

Redefining Orientalism Through “Squid Game”: Sentiment Analysis And Word Cloud R Studio

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to redefine Edward Said's definition of orientalism in the era of contemporary communication and information technology through the comments column for the film Squid Game on the IMDB (internet movie database) website. This paper argues that the Orientalist attitude of a dominant English-speaking country such as the United States emerged as a consequence of its white superior hegemony. In the midst of this orientalist attitude, today's communication and information technology has become a discursive channel for the world community to conduct ongoing discussions on films by Asians. By using the text in the comment column for the film Squid Game on IMDB.com as a case example, this article provides a discussion regarding the need to rethink the conceptual definition of orientalism today. This paper uses a digital research methodology with analysis tools using R Studio with two types of analysis, namely word cloud and sentiment analysis. By utilizing the programming language functions available in R Studio, this paper mines text from the IMDB.com comments column for the film Squid Game. This article contains results obtained from digital research methods, namely the Squid Game comments column focuses on characters, plot, acting and story. Meanwhile, sentiment analysis shows the dominance of positive sentiment and some negative sentiment. Therefore, this article argues that the battle between negative and positive sentiments in the Squid Game comments column is a means of resetting the negative stigma towards Asian films and eroding the orientalist attitudes that the West oppresses towards "the East."

Keywords: Squid Game; orientalism; movies; R Studio; IMDB

INTRODUCTION

Films are not only entertainment products, but they act as a tool for diplomacy, political power, and cultural representation of a group or country. Therefore, several cases of refusal to show films in a country stem from the values and ideological background contained in films produced by a country. For example, socialist countries such as Vietnam, Cuba and China reject films that contain liberal economic themes. (Pan et al., 2023) These socialist

countries took precautions so that the ideology they considered contrary to their socialist-communist ideology remained strong from economic-liberal popular attacks. Films play a role as cultural products that cannot simply be imported into a cultural territory.

The film deals with racism. In recent decades, the United States has been the mecca of world cinema. On the other hand, Europe also has a history of audio-visual technology and moving image production. Meanwhile, Asia and Africa are the new film producers. This condition created—in a few decades—a film industry in the world. Where, the United States is seen as the center and other countries as followers. According to Ting-Toomey (Griffin et al., 2019), a multicultural United States with a history of white supremacy (Eriksen, 2010) This has led to a national-centric concept of identity. A concept that assumes that Americanism is dominant. Therefore, according to Ting-Toomey, the individualistic nature of Americans causes a tendency to be indifferent to other cultures. Along with the migration of people of color over time, the United States became a channel for white supremacist contestation with other people of color, such as African Americans and Asian migrants. Even though it has a melting-pot concept (Calhoun, 2007; Eriksen, 2010; Smith, 2012), racism is a central issue in the past decades for the social formation of United States society until today. (Gail, 2010)

The awards night is an implicit testament to the racism that exists in the United States. Before 2013, no black person had won an Academy Award (or better known as an Oscar) film award. The wave of racial "equality" began to be seen as being "worked for" after Barack Obama became the first black President of the United States in 2009. However, the Oscars, as a popular and reputable film awards event, are still considered racist because they only "occasionally" give awards to actors/actresses. non-white. According to the BBC, Hattie McDaniel (a black actor) when she won an Oscar was placed on a separate table. In addition, only five Latinos have ever received Oscar nominations, one Asian (Miyoshi Umeki in 1957), and one Muslim Arab. (Rami Malek in 2018) Therefore, Oscar often receives a wave of protests from activism on the website. In 2018, people of color protested the Oscars with the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite. According to Latif, the #OscarsSoWhite movement has had a real impact. From 2016 onwards, the Academy provided space for filmmakers of color and

women, for example female membership increased from 1,446 to 3,179 and membership of color increased from 554 to 1,787. (Latif, 2021)

