THE CONCEPTS OF "RELIGION" AS SEEN IN TWO CHARACTERS IN

THE BOOK OF ELI

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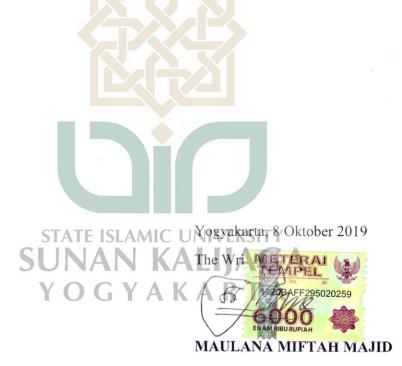
the Bachelor Degree in English Literature

By:

MAULANA MIFTAH MAJID

15150073

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY OF ADAB AND CULTURAL

SCIENCES STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY SUNAN KALIJAGA

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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 or cited in accordance with ethical standars.

Yogyakarta, 8 Oktober 2019

The Writer

MAULANA MIFTAH MAJID

Studet No: 15150073

KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA

Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 513949 Fax. (0274) 552883 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nomor : B-1971/Un.02/DA/PP.00.9/12/2019

Tugas Akhir dengan judul   : THE CONCEPTS OF "RELIGION" AS SEEN IN TWO CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK OF ELI

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama   : MAULANA MIFTAH MAJID
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa   : 15150073
Telah diujikan pada   : Senin, 04 November 2019
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir   : A-

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR

Ketua Sidang

Dr. Witriani, S.S. M.Hum.
NIP. 19720801 200604 2 002

Penguji I

Ulyati Retno Sari, S.S. M.Hum.
NIP. 19771115 200501 2 002

Penguji II

Febriyanti Dwiratna Lestari, SS., MA
NIP. 19810203 200901 2 007

Yogyakarta, 04 November 2019
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Dekan

Dr. H. Akhmad Patah, M.Ag.
NIP. 19610727 198803 1 002

NOTA DINAS

Hal   : Skripsi

a.n. Maulana Miftah Majid

> Yth.
>
> Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
>
> UIN Sunan Kalijaga
>
> Di Yogyakarta

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Setelah memeriksa, meneliti, dan memberikan arahan untuk perbaikan atas skripsi saudara

Nama   : MAULANA MIFTAH MAJID

NIM   : 151500073

Prodi   : Sastra Inggris

Fakultas   : Adab dan Ilmu Budaya

Judul   :

THE CONCEPTS OF RELLIGION AS SEEN IN TWO CHARACTERS IN *THE BOOK OF ELI* FILM

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Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Yogyakarta, 25 Oktober 2019

Pembimbing,

Dr. Witriani, M.Hum.

197208012006042002

ABSTRACT

The book of Eli reflects how the people understand about religion. In *the book of Eli*, There are two characters who knows about religion, they are Eli and Carnegie. The researcher choose *the Book of Eli* film because the film does not focus on one religion, but religion in general. This research aims to reveal different concept between Eli and Carnegie in *The Book of Eli* film in religion. This research uses the concept of religion theory and semiotics theory to analyze the differencues concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. The method of the research is a qualitative method. In the concept of religion theory there are three elements of religion, namely the credo system, the human ritus system, the norm system. The main data used in this research are taken from activities, dialogue, and characterization of Eli and Carnegie as related to the three elements of religion. This analysis uses data as sign, because this research uses semiotics theory. From the analysis of the three religious elements of religion of Eli and Carnegie, the researcher finds several signs signifying Eli and Carnegie have different concept in religion. The researcher uses the connotative meaning to prove the differences concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. Eli has the concept of religion as God's order, while Carnegie has the concept of religion as a tool of authority power.

Keywords: differences, concept of religion, elements of religion, semiotics theory, sign.

