

REPRESENTATION OF JULES WINFIELD'S RELIGIOSITY

IN THE *PULP FICTION*

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirement for Gaining the
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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writer's opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted and cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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REPRESENTATION OF JULES WINFIELD'S RELIGIOSITY IN THE PULP FICTION

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Abstract

The *Pulp Fiction* tells about a hitman named Jules Winfield who shows a religiosity side in a criminal and violence environment. Thus, the researcher decides to observe the representation of religiosity by concerning in two contrary elements; religiosity and criminality to understand the representation of Jules's religiosity. Furthermore, to answer the problem statement, the researcher uses the theory of representation with constructionist approach by Stuart Hall. In addition, the researcher uses qualitative descriptive as the research method. The method involves representation theory to analyze the data. In analyzing the data, the researcher divides the analysis into three categories; Jules's Bible quotation, Jules's Divine intervention, and Jules as the problem solver. Using the methods, the researcher found two constructed meanings behind the representation of Jules's religiosity; transformation of Jules Winfield's religiosity, and pious man. Finally, the researcher makes a conclusion of the analysis as the answer of the research question. The representation of Jules Winfield's religiosity is a manifestation of his struggle to escape from criminality and earns better life.

Keywords: *religiosity, criminality, representation, constructed meaning*

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REPRESENTATION OF JULES WINFIELD'S RELIGIOSITY IN THE PULP FICTION

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Abstrak

Pulp Fiction bercerita tentang kehidupan seorang pembunuh bayaran bernama Jules Winfield yang menunjukkan sisi kereligiusannya di lingkungan yang penuh kejahatan dan kekerasan. Dengan demikian, peneliti memutuskan untuk mengobservasi representasi dari sebuah kereligiusan dengan memperhatikan dua elemen yang bertentangan, yaitu kereligiusan dan kriminalitas untuk memahami representasi dari sisi kereligiusan Jules. Oleh karena itu, untuk menjawab rumusan masalah, peneliti menggunakan teori representasi dengan pendekatan konstruktif yang dirumuskan oleh Stuart Hall. Sebagai tambahan, peneliti juga menggunakan deskripsi kualitatif sebagai metode penelitian. Metode tersebut melibatkan teori representasi untuk menganalisis data. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti membagi analisis tersebut menjadi tiga kategori, yaitu Pengutipan Alkitab Jules, Mukjizat Jules, dan Jules Sebagai Pemecah Masalah. Dengan menggunakan metode di atas, peneliti menemukan dua konstruksi makna dibalik representasi kereligiusan Jules, yaitu transformasi kereligiusan Jules Winfield, dan Orang Saleh. Akhirnya, peneliti menyusun kesimpulan sebagai keseluruhan jawaban dari rumusan masalah bahwa kereligiusan Jules merupakan manifestasi dari perjuangan yang dilakukan untuk terbebas dari kriminalitas dan memperoleh kehidupan yang lebih baik.

Kata kunci: *kereligiusan, kriminalitas, representasi, konstruksi makna*

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MOTTO

MEN CAN NOT LIVE WITHOUT SPIRITUAL LIFE



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My beloved Mother



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Literature is an important part of human life. Every human act is reflected as an imagination and arranged by the author. Literature becomes a reflection of situation happened within a society at a certain time. According to Carter, literature is what a given society at a given time (2006:17). Literature also has many uses in human life. It helps every human being to express their ideas and opinions. This idea also convinced by Abrams that literature is an imitation of reality (2009:348). Literature is also important to help human understand about life. It helps people to understand their environment to have more genuine life. This idea once said by Rees that literature is same as history and philosophy usage in helping people to understand other people to have better life (1973:15). Learning literature is very necessary to increase human's understanding about their life and their social environment.

Literature is divided into three forms, poetry, prose, and drama. As the growth of knowledge and technology, literature not only comes in text but also visual. Film is the one of literary works that turns literary works into a form of audio and visual. It contains more elements than other literature and sometime, this element missed from the analysis. Those elements are the ways pictures are taken such the angle of the camera, the lighting, and the framing. According to Turner, film was seen to be analogues to literature, many of the things it did

which literature did not were ignored (1993:2-3). Therefore, it takes more concern to analyze a film. Then, Turner claimed film as the seventh art and it seen as analogous in the literature (1993:2). Actually, film is the development of drama. Both have same intrinsic elements. Therefore, film is a recorded drama.

