

ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERIZATION IN “ITAEWON CLASS” KOREAN DRAMA

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ABSTRACT:

This research is aimed at analyzing the characterizations of the five main characters in “Itaewon Class” korean drama. The analysis of the characterization includes the appearance of the characters, the personality of the characters, the social status of the characters, and the social relationship of the characters. The object of this research is the four main characters, namely Park Sae Ro-Yi, Jo Yi-Seo, Oh Soo-Ah, and Jang Dae-Hee This research applied descriptive qualitative research design. Data collection process includes: (1) watching the “Itaewon Class” drama, (2) reading the story of “Itaewon Class” and (3) preparing theory regarding the character and characterization. The findings of this research are each character has different characters. Park Sae Ro-Yi is known as a high integrity, hard-working, responsible, care, and never gives up man. He is also known as a man who has a good attitude. Jo Yi-Seo is described as a girl who has some characters, such as sociopath, lack of empathy, smart and full of charm, discipline, and confident. Oh Soo-Ah grows up as a realistic, consistent, firm, hard-working, not easily to give up and disciplined woman. Jang Dae-Hee is well-known as a rough, wicked, hard-working, cunning, vengeful, and caring man.

Keywords: *Character, Characterization, Itaewon Class Korean Drama.*

INTRODUCTION

Drama is a literary work that aims to be showed to entertain people. According to Mariani (2019), there are some kinds of genres in drama, such as melodrama, horror, comedy, action-adventure, war, romance, history, musical and the genre of science-fiction. Basically, in literature, including drama there are some kinds of elements, such as character and characterization, plot, setting, moral value, and point of view. The first element in drama is character and characterization which is important elements in movie. Both elements are basic in drama because for some viewers the first thing that they are looking for is who the characters play in the drama. The visual of the play also becomes an important thing in a drama because this is one of the things that determine the best-selling of a drama due to the main thing

that the audience is searching for is who are the actors play in the movie (Suryati, 2017).

According to Abrams (2013), characters are some people who are shown in a narrative work or drama which the audiences interpret as having explicit moral and characteristics and propensities as communicated in discourse and what is done in real life. Characters are classified as major, minor, flat, and dynamic characters. The main focus in a drama is the principal character. The main character is a person who appears often more than other characters. Usually, the main character in a drama or movie is someone who is kind or the protagonist. Protagonist is the main or major character in a movie or drama. A protagonist is a figure that becomes the main focus of a movie or drama. Simply, the protagonist is the character whose life is highlighted the most. Protagonist is the

character who is always hurt by evil as known as antagonist character. The antagonist is someone who opposes the protagonist (Nugriyanto, 2013). To support both major and minor characters there are two other characters such as flat and dynamic characters. Dynamic character is also known as round character.

Round character is a character in a play that goes through changes and developments both in personality and social status. This advancement makes this character fascinating and ready to move the storyline. This character refers to the personal development of people in daily life. Usually in a drama this character is an antagonist, and at the end of a drama he turns into the opposite of his behavior when the drama started (Cahyaningrum, 2020). Flat character is a minor person in a work of fiction that does not go through significant shifts or development in the direction of a story. This character is not that important but is needed in a play (Artikelkami, 2017). Character is cannot stand by itself. There is no character without characterization.

According to Gill (2014:126), Characterization is the process where a character is made. Abcarian stresses the significance of characterization towards the characters. Abcarian (2000:6) state that characterization is expected since it makes the character appears to be alive to the viewer. Characterization is the depiction of the characters in the story (Syamsiyah, 2008:12). Characterization is the portraying of clear pictures of an individual. Jones (2002:84), states that characterization by this definition implies the genuine depiction of the characters participating in the story through their activities.

According to Abrams (2013), characterization should be possible by utilizing two different strategies. The first strategy is showing technique. Showing technique is that the writer simply presents the characters talking and acting, and then the writer allows an opportunity for the viewers to view the characters. However, in this strategy, the creator can likewise put the ideas and feelings of the character. The second strategy is telling technique. The telling technique is that the

creator depicts the characters as she or he sees them. The writer tells the viewers straight forward about how the character is and the writer frequently tells the reasons for what the character says and does. Nonetheless, the characterization should be possible in different ways.