ABSTRAK

Film the book of Eli memiliki sisi-sisi keagamaan didalamnya, bagaimana orang memahami agama itu sendiri. Dalam film the book of Eli, terdapat dua tokoh yang mengetahui tentang agama, yaitu Eli dan Carnegie. Peneliti memilih film *the Book of Eli* karena film ini juga tidak terfokus kepada satu agama akan tetapi lebih kepada agama secara Umum. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan perbedaan konsep agama antara Eli dan Carnegie pada film the book of Eli. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori konsep agama dan teori semiotik untuk menganalisis perbedaan konsep agama yang terdapat pada Eli dan Carnegie. Metode dalam film ini adalah metode kualitatif. Dalam teori konsep agama terdapat tiga unsur agama, yaitu sistem credo, sistem ritus, sistem norma. Data utama yang diambil dalam peneliti ini adalah aktifitas, dialog, dan karakterisasi yang terdapat pada Eli dan Carnegie sebagaimana yang berkaitan ketiga unsur agama tersebut. Karena analisis ini menggunkan teori semiotik, analisis ini menggunakan tanda sebagai data analisis. Dari analisis ketiga unsur agama yang terdapat pada Eli dan Carnegie, peneliti menemukan tanda-tanda yang bermakna mereka mempunyai perbedaan konsep agama. peneliti menggunakan makna konotasi dalam ketiga unsur agama untuk membuktikan perbedaan konsep Eli dan Carnegie. Eli mempunyai konsep agama sebagai perintah tuhan, sedangkan Carnegie mempunyai konsep agama sebagai alat kekuatan untuk kekuasaan.

Kata kunci: perbedaan, konsep agama, unsur agama, teori semiotik, tanda.

MOTTO

Walk by faith, not by sight.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduation paper to;

Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala

Our Prophet Muhammad Shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam

All of my teachers and lecturers

All of my spiritual teachers/ kyai and ustadz

My beloved father and mother

My big family of

English Literature Department of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

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With this, the author is very aware of the shortcomings and imperfections both in the writing of analysis of this research. Therefore, the author submit the readers to provide input in the form of constructive criticism abd suggestions for the improvement and development of this research.

Yogyakarta, 30 Agustus 2019

Maulana Miftah Majid

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Today, film becomes media that is very influential in giving messages to people commonly. According to Effendy (1986: 134), movie or film is a communication media which formed by audio visual for delivering some messages to people in particular places. In films, there must be a message to be shared to people. If there is not any message, it will be an empty watching, although everyone has his or her own interpretation. Some films have different concepts for delivering a message to people, but the problem is how they find the message of any films. Unconsciously, everyone has his own opinion about any film, but the way they analyse a film is less of detail, because they do not use the theories.

From the definition above, we can know that there is some important role of film. First, a film can influence people. Some films may give big influence to people. A good film does more than entertain or fill seats at the cinema. It has power to change hearts and minds, and society more widely. For example, a film entitled *The Day After Tomorrow* according to Yale researchers[1]. It helps to increase awareness on climate change, and encourages people to consider their actions. It can avert such an environmental crisis. "Across the board, the movie appears to have had a strong influence on spectator's risk perceptions of global warming," the

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[1] http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/08/10-movies-that-change-the -world/, acecced 20 februari 2018.

academics concluded. Second, a film which is influenced by actual people. Some films or movies are made based on social conditions of the people. Film entitled *My Name Is Khan* is one of many films that influenced by the social condition of people. This film released when there was a problem of terrorism in the world, especially in America. Some people assume that all terrorist is Moslem and all terror is related to Islam. Through *My Name Is Khan* film, the people may know that not all of Moslem is bad, there are still many good Moslems in the world, like "Khan".

Social condition of the people cannot be separated from religion. Therefore, film can be analysed from religious perspective, but some scholars understanding of religious perspective is still limited in analysing film. In the middle of 90s Joel W. Martin was disappointed, after scanning critical studies of film as well religious studies, and he said that "Scholars engaged in prevailing of film criticism have almost nothing to say about religion. And scholars who study religion have almost nothing to say about Hollywood film. Instead of encountering an ongoing and stimulating dialogue about religion and film, I encountered silence" (Martinand Ostwalt, 1995: 2). Any religion has a concept which has been writen or regulated in the Holy book. Therefore, every religious people have to obey the concept of religion that agree with the Holy book, but there are many religious people has a concept that not agree with the Holy book. It is caused by many factors, like the condition and situation of environment.