The researcher prefers to analyze film than the other subjects because of some reasons. First, film is a literary work that contains audio and visual. It makes film the most complex subject to learn. It takes more effort to interpret the whole elements. There is not only text, but also visuals included in every single frame of the film. Second, film is more popular than the other literary works. Since film industry has become part of human needs, the popularity of film increase drastically. According to William, film becomes popular culture because people for themselves make the popular culture and even though it displaces folk culture, it is important since it is modern emphasis (1963: 35). As a result, film becomes one of the most influencing media.

Film also impacts almost every aspect in every audience's life. It contains so many messages behind the story, and delivers them to the society through the popularity of the film itself. Third, film helps to understand human ideas. Film employs concept from linguistic and anthropology which are ultimately aimed at understanding the nature of the human mind (Wollen, 1972 via Graeme Turner, 1988:47). Since there are so many ideas or opinions that are difficult to express, people started to use film to use film to facilitate them in expressing their minds. Film can bring the ideas or opinions that can be easily understood. Sometimes,

Film brings some ideas or issues through its scene or dialogue and affect audience's minds.

Film has many genres such action, comedy, horror, science fiction, and drama. However, many films cross multiple genres. For example, action comedy, horror comedy, action drama, etc. Black comedy is one of developed film genres. Black comedy involves the concept of black because it contains dark humors. It is called dark humor because the humor comes from the dark side of human life such as crime, violence, death, and suffering. As Connard said, dark humor is type of humor that attaches itself to the grotesque, morbid, and suffering, (2003:11). Thus, in black comedy, the humors are closely related to violence. There are also so many inappropriate scenes shown in black comedy related to murder and criminals act such as the use of drug, rape, and murder. According to Connard, black comedy finds humor from suffering or from transgression of taboos related to sacredly serious subjects, especially death (2003:9).

The explanation above makes some difference between the black comedy and traditional comedy. In traditional comedy, humors come from light and amusing story. Then, traditional comedy mostly ends happily. Meanwhile, Black comedy contains many tragic stories. Usually, black comedy also involves critics and issues. Thus, black comedy is less entertaining than traditional comedy yet brought stronger statements and ideas. Connard said that black comedy gives author a chance to make a strong statement about society (2003:4).

Pulp Fiction is one of American black comedy films. It is written and directed by Quentin Tarantino. The film tells about three separated story that

arranged into one. Vincent Vega (John Travolta) and Jules Winnfield (Samuel L Jackson) are two hitman employed by the mob boss Marcellus Wallace. They are assigned to retrieve a suitcase stolen from Marsellus. Then, Vincent Vega also asked to take Marsellus's wife out for a few days because he will be out of town. The next story is about an aging boxer, Butch Coolidge (Bruce Willis), who paid by Marsellus to lose his next fight in order to success the Marsellus's business. Another story is about two lovers and also a small robber. They call themselves Honey Bunny and Pumpkin. These three stories are seemingly unrelated to each other, but in the end of the film, they become one story that fully related. Quentin's way to put the film plot like a puzzle is really entertaining. *Pulp Fiction* tells about the lives of seemingly unrelated people that are woven together in a wildly entertaining and exhilarating motion picture adventure that both thrills and amuses (<https://www.Miramax.com/movie/pulp-fiction>).

In the film *Pulp Fiction*, there are so many murder and violence act shown as an insertion. Most of the acts are related to blood and swearing. Almost every scene was filled with violence. Usually, they are mixed with comedy touch through the character's dialogue and action that contain element of surprise. It brought up ironical feeling where the audiences laugh to something they should not. Sometime, black comedy influences audience with its inappropriate ways yet very clear message. There are many bad and taboo words in the dialogue that bring certain meaning.

