



Character Image Analysis of Elite Male Cho Sang-Woo in *Squid Game* of Netflix

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Abstract. *Squid Game* is a thriller and suspense television series produced by Netflix that premiered on September 17, 2021. Netflix was founded in 1997 as a subscription streaming platform. With an intense plot and outstanding performances, the *Squid Game* has been widely praised by audiences around the world. The audience cannot pay attention to the role itself but pay too much attention to the development of the plot, resulting in the audience only leaving a one-sided impression, rather than a deep connotation. In addition, the characters can let the audience find their characteristics and shadows, better interact with the characters, in-depth story. Cho Sang-woo, the character in the drama, is controversial among many viewers. Through research, Cho Sang-woo's character image is an egoist, who takes egoism as the core of all activities. The mercenary social environment is a social enterprise of refined self-interest. In the face of such egoists, we should abide by the spirit of the contract. Only by paying less attention to interests, understanding mutual benefit, and respecting and caring for each other's interests can we maintain a long-term relationship.

Keywords: *Squid Game* · Netflix · Egoist

1 Introduction

A US online streaming service provider, affectionately known as “Netflix” and “Netfix” by US TV fans in China, has quietly emerged to attack the advantages of traditional TV platforms with high-end homemade US dramas and breakthrough scheduling. Netflix is an American company founded in 1997 and headquartered in Los Gatto, California. It has offered a subscription service since 1999 and in 2009 offered more than 10 million MOVIES on DVD. Users can watch movies and TV shows on their PC, TV, iPad, iPhone, and connect their TV to Wii, Xbox360, PS3, and other devices. Netflix has been rated the most satisfying website by customers five times. Netflix has a strong competitive advantage in streaming services that have a more unique audience than Comcast's cable subscription. In the US, Netflix can claim to have the largest subscriber audience as a content viewing platform. On February 25, 2007, Netflix announced that 1 billion DVDs had been sold. In 2010, Netflix began expanding outside the United States, starting with a TV and streaming service in Canada and building in Latin America and Europe. That same year, Netflix officially launched on the AppStore to facilitate Netflix's TV followers

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and expand its market and presence in the streaming industry. According to Bloomberg, IHS has shown that Netflix surpassed Apple in online movie revenue in 2011. Netflix's "House of Cards" became a global hit in 2013, followed by "Hemlock Grove" and "Orange Is the New Black." It has become a phenomenon that many TV series maintain high quality. By 2014, Netflix had successfully launched services in more than a dozen European countries, including the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, and other countries. According to Netflix's annual report released in early 2015, the company has more than 57 million subscribers in nearly 50 countries [1]. Netflix's success is global, and its widespread acceptance has allowed it to reach into other countries and cultures and achieve widespread acceptance. Netflix is moving into movies as well as TV shows. Netflix has received a lot of criticism for premiering movies on Netflix instead of being released in theaters.

The storyline of *Squid Game* is not complicated. Driven to the brink by huge debts, 456 players stake their lives in a prizefight based on a childhood game. 456 people were corralled on a deserted island. Here, killing is unfettered, morality is shackled. Cameras as far as the eye can see. The interior is part prison, part children's playground. The outdoor space is surrounded by fake panels of colorful graffiti, and only a small square of sky overhead is real. Players compete against each other in a mix of innocence and violence until the last one survives and wins, taking home 45.6 billion won (45.6 million U.S. dollars) in prize money. In *Squid Game*, Cho Sang-woo, an elite who graduated from Seoul National University, is a victim of this gap. Born in a family with no background, he entered the coveted "SKY University" through his own efforts and worked for a large company after graduation. It was already a success story, but he was eager to climb even higher. Smart Cho Sang-woo embezzled public funds to invest in futures, a result of bet failure, and fell into the debt abyss [2]. The original script for *Squid Game* was written in 2008. That year, South Korea was hit hard by the financial crisis, which made life difficult for many people. Since then, the creators have revised the script several times to make it more complete and closer to reality. The broadcast version even had elements of the epidemic. The show's original conception, it is like the Japanese movie "battle royale", the use of games and violence, to achieve the purpose of entertainment, eventually became a masterpiece of realism: the audience found that everyone can become not only the play of that tragic edge, even in those people, found his own shadow. Hwang Dong-hyeok, director and screenwriter of *Squid Game*, interpreted the series as a "contemporary story of capitalism" that "fights to stay alive." South Korean society does have extraordinary cruelty, the problem of Chinese parents' children's tutoring, has long been a big problem in South Korea; The sense of crisis and competition brought by the "island geography" has filled Korean society with an additional sense of tension [3].

