Seong Gi Hun’s Religiosity Represented in Squid Game Film Series

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ABSTRACT
Squid Game series became a famous worldwide film that stole audiences' huge attention. Several reviews have been done about the social-capitalism side of this film. Besides, there is also a review of the nine main characters of this film. But this study focuses on Seong Gi Hun's religiosity represented in the Squid Game film series because there is still no review about this theme. Although Squid Games is not a religious film, we can still analyze this aspect with particular religiosity theory because it is about behavior, not attached to any religion. This study uses Stuart Hall’s representation and religiosity theory from Thouless, Glock, and Stark. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The data is taken from the film transcript. Using these theories and methods, the researchers found that Seong Gi Hun’s religiosity represented in Squid Games Film Series is included in the religious effect dimension based on Glock and Stark. Then according to Thouless, it is included in internal factors, especially the life factor.

Keywords: Main character, Representation, Religiosity

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works are works of art that are creative, meaning that they are the result of human creations in the form of aesthetic language works (in the sense of art). The results are literary works, such as novels, poetry, short stories, dramas, and others [1]. Meanwhile, literature has scientific characteristics, namely objects, theories, and methods. That is, literature can act as an object or subject of research. In the current era of modernization, literature is growing rapidly, seeing the increasing development of technology, which impacts the world of literature. Changing literary works into film form has occurred for several decades. Several successful films, especially in terms of the number of viewers and public appreciation, are based on literary works such as novels or collections of stories. The world of cinema today is increasingly varied, both abroad and domestically. More and more people are also fond of reading literary works such as novels.

Various reasons are underlying the transformation process from novels to films, among others, because a novel is already well-known, ultimately supporting the commercial aspect. This inspiring novel story idea will be of great educational value if filmed. The film can convey information and messages in a literary work creatively and uniquely. The film is a product of work art and culture with a use-value because it aims to provide inner satisfaction for the audience [2].

Character is a fictional structural element that gives birth to events. In terms of involvement in the whole story, the characters in fiction are divided into two. First, the central character or main character. The central character is the character who takes the most prominent part in the story, whose existence can be determined in three ways, namely, (1) the character who is most involved with the meaning or theme of the
story; (2) the character who relates the most to other characters, and (3) the character that requires the most time for storytelling. Events in fiction are the same as events in everyday life, always carried by characters. Therefore, the character is the most critical element in literary works. Through characters, readers get a complete picture of the story. According to Abram's story, characters are shown in a narrative/drama work [3]. Characters interpreted by the reader have certain moral qualities and tendencies as expressed in speech and what is done in action.

This study examines the character of Seong Gi Hun (Lee Jung-Jae), who is the main character in Squid Game. Squid Game is a drama series that shows on Netflix. The Squid Game drama series has just started showing in September 2021. So far, the Squid Game drama series has been shown for nine series. The Squid Game drama series tells the story of a collection of South Korean people who have debt problems. These people are generally in economic difficulties and pay debts. Then, these people are invited to play a game in a remote area. The Squid Game drama series offers up to billions of South Korean won prizes. The games played are South Korean children's childhood games. However, this game has a high risk. The players who lose will die brutally, like being shot. But the Squid Game drama series has caught the attention of movie fans worldwide. The Squid Game drama series has topped the global Netflix top 10 charts since Friday, September 24, 2021.

Many critics like Squid Game. The rating is perfect or 100 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. According to the Korean Research Center director in Western Australia, Jo Elfving-Hwang, Squid Game cleverly combines K-drama and Korean films. It makes the series so popular. As Hollywood launches endless remakes and superhero movies, people look for new and different content. According to pop culture writer Cynthia Wang, people want creative, original stories, and they don't find them in big franchise productions. They find them in Squid Game. Meanwhile, launching Fast Company, September 28, 2021, the event created by Hwang Dong-hyuk, the filmmaker of The Fortress, became famous for touching on similar themes of desperation and underclass exploitation explored by South Korean exports take over the world.

Some researchers have done about Squid Game, mostly talked about social – capitalism side of this series. However, this study focuses on the main character, Seong Gi Hun. In the beginning, he seems like a very annoying person since he is jobless. His wife and little daughter left him. Then he lives with his mother and becomes a parasite. But then, the researcher found a good side from Gi Hun. This good side brings us to the idea of religiosity value of Seong Gi Hun as the main character.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are still few analyses about Squid Game TV Series since it is a new serial. But people write a lot of famous articles on the internet about it. Most of them talk about social issues and real-life representation of Korea in this movie. Thus, the researcher tries to analyze Squid Game scientifically using representation theory. Here are several previous studies related to this analysis.