In *Pulp Fiction*, the actors often say some inappropriate utterance such as "Son of a bitch", "My nigga", and "Motherfucker". This kind of utterance usually

contains some message related to issues among the society. These issues mostly related to racism and violence. The words such as “nigga”, “negro”, and “nigger” contain a strong message about the equality conflict between white people and black people based on the race. Then, the film also uses words “motherfucker” and “son of a bitch” as the ordinary utterance. It has strong meaning about indication of dirty swearing act that involved “mother” term. However, in black comedy film, these bad elements are made based on real situation in a certain place and era. As it said above that black comedy offers the film-maker a chance to make a strong statement about society (Connard, 2003:4). For many years, film has become a media to deliver the author’s idea to all the society about the society itself. These ideas can be opinion, statement, and allusion about issues happened among the society. *Pulp Fiction* is a strong opinion about typical American life at the time.

One of the ideas that researcher wants to analyze in *Pulp Fiction* is about the idea that represent religiosity. There is element of religiosity in a character of *Pulp Fiction* that worth to analyze because it contrasts against the subjects of the film itself which are crime and violence. The researcher prefers to analyze the religiosity because of some reasons. First, the concept of religiosity has a very contrast character in this film since most of the film tells about violence, crime, and things that are contrary to religious value. It makes religiosity is an important object to analyze in *Pulp Fiction*. Second, religiosity is a complex concept. It is difficult to define because of the uncertainty and imprecise nature of the English language. “Religiosity is found to be synonymous with such terms as

religiousness, orthodoxy, faith, belief, piousness, devotion, and holiness. These synonyms reflect what studies of religiosity would term as dimensions of religiosity, rather than terms that are equivalent to religiosity itself” (Lewis, 1978). The second reason is about the complexity of religiosity that crosses different academic disciplines. Every discipline stands for its own approach and vintage point. For example, religious educator focuses on orthodoxy and belief. Psychologist focuses on dimensions of devotion, holiness, and piousness. Sociologist would consider the concept of religiosity to include church membership, church attendance, belief acceptance, doctrinal knowledge, and living the faith (Cardwell, 1980 via Holdcroft (89:2006). In order to understand the complexity of the term religiosity, Glock and Stark (1965) have been defined religious orientations, origins, and dimensions. In doing so, Glock and Stark identified five dimensions of religiosity. They are experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential (Holdcroft, 2006:86).

Relating to the research about religiosity in *Pulp Fiction*, the researcher uses the dimensions of experiential and intellectual. These two dimensions can be used for explain the religiosity in Jules character in *Pulp Fiction*. Experiential dimensions focuses on the personal faith as seen in the Jules’s character, while intellectual dimension is about knowledge of the basic tenets of faith and sacred scriptures. Then, Allport and Ross also said that they have identified two basic dimensions of religiosity. They are extrinsic and intrinsic dimension. They interpret extrinsic religiosity as a self-serving and utilitarian outlook on religion that provides the believer with comfort in salvation. Individuals in extrinsic

dimension disposed to use religion for their own ends, such as status, sociability, and self-justification, and often selectively shape a creed to fit their own ends. While, individuals in intrinsic dimension tends to be the one who internalizes the total creed of their faith and moves beyond church attendance (Holdcroft, 2006:89). These two dimensions also used by the researcher to analyze the representation of Jules's religiosity in *Pulp Fiction*. The dimension of intellectual, experiential, intrinsic and extrinsic dimension explained above are the forms of measurement of religiosity representation conducted by Jules.

The researcher decides to analyze *Pulp Fiction*, one of black comedy film, because *Pulp Fiction* has really unique and non-linear plot. It serves the story in three separate scenes and rearranged like a puzzle. The audiences must give more concern to understand the story and the message as well. Usually, audiences need to watch the film more than once to understand the story.

“It makes us go back to watch the film over and over again to get all the inter-story references and watch certain parts with fuller understanding of the characters and the plot. You can not get all the nuances and hints in the first viewing” (<https://www.Shmoop.com/pulp-fiction/themes/html>).