According to Guerin (2006: 83), there are 4 different ways of characterization using different angles. The angles are: the physical appearance of the character, the social status of the character, the social relationship of the character, and the personality of the character. The first angle is the physical appearance of the characters. At this point, the creator can portray a character through his or her appearance or, his or her clothes so that the viewers can easily recognize the characters. The second angle is personality. At this point, there are three things that will show the personality of the character, such as speech, reaction, and thought. By utilizing these points, the creator allows the viewers to see the character in light of what the character says and how the response can show the image of the character through how the character responds to specific circumstances and events and the last one is thought. A person's character can be seen from the way of thinking about something. The third angle is the social status of the character. This point discusses about the background of the characters, such as education, their life in middle and high modern class. The last angle is the social relationships of the characters. This discusses the character's social relationship with his or her environment, whether it is a positive or negative relationship.

Second element in the movie is the plot. Plot is a structure of a series of events in a story that is arranged chronologically. Plot is a series of stories from the beginning to the end. The plot regulates how the activities and how the story must be connected to each other, for instance the way an occasion is connected with different occasions, then at that point, how the characters portrayed and played a role in the story are all connected with a solidarity of time (Wellek and Warren, 2014). People will be able to understand a movie by answering some questions, such as

who are the actors of the movie (Fardhany, 2020). This question refers to the characters in the drama. According to Nugriyanto (2013), the actors of the drama refer to the nature and mentally of the person, more to the personal qualities of a character. The characters can influence the story line regarding how the drama is playing and how the response of the audience.

In a drama there are three plots; flow forward, reverse plot, and mixed plot (Prayoga, 2015). Flow forward is a plot that occurs in the present and moves forward. This plot is generally used in a story that is easy to understand, such as a story for children. Even though this plot is easy, this plot is usually used in drama. The second is reverse plot. Reverse plot is a plot that tells about characters' in the past. This plot is commonly found in a drama that uses a time setting in the past. It is about the characters' lives in the past. The plots are always used together in drama to impress the audience and enjoy the drama while watching and also to avoid the audience's confusion. The last plot is mixed plot. Mixed plot is a plot which begins with the climax of the story. This plot is easy to use in making a story if the author understands how to set the plot of the story (Prayoga, 2015). Plot is an essential principle in the story (Scott, 2012). Based on the explanation about mixed plot, the plot used in Itaewon class drama is mixed plot.

This research focused on analyzing a drama from South Korea entitled Itaewon Class. The researchers choose this drama because it has positive values in each episode and it is also interesting to be enjoyed. This drama was published on January 31, 2020. Itaewon Class was adapted from webtoon and played by Park Seo-Joon, Kim Da-Mi, Yoo Jae-Myung, Kwon Nara and Ahn Bo-Hyun. This drama is about a boy named Park Sae Ro-Yi who works really hard to become a successful man. He is also a determined boy who is not compromised with injustice and corruption. Itaewon Class basically tells about the efforts of Park Sae Ro-Yi who takes revenge on the number one owner of a culinary business in South Korea. It can be called a drama about the business.

The conflicts that occur in this drama are also diverse, such as injustice, corruption and bullying. In this paper, the researcher only focuses on analyzing the main characters of the "Itaewon Class" drama because this drama is interesting as proven by its rating which is higher than other dramas in January to March 2020. This drama also taught how to run a business and also taught the audience to respect each other regardless of the person's background.

Second, this drama is really suited to be enjoyed because it has good messages and motivations. One of them is that someone has to keep going and fight to survive in this world full of evil and injustice. In real life, injustice and evil commonly happen to those people who are weak and poor. Park Sae Ro-Yi experienced it all but he was still holding on until he was finally able to bring down the Jangga Company. In this section, the researcher will provide some previous studies used by the researcher. The researcher uses the previous studies to study and compare her thesis and the researcher found the similar topic.

Several studies have been done to analyze the characterization of a character in a literary works, mostly in a movie (such as in Fardhany's (2016) and Sa'adah (2017)) and novel (in (Suryati (2017)) but limited studies were conducted to analyze the characterization in a Korean drama.