First, Devi's study analyzed the religiosity of the main character in a film entitled When God Falls in Love. Still, the difference is, it used the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes [4]. Second, analyze the personality of the main characters of the film Later We Tell About Today. It used psychoanalysis theory [5]. Then the third, the analysis of the main character in the film The Monkey King 3 by Cheng Pou Soi, using social psychology theory [6]. Finally, the fourth previous study is on the religious elements of the film Squid Games. It is not scientific work, but it helps the researcher find the religion hidden in Squid Games film. It talked about the religiosity of the main character [7]. These previous studies used film as the object, but this study uses the film script.

The theoretical framework used in this study outlines the structure used to support research in finding data, analyzing, and drawing conclusions. The views or opinions expressed by experts are compiled and combined for this purpose. As stated previously, this study only discusses the main character's religiosity analysis in the Squid Game film series with a representation study.

Representation is a concept used in the social process of meaning through available marking systems, namely through dialogue, writing, video, film, and photography. According to Stuart Hall, representation is a critical practice that produces a culture in terms of experience. Representation is usually understood as an accurate picture of something or distorted reality. Representation is not only about "to present", "to image", or "to depict". Representation is a way to interpret what is given to the object depicted.

Concerning reality, Manurung said that representation is a process of constructing the world around and interpreting it [8]. Furthermore, Fiske mentioned that representation is a communication
Religiosity comes from the word religion which in English is called religion, Dutch is religion, Arabic is called al-din, and it is called agama in Indonesian. Religiosity is how far knowledge is, how strong belief is, how much worship and agidah are practiced, and how deep is the appreciation of the religion he adheres to. Johnson defines religiosity as the extent to which an individual is committed to his religion by acknowledging all its teachings, as well as individual attitudes and behaviors that reflect that commitment [10]. Religiosity is vital because it can affect an individual cognitively and behaviourally. Religious people have a different value system than people who are not religious/lack religiosity. Wijaya also distinguishes between the terms religion/religiosity and religiosity. According to him, religion refers to the formal aspects of the rules, obligations, and religion.

In contrast, religiosity refers to the aspects of religion that individuals live. The form of religiosity that should be immediately known is social behavior [11]. If a person always performs positive and constructive behavior towards others, motivated by his religion, then that is the manifestation of his religion.

Religiosity needs to be distinguished from religion because the connotation of religion usually refers to institutions that are engaged in juridical aspects, rules, and punishments. Religiosity is more about these institutions' 'deep heart' and personalization aspects. Therefore, it distinguishes the term religion from religiosity. If religion refers to formal aspects related to order and obligations, then religiosity refers to aspects of religion that a person has lived in his heart [12]. Religion and religiosity support each other because they are a logical consequence of human life, with two poles, namely the pole of personal life and the pole of togetherness in society. From the description above, it can be concluded that religiosity is a picture of the state in a person that encourages him to behave (both visible and invisible behavior) and act following the religion he adheres to.

Glock and Stark divide the dimensions or aspects of religiosity into five [13]. The five aspects or dimensions are (1) religious belief, (2) religious practice, (3) religious feeling, (4) religious knowledge, and (5) religious effect. First, religious belief (the ideological dimension) or the belief dimension is the degree to which a person accepts dogmatic things in his religion, such as God, angels, heaven, and hell. Although it must be admitted that every religion certainly has a set of beliefs that are doctrinally different from other religions, even for their religion, sometimes different and often contradictory ideas emerge. Every religion also wants an element of obedience for each of its followers. As for the religion a person has, the essential meaning is the willingness to obey the applicable rules in the teachings. Therefore, the dimension of belief is more doctrinal which must be adhered to by religious adherents. The dimension of belief in Islam is manifested in the acknowledgment (shahada), which is realized by reading the two sentences of the creed. There is no God but Allah, and the prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. By itself, this dimension of belief requires the practice of worship under Islamic values.

Second, religious practice (the ritual dimension) is the degree to which a person performs ritual obligations in his religion. Elements in this dimension include worship, culture, and things that show a person's commitment to their religion. The manifestation of this dimension is people who follow certain religions in carrying out religion-related rites. For example, dimensions of practice in Islam can be done by performing prayers, fasting, zakat, hajj, or other muamalah practices.