Some genre of films show that film has interpretation of religion, like the post-apocalyptic film. *The Book of Eli* is the post-Apocalyptic Western film. The post-Apocalyptic films is film that shows social condition of the world after war,

because of some political or religious problem. The post-apocalyptic film not only focuses on how the situation of the world after war, but also on how the problem solves or survives the world after war. As Eaton told in his book "Post-apocalyptic narratives are often confused with dystopian narratives but are distinctly different. Post-apocalyptic stories focus on rebuilding and dealing with the destruction of organized civilisation, whereas dystopian narratives deal with problematic on-going societies that are often highly structured (Eaton 2010: 477)". Sometimes, the problem solving in the post-apocalyptic using religious knowledge, because religion has a big spiritual power to influence ideological, political, economic and culture of people.

The researcher chose *The Book of Eli* because of several reasons. First, the main character and the producer of this film is Denzel Washington. He is known as the actor who always prays in the Crystal Cathedral Church Ministries. The interesting information is his statement about *The Book of Eli*. Denzel Washington, when interviewed by NBC, said that film is not a film that only focuses on the Bible, but tells about power, evil in this world, and a man with a special mission to save human civilization. In this statement, the researcher argues that this film does not refer to particular religions, because it does not focus on any religious group. Second, *The Book of Eli* is the post-apocalyptic film, as the researcher told before, a post-apocalyptic not only focus on description of the world after war but also focus on how the people survive the world. The interesting side of this film is the way religion resolves the humanity in the world after war and how the religion is chosen as the solution in the middle of destruction.

The Book of Eli is produced by Hughes Brothers, written by Gary Whitta, and starred by Denzel Washington, Gary Oldman, Mila Kunis, Ray Stevenson, and Jennifer Beals. In the beginning scene, *The Book of Eli* describes the destruction of world that causes a war of nuclear. People's condition shows that they are starving and thirsty. They become more aggressive than before nuclear war happened. Then, in the first scene (usually we called exposition) a character named Eli appears with bringing a mystery book, it's a Holy book (Bible). He wants to carry the Holy book (Bible) into the west on foot. In the middle of journey, when he wants to buy some water, he meets the head of the town, named Carnegie. There is a conflict when Carnegie knows what Eli brings. Carnegie needs a long time to look for the holy book (Bible). Carnegie wants to have the Holy book (Bible) for specific purpose. He can control the people, when he finds the holy book (Bible), but Eli has a spiritual power to protect himself. Hence, the holy book (Bible) is difficult to be seized from Eli. Although in the ending of film, Carnegie can seize the holy book (Bible) from Eli, but the holy book (Bible) cannot be read, because it's a braille book. Eli has memorised all of the holy book (Bible), and takes to the west to be reprinted.

Eli is a religious man, who wants to carry the Holy book (Bible) to the west, but in the middle of journey, he meets Carnegie and his troops. Carnegie is the head of a town which has many people in it. For several years, Carnegie is looking for the holy book (Bible). He wants to have a power to control the people through religion. It means, he mixes religion with political aspects. Whereas, Eli realizes about Carnegie's purpose to aim his book (Bible). Eli disagrees with Carnegie, so

he will not give the holy book (Bible). Eli always remembers God's order, that he must carry the holy book (Bible) to the west. Eli and Carnegie believe that religion has power, because they know. Carnegie has a bad purpose. He wants to fix people through religion, but Eli knows where the Holy book (Bible) will be placed. The place where there is no power struggle.

Eli and Carnegie are characters who know about religion, but they have different concepts. The concept of religion will affect Eli and Carnegie in their daily lives. As characters who know about religion, Eli and Carnegie certainly have their positive and negative sides, as the researcher stated above. Eli does the duty to carry the Holy book (bible), but in the other side, Eli does brutally murder. Carnegie knows about the power of religion and uses it as tool of authority power, but he gives the people a place and arranges the water for them. They both also use religion and faith to survive the world after war, but in different ways. Eli understands religion as God's order, and tries to carry it out properly, while Carnegie uses the power of religion to control people's minds. They have their own concept of religion, but the problem is where the concept that suit with the holy book.