Fardhany's (2016) analyze the character and characterization in "Dangerous Minds" movie. The object of the research is Ex-Mariane Louanne Jhonson in "Dangerous movie" by John N. Smith. In this research, Fardhany used two theories such as personal traits theory by Costa and McCrae, and Maslow's motivation and personality theory. This movie is adapted from a true story. This movie tells us about a woman who is looking for a job as a teacher but unfortunately when she gets there the students dislike her by giving her nickname as "White Bread". In a few days of teaching, she found a way to make students more interested in learning by giving students an "A" grade for those who are able to answer her question. Fardhany's thesis used qualitative research. From the

analysis, the findings of this research, the researcher inferred that LouAnne Johnson as the main character had a trademark, for example, gifted, focused, certain, grateful, genuine and fair, supportive, practical, testy, profound, and critical. The specialist likewise reasoned that LouAnne Johnson was a hero, she had a straightforward/level figure portrayal and all the portrayal could be depicted through appearance, discourse, outside activity, inward activity, and responses of different characters. This research fortifies the most widely recognized kind of the main characters in the film that came in protagonist, basic and level one.

Sa'adah (2017) analyze the characterization of the main characters in "Gone Girl" movie by Gillian Flynn. The object of the writer's research is Nick Dunne as the main character of this movie. In this research, Sa'adah was used a theory from Guerin (2006: 83) which title "*Approach to Literature*". The researcher chose this movie because it is about the life of a psychopath, and this movie is also very interesting with a tense action genre. Psychopaths are very dangerous to everyone. The psychopath can kill someone that he does not even know. Psychopaths are not only dangerous but also more than a killer and also anti-social. Sa'adah used qualitative research in analyzing the movie. This drama is about the lives of a married couple whose wife disappeared suddenly, and she might be killed by a serial killer or also known as psychopath. Nick Dunne suspects his wife's sudden disappearance, and she might be killed by the person who stared at Nick Dunne when he was searching for his wife. The findings of this research is that Nick's physical appearance is, he was a male that good-looking, he was tall, fat man in age thirty years old. His personality shows that he is respect to people around him, but in the end it became useless. His social status is he was educated person. He has good relationship with people in his surroundings. Another character is Amy Elliot Dunne. Her physical appearance is a beautiful and gorgeous women, her body is thin. Her personality is unhumble with people around her. Her social

status is high educated person, she is from upper classes. She has not good relationship with people in her surroundings.

Suryati (2017) in the thesis entitled Analysis of the characterization of the main character in a "Million Dollar Dream" Novel by Albertheine Endah. The content of this novel is about Merry Riana. In Suryati's research, the researcher uses theory of (Bernado, 2008). Merry Riana is a girl who lives with million-dollar dreams. This novel is about a girl who works really hard and never gives up on fighting and pursuing dreams until success. In addition, Merry Riana is the number one motivator in Asia. This novel is about the journey of Merry Riana's life. Besides Merry Riana's story in achieving her goals, this novel also taught the readers how to have a positive mindset, why discipline and passion are needed at work, and from where the journey to achieve goals begin. The findings of this research are that Merry Riana is a girl who lives with million-dollar dreams. To get her dreams, she has very good characterization, such as patient, humble, care, faithful, discipline, hard-working, sad, and never give up.

The previous studies give enlightenment that the characterizations that have been analyzed by the previous researchers focus more on the description of the characteristics, and have not analyze the character related to its personality and social relationship. This research is aimed at filling that gap, that is to analyze the character and the characterization of the five main characters in "Itaewon Class" korean drama using Guerin (2006: 83) theory that describing the characterization into 4 different ways the physical appearance of the character, the social status of the character, the social relationship of the character, and the personality of the character.

RESEARCH METHODS

The design applied in this study is qualitative design. According to Moleong (in Lutgardiss, 2017), qualitative research is figuring out the characteristics of what subject experiences, for instance, behavior, inspiration,

