



The Respresentation Of Toxic Masculinity In *The Power Of The Dog* Movie

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Abstract: This study is about the idea of toxic masculinity as reflected in *The Power of The Dog* by Jane Champion based on the toxic theory of masculinity by Terry A. Kupers. In Kupers' theory, masculinity has toxic characteristics in the form of misogyny, wanton violence, aggression, and dominance. The researcher uses qualitative methods in conducting this research. Researcher focused on written data in the form of scripts from movie related to toxic masculinity. The researcher uses Jan Mukarovsky's dynamic structuralism approach. There is a relationship between toxic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity. There are many toxic masculinity traits that can be found in society. However, researchers limit the properties contained in the movie. The purpose of this study is society has knowledge about the characteristics of toxic masculinity and one factor of toxic masculinity. The results of this research contained 19 data which are characteristics of toxic masculinity and factors that cause toxic masculinity. Researcher found 4 (four) data covering the characteristics of misogyny, 2 (two) data on naughty violence, 6 (six) data on aggression, and 3 (three) data on dominance and 5 (five) factors to motivate toxic masculinity. The conclusion of this research is that the idea of toxic masculinity is not only dangerous for women but also for men. And the factor of the occurrence of toxic masculinity can also be due to trauma from the past.

Keyword: Toxic Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity, Dynamic Structuralism, Movie

Abstrak: Kajian ini membahas tentang gagasan tentang maskulinitas toksik yang tercermin dalam *The Power of The Dog* karya Jane Champion berdasarkan teori toksik maskulinitas karya Terry A. Kupers. Dalam teori Kupers, maskulinitas memiliki ciri-ciri toksik berupa misogini, kekerasan nakal, agresi, dan dominasi. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam melakukan penelitian ini. Peneliti memfokuskan pada data tertulis berupa naskah film yang berkaitan dengan toxic maskulinitas. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan strukturalisme dinamis Jan Mukarovsky. Terdapat hubungan antara maskulinitas beracun dan maskulinitas hegemonik. Ada banyak ciri-ciri maskulinitas beracun yang dapat ditemukan di masyarakat. Namun peneliti membatasi khasiat yang terkandung dalam film tersebut. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah masyarakat mempunyai pengetahuan mengenai ciri-ciri toxic masculinity dan salah satu faktor dari toxic masculinity. Hasil penelitian ini memuat 19 data yang merupakan ciri-ciri toxic masculinity dan faktor-faktor penyebab toxic masculinity. Peneliti menemukan 4 (empat) data meliputi ciri-ciri misogini, 2 (dua) data kekerasan nakal, 6 (enam) data agresi, dan 3 (tiga) data dominasi serta 5 (lima) faktor yang memotivasi toxic masculinity. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah gagasan tentang toxic masculinity tidak hanya berbahaya bagi perempuan tetapi juga bagi laki-laki. Dan faktor terjadinya toxic maskulinitas juga bisa karena trauma masa lalu.

Kata Kunci: Toxic Maskulinitas, Hegemonik Maskulinitas, Strukturalisme Dinamis, Film

INTRODUCTION

The culture of toxic masculinity in the scope of society around the world is real. Almost all of them assume that men must have a high level of masculinity. This is because men are considered the 'heads' in all matters, where they must always be ready to lead, wherever and whenever. A habit like that ends up making most men feel burdened, the burden they carry seems so much. They are required to be strong, brave, courageous, not allowed to be weak in

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the slightest, let alone to look like a woman. This culture of toxic masculinity turns out to have a significant impact on men's mentality, even though in plain view the main signs such as power, control, or violence give a certain prestige to these men.

The field of gender studies defines the term masculinity as the set of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a man (Pilcher and Whelchan in Brooks, 2019: 1). Masculinity, in its wide definition, can be defined as a set of behaviors and practices that have traditionally been associated with manhood in a culture. Society dictates what is expected of men so those who do not conform to the ideal types of manhood are usually condemned. In other words, men are expected to act a certain way and embody those cultural norms. The modifier “toxic” is used to highlight the fact that these kinds of behaviors carry with them some potentially serious and even deadly consequences.

Attitudes and behavior of men who must be perceived as strong, courageous, and enthusiastic leaders in a society where it is not acceptable to show emotion. When a man comprehends societally imposed male ideals, such as considering men as weak, cowardly, or sobbing, you will be very surprised to see them.