Parasite won several Oscar nominations in 2020. The Asian film with the "non-English-language" typology won the "Best Pictures" category, one of the six awards Parasite received. "Best Picture" is one of the most prestigious categories at the Oscars film awards. However, negative sentiment surrounds it. Indeed, the world appreciates Parasite's monumental work, but issues of discrimination against this film have emerged in Europe and the United States. In fact, the President of the United States stated that "how bad the Academy awards were this year... and the winner was a film from South Korea". (Cillizza, 2020) For example, people in the United States are not used to reading telop, so they did not consider the film Parasite worthy of winning because it was difficult to watch. This shows cultural centrism and orientalism (Said, 2003) in the logic of white people in the United States in seeing people of color outside of white hegemony.

Hollywood dominated the world film market until 1980. After that, the wave of South Korean culture and its popular culture products in the form of films competed in the global film market. According to Kim, this condition forced Hollywood, which is dominated by the Anglophone-European race, to be exposed to the wave of South Korean culture. This condition means that South Korean culture, which is manifested in its films, is spread throughout the world, including the United States. Bong Joon-Ho (Director of the Film Parasite) satirized Hollywood in his victory speech for the film Parasite in 2020, "when you get out... from the telop problem, you will get to know various spectacular films". (Kim, 2022) Joon-Ho's statement emphasized that the film curation at the Oscars was not comprehensive, but partial. From this statement, Joon-Ho emphasized the importance of globalization for films with a basis other than English.

According to Kim's (2022) study, telopes become a barrier between verbal and nonverbal meaning in films. Telop is a factor that subconsciously influences the subjectivity of film curators from different cultural backgrounds. For example, South Korean language telop will limit the ability of Anglophone-European audiences to capture the verbal and non-verbal meaning contained in the film as a whole. The previous factors create unfair competition for films in languages that are not Anglophone-European in the awarding event

for films domiciled in areas dominated by the Anglophone-European race. Therefore, Joon-Ho mentioned the importance of globalizing films that are not in English so that film curators can explore the variety of quality films available in various cultures in the world. Apart from that, telop should not be a barrier.

Films that don't speak English do have minimal places at the Oscars, but this condition shows that it's not just telop that is an obstacle to competition for non-English language films at the Oscars. This article argues that racism is a determining factor in the lack of non-English language films at the Oscars. Racism arises from an attitude of centrism that arises from the supremacy of the dominant cultural group—in this case whites—which gives rise to an excessive sense of pride in one's own culture and views cultures outside it as immoral, pagan, and exotic. Said (Said, 2003) said that Western culture has become accustomed to living in superiority. This attitude arises because of the history of occupation (colonization) by white people who are associated with Western people. Colonization has caused technological, social and cultural disparities in colonized lands which over time created cultural strata agreed upon by two parties, namely the West (colonizer) and the "East" (colonized). "Far East" is the terminology the West uses to define its colonies in Africa and Asia. Colonizers position themselves as owners of a high cultural strata, which at the same time being colonized justifies that label. The colonizer saw the colonized as immoral, pagan, and exotic, so the colonizer felt he had a moral responsibility to "civilize" the colonized but by standardizing them.

The stereotypes given by colonizers to colonized culture have been embedded and created the principles of orientalism within the body of colonized culture. Orientalism is an "oriental" attitude that justifies the label of backwardness of Eastern culture (Asia and Africa) from Western culture (Europe and the United States). Orientalism—for Asians—has created an inferiority complex, namely an attitude that will always view that whatever is produced by the East will always be below what the West produces in various aspects of life.