motivation, and action. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods to describe the characters played in this drama. According to Nawawi (in Lutgardiss 2017:17), descriptive methods can be deciphered as a critical thinking system that is explored by describing or portraying the condition of the subject or object at present, considering clear reality such as a novel, sonnet, drama or movie, and a short story. The data source is the five main characters utterance and scenes in the movie in "Itaewon Class" Korean drama. The data were collected by documentation technique in which the researchers watching the drama, notifying the utterances and the scenes of the four main characters, classifying the findings based on the theory of Guerin (2006: 83), the collected the data into the corpuses. To gain the validity, the data corpus was consulted to the expert to meet the data triangulation technique.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researchers used the theory of Graham Guerin to analyze the characterization in "Itaewon Class" Korean drama, which was published on January 31, 2020. The drama has 16 episodes with one hour and more duration, and the researchers watched all the episodes and analyzed each main character. The major character is Park Sae Ro-Yi, and the minor characters are Jo Yi-So, Oh Soo Ah, and Jang Dae-Hae. Based on the theory, four problems needed to be analyzed, such as appearance, personality, social status, social relationship, and the personality of the characters.

1. Findings on the appearance of the characters

The kind of appearance of the character to describe the age, the shape of characters' physical, their gender, and the shape of their body, such as beautiful or handsome, tall or short, hair color, and skin color. In this research, there are five characters analyzed. They are:

1.1 Park Sae Ro-Yi

He is a mature man who always wears a polyester and boots. He is handsome, tall, nice, independent and very charming man.

He is shy and stiff, and not good at socializing. He has a unique habit of stroking his hair when he shy and confuse. His haircut short, straight, oval in shape and fair skin. He is thirty four years old.

2.1 Jo Yi-Seo

She is a genius young lady. She is tall, charming, her hair is shoulder-length short, with blonde hair underneath, her face is round, her eyes are sharp, has fair skin she is beautiful. She is about 21 years old.

3.1 Oh Soo-Ah

She is tall, has long hair and bangs, and has V face shape has fair skin. She is about 30 years old.

4.1 Jang Dae-Hee

He is short, old, gray, wrinkled, has big eye bags, round face, black skin, and he is about sixty years old. He likes to wear Korean traditional clothes, Hanbok, likes to wear dark color clothes.

2. Findings on the social status of the characters.

The social status is about the background of the characters in term of their education background, their life in lower, middle or high modern class. After watching the drama, the researcher has conclusion that Park Sae Ro-Yi is uneducated, he is a junior high school graduate, an ex-convict, an orphan, and his life is in middle class. Jo Yi-Seo is an educated senior high school graduate, a social media star with 760,000 followers on her personal blog, a famous influencer in Korea. Her life is high modern class. Oh Soo-Ah is an educated girl. She went to college with scholarship given by Jangga Company, works for a well-known company in Korea, Jangga Company. She lives and grows up at an orphanage. Her life is lower class. Jang Dae-Hee is an educated man. He is an owner of the number one pubs in Korea. His life is high modern class.

3. Findings on the social relationship of the characters.

In this section, the researcher present about the relationship between the characters. Basically, human can't live alone. Human beings need each other to having communication or to work together. Human cannot solve a problem alone. After watching and analyzing the drama, the researcher has a conclusion that Park Sae Ro-Yi has a good attitude, he likes to help others but he is not good at socializing that is why he has no friends in his school. He respects other people regardless his or her background. Jo Yi-Seo is unhumble girl, she only has one friend who always there whenever she needs someone to helps. Oh Soo-Ah has a good behavior and loved by everyone who knows her. She is good at socializing. Jang Dae-Hee is known as rough person, he is not good at social relationship with other people even his own sons.

4. Findings on the personality of the main characters.

1. Park Sae Ro-Yi

Park Sae Ro-Yi is described as someone who has some characteristics, such as: care, principle, responsible, hard-working, and never give up. He is also known as a man who has a good attitude. Picture 1 showed the personality of Park Sae Ro-Yi that is principle.



Picture 1. (00:59:35 – 01:00:06, episode 8)

Park Sae Ro-Yi : What I want is freedom. I want my words and acts to have power, so no one can mess me and my people. I don't want to be swayed by anyone or any injustice. I want to live a life where I make my own decision and I don't have to pay for my principle.

Park Sae Ro-Yi is depicted as a principle man, in this scene he spoke with his father's colleague and he was determined that he wanted what h said and what he did have power to keep bad people from harming his people. That he proved when he calmed down Hyun-yi who is a transgender when her true identity was exposed.

