

The Indonesian Film Industry: Representation Of Toxic Masculinity In The Film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap

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Abstract

This study explores the representation of toxic masculinity in the film "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap", as exemplified by the character Mr. Domu, the patriarch of a Batak family. His behavior mirrors the patriarchal structure embedded within his family dynamics. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing John Fiske's semiotic analysis, which is structured into three levels: the Level of Reality (focusing on behavior and expression), the Level of Representation (analyzing camera shots and lighting), and the Level of Ideology (uncovering underlying ideological messages). Data was gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation. Through semiotic analysis, the study reveals both verbal and non-verbal signs, such as the characters' behaviors, expressions, and dialogues within the film. Toxic masculinity in Mr. Domu manifests in various ways, including his stubbornness, insistence on appearing strong, authoritarian attitude, refusal to be contradicted, and obsession with achieving high social status to earn respect. He also enforces emotional suppression, such as prohibiting expressions of sadness or crying, especially in front of his family. These behaviors are indicative of the harmful aspects of masculinity that are often misinterpreted, misused, and imposed upon others. Moreover, the film highlights an ideology of individualism, which tends to disregard the needs and desires of others.

Keywords: Social Reality, Toxic Masculinity, Film.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of digitalization, humans not only get information through print media but also from various other media, one of which is electronic media. The growth of information technology in the digital age requires all aspects of communication to adapt to the changes that are taking place (Fajarianto et al., 2021). With the acceleration of industrialization that demands digital intelligence, this process marks the rapid development of mass media. Besides, a society is a group of individuals who live together and create culture. (Rosana, 2017). One culture produced by the mass media that is undergoing rapid development is film. Film is an extraordinary form of art because, in film, we are endowed with an exciting understanding of social, political, and cultural issues. Furthermore, films also have a wide range of roles and purposes, ranging from a means of expression and creativity, a distributor of ideas (film as art), to a product that trades specific themes (movie as an industry), the media of communication (film as a propaganda tool), and of course a combination of the three (Imanjaya, 2019). Film is one form of mass visual communication. Every week, many people watch movies in the movies, on TV, or on their cell phones.

Film has become a medium of visual communication that people of various ages and social backgrounds enjoy. Unlike other mass media, film is an essential social institution. The content of a film is not only capable of reflecting but also creating reality, such as the phenomenon of masculinity. One of the films that addresses the issue of masculinity is "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap." Masculinity is closely related to the social life of society's gender reality. Society's taboo view on gender means that in the reality of social life, information about gender still feels lacking, thus creating a taboo gender stigma. The film "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap," produced by Ernest Prakasa and Dipa Andika, is a film that addresses issues related to gender inequality, namely

toxic masculinity, where women are considered inferior so that men can do whatever they want with their power.

In its development, issues surrounding gender, especially in the context of masculinity, remain a hot and exciting topic to discuss, especially in the field of science. Gender, fundamentally, is different from sex. Gender refers to the characteristics and behaviors associated with men and women that are influenced by social and cultural factors. Although often equated with sex, gender is a different concept. Sex refers to a person's biological and physical characteristics. At the same time, gender encompasses differences in roles, attributes, characteristics, attitudes, and actions shaped and influenced by the social environment. Therefore, the discussion about gender highlights the biological differences between men and women and involves a deep understanding of the social and cultural complexities that shape an individual's gender identity. Nevertheless, there is still a difference in treatment between men and women in the development sector, resulting in discrimination in terms of gender equality (Khumayah et al., 2024).

From a sociological perspective, gender identity encompasses all concepts applied to individuals based on gender identification. As a result, these concepts become drivers for gender-related behavior. Masculinity is the result of a social formation inherent in men. Men are often portrayed as assertive, energetic, aggressive, logical, ambitious, and assertive in this view. It also indicates that whenever a boy is born, he is burdened with various standards, responsibilities, and expectations set by the family. This legacy is passed on from generation to generation, creating the expectation that to be a real man, one must follow the previously established norms (Angkasa & Nasution, 2023).

