exact event that wants to deliver. If not, the readers will eventually lose interest.

## 2. Setting of Time

The setting of time explains the problem of when those events happen in literary or fiction. The problem is usually used in the historical events factuality (Nurgiyantoro, 2005). Time can cover many areas, such as the character's time of life, the time of day, even time period such as the past, present, or future. It can change throughout the plot. Setting of time is really important, especially for the English story that tells the setting of time by tenses, actually without putting the elements of place but with the clear setting of time, it is not a problem. (Genette, 1980:215).

## 3. Setting of Social

Social setting refers to the situation of society which actually happens in the story. The ways of social life cover the problem in the complex environment, such as habit in life, custom, traditions, religion, the point of view, the way of thinking and behavior. Even, the social setting relates to the social status of the character (low, middle, upper class). We can notice that the social setting is stronger than others or vice versa just by reading the differences between the place setting, the time setting, and the social setting.

It is neutral setting when in the setting of place also has the setting of social in it, no matter the place has the typical setting which informs about the social life, culture, and behavior or not. Every story should create a vivid detail. Vernacular, naming, and status can be characterized in the social setting; the local color can be informed through society and their social life.

Even, the characteristic of a name can be defined as a social setting, for example Pariyem, Cokro Sentono, Sri sumarah, Karteredjo, define names of Javanese. Also, the social status in the name can be characterized, for example, the name of Pariyen, Srintil, Auta, Darmo, are referring to the low social status, different with Sastrasarjana, Herdaningrat, which refers to the upper class. Because in Javanese social live, the name of Kusumo, Negoro, Sarjana, etc cannot be used by the low social status. Nurgiyantoro (2005:236)

In this case, it can be considered that that the definition above about social setting by Nurgiyantoro (2005) is inherent to Roberts and Jacobs (2001) theory of setting.

**Ecranisation**

Eneste (1991) defines ecranisation as the process of transforming novel to film. The transformation occurs in the story line, plot, character, setting, atmosphere, and theme. He also mentions that it is the changing of words in the novel into moving images. So, we can say that ecranisation is someone's work to make long prose into a motion picture. All the elements that happen within the novel should be adopted only into limited duration of film. There are three elements of changes that may happen in the process (Eneste, 1991):

### 1. Reduction

Reduction is leaving out novel's story elements in the film. There are two main points why they are reduced: (1) the assumption that certain action and character are not necessary or not important to be included in the film. Moreover, the setting in the novel cannot be transferred pervasively to the film for it can make the film longer than it expected. (2) There are some elements that cannot be transferred to the film because of a technical limitation in the film.

### 2. Addition

Addition means adding elements which are not written in the novel to the film. Addition is commonly implemented by film director to make the flow of storyline in the film to be more audio-visually interesting.

### 3. Variation of Change

Variation of change means the film retains elements in the novel with certain adjustments related to media usages, audiences, and time duration. The variation of change influences the language use, words, and actions in describing all events in the story so that the film has distinctive characteristics compared to its original version.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is qualitative descriptive in which the ways of collecting and analyzing the data are focused on text or words to find out the impact of ecranisation on the two sources of data, novel and its film version. Tavallaei & Abu Talib (2008) state that qualitative research covers a wide range of approaches for the exploration of

human experience, perceptions, motivations and behaviors and is concerned with the collection and analysis of words whether in the form of speech or writing. In this aspect, qualitative inquiry means to understand what others do and say or to get a grasp, hear, catch and comprehend what something means (Grant, 2008).

Objective data were collected by way of purposive sampling from the novel and its film version of *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl.* The data are social circumstances which are illustrated in the novel and depicted in the film.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

Of the 40 data collected in this study, 17 social settings in the novel are reduced in the film; 15 are varied; and 8 social settings are added. The distribution can be seen in figure 1.
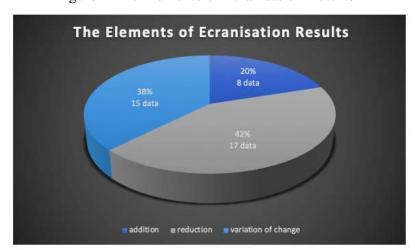
Figure 1 The Elements of Ecranisation Results



1. **Reduction**

Table 1 Example of reduction

| DATA | NOVEL | FILM |
|---|---|---|
| 16. | It explains about the background of Earl's personality, Earl's home and Earl's family condition. | This setting of social does not exist. |

(Chapter 9, page 62-64)

The reduction of those social settings in the movie makes the storyline in the movie different from the one in the novel, which causes Earl family's social status and behavior are not accommodated in the movie. Furthermore, the information about Earl's background story of his current character and Earl's home and family condition become unclear. Therefore, in the movie Earl does not really look like he is angry with his condition, but more like a weirdo who is seemed to always unenthusiastic about everything without any concrete reason. Also, the absence of this social setting about Earl's home and family condition makes the story of why Earl is the one who usually hangs out at Greg's home in the novel is not known by the movie audience.