The South Korean wave became a contest over the superiority of American films. At the same time, the development of information and communication technology has created an open space for everyone (not just the West) to participate in assessing film works. As an example of technological and information developments that this paper proposes are film

rating and rating websites such as IMDB.com and Rotten-Tomatoes. IMDB and Rotten-Tomatoes are a consequence of the era of open information that the internet facilitates, so that the involvement of audiences as active consumers increases (Buckingham, 2008; Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Saha, 2015). Audiences can provide comments, suggestions and views. This era of openness cannot occur if there is no information and communication technology that the internet facilitates. This paper argues that ranking websites are channels of openness that bring about “discourse battles.” In other words, discourse is not only controlled by the West and the United States but also by audiences living in the information society. This condition can create equality for Asian, Arabic, Indian and African film works through discourse facilitated through the IMDB and Rotten-Tomatoes websites which can be accessed by information age audiences from various regions and cultural backgrounds.

In 2021, a South Korean film series entitled “Squid Game” appeared. This film is the most successful film series that Netflix has ever made. It cannot be denied that, as a ranking website, IMDB.com took part in assessing it. As a company, IMDB has rated more than 530 million films, ranging from series, shorts, to podcasts. (IMDB, 2023) Currently, the company that owns IMDB is Amazon which is owned by American tycoon Jeff Bezos. IMDB provides an anonymous space for every member registered on its website to provide comments and ratings on the films they have watched. This rating will become a database for IMDB to rate a film.

This article attempts to understand how the discourse of Asian films is contested via the IMDB website through analysis³⁶ sentiment. By taking the case of the South Korean film "Squid Game," this article seeks to understand³⁶ sentiment towards the film through comments listed openly on IMDB. This paper has limitations due to two things. First, the cultural background cannot be interpreted interpretively based on the embedded comments. Second, commenters may modify their avatar, gender, and nationality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This paper uses the postpositivism paradigm (Gibbs, G, 2007; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) by taking the assumption that there is a cultural background in every human action. This

paper uses two data analysis techniques, namely digital analysis which the researcher carried out via R Studio. Meanwhile, researchers used literature studies to carry out analyzes related to discussions regarding the concept of orientalism.

This paper analyzes sentiment through comments on the IMDB website (<https://www.imdb.com/>). This article obtained comments on the film Squid Game via the dataset (data collection) which this article obtained via the Kaggle.com website. (<https://www.kaggle.com/>) Kaggle.com presents files (digital files) in CSV format. (comma separated values) for free, so that companies, consortiums or researchers can extract data from websites starting from comments, reviews and other digital texts. This article requires a CSV file. to simplify the analysis that this article will carry out later via the R studio application.

R Studio is a tool that facilitates programming languages. R Studio can help this article to produce an overview in the form of a graphic, plot, or word cloud. (Kosourova, 2022) R Studio is a programming language application that is not as popular as Python, but several communication and media scientists have recently used R Studio as a data analysis tool. For example, ALİKILIÇ & ALİKILIÇ's study reads agenda-setting; Jaichandran studies reading sentiments on the film "Kabali;" study of Sreeja et al. Analyzes Tweet Demonetization of Airline Companies in India. (ALİKILIÇ & ALİKILIÇ, 2020; Jaichandran et al., 2019; Sreeja et al., 2020)

To do its work, R studio needs raw files that it can read. This article presents a CSV file. obtained from Kaggle.com regarding comments from the film Squid Game in the period October 2021-October 2022 for R Studio analysis. R Studio does not work automatically, so researchers play an important role in cleaning raw data and typos that still exist in CSV files. beginning. Researchers cleaned the data by replacing typos, symbols, emoticons and slang that could not be read as negative or positive sentiment.

Through R Studio, this paper will produce two data visualizations that will be presented, namely, sentiment analysis and word cloud. These two analysis models will help understand the sentiments that arise towards the Squid Game film through the comments they provide via the IMDB.com website. Meanwhile, through literature study, this article will produce a discussion regarding Edward Said's concept of Orientalism.

The analysis process through R Studio goes through three processing stages for each analysis which include pre-processing, process and analysis. So there are six stages that researchers carry out for all two types of analysis models. csv file. of comments on the film Squid Game has 1185 observation files with six columns which include number, name of the commenter (user name), title of the comment (review title), assessment of the comment (review rating), date of the comment (review date), and fill in the comments (review body) (Figure 1). Figure 1 shows two rows of an example dataset, but essentially there are 1,185 more rows.