Third, religious feeling (the experiential dimension) or the experience dimension are feelings or experiences that have been experienced and felt—for example, feeling close to God, feeling afraid to sin, feeling that his prayer is being answered, saved by God, and so on. Ancok and Suroso say that in Islam, this dimension can be manifested in a feeling of closeness or intimacy with Allah, a feeling of trust (positively surrendering oneself) to Allah. Likewise, feeling solemn when praying or praying, feeling thrilled when hearing the call to prayer or verses from the Qur'an, feeling grateful to Allah, feeling getting warning or help from Allah [14].

Fourth, religious knowledge (the intellectual dimension) or the dimension of religious knowledge is a dimension that explains how far a person knows about his religious teachings, especially those in his holy book. It is a dimension that explains how far a person knows about his religious teachings, especially in any other scripture. At least someone religious should know the basic things about the fundamental beliefs, rites, scriptures, and traditions. This dimension in Islam refers to Muslims' level of knowledge and understanding towards the teachings, especially those contained in their holy book.
Fifth, religious effect (the consequential dimension) is a dimension that measures the extent to which a person's behavior. It is motivated by the teachings of his religion in social life. For example, one visits a sick neighbor, helps people in trouble, donates his wealth, etc.

Then Thouless distinguishes the factors that influence religious attitudes into four [15]. First is the influence of education or teaching and various social pressures. This factor includes all social influences in religious development, including education from parents, social traditions, pressure from the social environment to conform to various opinions and attitudes agreed by the environment.

The second is the experience factor relating to the various experiences that shape religious attitudes, especially the experience of beauty, moral conflict, and religious, emotional experience. These factors are generally in the form of spiritual experiences that can quickly influence individual behavior.

The third is the life factor. These needs can be broadly divided into four: a) The need for security or safety, b) The need for love, c) The need for self-esteem, and d) Needs arising from the threat of death. The last one is the intellectual factor. It relates to various processes of verbal reasoning or rationalization.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that each individual has different levels of religiosity and is influenced by two kinds of factors, namely internal and external. Internal factors that can affect religiosity include religious, emotional experiences, urgent individual needs to be fulfilled, such as security, self-esteem, love, etc. While external influences such as formal education, religious education in the family, social traditions based on religious values, social, environmental pressures in individual life. Thus, this study analyses Seong Gi Hun’s dimension and factor of religiosity.

3. METHOD

A person carrying out his activities always uses methods to achieve the wanted goals. Therefore, research methods play an essential role in a study. It is essential in a study because it also determines whether or not what will be achieved is achieved. Sugiyono stated that the research method is a scientific way to obtain valid data to discover, develop, and prove specific knowledge so that it can be used to understand, solve, and anticipate problems [16]. The method used in this research is descriptive. This descriptive method aims to solve the problems faced and collect data information to be compiled and analyzed.

Sugiyono states that research variables are attributes or properties or values of people, objects, or activities that have certain variations determined by researchers to be studied and then drawn conclusions [16]. The variable to be studied is Seong Gi Hun's religious value found in the Squid Game series script. This research is reviewed by taking notes, marking the column according to the characterization or nature of the main character.

Then data analysis techniques are the steps taken to conclude the answer to the problem. Data analysis systematically searches and compiles data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation. It is done by organizing data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, compiling it into patterns, choosing which ones are important will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood [16]. After the data is obtained and neatly arranged, the processing is carried out as follows: a). Watching the Squid Game film series as an object of research. b). Understanding the film's contents according to the studied problem. c). Collecting data from the film's contents through the film script, and d). Presenting the results of the study and concluding the results of the discussion.

4. FINDING & DISCUSSION

Any religion does not bind Seong Gi Hun (SGH), but one religion mentioned is Christian. It is proven by previous analysis about religious elements shown of Squid Games by Panca, who discussed that this film consists of Christianity symbolism. He put his analysis in the famous article which ceritagames.com publishes. [7]. Thus, based on Glock and Stark's explanation about religiosity dimensions, SGH does not experience all dimensions but religious effect. This hypothesis can be proven by the following citation from the film transcript.

Table 1 shows SGH’s behavior in episode I. Starting from number 1 to 5, SGH tries to keep doing good for his daughter. Based on Glock and Stark's religiosity theory, it is included in the religious effect dimension [13] because SGH’s behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then based on Thouless theory, SGH’s deeds are affected by the life factor [15]. It is the need for love. While in no. 6, SGH shows his excellent behavior toward the old man. It is also included in the religious effect.
dimension, which is affected by the life factor in the need for love and self-esteem because if he can help the old man, people will recognize him as a good person.