While many critics have studied the other characters in the series, no one has studied Cho's personality analysis in the *Squid Game*. Because the audience's attention is more focused on the plot, fewer observers can discover the meaning of each character. Therefore, it is necessary to show that behind every character, there is a part of universality. Everyone can identify with the character. To sum up, this paper studies the character image analysis of Cho Sang-woo in the *Squid Game*.

2 Literature Review

There are a lot of movies and TV shows that have this kind of personality – egoism, for example, in the Chinese TV series *Hidden Corner*, where Zhu Yongping’s character is clearly and profoundly analyzed – a subtle egoism. After cheating on his wife, he abandons his son and sets up a home with his mistress, who has a lovely daughter. Originally a happy family, but after the death of his daughter Zhu Jingjing, nature is changing, in order to teach her son to lie, he shows the children know, trips with a tape recorder, found the children lying, finally, thinks daughter’s death and son, is their own selfish and selfish education of the essence of the problem. It is also a symbol of egoism that destroys not only itself but the children of the next generation [4].

Exquisite egoism is actually the derivation of utilitarian ethic theory in capitalist society and has its historical origin. For example, Bentham, the founder of utilitarian political thought, clearly put forward that “personal interest is the only realistic interest” and expressed a distinct critical position on the spirit of self-sacrifice. Bentham also regarded social interests as the sum of individual interests, leading to the absurd inference that “the parts are the whole”, which Engels strongly criticized. In the social context at that time, utilitarianism served the interests of the British bourgeoisie. According to Bentham, the principle of utilitarianism should not consider motives, no matter whether they are moral or not, but results, that is, whether they can bring the maximum benefits to people. In other words, the utilitarian results of the bourgeoisie naturally become the criterion of utilitarian morality, and every profit-seeking capitalist can swagger around under the guise of “morality”. Therefore, Bentham’s utilitarianism seems to be an example of harmonizing individual interests with social interests, but in fact, it is the beautification of maintaining individual interests, namely the interpretation of “exquisite egoism” with the ultimate goal of returning to individual original positions and realizing individual interests. Refined egoism is actually the product of capitalist society, and its wanton development will intensify polarization. If it is invisible in the socialist society, in the long run, the expansion of exquisite egoist groups will certainly bring a negative impact on the socialist common prosperity [5].

In modern film and television works and other works of art, the interpretation of the character, inner monologue, to promote the development of the plot, has become an indispensable characterization process. After deducing many internal and external visualization features of the characters, the characters’ personalities are gradually analyzed and presented to the audience, to depict the characters’ image, temperament, and connotation in the script. Notice is artistic image outline past period, flashy show not humanity, but too to the characters of external features such as occupation, age, identity, so for the characterization of the deep reflection is not found in time and sublimation, the external character image design through sensory experience for the audience, but not at the inner image of characters, In fact, the lack of deep skills of inner character-shaping is undoubtedly a kind of deficiency and regret character image design. Therefore, the successful shaping of film and television character image is not only based on the actor’s personal ability of role-playing, but also on the design of his external image and inner image. From the perspective of both internal and external repair, it puts forward more in-depth requirements for the characterization of character. After analysis of the actor’s social role, so need to meet the needs of the plot, script Settings, form condition, actor

trait, and a series of internal and external factors, the character image shows an acting role model, there can really create a “blood” “meat” the character image, to provide a more refined microstructure characterization to control [6].

3 Results and Discussion

Cho Sang-woo is characterized by egoism. Egoism refers to the idea that people only care about their own interests and ignore the interests of others and the group. Egoism refers to the attitude of life and behavior that regards egoism as human nature and personal interests above all else. It is characterized by an unscrupulous pursuit of fame, status, and enjoyment for extremely selfish personal ends. The pursuit of personal fame and fortune has always been the aim of all egoists [7]. In South Korea, there is a famous TV series called *The Squid Game* recently. The thriller tells the story of hundreds of troubled people who take part in six games of flying to their death, earning a prize of 45.6 billion yuan [8]. Cho Sang-woo is one of the characters. He once made a mess of his proud life, much like the debt-ridden people in the game. He would use his clients' money to speculate in futures. “You can't lose the game” Cho Sang-woo's goals and his behavior confirm this. [9] Cho Sang-woo's human design is the most three-dimensional and also the most complex design reflecting human nature.