Based on the background above, this research aims to gain an understanding of the meaning and representation of toxic masculinity in the film *The Power of The Dog* which can be used as a reflection in social life. On the other hand, the concept of toxic masculinity is vividly portrayed in the actual movie. The destructive factor of masculinity that are portrayed in the movie are the author's main concern. This study uses a structuralism dynamic to evaluate and explain this toxic masculinity.

In addition, the researcher uses the theory of structural dynamics because the characters in *The Power of The Dog* contain signs of toxic masculinity which should be interpreted by opening up the structure of the film in order to strengthen the analysis and find meaning as a whole. The study of structural dynamics is preferred as an applied theory because by using this theory the researcher will get a more complete meaning of the film, so that the use of structural dynamics theory will be relevant to the context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Based on Kupers (2001) theory on toxic masculinity, the researcher conducted a study entitled “**The Representation of Toxic Masculinity in The Power of The Dog Movie**”. The objectives of the study are analyze how the toxic masculinity depicted in *The Power of The Dog* movie.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structuralism

Saussure (1959), as quoted in Carol (2006 : 14). A precise definition of linguistic structuralism is difficult to come up with given the diverse variety of meanings the term "structuralism" first took on during the 20th century. It really refers to a set of general ideas that major European linguists of the interwar era, many of whom were greatly influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course de Linguistique Générale*, held in common. Referring to a then-current new approach that was employed in linguistics as well as fields including literary studies, psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

Pure structuralism, which was seen as the later evolution of formalism, had flaws that gave rise to dynamic structuralism. Dynamic structuralism is intended as a refinement of structuralism, which in itself ignores its extrinsic aspects and just lends emphasis to the core structure. Mukarovsky and Felix Vodicka were the first to advocate dynamic structuralism (Fokkema, 1977: 31). He views literature as a form of semiotic factual communication made up of signs, structures, and values. A symbol that develops significance in the viewer's consciousness is a piece of art. As a result, the ability to create works of art must be returned to the author, the people who generate them, and the audience members who will be seeing them. Undoubtedly, structuralism emphasizes the investigation of the work's constituent parts. Every literary work, whether it be one of the same genre or another, includes unique components. The variances in these features result from changes in the reader's reception process in addition to the effects of these intrinsic qualities. It is in this connection that literary works are said to have distinctive characteristics, are autonomous, and cannot be generalized

Dynamic structuralism is a method that also pays attention to the extrinsic factors in addition to the intrinsic ones. The autonomous nature of the first point—which does not point beyond itself—and the informative nature of the second are the defining characteristics of the dynamic structuralism approach. The two properties are connected. As a result, literary writing is always dynamic as a structure. Dynamics readers are equipped by convention which always changing, and the reader as the *homo significans*, creatures and create a sign reading (Culler, 1975: 130 in Jabrohim, 2014: 86).

Toxic Masculinity

According to traditional toxic masculine values, a male who does not display enough of these traits may fall short of being a 'real man.' In modern society, people often use the term toxic masculinity to describe exaggerated masculine traits that many cultures have widely accepted or glorified.

Toxic masculinity is a branch of Hegemonic Masculinity that is an umbrella concept. The concept of toxic masculinity depicts these socially damaging characteristics of hegemonic masculinity that are prized and believed culturally, such as misogyny, wanton violence, aggression, and dominance (Kupers, 2001). Kuper's theory says that toxic masculinity describes the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity such as misogyny, wanton violence, aggression, and dominance.

Misogyny itself is a term used to describe hatred, contempt, or prejudice against women. It is a form of sexism that is used to place women in a lower social status than men, thereby maintaining a patriarchal social role. Misogyny has been widely practiced for thousands of years and is reflected in art, literature, the structure of human society, historical events, mythology, philosophy, and religions around the world. Misogyny can manifest in obvious and bold ways, such as bullying and physical abuse, sexual harassment, and rape. It can also be more subtle or disguised in ways that provide plausible deniability, such as disparaging women, gender discrimination, and sexual objectification.

Wanton violence refers to violence that is not controlled by any system of justice and occurs without any valid reason. It is characterized by deliberate, unprovoked, and unjustified acts of violence. Wanton violence is completely unrestrained, unchecked, and uncontrolled. It is not in accordance with any principle of justice. This type of violence may appear random because it cannot be predicted and is not a reasonable response to anything. Wanton violence refers to violence that is not controlled by any system of justice and occurs without any valid reason. It is characterized by deliberate, unprovoked, and unjustified acts of violence. Wanton violence is completely unrestrained, unchecked, and uncontrolled. It is not in accordance with any principle of justice. This type of violence may appear random because it cannot be predicted and is not a reasonable response to anything.