This graduating paper is an initial attempt to examine the different concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie and find the concept that suit or not suit with The Holy book. The mind setting to understand religion is described by Eli and Carnegie. Someone presents her/his mind setting or concept in several ways, like the behaviours, opinions, talks, speeches, and other. Hence, to describe the concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie, the researcher uses the concept of religious

theory as primer theory and semiotic theory and film theory as secondary theory to explain the difference concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie as sign.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the background of the research, this research aims to find the answer of the question: How is the different concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie? where is the concept that suit or not suit with the Holy book?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The research is showing the difference concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie in *the book of eli* film. Eli has concept of religion as God's order, and Carnegie has concept of religion as tool of authority power. From the analysis, it shows every person has different concept of religion, it depends on how the person understand about the religion, and defines in three element of religion.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This research aims to know and understand that everyone has different concept of religion based on their own understanding. We know it based from Eli and Carnegie in *The Book of Eli* film. By analysing the signs in three element of religion, the researcher finds there is several sign. The signs means that Eli and Carnegie have different religious concepts, and where the concept that suit or not suit with the Holy book (religious teaching). This analysis also aims to explain that every religious person has positive and negative side, and removing of judgement wheter the bad and good person in religious rites. We must know the concept of

religion that suit with the Holy book (religious teacinghs), so we can separate where the right side or the wrong side of the people.

1.5. Literature Review

Some researchers have been analysing *The Book of Eli* film in different perspectives, but most of the researchers focus on religious perspectives. Shivani Jagan wrote an analysis about Dystopian Film, under the titled "Analysis of Dystopian Films *Book of Eli* and *V for Vendetta* Using Randal Marlin's Theory of Propaganda". She claimed that in *The Book of Eli* film contained many elements of propaganda – religious propaganda and Western superiority propaganda. "Propaganda is a form of communication aimed towards influencing the attitude of the population toward sock me cause or position (research public journals, page 312)". She used Randal Marlin's Theory of propaganda and used the genre of the film to analyse *The Book of Eli* film. She claimed that the dystopian film connected with the aspect of propaganda. Then she analysed the film, in its whole parts such as plot, characters, and others.

Andrew S Gross wrote a journal of Eli film under the title "The post-Apocalyptic Western as a Bookish Genre: *The Book of Eli's* Vision of an Archival Future". He analysed this film based on the genre, he collated the genre and the visual of the film to define what the film means to the people. He also defined the main characters as the representation of prophet who has a duty to take the bible to the west. Gross defined the situation of the film based on visual effect, and he described the main character also. The post-apocalyptic film contains many western aspects. When Eli survives with her knife and begin to kill someone, he uses

something like samurai. However, the researcher argues that Eli has a positive power that come from the religion.

My third literature review is a journal with the title "The (Un) Christian Road Warrior: The Crisis of Religious Representation in The Book of Eli (2010)" by James Aston and John Wallis. The journal criticized the previous journal written by Adam Porter. The journal used the binary opposition between Eli and Carnegie, explaining the ambiguity of where the positive or negative power of religion between Eli and Carnegie.

From the literature review above, the writer concludes that *The Book f Eli* film can be analysed with a religious perspective. The three literatures discuss the religious side with various theories. In this research the researcher also discusses the religious side, especially in the concept of religion. This study aims to reveal the differences in the concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. This study uses three elements of religion according to R. Abuy Shodikin in the concept of religion commonly, and semiotics theory.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

1.6.1. Concept of Religion Theory

Before explaining the concept of religion, we must know the definition of religion. Some philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and theologians have formulated the definition of religion in their own ways. This is because defining religion in general is a difficult thing to do. In this case the researcher takes etymological definitions and terminology. In the technical sense, the word *religion*

(English), the same as *religie* (Dutch language), *din* (Arabic), and Agama (Indonesian). Then both *religion* (English) and *religie* (Dutch language), both of which come from the absorption of the old language, namely Latin: "*relegere*, to treat carefully, *relegare*, to bind together; or *religare*, to recover" (R.Abuy Sodikin. 2003: 2). Religion can also be interpreted as collecting and reading.

Terminologically, Nasution gives definitions of religion, as follows:

1. Recognition of the relationship between humans and supernatural powers that must be obeyed,

2. Recognition of the existence of supernatural powers that control humans,

3. Binding oneself to a form of life that contains acknowledgment to a source that is outside what human did and which affects human actions,

4. A code of conduct that originates from supernatural powers,

5. Trust in a supernatural power that gives rise to a certain way of life,

6. Recognition of the obligations that are believed to originate from an occult power

7. The worship of supernatural powers arises from feelings of weakness and feelings of fear of the mysterious forces found in the realms of humans,

8. Teachings revealed by God to humans

From the definition of terminology above, we can give a simpler definition, religion is the belief and confession of a person against supernatural powers (god),

and bind to his obligations to supernatural powers (god), as obedience and fear of supernatural powers (god).