First, Cho Sang-woo is a very smart person, even in the game to see the old hair, in addition to curiosity, More or worship has always been, Cho Sang-woo this kind of smart people's children, want to hide one thing, must be too simple. Even though she was deeply in debt, she lied about how busy she was working abroad and even sent expensive gifts home. Second, he meets his childhood friend Cheng Qixun in the game, which makes him very embarrassed because he thinks he has moved on from his past and joins the same game for different reasons than he and his childhood friend. Especially the junior partners are always bragging about themselves to outsiders. You can see that his self-esteem is very high. Third, he guessed the match before the second match but didn't tell his childhood friend Cheng because he knew his childhood friend very well. Cheng can't keep secrets. He'll tell the rest of the team. If there are not enough boxes, it will affect you. He was worried, so he didn't share it. He may have hesitated, but it wasn't his life. Fourthly, Cho Sang-woo betrayed Ali for his own life. In his first game, he saved Jin Ji-hoon, and he saw Ali's kindness. It's not like he did not lend Ali money to get back into the game. He gives Ali his food so that Ali can save him in the race. In this game of two, he does what he can to stay alive. The moment he was not sentenced to death, the evil of human nature began to show. In the sugar-cake game, he didn't remind the hero to let him live or die, and in the pinball game, he didn't hesitate to deceive a trusting friend by pushing the person in front of him onto the glass trestle. But in the face of death, every man for himself, and the devil takes the hindmost [10].

Part of what makes this refined egoist so noble is a lack of confidence. Refined egoists seem to be “careful”. Their strategy is “to be on both sides of the coin,” their goal is “self-actualization,” and their policy is “short-term rewards.” This is called refinement. Refined egoists are so selfish that they care nothing but their selfish egoism. On the other hand, there is a disconnect between knowledge and action. When their own interests are not involved, they are almost always clear and serious. Talk about corruption with

hatred; People are always indignant at injustice. When the temptation of reputation or opportunity comes, some people who have just been strictly righteous will secretly turn around and reveal their true colors. For example, they satirize unhealthy trends and are busy looking for connections while running their own affairs. Hate “unspoken rules”, but want to be the beneficiary of “unspoken rules” etc. At this point, refined egoism is no longer black humor, but a fact of life [11].

Once such a person has gained power and social status, he will be far more powerful than the ordinary “black sheep.” For example, in 2017, a Chinese student studying at the University of Maryland delivered a commencement speech as a student representative. Instead of thanking her motherland, parents, and teachers, she pointed out that, as a native of Kunming, she had to wear five masks every day to leave the house. It was not until she came to America, the land of democracy and freedom, that she could enjoy such fresh air. When they go abroad, they abandon their “national ideology”, talk about the benefits of the United States, flatter American students and professors, and expect them to bring better development for them in the future. This is true in schools where members and spirits are purer, but in society “refined egoists” certainly do more harm to the state [12].

The solution to egoism is to abide by the spirit of the contract. The two sides find the meeting point of working interests, take a step back for each other, meet the marginal interests of all parties, establish a good cooperation model for them, develop fair and just processing rules, dispute settlement mechanism, and maintain a good relationship, more practical. Also, egoists should improve their public moral awareness and have the courage to shoulder social responsibilities. Only when human beings have a certain sense of public morality, they will examine whether their daily behavior damages the interests of the society, the country, and the collective, and pay attention to the protection of social public interests. Strengthen the sense of social responsibility, the courage to speak out for some of the injustice in the society, willing to seek welfare for the socially vulnerable groups, willing to contribute to the social progress of their negligible contribution, which can effectively resolve the delicate egoism.

4 Conclusion

The topic of this article is Cho Sang-woo’s personality in Netflix *Squid Game*. He was a subtle egoist. Because he betrayed his partner; Killed a teammate; Kept the game secret from childhood friends. He put his life before everything else and eventually committed suicide. This characteristic implies that the pursuit of fame, status, and enjoyment, by all means, is driven by deeply selfish personal ends. The pursuit of personal fame and fortune has always been the aim of all egoists.

Everyone’s time on earth is limited, and it’s sad to spend your short life fighting for unlimited resources. A man who has no real friends and only real interests in his eyes will never be happy. We need to curb the power of such shrewd egoists, whose power is far more harmful than that of corrupt officials. We must be honest in our lives, but we must be careful not to be exploited by refined egoists and lose our integrity and goodness.

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