Aggression refers to a range of behaviors that can result in both physical and psychological harm to oneself or others. It is an overt or covert, often harmful, social interaction with the intention of inflicting damage or harm upon another individual. Aggression can occur reactively, as a response to provocation, or without provocation. It can be caused by various triggers, such as frustration due to blocked goals or feeling disrespected.

Whereas domination itself refers to the power or right to give orders or make decisions, or the circumstances that exist when one person or group has power over another. It can also refer to being dominant or having the authority to influence or control. Dominance can be seen in social relationships, such as in dominance hierarchies where individuals within a community control the distribution of resources within the community. Dominance can be expressed in

various forms, such as male dominance, political dominance, or dominance over rivals in the market. Overall, dominance is a complex concept that can be seen in various contexts, from social relationships to biology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research was conducted using a qualitative approach as a result of data analysis in descriptive phenomena such as monolog and dialogue in the movie. In this study was to inquire into toxic masculinity depicted by the main character in *The Power of The Dog* movie.

The constructivism worldview was applied in the present research because the research agreed with the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things (Creswell, 2014).

Data and Data Source

The data in this research are dialogues and monologues from the *The Power of The Dog* movie which refer to the representation of toxic masculinity based on the Kupers theory used by Phil who is the main character of the movie. The data sources are classified into two types. The movie *The Power of The Dog* and its dialogue texts served as the major data source. Secondary data sources include textbooks, the internet, articles, papers, dissertations, author's biography, journals or publications, and other significant data.

Data Collection

Several techniques are possible to use in collecting data. First, watch and read the script for *The Power of The Dog* movie numerous times. Second, highlight the points refer to the characteristic of toxic masculinity Then classified the characteristics of toxic masculinity contained in the script in the movie.

Data Analysis Procedure

The several steps in analyzed the data were taken from the script of *The Power of The Dog* movie. First, the movie script was read, and the monolog and dialogue were collected. Second, the data is classified and identified based on characteristics of toxic masculinity, following Kupers (2001) theory. Third, the data were analyzed descriptively from the script taken. Then the conclusion was made based on the analysis.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The results of this research contained 19 data which are characteristics of toxic masculinity and factors that cause toxic masculinity. Researcher found 4 data covering the characteristics of misogyny, 2 data on naughty violence, 6 data on aggression, and 3 data on dominance.

1. Misogyny

Data 1:

“Phil: What did you do down there? Maybe a little ‘Tom-Cattin’? A silence. The wind blowing under the front door lifts the hall carpet.

George: I was speaking to Mrs Gordon.

Phil: Oh yes she cried on your shoulder.

George: So she did.

Phil: Give her a chance and she’ll be after some dollar for Miss Nancy’s College fees.”

(TPTD: 00: 28:16 - 00:28:27)

Analysis:

In this scene, George says that he just got home from Ms. Gordon (Rose) to apologize for a past incident, where Phil made fun of his son and sent another customer running away. In fact, this is natural for George to do by apologizing to Rose for what his brother did. Phil feels that his brother is starting to fall in love with the woman and Phil doesn't accept that.

Phil with his own thoughts and speculations says that George should have realized that Rose's goal in marrying her brother George was simply to acquire George's property to pay for his "effeminate" son's college tuition. In this case, it is related to Kupers' theory about one of the characteristics of Toxic masculinity, namely misogyny where misogyny is about hatred of women. Where Phil only underestimates women who only think that these women only approach a rich man to get the man's money. This assumption originated because in ancient times only men attended school and had the right to receive higher education which caused women to only be housewives. This is one of the reasons why many women who want to marry are considered to only want the property of the man they marry. Even though today many women work to help support their family's economy, it is not even rare to find a wife who becomes a breadwinner.

Data 2:

“Dear Mother and Father, I can no longer keep from you the troubling situation where George is seeing...”

Mrs. Lewis comes in with a hot plate of meat - lunch. Then stops to see only Phil. The Old Gent (reading an extract): ‘... he has got himself entangled with a suicide-widow...’”