Table 2 demonstrates SGH’s behavior in episode II. Starting from number 1, it shows SGH’s need for security or safety by reporting to the police officer who shows one of the life factor based on Thouless theory [15]. This behavior also shows SGH’s religiosity, which is included in the religious effect dimension because it is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life.

### Table 1. Citation from the episode I

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Guess what I'm getting for the birthday girl. | Seong Gi Hun (SGH) tries so hard to get prizes for his daughter’s birthday. It shows that he cares so much about his daughter. |
| 2. | You know, I wanted to buy you a nicer dinner than this. | SGH tries to calm his daughter. |
| 3. | Surprise. Ga-Yeong, I got your present right here. | SGH gives a birthday prize for his daughter. |
| 4. | And you'll see next year, huh, I'll get an awesome present for you, okay? | SGH wants to prepare a better prize for his daughter. |
| 5. | Oh, she got sleepy, I carried her. I'll carry her to the elevator if you don't mind, okay? | SGH wants to make sure that his daughter come in safely. |
| 6. | Gi Hun: Excuse me, sir.  
Old man: And then, there are those…  
Gi Hun: What are you doing?  
Old man: Stop talking to me, or I lose count. And so I was at 50, so the…  
Gi Hun: Ah, you must be trying to count how many of us there are, is that right?  
Old man: That's right. So could you stop talking to me for a while? And then… Huh? Hold on. Where was I just then?  
Gi Hun: Upon the board, sir. There are 456 here. | SGH greeted an elderly grandpa and helped him count the number of participants. |

### Table 2. Citation from episode II

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Upon returning, Gi-hun goes to the police, but no one believes his story except Detective Hwang Jun-ho, whose missing brother received Gi-hun's card. | SGH is trying to get justice for him and friends. |
| 2. | But you’re not okay. Hey, Mom, you can’t walk around like that. | SGH cares so much about his mother. |
| 3. | Damn it. I'll get what you need. I'll get all the money you need. [sniffs] | SGH tries to get his mother’s need. |
| 4. | I’m sorry. It’s for… my mom. She was in the hospital. | SGH tries to get money for his mother’s medical needs. |
| 5. | Police: Mr. Seong. You can help me. I need to get him back. [tense music]  
SGH: Why would you think…that I will be useful to you or anybody else? | SGH intends to help the police find his missing brother. |

Then number 2 to 4 show that SGH cares about his mother’s health, although he has not enough money. It shows the religious effect dimension because SGH’s behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. This behavior is affected by the life factor in the need for love.
After that, number 5 is similar to number 1, which shows one of the life factor based on Thouless theory, it is the need for security and safety [15]. This behavior also shows SGH’s religiosity, which is included in the religious effect dimension because it is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life by helping the detective.

Table 3. Citation from episode III

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Oh, Sang-woo. So you’re here. I didn’t think I’d see you. | SGH greeted his childhood friend. |

Table 3 shows us SGH’s behavior in episode III. Based on Glock and Stark, SGH shows religious effect dimension by greeting his childhood friend. It shows that his behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then this behavior is affected by the need for love and self-esteen, which are included in the Life Factor.

Table 4. Citation from episode IV

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Hey, didn’t you hear that? A person died. That man there just died. Look, that man was killed. | SGH tries to get help for the dead man. |
| 2. | Hey, old man! Are you there? Old man! | SGH worries so much about the old man while the massacre happens. |
| 3. | We’re all teammates here now. We should really know about each other, build up a little trust, okay? | SGH makes a cooperation with the playmates. |
| 4. | Hey, old man, you must be really shook up today. | SGH tries to calm the old man. |
| 5. | Together, you and I will get out of here. | SGH makes a promise to the old man to be always together till the end of the game. |

Table 4 shows SGH’s behavior in episode IV. Starting from number 1 to 5, based on Glock and Stark, SGH shows religious effect dimension by showing affection to the old man and playmates. It shows that his behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then this behavior is affected by the need for self-esteem, which is included in the life factor based on Thouless theory [15].

Table 5. Citation from episode V

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Wait right here. Okay. We need to lower your fever. Hold on. | SGH helps a playmate who got fever. |

Table 5 shows SGH’s behavior in episode V. Based on Glock and Stark, SGH shows religious effect dimension by showing his affection to the playmate [13]. It shows that his behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then this behavior is affected by the need for self-esteem, which is included in the life factor based on Thouless theory [15].