Unfortunately, when stereotypes or gender concepts, especially about masculinity, are understood and interpreted narrowly and excessively, one might believe that their view of masculinity is the most correct compared to others. This can limit and discriminate against aspects considered wrong, whereas they are only seen from a personal perspective (Prayoga, 2023). This phenomenon is known as toxic masculinity, which describes narrow views or behaviors about the roles and actions of a man. It imposes "masculine" or "real man" standards, where men are considered not to cry, play with girls, and must be trained to engage in physical activities, among others (Novalina et al., 2021).

The phenomenon of toxic masculinity in the movie "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap" often occurs in the real social life of society. Mr. Domu, as the head of the family, always feels right and expects family members to always listen to him. Mr. Domu feels that as the head of the family, he deserves to be listened to, and that's where a father will appear successful in educating his child in front of others, especially when the child and his wife submit to a father. Of course, this becomes a significant problem because every person in the family has the same right to be listened to and understood. This reflects the social norms that put pressure on men to show their "manliness" by prioritizing the decision of a father as the best for his child, which in turn can reinforce a narrow and detrimental construction of masculinity.

In previous research, there have been several studies discussing toxic masculinity that used semiotic analysis. Such as the research titled "Representation of Toxic Masculinity In The Movie 'Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini (NKCTHI)." This movie examines toxic masculinity in terms of its masculinity ideology and Patriarchy using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory. "Representation of Toxic Masculinity In The Movie 'Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini (NKCTHI)," where the role of an elder brother must appear strong and not weak in front of his two younger sisters, thus causing the elder brother, played by Rio Dewanto as Angkasa Narendra Putra, to adopt a toxic attitude towards himself and also impact others (Wahyudi et al., 2022).

In previous research, a study was titled with the same object, researching the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap. However, the last study title discussed "Representation of Father's Role In

The Movie *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*," in which they used John Fiske's semiotic analysis method. This movie talks about a family where the father holds the most dominant role because he is responsible as the head of the family, leading and having the highest authority. This phenomenon is known as patriarchal culture, where men dominate in leadership and family decision-making (Ariffananda & Satrio Wijaksono, 2023).

From the background mentioned, the researcher wants to analyze the phenomenon of Toxic Masculinity using the semiotic theory proposed by John Fiske, which is divided into three stages, namely the stages of reality, representation, and the ideology stage, which will be described based on the researcher's interpretation of the actual meaning present in the movie "Ngeri- Ngeri Sedap" directed by Bene Dion Rajagukguk.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the author applies a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is a research method that obtains verbal descriptions from the people or behaviors being studied, both in written and oral form. (Rahmadi, 2011:4). The researcher uses a descriptive qualitative method with a Semiotic analysis approach by John Fiske uses three levels: the level of reality, the level of representation, and the ideological level.

Descriptive qualitative research involves analysis of the description level and systematically processing facts to facilitate understanding and conclusions. It aims to accurately present facts and characteristics in a specific field. The data analysis method used is triangulation, which involves checking and comparing instruments and statements with the reality observed by the researcher in the field (Hermawan, 2023).

The data collection methods used by the researcher in this study include observation, documentation, and interviews. Observation involves observing an event in which the researcher conducts observations or analyses on the film *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* regarding toxic masculinity found in one of the characters in the movie. Documentation involves collecting, selecting, processing, and storing information or events. In this research, the researcher documented several scenes in the film by taking screen captures for the research needs to show the phenomenon of toxic masculinity in the movie. The interview process is conducted to obtain relevant and accurate information related to the topic of discussion taken from the research. The researcher performs this interview technique with informants who understand the matter of toxic masculinity in the film.

To find out how Toxic Masculinity is represented in the film *Ngeri—Ngeri Sedap*, the researcher applied John Fiske's Semiotic theory analysis. Semiotics is a field of study that examines signs in human life. Every sign in human life has a meaning or significance; thus, semiotics studies the meaning contained in a sign. This analysis involves three stages of levels: reality, representation, and ideology (Pinontoan, 2020).

1. Reality Level

This level highlights how journalists or the media record or encode events as reality. The focus is on how the media presents events using visual elements such as behavior, dialogue, and expression. Here, reality is always marked and constructed by our observations.

2. Representation Level

At this level, the question is how reality is depicted or represented. This involves the use of technical tools such as words, sentences, proportions, and graphics, and in the context of audio-visual media, such as camera, lighting, editing, and music. These representations transmit codes such as shot type, lighting, use of sound, and conflict to society. How certain information is conveyed can influence how society understands the presented reality.