(TPTD: 00:30:30 – 00:31:32)

Analysis:

Phil is in the dining room, writing letters to his parents. Phil writes in his letter that there is a big problem, namely his brother George is in contact with a widow whose husband committed suicide and her son who is slightly retarded. This falls under the misogyny category because in this scene Phil tries to incite his parents to hate Rose and disapprove of George's decision to marry George by writing bad things about Rose. Writing that Rose was a widow whose husband died by suicide, without explaining why his husband killed himself so his parents could speculate unkindly about Rose. Phil also uses bad words to spread his hatred towards Rose because of his hatred for the woman his brother wants to marry. Phil uses the word "retarded" to describe Rose's son who he thinks is different from the rest of society. There was nothing wrong with Peter though.

Society's stigma about a widow is often bad. Women are considered unable to take care of their husbands, weak, and are often branded as seducers so that in social and cultural conditions they often get injustice. The more advanced education is now, it doesn't make the community's stigma about a widow better. There are still many songs or films that demean the widow herself. Included in the movie *The Power of the Dog*. When a woman is a widow, the negative grapevine begins to spread. In contrast to men who look respectable with status as a widower.

2. Wanton Violence

Data 5:

“George: You ever try the house bath Phil?”

Phil: No I don't wanna smell like a piece of soap, like a flower. I like to smell like a man.”

(TPTD: 00:02:54 – 00:03:09)

Analysis:

George who was taking a shower in his bathroom asked Phil if Phil ever took a bath at home. Phil and the other cowboys always bathed in the river, where they just

washed themselves with the water. Phil said that washing with soap makes his body smell of soap and flowers, which makes his body smell not like a man's. In this scene, one of the characteristics of toxic masculinity, namely wanton violence, occurs.

Wanton violence is a behavior where the violence that occurs is done without reason or unintentionally. Phil mentioning that he wouldn't shower at home and use soap because it wouldn't smell like a man, was satire without reason. This scene also explains that Phil indirectly becomes a perpetrator of toxic masculinity, where he thinks that a man is not someone who smells of soap and flowers.

Toxic Masculinity's behavior towards the main character, Phil, often makes people around him feel hurt. Regulate everyone not to bathe too often, and may only bathe in the river. Even indirectly denouncing her sister who bathes at home and uses soap. Phil's rare bathing activity sometimes makes people around him feel uncomfortable with the body odor he has. Though bathing is not something that should be considered an unmanly activity.

Data 6:

“Phil has meanwhile rolled himself a cigarette, he takes a paper flower and flames it up on the candle then lights his tight slim smoke.”

(TPTD: 00:14:04 – 00:14:07)

Analysis:

After Phil found out that Peter made the flowers. Phil talks to Bobby and the other cowboys about Harry's Bronco. After Phil tells his story he burns the flower Peter made to light the cigarette he had in his mouth. This scene is included in wanton violence where it is not certain what his intention and purpose was for doing this, to show his strength in front of Peter and the other cowboys or whether he wanted to make Peter feel sad by what he did.

Even though he did this for no apparent reason, what he did made Peter feel very sad. Not only Peter, but even the cowboys who also saw Phil perform this action showed faces that were a little astonished by his behavior. Regardless of the action without reason, this is an inappropriate act. Where he destroyed the property of the restaurant and damaged the goods in front of the people who made them.

3. Aggression

Data 7:

“Phil: My goodness I wonder what little lady made these?”

Peter turns, his hands full of plates.

Peter: I did actually sir. My mother, you see trained as a florist.

Phil: Well do pardon me, they're as real as possible."

(TPTD: 00:11:50 - 00:12:17)

Analysis:

In this scene, Phil and the other cowboys think that making flowers is something women should do. From the quote above, Phil only pretends to ask who the girl made the flower, even though he knows who made the flower. Phil just wanted to make fun of Peter by pretending to ask using the word "little lady". Similar to toxic masculinity in our society, men who work like women are considered unmanly. In the quotation above, it can be seen that the characteristic of toxic masculinity that occurs is aggression. Aggression is behavior in which a person intentionally injures someone with a specific purpose or reason, either physically or psychologically.

Nowadays, everyone should be free to do whatever they like, as long as it doesn't harm other people. Everyone can do their fashion style, hobbies, and work while they like and can afford it. There is no limit that a man should dress or do certain hobbies and vice versa. But it cannot be denied that there are still many people who have a stigma that men or women must do something that they feel is appropriate. This can cause a person to not feel confident in their abilities, hurt, and unable to express their identity.

