



Unveiling toxic masculinity symbols: Peircean semiotic analysis in films “*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*”



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ABSTRACT

“*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*” movie depicts how societal pressures concerning masculine characters are illustrated through male attractiveness, centered around their genitalia, the dominance of power, the suppression of emotions or sadness, and physical strength and toughness. According to Terry A. Kupers, toxic masculinity comprises four main components: the suppression of anything labeled as feminine, emotional repression, male domination, and aggression. This study employs a qualitative and descriptive approach to illustrate the phenomenon of toxic masculinity in films. The data collection is conducted through documentary, observational, and literary methods and subsequently analyzed using Peirce’s semiotics by examining icons, indexes, and symbols. The research results demonstrate that the representation of toxic masculinity in the film is portrayed through Ajo Kawir as the main character who suffers from impotence and adopts masculine traits to mask his condition. Toxic masculinity behavior is more likely to be produced when Ajo Kawir’s masculinity is threatened. Ajo’s toxic masculinity behavior becomes more extreme after experiencing erectile dysfunction. Furthermore, this research reveals that sexual power is a part of toxic masculinity, depicted by viewing male genitalia as a symbol of virility. Related to the characteristics of toxic masculinity, this research identifies a complementary character in Kupers’ concept, which is excessive sexual processes.



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1. Introduction

As the award-winning film at the Locarno Film Festival, “*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*,” the movie not only portrays the violence perpetrated or experienced by its characters but also depicts how the societal environment normalizes such behavior. The main character, Ajo Kawir, experiences impotence and resorts to violence as a way to conceal his condition. In the context of toxic masculinity, violence becomes a tool for asserting one’s masculinity [1] and fulfilling societal expectations of true manhood [2]. Ajo Kawir’s use of violence is also one aspect of constructing a powerful male character, wherein the male genitalia is seen as a symbol of potency [3]. Through this approach, the film “*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*” provides a vivid depiction of men who are both victims and perpetrators of violence due to toxic masculinity, employing various signs such as icons, indices, and symbols. Therefore, this study focuses on illustrating the chain of events within the phenomenon of toxic masculinity, with a particular emphasis on men as its victims. Excessive sexual aggression within toxic masculinity can ultimately lead to sexual violence [4] and discrimination against men who do not conform to the ideal symbols of masculinity [5]. One of the impacts of such characters on men, particularly those with impotence, is a lack of self-confidence [6]. “*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*” movie illustrates how societal pressures regarding

masculine characters are demonstrated through the emphasis on male attractiveness centered around their genitalia [4], [7], dominance of power [8], suppression of emotions or sadness [9], and physical strength and toughness [10].

The character Ajo Kawir in this film not only demonstrates how impotence leads him to engage in continuous acts of violence but also indicates that this behavior is a result of various societal pressures regarding misguided concepts of masculinity. The construction of masculinity has indirectly compelled men to conform to standardized or idealized images of masculinity to demonstrate their manhood [11]. If these misguided masculine characters continue to be embraced, it increases the likelihood that men will face several risks leading to interpersonal and structural violence [12]. Toxic masculinity is deemed harmful to everyone involved, including women who become victims, women who defend such concepts, individuals who fall victim to or are excluded by it, as well as children who are forced to adapt to toxic masculinity [13]. Toxic masculinity is a concept of unhealthy masculinity and is associated with socially regressive male traits that aim to promote superiority, devaluation of women, sexism, and indiscriminate violence [14]. Toxic masculinity refers to a set of socially constructed attitudes, behaviors, and expectations related to traditional masculinity that are harmful to both men and women. The concept of toxic masculinity portrays men as aggressively dominant beings with power, strength, and anger [8].

According to Terry A. Kupers, toxic masculinity has four main components depicted as the suppression of anything labeled as feminine, emotional repression, male domination, and aggression [15]. Behaviors formed from the concept of toxic masculinity indicate that it damages male identity, and the word "masculinity" has been misconstrued to practice such behavior. Men are then forced to adhere to masculine characters that dictate how they should behave. In some cases, these concepts have been enforced since childhood [10]. Men who cannot conform to the standard of masculinity tend to experience an identity crisis and are susceptible to bullying [16]. Previous research related to toxic masculinity has been conducted by Udasmoro, revealing that violence is one of the consequences of unhealthy masculine behavior that has been normalized [7]. Toxic masculinity is also linked to sexuality, where men are considered masculine when they can demonstrate their sexual function and dominate women [4]. The difference between this study and previous research lies in the research object, as this study focuses on depicting men with erectile dysfunction who exhibit toxic masculinity. This research aims to examine and analyze the representation of toxic masculinity in "*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*" movie by Edwin through icons, indexes, and symbols present in the film scenes, using Peirce's semiotic method.