3. Ideology Level

Events are organized into ideologically accepted conventions. This involves how Representation codes are arranged and connected with broader social frameworks, such as social class or dominant societal beliefs like Patriarchy, materialism, capitalism, and so forth. These ideological conventions play a crucial role in how we understand and interpret the reality presented by the media

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Based on the research findings, there are six scenes in the movie Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap that represent toxic masculinity behavior, including:

a) Scene 1



Figure 1 Sulang-toast Pahompu meeting scene.
(Film source: Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap)

Table 1. Scene 1 In the Film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap

John Fiske’s Code	Description
Reality Level Expression Behavior Dialogue	Mr. Domu's expression was one of resignation because he had to cover the shortfall in expenses for the traditional feast. As the eldest son, he felt obligated to cover the shortfall in the cost of the traditional feast. Mr. Domu's behavior forces the situation and makes unilateral decisions. "Let us just collect donations from the younger siblings first. I will cover any shortfall," "If I say it, you definitely will not agree."
Representation Level Shot Type Lighting Use of Sound Conflict	Medium close up Motivated lighting With a low tone of voice intended to be persuasive and emphatic. Mr. Domu bears the cost shortfall for the traditional feast.
Ideology Level	In this scene, Mr. Domu's character demonstrates individualism by making a unilateral decision during the

	meeting outcome.
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a) Scene 2



Figure 2 The scene where Mr. Domu insinuates that Domu is not to marry a Sundanese girl.
 (Film source: Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap)

Table 2. Scene 2 In the Film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap

John Fiske's Code	Description
Reality Level Expression Behavior Dialogue	<p>Mr. Domu's expression of dislike and disdain when his son gave him the wrong ulos. Mr. Domu's three sons' expressions are one of resignation and laziness when talking to Mr. Domu.</p> <p>Mr. Domu's behavior of dislike and disdain when given the wrong ulos and immediately discussing his son's personal issues, which require his son to marry a Batak person so someone can teach him the Batak customs.</p> <p>"That also is for the deceased; if you bring that also, do you want to kill your grandfather?", "That is why you should Marry a Batak person so someone can teach you."</p>

Representation Level Shot Type Lighting Use of Sound Conflict	Over-the-shoulder shot Soft Lighting Speaking in a deep and dismissive tone Domu mistakenly took an ulos, which is for the deceased, making his father angry because Domu wants to marry a Sundanese woman. scene is the forced desire of a first child not to marry a Sundanese girl.
Ideology Level	The ideological value present in this scene is individualism, as there is a debate between Mr. Domu and his three sons. In this debate, both the father and sons are defending their own egos.

b) Scene 3



John Fiske Reality Level Expression Behavior Dialogue	<p>annoyed. from his</p> <p>Law degree, you are wasting my struggle", "you inheritance."</p>
Representation Shot Type Lighting Use of Sound Conflict	Over-the-shoulder shot Soft lighting The tone of voice becomes higher and louder Mr. Domu wants his sons to follow and obey his commands, but the three boys resist and argue with Mr. Domu

Ideology Level	The ideological value present in this scene is individualism, as there is a debate between Mr. Domu and his three sons. In this debate, both the father and sons are defending their own egos.
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c) Scene 4



Table 4. Scene 4 In the Film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap

John Fiske’s Code	Description
Reality Level Expression Behavior Dialogue	All actors show an annoyed expression Mr. Domu is angry because his children are now daring to argue with him, and his children express the feelings that they have been experiencing "Now all of you are rebelling. In the past, you were obedient", "Your lives are what make father happy," and "Is it your way that makes father happy?"
Representation Level Shot Type Lighting Use of Sound Conflict	Medium Close Up Motivated lighting The tone of voice of Mr. Domu and Mrs. Domu is high, and the three sons Have a high but still gentle tone of voice. Mr. Domu does not want his children to become someone he does not wish for. Mr. Domu wants his sons to obey him, but his three sons insist on maintaining their desires.
Ideology Level	In this scene, there is a value of materialism ideology, which is that Mr. Domu feels disadvantaged by all the efforts he has made for his children, so Mr. Domu feels entitled to receive a return from his children.