Data 11:

"Phil finishes climbing the stairs carrying a newly found fossil. In his bedroom he places the fossil inside his display case. Sharp eared Phil hears the drop of the bottle and opens his dormer window peering below. He sees Rose stretched out beside the pit now using a stick to roll a bottle of Whisky towards her, a good inch of the golden liquid at the bottom. As she reaches down to grasp its neck Phil whistles a short phrase from Rose's Strauss Waltz. Rose pauses and Phil stops whistling. She pulls the Whisky bottle out of the pit and the whistling starts again, Phil above her watches amused. Rose looks all about including back up at the house. She doesn't know if the whistling is real or she's imagining it. She steps back against the shadows of the wall and swigs the dregs of the bottle."

(TPTD: 1:10:30 – 1:10:50)

Analysis:

Phil knew that Rose was drinking alcohol beside the pit. Phil accidentally whistles the song Rose is playing while playing the piano. Phil did that on purpose to embarrass Rose and feel cornered. Phil was amused to see Rose acting like an alcoholic, even though Rose did that because she was stressed seeing Phil's behavior who always hated her. When she heard Phil's whistling sound, Rose thought that it was just the sound of her hallucinations. That's because he was traumatized by what Phil did to her.

In this scene, one of the impacts that arise due to the occurrence of toxic masculinity can be seen. Someone who originally lived peacefully and did not consume alcohol even had to consume it just to vent her emotions. Toxic masculinity not only causes physical pain but also psychological pain.

4. Dominance

Data 13:

“Phil: Do you mind quietening, we’re eating.

The MAN on the Pianola lifts his hands as the keys amusingly play on.

Phil: Shut that down, or I will.”

(TPTD: 00:14:50 – 00:14:58)

Analysis:

Phil, George, and the other cowboys went to a restaurant. The restaurant was very crowded with visitors, some even played the piano in the restaurant while singing and dancing together. Phil was annoyed with the visitors in the restaurant. He shouted for all the visitors to be quiet and caused all the visitors there to leave. Phil's behavior in this scene displays one of the toxic characteristics of masculinity, namely dominance, where a person's character overpowers other traits that are decisive, be it because of power, influence, etc.

The nature of this domination is very detrimental to other people, because not everyone wants to be controlled, especially with people they don't know. This dominance trait tends to be owned by men. Because literally, men are leaders. But often, they either realize or don't really dominate something that makes it toxic masculinity.

Data 14:

“George: Night Phil.

Phil: If it’s a piece of ass you’re after fatso, I’m damn sure you can get it without a license.”

(TPTD: 00:29:30 – 00:19:36)

Analysis:

Phil learns that George just came home from Rose's house. Phil already suspected that his brother would fall in love with Rose. Phil disapproved of his brother's actions and said that his brother could get a woman without marrying her. This is based on the past, many women like George because of his wealth. And Phil reckons that's going to happen to George again now. Phil thinks that Rose is only in love with her brother's wealth. The dominant trait of a Phil that governs his brother's personal relationships is included in the example of toxic masculinity. As explained in data 13, domination can be very detrimental to other people and even disturb other people.

CONCLUSIONS

From the *The Power of The Dog* movie, it can be seen that many acts of toxic masculinity were committed by the main character, which means that toxic masculinity is the constellation of socially regressive [masculine] traits that serve to foster domination, misogyny, homophobia, aggression, and wanton violence. From this toxic masculinity action, there are plots, characters, themes, and points of view that can be analyzed. The author analyzes them using the theory of toxic masculinity and interprets them using dynamic structuralism. Not only analyzing the characteristics of toxic masculinity, but the researcher also analyzed factor of the occurrence of toxic masculinity in the film, because society needs to know how dangerous toxic masculinity is so that people are more aware of it. Of course, whatever people do have an impact, in this film, it is answered that this factor is homophobia and one's desire to be dominant in society.

SUGGESTION

For future researchers who are interested in analyzing toxic masculinity, they can use the same theory, namely the theory of toxic dynamic structuralism, so they can better analyze what are the characteristics of toxic masculinity, and what people do to the people around them, in *Toxic Masculinity* is all clear and no one has discussed toxic masculinity using dynamic structuralism.

For research objects, there are many films containing Toxic masculinity that can be analyzed or field research to prove that toxic masculinity is a real phenomenon, and also for additional data sources, documents, such as theses, journals, and books can be used. It's like the internet, because it gives people access and all the information they need..

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