Beside the plot, the researcher also has another reason. *Pulp Fiction* is a film produced in early 90's that influences nowadays trend. Although it was created in 1994, *Pulp Fiction* has unique characteristic that rarely found in nowadays film. Quentin Tarantino made the *Pulp Fiction* with full of detail through his character's language and communication. In *Pulp Fiction*, unlike other films, audiences usually only recognize the violence and the shocking

scenes. In fact, the dialogue in the film itself that makes the story. It is the dialogue that really makes the movie what it is. The characters talk a lot. They talk about everything from pie to bank robberies to French fast food. In *Pulp Fiction*, language is powerful, and communication is important. Tarantino wants his audiences to notice every single word his characters say because they all have meaning (<https://www.Shmoop.com/pulp-fiction/html>).

As a black comedy film that mostly related to violence, *Pulp Fiction* has hidden elements represented behind a character. One of them is about religiosity. Although *Pulp Fiction* is a crime and violence film with a lot of bloody scene, it has some religiosity elements inside. The religiosity elements were represented by the author through the act of the characters. There are several scenes and images that indicate the religiosity behind the character's act. Jules Winfield is the character in *Pulp Fiction* who represents the religiosity. Although he works as a hitman, his act often contains religiosity. In an environment that closely related to criminality and violence, Jules has different side of himself that represents a religiosity act. This case is very contrast with the film that serves a lot of things contrary to religious teachings.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of study above, the researcher discusses about the following question:

How is the representation of Jules Winfield's religiosity in *Pulp Fiction* film?

1.3 Objective of Study

In making this research, the researcher has an objective that is important to achieve. The objective of this paper is to discuss about Jules's religiosity as represented in the film *Pulp Fiction*.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research focuses on the representation of religiosity in *Pulp Fiction*. As is known, religion issue has become a topic among the society in many years. Many people concern about religion and religiosity as the part of their identity. Then, this research is needed to understand about representation of religiosity through literary work especially in the film *Pulp Fiction*.

1.5 Literary Review

There are some researches which are also use *Pulp Fiction* as the material object. The first is "Other Side of Badass Coin: Racial Doubling and Cultural Contestation in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*" by Cynthia Young from Yale University. This research focuses in the racial issues appear in *Pulp Fiction*. The researcher concerns on the word "Nigga", "Nigger", and "Negro" that continuously said by the character in the *Pulp Fiction* especially Jules and Marsellus. The second research is "Eight uses of nigger in *Pulp Fiction*" in the research "Contextual Determinants on the Meaning of the N Word" by Keith Allan. This research also concern on the use of N or "Negro" word in *Pulp Fiction*. The researcher mentions eight uses of "nigger" word in *Pulp Fiction*. Most of them are said by Jules and Marsellus who both are black. However, the researcher also mentions some uses of "nigger" word by Jimmy (Quentin

Tarantino) that bring pros and contras because he is white. Most of the research about *Pulp Fiction* concern about its racial issues.

There are some things that make this research different from the researches above. First, this research focuses on the religion issue. It makes this research has contrast object to analyze with the previous researches which related to racial and violence issues. Second, this research tries to prove that *Pulp Fiction* has religious side in it. Since the story in *Pulp Fiction* mostly tell about crime and violence, people only focus on these things. In fact, there are religious sides contained in *Pulp Fiction* film especially in the Jules's character. Overall, this research analyze about representation of Jules's religiosity in *Pulp Fiction*.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

The researcher decides to analyze the paper with two theories, namely representative theory and film theory. Both of them explain the problem based on the research question. These theories are explained below:

1.6.1 Representation Theory

Representation means using language to represent something meaningfully. Language, in this case is a literary work, produces a lot of meaning of the concepts. It produces the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language (Hall, 1997:17). In representation, language produces meanings. A language communicates thought and express it's meanings to other people.

Most of literary works have relation to certain social condition. A literary work could contain concepts and ideas of the author that influenced by the environment of the society. Sometimes, meanings is not only produced but also

constructed. It is proven when people in the certain culture or social condition have their own convention about a meaning of something. For instance, people in snowy area tend to have more terms and language use about snow (Hall, 1997:23). Furthermore, a meaning is also can be constructed through the social environment in the certain place and time.