From the etymological definition of religion and terminology we find several elements in religion. The concept of religion must be bound to these elements. According to R. Abu Sodikin (2003) there are 3 elements of religion.

1. As a credo system (order of faith or order of belief) for the existence of something that is absolute outside of humans.

2. As a system of human rite (worship) to those who are considered absolute

3. As a norm system (rules governing the relationship between humans and humans, and human relations with other nature, according to and in line with the rules of faith and worship included above)

From three element of religion, we know the concept of religion is, by believing in God, carrying out the commands of God or the teachings contained in the holy book, and dealing with fellow creatures of God.

1.6.2. Semiotics theory

In simple definition, semiotics is the theory of sign. From the term, semiotics is derived "semeion", a greek word for sign. Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) invented the modern disciplines of semiotics. Charles Sanders Peirce, derivide the sign into several type. Icon, is the sign that similiar to the object or signifies. To understand the icon, you just pay attention what the picture, such as a map. Index, is a sign that which is affected by

what it represents, and the symbol, a sign that is connected to what it signifies by a law or convention[2]. In the first period, semiotics just focus on the text that will be analyze, but Roland Barthes argued that the every text produced in the different way and experience. There is a step when the sign produces the meaning.

In the film we will find much of the object as a sign, because film is reflection of social real life. as Barthes said in *Mythologies* "trivial aspects of everyday life can be filled with meaning" (ibid, p.1). Filmmakers will make a detail sign in the film, such as smile, darkness, flowers, house style, face, hate, and others. In a single picture, film maker's role or arrange the sign that will appear in every single picture. For finding the meaning of sign in every single picture, we must understand the relationship between signified and signifiers.

Semiotics is approach explaining how sign exist, and how human understand the sign, and all aspect that relate to sign. Barthes divided signification into two order. The first order has denotation meaning, and the second order has connotative meaning. Denotative is direct meaning of the sign, what we see and feel in the single picture. Denotative meaning, reverse to the direct object or sign. In the second order of signification, sign produced new meaning or connotative meaning. the connotative meaning must be constructed depends on collective cultural studies. According to Christian Metz, "The study of connotation brings us closer to the notion of the cinema as an art (the "seventh art")." (1999: 71). Connotation is the secondary meaning, indirect meaning, and look in other side of the object or sign.

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[2] Ibid 2

In semiotics theory, we will see a sign having connotative meaning in daily life. There are several causes of connotation that appears, including 1). The results of the assessment are based on belief or custom, 2). The times, 3). Contributions from social observers and mass media, etc. So, the connotative meaning is the development of the signified aspect (meaning or content of a sign) by the sign user in accordance with his point of view. An example in Indonesian culture, "sarong". In the past, sarong was not identical with santri, because it was still used by the general public. however, now "sarong" has one of the santri identities, because the majority of users of "sarong" are now santri.

1.6.3. Film Theory: *mise*-en-scene by Ed Shikov

The secondary theory of this research is film theory. Film theory is the first step for the researcher to analyse film. Film theory is the theory that focus on the form of film to find an interpretative meaning. Every chapter of film has a meaning that must be found, and connected to each other. Through film theory the researcher can focus on every scene deeply. In film theory, the image of the film is the representation of a real life, depend on the director of the film. The image shows how the ideas and emotions can be produced and served.

Mise-en-scene is one of the way how the film can be understood and reflect meaning. This term focuses on what you see in single image of film, because this term taken from the French, and it means "that which has been put into the scene or put onstage (ed sikov, 2010:3)". Hence, mise-en-scene analyses the whole of parts in a single image of film, such as settings, actors, lightings, costumes, props,

makeups, camera movements, and others. Every part in a singel image is set by the purpose of the film director.

1.7. Method of Research

1.7.1. Type of Research

The researcher used descriptive qualitative based on data. The researcher collects the data and describes the data. Then, the researcher gives conclusion based on the description of the data. Qualitative research is concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms (Blaxter. 1996: 61). Hence, this research gives conclusion based on many forms of data which is collected.