Table 6. Citation from episode VI

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Sang-woo is with Ali, Gi-hun with Player 001, and Sae-byeok with Player 240. | In the couple game, SGH chooses to play with grandpa. |

Table 6 performs SGH’s behavior in Episode VI. Based on Glock and Stark, SGH shows religious effect dimension by showing his affection to the playmate [13]. It shows that his behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then this behavior is affected by the need for love and self-esteem included in the life factor based on Thouless theory [15].

Table 7. Citation from episode VII

| No | Dialogue / Narration | Analysis |
|----|----------------------|----------|
| 1. | Sir, give this chance to me. [whimpering] Please just give me that. [Player 96 on TV] Thank you! | SGH gives other players a chance to choose number one |

Table 7 shows SGH’s behavior in episode VII. Based on Glock and Stark, SGH shows religious effect dimension by showing his affection to the playmate [13]. He tends to give up on choosing the number. It shows that his behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then this behavior is affected by the need for self-esteem, which is included in the life factor based on Thouless theory [15].
Table 8. Citation from episode VIII

| No | Dialogue / Narration                                                                 | Analysis                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | [Gi-hun] Oh, Hey! Could you please get a doctor? She’s lost a lot of blood. Hurry! Please. | SGH tries to help a woman who is bleeding so much.                         |

Table 8 shows SGH’s behavior in episode VIII. Based on Glock and Stark, SGH shows religious effect dimension by showing his affection to the playmate [13]. He helps the bleeding woman. It shows that his behavior is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life. Then this behavior is affected by the need for love and self-esteem included in the life factor based on Thouless theory [15].

Table 9. Citation from episode IX

| No | Dialogue / Narration                                                                 | Analysis                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | He invokes the third clause to end the game, but Sang-woo stabs himself and asks Gi-hun to use the prize money to help Sang-woo’s mother. | SGH chooses to end the game instead of killing his own best friend        |
| 2  | Gi-hun snaps out of his stupor and fulfills his promises: he gets Sae-byeoek’s brother out of the orphanage and gives Sang-woo’s mother his share of the prize money. | SGH fulfills his promises to his playmates.                                |
| 3  | Gi-hun is about to leave the country to reconnect with his daughter, but on the way sees someone playing ddakji with the same game recruiter who invited him. | SGH loves his daughter so much and wants to give his responsibility to her. |
| 4  | Gi-hun takes the man’s card and calls the number, now determined to find out who they are. | SGH is trying to find justice by finding out the truth about the game      |

Table 9 shows SGH’s behavior in episode IX. Start from number 1. It shows SGH’s need for the love of his childhood friend, which shows one of the life factor based on Thouless theory [15]. This behavior also shows SGH’s religiosity, which is included in the religious effect dimension because it is motivated by the teachings of the religion in his social life.

Next is number 2; SGH shows the need for self-esteem by fulfilling his promises to his childhood friends. Thus, it is included in one of the life factor based on Thouless theory [5]. Besides, according to Glock and Stark, SGH’s behavior shows the religious effect dimension [13] because it is motivated by the teachings of religion in his social life.

Then number 3, SGH shows the need for his daughter’s love and the need for self-esteem as a father. According to Glock and Stark, it shows two life factors based on Thouless theory [15] and religious effect dimension [13].

The last is number 4; SGH shows the need for safety and security by looking for justice. Therefore, it is included in the life factor based on Thouless theory. Then it also shows the Religious Effect Dimension according to Glock and Stark [13]. Therefore, the analysis from the episode I to IX shows the religious effect dimension based on Glock and Stark. Then, from the citation above, it is clear that SGH shows the need for love, safety, security, and self-esteem, which are included in the life factor according to Thouless theory [15]. Furthermore, this film shows us that SGH also needs to arise from the threat of death, which is also included in the life factor of Thouless theory because he has to survive in each level of the game he plays.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that Seong Gi Hun shows his good behavior towards others in all episodes. Seong Gi Hun acts well towards his daughter, mother, old man, woman, childhood friend, and playmates. Besides, he fulfills his promises after winning the game. Therefore, Seong Gi Hun’s religiosity is included in the religious effect dimension because it is motivated by the teachings of religion in his social life. Then based on Thouless, this religious dimension is affected by an internal factor. It is the life factor because SGH shows the need for love, safety, security, self-esteem, and arising from the threat of death.

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