According to Hall, where do meanings come from and how to get true meaning of a world or image can be known with three approaches, there are reflective, intentional, and constructionist or constructivist (1997:24). The first is reflective approach. Reflective approach reflects the true meaning as it already exists in the real life. This approach has function like a mirror. It reflects true events. The second is intentional approach. Intentional approach stands for the author's meaning in the real world through language. It shows the act meaning as intended by the author. The third is constructionist approach. This approach recognizes the public social character of language. It acknowledge that neither things in themselves nor the individual use of language can fix the meaning (things do not means: we construct meaning using representational system – concept and sign) (Hall, 1997:25).

From these approaches above, the researcher use constructionist approach for this analysis. Constructionist approach aims to find the constructed meaning behind the representation. Thus, there are not only representations, but also meanings which are constructed behind them. According to hall, the system of representation is divided into two processes. The first process sets system of concept around the people heads in interpreting the world. The second process

shares meaning of the construction (1997:18). In represents the language, constructionist approach acknowledges the social character of the language itself. It involves the concepts that existed in people heads. The constructed meaning of the representation appears after the construction process of the meaning itself.

In this research, the researcher uses film as one of literary works to become the language. Film becomes the main subject that contains meaningful elements represented through its character and dialogue. Therefore, the researcher focuses on these two elements. The researcher analyzes the representation of religiosity shown in one of the character. The focus of the analysis is about the representation of Jules's religiosity.

Jules is one of the main characters in the film *Pulp Fiction*. This character shows some religious side in his actions. This religious act has a contrast meaning to social condition that happen at the time. It proved by seeing the character that works as a hitman. However, there are some meanings constructed behind the representation of Jules's religiosity. The process of how the Jules's religiosity is represented, produce some other meanings constructed by the representational system. Therefore, the researcher decides to use constructionist approach to analyze the case. It can be analyze both of the Jules' religiosity representation and the constructed meanings behind them.

1.6.2 Film Theory

According to Villarejo, film study is like a language that could be defined into two aspects, form and rules. Film analysis – the name for the study of film as “like a language” through a taxonomy of its form and an examination of its rules

– similarly brackets film history, theory, the philosophy of the image, fandom, technological shifts, industrial organization, and so on (2007: 27). Then, Villarejo said that film study lends itself most powerfully to the study of narrative film, a dominant form, to be sure, but, as we have seen, by no means the only one. (2007: 27).

According to Villarejo there are several points of film analysis based on the camera shot technique:

1. The extreme long shot (ELS), in which one can barely distinguish the human figure and environment;
2. The long shot (LS), in which humans are distinguishable but remain dwarfed by the background;
3. The medium long shot (MLS), in which the human is framed from the knees up;
4. The medium shot (MS), in which we move in slightly to frame the human from the waist up;
5. The medium close-up (MCU), in which we are slightly closer and see the human from the chest up;
6. The close-up (CU), which isolates a portion of a human (the face, most prominently);
7. The extreme close-up (ECU), in which we see a mere portion of the face (an eye, the lips).

(2007: 38). From the points above, researcher analyze the film of Pulp Fiction from the cinematography side. The researcher takes the screenshot of every

important scene. In taking of the screenshots, the researcher concerns in the frame which contain a closer relation to the problem. Then, the researcher makes an analysis by combining the film theory and the representation theory.

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of research

The researcher use qualitative research to analyze this paper. According to Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative approach emphasizes the qualities of entities, process and meaning that are not experimentally examined and measured in terms of quality, amount, intensity, or frequency (200:8). Qualitative method refers to meaning, concept, and characteristic of things. For the analysis, the researcher finds the data based on the film itself. The researcher also use another sources such as articles, and e-book that provide text sources. All the data are used by the researcher by analyzing them based on representation theory. This research also applies the film theory as the supporting theory.