1.7.2. Data Sources

The primary source of data in this research is the text of *The Book of Eli* film. The data unit contains several things, like dialogues, actions, expressions and others. Text is not just a script of the film, but other things in the film can be used as the source of the analysis. The secondary source of data is other dystopian or post-apocalyptic journals and books that related to this research.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

In order to collect the data, the researcher looks for the text in the film, through watching and reading the film. The data is collected in other ways. Every scene contains many texts as sign that must be analysed. The researcher finds some other data while watching other film also. The analysis of other films used to strengthen the argument.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the researcher does some steps to analyse the data. The first, the researcher finds the data through reading the film to find the text that will be analysed. Then the researcher clasifies every scene and find some data. The second step is classifying data that related to the concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. The third, applying the concept of the theory of religion to find the concept of religion between two characters. Then, applying semiotic theory to define the connotative meaning in the concept of religion between two characters. The fourth, explaining the concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie in *The Book of Eli* film. Then the last steps are drawing the conclusion.

1.8. Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is introduction. This chapter consists of background of study, problem statement, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. Chapter two is the information and the intrinsic elements of *The Book of Eli* film. Chapter three is the analysis. This chapter contains analysis of the data that has been classified. The last chapter is conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion

In *The book of Eli* there are two characters who understand the concept of religion, namely Eli and Carnegie. After the nuclear war, the earth becomes chaotic. People lose rules and motivations. It makes the religion represented by the holy book being the solutions to restore the world. Eli appears as the person who is awaited, because he carries the Holy book (Bible). In the other side, Carnegie knows about the power of the Holy book (Bible), and wants to have it. Eli and Carnegie are people who understand about religion, however they have different concept of religion.

Eli gets an order from God to carry the holy bible to the west, but on the way Eli meets Carnegie who really wants the holy book to expand his power. *The book of Eli* film represents the concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. After analysing *The Book of Eli* film, the researcher finds the different concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. It is obtained from activities, dialogue, and characterizations of Eli and Carnegie. The researcher uses the concept of religion theory, semiotics theory and film theory. The concept of religion theory devides three elements of religion, they are; as a credo system, as a system of human rite, and as a norm system. In semiotics analysis, all texts is signs. Every sign has a connotative meaning, so the researcher find several signs in three element of religion that define the difference concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie.

First, the signs in the credo system, Eli is the person who believes in God by believing the intended path and the protection of God for him, and Carnegie is other person who believes in God, by believing in the power of praying. Secondly, the signs in the rite system, Eli is the person who had good relationship with his God, so Eli tries to obey God's order as what writen in the holy book (Bible). It is different from Carnegie. The relationship between Carnegie and God is not good. Carnegie is disappointed with God and to cover his disappointment he wants power from God. The third, the signs in norm systems, Eli treats the people as friends, helps others and teachs religious teachings, because it is the order from God. Whereas Carnegie treats others as his servants or subordinates by underestimating others.

The signs in three element of religion signifies the difference concept of religion between Eli and Carnegie. Eli has the concept of religion as God's order, while Carnegie has a concept of religion as a tool of authority power. Then Eli's concept of religion as God's order is the right concept because it suit with the Holy book (religious teaching). While Carnegie's concept of religion as a tool of authority power is wrong concept, because it does not suit with the Holy book (religious teaching).

4.2. Suggestion

The book of Eli film can be analysed in other theory, such as CDA or Spiritual identity theory. Although *The Book of Eli* film is not a religious film, it can be

analysed in religious perspective. This film is an interesting film that has a deep

meaning and can be analysed how religion can be a solution in social life.

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https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/

CURRICULUM VITAE

MAULANA MIFTAH MAJID

Address : Jl. Pemuda 1, RT/RW 04/01 Desa Sowanlor, Kec. Kedung, Kab Jepara, Jawa Tengah.

Cell Phone : 082243676594

E-mail : maulanamiftah29.mm@gmail.com

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of Birth : 29 Mei 1998

Place of Birth : Jepara

Citizenship : Indonesian

EDUCATION

2004-2009 : Tamrinuth Thullab Islamic Elementary School

2009-2015 : Menganti Darul Hikmah Boarding School

2009-2012 : Darul Hikmah Junior High School

2012-2015 : Darul Hikmah Senior High School

2015-2019 : State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

ACTIVITIES

2016-2017 : The Member of *HMI.*

2015-2017 : the Member of *UKM JQH Al-Mizan*

2019-Now : the teacher of Hanifa Foundation