

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In this age of modern life that cannot be separated from electronic devices, many individuals spend their free time watching all types of Chinese, Thai and Korean dramas. The process of globalization of Korea on the basis of recognition of its culture in Asia was rapid. Of the many Korean drama titles that have always been the center of attention of Korean drama lovers, there is one Korean drama entitled *Mr. Queen* (2020) where the series tells the life of a woman living in the Joseon Dynasty Kingdom with the character name Kim So-Yong surviving to continue living after the incident of being entered by a male soul from the modern era named Jang Bong-Hwan.

The reason author chose the series *Mr. Queen* (2020) is because there is one interesting issue to discuss, namely when author explore how Kim So-Yong is after the entry of the male soul in her body, before discussing further here the female figure does not become a tomboy but masculinity can be formed because of the male soul that enters her. Therefore, after author watched the series *Mr. Queen* (2020), it turns out that it can also be analyzed in depth by of course using one of the theories that author have adjusted as well, from this theory author decided to use the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity according to R.W. Connell after analyzing the masculine side of Kim So-Yong, of course there is a response from the surrounding people who see Kim So-Yong in their daily lives, therefore the author will also discuss

it using the theory of Gender Performativity according to Judith Butler.

The first generation critical masculinity studies continued their discussions over an ideal masculinity state. This concept continued to the end of 1970s and based on the sex role paradigm minimized the masculinity to a role model. Accordingly, there is only one personality cluster characterizing the men, thus describing masculinity. The same situation is valid for the women. In 1980s, the viewpoint that there are more than one form of masculinity has begun to be widespread (Renkmen, 2016 on (Gurkan, 2022)).

Accordingly, different cultures and different historical eras, create different gender regimes, so different patterns of masculinity (Connell, 2002 on (Zdravomyslova, 2016). That means masculinity is not static and eternal but it is historical. Its meaning may vary due to the changes in time and people (Kimmel, 2010).

This viewpoint about masculinity also claims that several masculinities can be produced with each other and different power focuses and institutions, and they are represented in various forms in various cultural products. Therefore, masculinity differentiates depending on some factors such as historical, class, cultural, sexual identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, and ethnicity, and as a result of this differentiation various inequalities emerge.

On the other hand, (Connell & Messerschmidt, Hegemonic Masculinity, 2005) state that the supporter of hegemonic masculinity may not only act with the standards presented by the culture of the society all the while, but also modernise gender relations and form the masculinities over again. According to them, since gender relations are a kind of stress field, an

ascribed masculinity may stay as hegemonic during to solve for these tensions. The authors do not base hegemonic masculinity on social reproduction theory. In other words, they mention that gender theory cannot guess which pattern wins within the hegemonic struggling.

One representation of masculinity that is interesting to discuss in the Korean drama *Mr. Queen* (2020) is a masculinity found in a woman who from birth does not have a masculine side at all but after she is entered by a man's soul then this woman has a masculine side, before discussing the meaning of Hegemonic Masculinity, the author will explain a little understanding of hegemonic explained by Antonio Gramsci' in the book Hegemonic masculinity R. W. Connell, the concept of hegemony derived from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamics by which a group claims to maintain a leading position in social life. R.W. Connell, the concept of hegemony derived from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamics by which a group claims and maintains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity is more culturally valorized than another.

Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as a configuration of gender practices that embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of patriarchal legitimacy, which guarantees or is perceived to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. The representation of masculinity in Korean historical dramas has become a crucial area of inquiry within gender and cultural studies, especially with the global rise of Korean pop culture, known as the Korean Wave or *Hallyu*. One of the notable

dramas in this context is *Mr. Queen* (2020), a historical-comedy series that features a modern-day man's soul confined in the body of Queen Cheorin during the Joseon dynasty. This unique narrative device disrupts conventional gender binaries and opens a discursive space to examine how masculinity is both constructed and performed within a deeply patriarchal society. However, after watching the Korean drama *Mr. Queen* (2020), the author discovered a unique representation of masculinity that differs from those presented in other dramas previously analyzed. Unlike most narratives where masculinity in women typically stems from their own experiences or societal influence, *Mr. Queen* offers an unusual premise: the masculinity displayed by the female character Kim So-Yong arises due to her body being inhabited by the soul of a modern-day man, Jang Bong-Hwan, after an accident. The moment of soul transfer through an unconscious state and an accidental kiss while drowning becomes a fascinating turning point that triggers the character's masculine traits. This unexpected portrayal of masculinity challenges conventional gender roles and invites deeper analysis. Therefore, the author is interested in examining this phenomenon using R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to explore how masculine traits are performed through Kim So-Yong's character. In addition, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity is used to analyze how the surrounding characters respond to Kim So-Yong's gender expression and how those responses reflect societal mechanisms of gender regulation.

1.2 Research Question

The research question of this research are:

1. In what ways does Queen Cheorin (Kim So-yong) display masculinity?
2. How did the royal society response to Kim So-yong?

1.3 Objective of the study

The purposes of this research are:

1. To elaborate how masculinity is depicted in the *Mr. Queen* (2020) series,
2. To elaborate how royal society responses to the display of masculine by Kim So-Yong. After meeting all of that, it is then associated with the theory of masculinity according to R.W. Connell by explaining by adjusting the various types that exist. After that, through this research in producing that in the drama *Mr. Queen* (2020) it turns out that there is a woman who has a fairly dominant masculine trait that comes from a man.

1.4 Scope of the study

This research focuses on the character analysis of Kim So-Yong (Queen Cheorin) in the Korean drama *Mr. Queen* (2020), particularly after her body is inhabited by the soul of a modern-day man, Jang Bong-Hwan. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss masculinity within male characters or soft masculinity in Korean dramas, this research offers a different perspective

by examining how masculinity is expressed through a female character as a result of an external soul transfer. The analysis centers on identifying dialogues that reflect masculine traits and investigating how surrounding characters respond to those expressions.

1.5 Significance of study

This study is significant because it offers a unique perspective on the representation of masculinity in Korean drama by analyzing a female character, Kim So-Yong, who displays masculine traits not due to her social background or personal development, but because her body is inhabited by a man's soul. While previous studies have explored masculinity in male characters or soft masculinity in male idols, they rarely address the presence of masculinity performed by female bodies due to supernatural or metaphysical circumstances. By using R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, this research not only contributes to the understanding of gender construction in media but also challenges the binary perception of gender roles. This study provides new insight into how masculinity can be expressed, received, and negotiated within a female body, a subject that remains underrepresented in academic discussions especially within the context of Korean historical-fusion dramas.