	User_name	Review title	Review Rating	Review date	Review body
1	Jackyng direct	A non TV classic	20/10	5 October 2021	Just finished up SQUID GAME, the Korean TV show tha...
2	Twinklans	Games to die for	20/10	10 October 2021	Well multiple games actually, but even that you may fi...

Figure 1. Dataset of Comments on the Film "Squid Game"

The comment body column (review body) is key in the analysis because that is where the sentiment of the commenter (user name) will be seen. Researchers cleaned the raw data by removing html (hypertext markup language), emoji, and stripes using the function available in R Studio, namely, "replace_emoji"; "replace_html"; "replace_strip." After the researcher deemed the content of the comment clean, the researcher added a column next to the content of the comment with the column title "sentiment words." In other words, the researcher re-extracted every comment made by each commenter. So, every commenter will be presented with dozens of additional lines below it. This happens because each commenter will be covered by the specific words he wrote. Thus, the observations increase to 67,000 rows. Next, the researcher removed stop words using the "en" function, source = "stopwords-iso". This function needs to be used so that the composed sentence can be easily read as a sentiment because the commas, quotation marks and periods are missing. The final stage to produce word clouds, researchers used "wordcloud2."

To produce sentiment analysis, researchers utilize data in the "sentiment word" column which is clean thanks to the library function which consists of "library(tidyverse); library(readr); library(stopwords); library(topicmodels); library(tidytext); library(textdata). To get sentiment, researchers use the function "get_sentiments(loughran)." Loughran's

function is important because it will act as a dictionary that can classify negative, positive and neutral sentiments (constraining, litigious, uncertain and superfluous). By using the "inner_join" function the "sentiment word" column can be visualized into a diagram with the "ggplot" function.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Squid Game film is a drama-themed film survival (survival effort). This film tells the story of the struggles of people with economic difficulties in South Korea who are trying to win a cash prize of 45.6 billion Won. Where, as many as 456 people were involved in this game. Each participant is involved in a typical South Korean children's game, but with bad rewards when they lose the game. By carrying the idea of resistance against the rich and economic disparities in South Korea, this film is very interesting to watch.



Figure 2. Squid Game Movie Poster

Source: Netflix.com

The Squid Game film is a series of films produced by Siren-Pictures in South Korea on September 17 2021. This film features the roles of Lee Jung-Jae, Park Hae-Soo, Wi Ha Joon, HoYeon Jung, and O Yeong-Su. Hwang Dong-Hyuk wrote and directed this film. With the help of the Netflix network, this film gained global market share centered in the United States and South Korea. In the opening week, the film Squid Game received approximately 1.7 million hours of viewing, which also places it as the most watched film on Netflix.

The film Squid Game has gone global so that it can reach audiences from various cultural backgrounds, including communities in English-speaking countries in the United States. Several film criticism websites participated in providing ratings for the film Squid Game, such as IMDB and Rotten-Tomatoes. Apart from presenting assessments, the two websites also openly provide a column for their members to provide comments. In terms of ratings, the Squid Game film received good results on the IMDB and Rotten-Tomatoes websites. Where, IMDB gives a score of 8/10 while Rotten-Tomatoes gives a score of 95/100. However, this article aims to understand the sentiment regarding comments on the Squid Game film on the IMDB website which are not fully captured through numbers.

From 1,185 comments, Figure 3 shows that the words that frequently appear are character, acting, and story. The three dominant words appear together with other dominant words such as people, episode and plot. Based on this word cloud, it can be seen that 1,185 commenters often review the characters, acting and story in the Squid Game film. However, as a limitation, this word cloud is not able to explain the sentiment contained in the dominant words that emerge from the reviewers' comments.