## 2. Addition

Table 2 Example of addition

| DATA | NOVEL | FILM |
|---|---|---|
| 15. | This setting of social does not exist. | Greg was saying that Earl is not his friend. |

(00.16.08)

The addition of this social setting in the movie makes the storyline in the movie different from the one in the novel, which causes Greg's way of thinking about not having friends, is stronger in the movie. In the book, Greg is also having an issue in making a friend but then the idea of him saying Earl and Rachel are his friends give a lot of impact about their friendship images. It shows the readers knowledge about how Earl and Rachel give a lot of meaning about friendship to Greg, whose basically afraid of being a friend with anyone. Hence, the addition of this social setting makes Greg's point of view about his friendship with Earl and Rachel in the movie becomes unclear. It even comes to the point where it leads the movie's audience to start questioning Greg's behavior, like "is he having a phobia or

something?"

### 3. Variation of Change

Table 3 Example of variation of change

| DATA | NOVEL | FILM |
|------|-------|------|
| 29. | Rachel watches the movie when she's still alive and not dying. | Rachel watches "Rachel the Film" in her dead-bed. |
| | (Chapter 36, page 260) | (01.25.00) |

The variation of change in this social setting in the movie makes the storyline in the movie different from the one in the novel, which makes Rachel's point of view towards Rachel the film is not accommodated. This scene makes Rachel's opinion about the film in the movie become unclear. For in the movie, Rachel does not say a single word while watching the movie, she is just crying and it can be interpreted as a form of a lot of emotions. Thus, the absence of this social setting about Rachel the Film is not clearly known by the movie audience.

**Discussion**

The results of the research have been presented in the first part and based on these results, it can be seen that the element of ecranisation which often appear and give effects towards the line story is reduction. This is the sample of how the story line in the movie was socially constructed due to the reduction based on data 16 in table 1. In the novel it explains about Earl's background personality and Earl's family condition, while this setting of social does not exist in the movie. The existence of these social settings within these datum leads to the story line in the novel that Earl's default mood is pissed and Earl's backup mood is mega pissed and that his parents were divorced, his mother is a junkie, his father is not really in the picture of his life, his stepfather is in prison, his brothers are bullies, and his stepbrothers are drug dealers and so on. The reduction of those social settings in the movie makes the storyline in the movie different from the one in the novel, which causes Earl family's social status and

behavior are not accommodated in the movie. Furthermore, the information about Earl's background story of his current character and Earl's home and family condition become unclear. Therefore, in the movie Earl does not really look like he is angry with his condition, but more like a weirdo who is seemed to always unenthusiastic about everything without any concrete reason.

This article can be compared with a previous study, The Ecranisation of Setting in The Novel of *Forever My Girl* and Its Film Adaptation by Rizky Dwiwahyuni, that in her study it is also find that reduction appears in a bigger number than addition and variation of change. In this present research, the results of reducing a certain social setting from the novel's storyline into the one in the film are to shorten the duration of time in the film and also there are some actions in the novel that cannot be transformed into the film because of technical limitation. And it indeed makes the storyline between the novel and the film different. This finding is in line with Rizky Dwiwahyuni's finding. In her research, she states that reduction happens because of duration of time that impossible to insert all of the setting in the film and the domination of it give impact to the storyline in the film and make it different with the one in the novel.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

**Conclusion**

The outcomes of this research show that there are a lot of changes in adapting story from the novel into film. When there is a part that is reduced, added, and varied, it will draw a different point of view of the storyline between novel and film. The reduction, addition, and variation of change in a social setting area give different perspectives in understanding the whole storyline between the story in the novel and the one in the film. This phenomenon of how a film is made through a lot of shifts brings this intriguing analysis. For this phenomenon relates to the problem of taking the whole image that is derived from written work into audio-visual realization.

The effect of reducing a certain social setting from the novel's storyline into the one in the film is to shorten the duration of time in the film. While the effect of adding

certain social setting from the novel's storyline into the one in the film is to overdo the storyline in order to exchange the reducing part in the novel to make it more interesting and to make the storyline in the film itself bold enough. At the other hand, the effect of varying certain social setting from the novel's storyline into the one in the film is to give another perspective of delivering the storyline that happens in the novel.

## Suggestion

For other researchers, it is suggested to take other discussions to analyze the relation between the two intrinsic elements such as plot and setting of social.

- Plot and Setting of Social:
    Plot has a very important role in the story and so does setting of social. There are five main elements in the plot such as exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. When there is a plot that is changed in a film, it can also change its social setting. In this Me and Earl and The Dying Girl novel that has adapted into a movie, there are many changes in the plot of the story that make the setting of social is reduced, added, or varied. The relation of the two main intrinsic elements will bring an intriguing analysis. For instance, in the novel in resolution plot, there is a time when Greg and Earl were finally knowing that the reason they got high is not because of Mr. McCarthy's Pho but because of the cookies from Earl's brother ex-girlfriend that Earl brought to school for lunch that day. Meanwhile, in the film, this scene happens in rising action plot and it indeed changes the whole social setting of the story.

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