Discussion

In the film, there is a phenomenon of toxic masculinity in several scenes, which have been studied as follows:

1.) Scene 1

In this scene, Mr. Uda initiates a discussion about the Sulang-sulang Pahompou activity. More funds are needed for this activity. Mr. Domu, feeling like the eldest brother with a greater sense of responsibility, tries to cover this shortfall, but he decides unilaterally in a situation where his

family's economic condition is not yet stable. The toxic masculinity in this scene lies in Mr. Domu's individualistic attitude of making decisions unilaterally.

2.) Scene 2

In this scene, Domu mistakenly takes traditional attire and the rules for the deceased. As a result, Mr. Domu releases words to mock Domu, suggesting Domu should marry someone from Batak and not Sundanese. Mr. Domu still tries to maintain his desire for his first child to marry someone from Batak. Suppose Mr. Domu succeeds in getting Domu to marry someone from Batak. In that case, Mr. Domu will be satisfied, and he will have a good image in front of his relatives.

3.) Scene 3

In this scene, Mr. Domu does not discuss or debate with his son about Mr. Domu and Mrs. Domu's divorce but instead discusses his son's future. In this scene, Mr. Domu wants to lead and be selfish toward his desires, wanting his first child to marry a Batak woman. The second child must work as a prosecutor because Mr. Domu thinks that being a comedian is an unclear job. Sahat, as the youngest child, must take care of his parents at home and not wander off the island because if he does not care for his parents, the youngest child will not get the inheritance of the house. However, Mr. Domu's words do not change his children's desires to continue with their wishes. In this scene, it is very evident that Mr. Domu has an egoistic nature and does not want to listen to his children's desires because, according to him, his decisions are The right ones for his children. Mr. Domu's principle is very firm in maintaining his image as a male leader: Men must be firm in making decisions.

4.) Scene 4

This scene is full of emotional moments, and Mr. Domu's stubborn character also occurs. Mr. Domu believes that Mr. Domu determines his children's happiness because he is a male leader who must manage the continuation of his children's lives. Mr. Domu also believes that his children's happiness is Mr. Domu's happiness as well. However, Mr. Domu's way does not make his children happy, and they feel pressured, which is further compounded by the strong Batak culture. According to (Puja), where the home is supposed to be the most comfortable place for his children to return and be their destination, it is different for Mr. Domu's three sons. They feel uncomfortable being at home due to their father's behavior of always controlling their lives, so the three sons choose to wander off.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the portrayal of toxic masculinity in the film "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap" will be examined through the three semiotic levels proposed by John Fiske, providing a deeper analysis of how this theme is woven into the narrative and visuals of the film.

1. Reality Level: Signs of toxic masculinity are primarily embodied in the character of Mr. Domu. His demeaning facial expressions and aggressive tone in dialogue are consistent throughout the film. His forceful way of speaking and desire to assert dominance over others are not just verbal, but also reflected in his body language, which reinforces the toxic masculine ideals he represents. These small but powerful signals communicate the traditional, authoritative stance he holds within his family and society.
2. Representation Level: The film's cinematographic choices are crucial in illustrating toxic masculinity. Techniques such as "extreme long shots" and "long shots" are used to establish Mr. Domu's physical presence in relation to the environment, often making him seem imposing or controlling. The "medium long shot," "medium shot," and "over-the-shoulder shot" capture his facial expressions and body movements in intimate detail, drawing attention

to the subtle physical cues that reveal his internalized need for control and dominance. These shots emphasize his stature and demeanor, reinforcing the toxic masculinity theme visually.

3. Ideology Level: At the ideological level, Mr. Domu's character is shaped by a deep-seated individualism and cultural traditionalism. His behavior reflects an unwavering focus on his own goals and ambitions, with little regard for the emotional well-being of his family or others around him. He adheres strongly to Batak cultural values, particularly those that stress authority and patriarchal leadership, which conflict with the evolving expectations of his children, who find his approach outdated and oppressive. The tension between his rigid adherence to cultural norms and his children's rejection of them highlights how toxic masculinity, intertwined with race and cultural identity, can alienate younger generations, creating rifts within the family dynamic.

In sum, the film “Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap” presents a complex portrayal of toxic masculinity through both its narrative and visual storytelling, effectively illustrating how traditional cultural expectations and personal ideologies can manifest in harmful behaviors.

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