By using sentiment analysis, this article is able to capture the sentiments of commenters on the Squid Game film. Figure 4 shows the sentiments that appear in the comments on the Squid Game film on IMDB.com. Loughran's dictionary maps six classifications of sentiment where negative sentiment includes the words bad, poor, violent/violent, worst, annoying, slow, and problem. Meanwhile, positive words include good, great, best, better, enjoy/enjoyed, perfect. Meanwhile, this paper values constraining, litigious, superfluous and uncertainty tokens as neutral sentiment. Based on visualization facilitated through the plot function, this paper sees that sentiment with positive tokens is more dominant than sentiment with negative and neutral tokens.

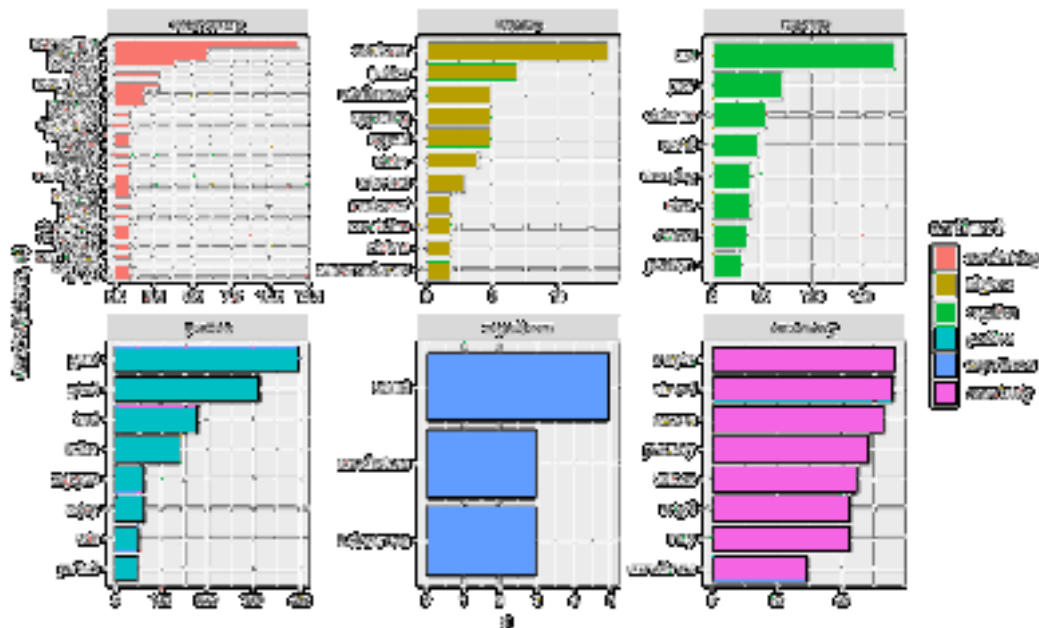


Figure 4. Sentiment of the Film "Squid Game"

Source: Researcher Document 2023

There were 430 negative sentiments from the words bad, poor, violent/violent, worst, annoying, slow, and problem. Meanwhile, positive sentiment totaled 1,200 words which included the words good, great, best, better, enjoy/enjoyed, perfect. However, the words poor and bad can have ambiguous meanings that do not lead directly to a negative assessment of the film. Therefore, this article looks at the dominant positive side of comments on the film "Squid Game."

Discussion

This article argues that the comments column on the Squid Game film shows the dominance of positive sentiment which shows an appreciative attitude. However, there is negative sentiment showing a depreciating attitude towards the South Korean-produced film Squid Game by commentators from English-speaking countries. This article argues that the emergence of the South Korean wave led to the popularity of film products throughout the world. Therefore, South Korean arts and culture are contesting the tastes of society, including those in English and "Western" speaking countries. The existence of South Korean films continues to provide comparisons with films at the national level in Western countries.

Infrastructure, audio-visual technology and film knowledge are increasingly accessible and open, meaning that technical mastery of film can no longer be simplified only by Hollywood in the United States. However, that control can be held by anyone including producers and technology in Asia.