2. Jo Yi-Seo

Jo Yi-Seo is good at everything such as music, sport, drawing, and so on. A genius girl with an IQ of 162, she gets good grades. She's social media star with 760,000 followers and an influential blogger. Despite his angelic face, Jo Yi-Seo is a quite evil. She is a sociopath. In this drama, Jo Yi-Seo appears in third episode. Jo Yi-Seo is described as a girl who has some characters, such as sociopath, lack of empathy, smart and full of charm, discipline, and confident. Picture 2 showed the personality of Jo Yi-Seo that is sociopath.



Picture 2. (00:05:05 – 00:05:16, episode 3)

Jo Yi-Seo is described as a sociopath young girl. It can be seen in this scene. She slapped the mother of a bully in her class. The mother came to her and slapped her because she publishing the bullying her daughter was doing at school. As a result, his daughter was expelled from school and given negative comments by Korean people. Jo Yi-Seo slapped the woman back and recorded that woman slapping her. Regardless of age, Jo Yi-Seo really hates annoying humans like them and does not hesitate to slaps that woman.

3. Oh Soo-Ah

She is Park Sae Ro-Yi's school friend. She is an orphan and lives in Gwanjin orphanage. She grew up as a realistic, consistent, firm, hard-working, not easily to give up and disciplined woman. She is working in the Jangga Company. Picture 3 showed the personality of Oh Soo-Ah that is firm.



Picture 3. (00:20:10 – 00:20:37, episode 11)

Oh Soo – Ah: You're a mere employee, how dare you talk back to the chairman in front of your manager? Why are you so confident? because he's your father? I know what kind of relationship you had with Sae Ro – Yi but things are so done differently here. We are strictly vertically structured company, I don't care even if you are his son.

I don't need an incompetent employee on my team.

Oh Soo-Ah is described as a firm lady, she is indeed very firm in her works place. In this scene she scolds Jang Geun-Soo because he dares to say bad words to the chairman even though she knows that Jang Geun-Soo is Jang Dae-Hee's son. She wants Jang Geun-Soo to be able to adapt, when he is working there is no family term. Chairman is chairman, they must be respected.

4. Jang Dae-Hee

He is a single parent with 2 sons. He is very famous because he is an owner of the number one culinary business in Korea namely Jangga company. He is well-known as a rough, wicked, hard-working, cunning, vengeful, and caring man. However, Jang Dae-Hee is Park Sae Ro-Yi's role model. Picture 4 showed the personality of Jang Dae-Hee that is firm.



Picture 4. (00:07:57 – 00:08:05, episode 9)

He wanted Jo Yi-Seo join his company. He invited Jo Yi-Seo to have a dinner.

Jang Dae-Hee : I'm not good at beating around the bush, why don't you join Jangga? I'll treat you well.

Jang Dae-hee is described as a cunning man, it can be seen in this scene, he invites Jo Yi-Seo to have dinner with him. He praised Jo Yi-Seo's abilities,

finally conveyed his intention to invite Jo Yi-Seo to have dinner together. He wants to invite Jo Yi-Seo to work at Jangga. The researcher knows what he means, he invites the manager of DanBam to work together so that Park Sae Ro-Yi does not have a manager and can't open the pub anymore. That way, Jangga Company will remain victorious and become number one pub in Korea.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The researchers found that the four characters chosen are the most popular in the drama, Sae Ro-Yi, Yi-Seo, Soo-Ah, and Jang Dae-Hee. Park Sae Ro-Yi is willing to get expelled from school, almost goes bankrupt, and finally brings down Jangga Company. His goals are to become the number one pub in Korea and take a revenge to his father for his hit-and-run case. Jo Yi-Seo is a popular blogger in Korea known for her smarts, charm, confidence, discipline, and lack of empathy. She is an idol of Korean teenagers and can grow DanBam from a small pub to become the number one pub in Korea, but only one person knows she is a sociopath girl. Oh Soo-Ah is described as a firm, discipline, realistic, consistent, never give up, and hard-working girl. She is Sae Ro-Yi's best friend and works for the Jangga Company, but is never on the Dae-Hee's side. Jang Dae-Hee is an old businessman and owner of Jangga Company, with characters such as wicked, rough, vengeful, cunning, and caring. He is afraid of someone who will bring his company down and will destroy them.

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