1.7.2 Data Sources

In this paper, the researcher uses two types of data, primary and secondary data. The primary data are taken from the *Pulp Fiction* itself. Primary data contains elements in every scene in the film. Those elements are dialogue and character in the film *Pulp Fiction*. These elements are divided into two categories, they are action and image. In representing the religiosity of Jules, the researcher also concerns in the mise-en-scene elements. Mise-en-scene discuss

about how the image are pictured in the film. It involves setting, camera angle, and lighting.

Secondary data is sources come from text sources. They are books, journals, articles, and pdf files. These sources contain important information about concepts and ideas of the analysis. The researcher quotes expert's opinion that relevant with the discussion. Secondary data also support the researcher's argument.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher uses frame as the main unit of analysis. First of all, the researcher reads the. Then, the researcher looks for the data which related to religiosity in Jules's character by collecting and screen shooting the frames. Third, the frames are divided based on the categories of representation theory. In this case, the researcher uses constructionist approach on representation theory. Then, The researcher divide the frames based on the categories. Last, the researcher adds the details of the frames such as, scene name, dialogue, time.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

In this study, the researcher use representation theory by Stuart Hall. In representation theory, the main point is about producing the meaning. In producing the meanings, the researcher uses constructionist approach. There are several steps to analyze this paper. First, the researcher reads the film and collects the frames and dialogues as the data of analysis. Then, the researcher divides them into three categories. These categories are Jules's bible quotation, Jules's divine intervention, and Jules's as problem solver. Last, the researcher applies the

representation theory by forming a connection between the data and the theory. Then, the researcher makes an analysis paragraph based on the evidences.

1.8 Paper Organization

This research paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter is about introduction which contains background of study, research question, objective of study, significance of the study, literary review, theoretical approach, methods of research, and paper organization. Second chapter contains about the intrinsic element of *Pulp Fiction* Film. Intrinsic elements include theme, character and characterization, plot, setting, and summary of the film. Third chapter is about the analysis. In this chapter, the researcher applies the theory of representation by Stuart Hall and also film theory by Amy Villarejo to analyze the religiosity in the film, especially in Jules character. The last chapter is conclusion and suggestion.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

The researcher concludes this analysis based on the representation theory as the main theory, and religiosity as supporting concept in order to analyze the representation of Jules's religiosity in *Pulp Fiction* and the constructed meaning behind the representation. The analysis itself uses three categories to explain about what and how representation of religiosity is. The categories are Jules's bible quotation, Jules's divine intervention, and Jules as problem solver. Moreover, the analysis produces two categories of constructed meaning behind the representation, transformation of Jules Winfield's religiosity, and pious man.

The conclusion of this study shows up after the researcher finds the constructed meaning of the representation. It becomes the answer of the research question in the background of study. The representation of Jules Winfield's religiosity is a manifestation of his struggle. Jules performs this struggle in order to reevaluate his path of life and get a revelation. It is a Jules's struggle to escape his former life and earn better life. In the end, Jules achieves his goal and chooses to live his life. He becomes the only character that survives from the criminal environment without suffering.

4.2 Suggestion

This is the verse of holy Qur'an which tells that a person must have struggles to get a better life and destiny.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا
 أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ مَن
 وَالٍ ۗ

Means: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves (with their own souls). But when (once) Allah intends a people's punishment, there can be no turning it back, nor will they find, beside Him, any to protect". (Q.S. Ar-Rad:11)

The verse above is a supporting statement from Holy Qur'an that struggle is needed in order to get better self. People must give not only their best effort but also their best faith to god. Finally, God will only help people who want to change into better person.

The *Pulp Fiction* tells about social phenomenon between two contrary characters; religiosity and criminality. In this paper, the researcher use theory of representation to analyze the problem. Furthermore, the researcher focuses on the constructed meaning behind the representation of Jules's religiosity. With the theory above, the researcher tries to answer the problem and proves the religiosity side of Jules.

For further research about *Pulp Fiction*, the researcher suggests to the next researcher to elaborate it with other theories. As it stated in the background, *Pulp Fiction* is a film with unique genre. It has many concepts and ideas about society that are strongly delivered through the stories. The next researcher may concern on the use of psychoanalysis or semiotic theory.

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