In the last two decades, South Korea has proven that it has technical quality in creating products—to borrow Adorno's term (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2007)—cultural industry. In recent times, South Korean popular culture has colonized people's screens and daily lives, from music, food and films throughout the world, including Western countries. This will have two impacts, countries in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand will see South Korea's popular culture as a source of pride because of their collective awareness as part of the same regional region, namely Asia. However, the reception of members of each culture is not necessarily the same. Negative sentiments towards groups "who are not us" are often seen in racist language and expressions in English-speaking countries in the West such as the United States. With their background, nationalcentrism and feelings of being a superior community make them feel that no one can produce films as good as the ones they make. No matter how good the films South Korea makes, the United States' prejudices and stereotypes against films other than their own are getting worse. As a result, quality South Korean films will still receive a negative response from English-speaking countries in the West such as the United States.

We can start to reflect that perhaps the big names who give film awards like the Oscars have many racially based interests. Thus, the curation and nomination selection process tends to ignore cultural diversity factors. This article agrees with Joon-Ho's argument that telopes are a major obstacle for people in the United States and most English-speaking countries, because they see telops as a barrier to "engrossment" in watching films. This paper argues that this behavior arises because superior traits are carried over into an attitude of judgment. Therefore, the Oscars nomination event is an arena for the reproduction of the culture of racism among white people in the United States. The awards recently received by Asians, Arabs and other people of color at the Oscars are temporary gestures that serve to dampen public concerns about racism at the Oscars in particular and American culture in general.

The existence of the Rotten-Tomatoes and IMDB.com websites which provide assessments of various films in the world seems to be a discursive space to challenge the idea that Asian films cannot be better than films from the United States. This article shows that—despite the predominantly positive sentiment—there is still a significant amount of depreciation from English-speaking countries towards films made in Asia, the film *Squid Game* in the case of this film.

This article sees that Said's concept of "orientalism" is being contested by the latest communication technology. This argument arises because the latest audio-visual technology makes it possible for anyone who can afford it to have one. Apart from that, the openness of film knowledge starting from writing and production techniques in various parts of the world has made competition in film making more even. The emergence of Film Universities run by Asians who previously studied in the West has enabled the adoption of knowledge by Asian filmmakers. This open space has enabled various film producers in the world, including Asia and South Korea, to be able to develop film techniques that are as advanced as Hollywood.

The space for film distribution via the internet is fragmented and no longer recognizes territory and national boundaries (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021) causing everyone in the world to be able to provide an open assessment of the films they watch more objectively. This challenges the ideas of racism and nationalcentrism that have long been associated with the culture of English-speaking countries such as the United States. Therefore, Said's orientalism—at least in this article—needs to be rethought considering the high appreciation of non-Western films through criticism channels on the IMDB.com and Rotten-Tomatoes websites. This article argues that the discourse contestation on IMDB regarding the film *Squid Game* gives it a good image. So, Orientalism does not always show Western pressure on the East but can be the other way around

CONCLUSION

Edward Said's concept of Orientalism is being contested today. Through artistic analysis, word clouds, and literature studies, this paper argues that the emergence of the IMDB ranking website has opened channels for discourse debate from audiences from various regional and cultural backgrounds. The discourse battle on the IMDB website

through comments on the Squid Game film shows the dominance of positive sentiments and quite a few negative sentiments. For this reason, orientalism which shows the control of the west over the east is being contested by the presence of the IMDB website with its members' active commenting behavior to show that many films and cultural industry works in Asia are of good quality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article would like to thank the Sadasa Academy for being a mentor in using the R Studio programming language application. Apart from that, this article would like to thank the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Bhayangkara University, Jakarta Raya, which supports this article. Hopefully this article will be useful for communication scholarship and scholars who are interested in discussing media and communication studies with a cultural studies background.

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