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method and a semiotic approach or the science of analysis in examining signs [17]. According to Piliang, the semiotic approach is an intensive method used in cultural studies, especially in studying popular culture, such as films [18]. In general, a film is created by producing numerous signs that aim to achieve the desired effects during its delivery process, especially in visual and audio forms [17]. Visual composition is a part of the formulation between semiotics and aesthetics through cinematic language narration, which implicitly conveys information [19]. The researchers collected cut scenes in the movie that contain verbal codes and objects (image) to be classified based on the toxic masculinity concept using indicators including the presence of toxic masculinity depicted through the oppression of women, dominance, aggression, emotional repression, and the male genitalia as a symbol of virility. In this research, the semiotic framework used is Charles Sanders Peirce's, which aims to examine how icons, indexes, and symbols are represented in the "*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*" movie. Therefore, the data analysis involves three stages. First is the icon stage, which deals with signs that resemble the objects they represent [20]. Second, the index stage involves signs that have a direct relation to what they represent [21]. Third, the symbol stage which encompasses signs whose relations are determined by general rules or mutual agreements [22]. The researchers also employed the triangulation method to validate the research findings. The triangulation method practiced involved conducting interviews with a film expert, Greg, as a film editor.


3. Results and Discussion

In the “*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*,” the presence of toxic masculinity is depicted through the oppression of women, dominance, aggression, emotional repression, and the male genitalia as a symbol of virility [3], [15].

3.1. Dominance

The icon of dominance is portrayed through a motorcycle racing scene, which begins with a visualization of the rapidly spinning motorcycle wheel. The arena is filled with spectators, mostly men, cheering and eagerly awaiting the continuation of the motorcycle race. The motorcycle race starts, and Ajo emerges as the winner, followed by Ajo's celebration on top of the motorcycle. The body gestures of Ajo Kawir and his opponent are depicted with their bodies leaning forward and shoulders moving backward. This position can be interpreted as a challenging stance taken to face their opponent in the competition. Besides body gestures, Ajo Kawir's expression shows defiance and a smile, characterized by sharp eye gaze, forehead and eyebrow wrinkles, and a narrowing of the lips. As for the smiling expression, it is shown with an upward movement of the lips, the dominance of the upper teeth visible, and the eyes slightly narrowed. The index of dominance begins with the sound of a loud motor engine roar. This sound indicates repeated pulling of the motorcycle throttle, thus signifying competition or rivalry. In addition to the motor sound, this scene also contains the index of cheering and applause from the spectators, providing clues of ongoing competition and creating a competitive atmosphere. Another index is found in the conversation between Pria A, who says, “*Gua tahu lu gak punya nyali*” (I know you don't have the guts). This shows that this type of game is done to stimulate the adrenaline of men [23], related to elements of power, masculinity, toughness, courage, and others. Table 1 is a scene of Ajo Kawir racing a motorbike.

Table 1. Scene of Ajo Kawir racing motorbike

Sign	Peirce's Semiotics		
	Icon	Index	Symbol
<div></div> <div>Minutes 01:06-02:14</div>	Motorbike racing scene	The roar of the motorbike engine Dialogue Man A “ <i>Gua tahu lu gak punya nyali</i> ” “I know you don't have the guts” Dialogue Tokek “ <i>Jagoan dari Bojong Soang</i> ” “The hero from Bojong Soang” Exhaust fumes Cheering of the audience	Bottles of drinks as competition objects Ajo's body gestures.

The competition in this scene is also a deeply rooted culture in the patriarchal social construction, used as a means to prove the existence of men, or in other words, this activity is used as a way to demonstrate masculinity with the aim of gaining respect among their peers. Another index is shown through the dialogue of Pria B, who says, “*Dan di sisi sebelah sana, ada juara bertahan kita*” (And on the other side, there's our defending champion), and then Tokek responds, “*Ajo Kawir jagoan dari Bojong Soang!*” (Ajo Kawir, the champion from Bojong Soang!). This dialogue reveals Ajo Kawir's dominant position in the motorcycle race competition, giving Ajo higher authority and respect from those around him. This racing scene is symbolized by a bottle filled with cigarette butts, which conveys the understanding that Ajo and his opponent are competing or racing to claim the bottle with their motorcycles. The next symbol is found in the body language when Ajo Kawir wins the competition. Ajo's body position is open, with certain body parts such as hands and chest held high, signifying pride. The findings of iconic,

indexical, and symbolic signs in this scene are further reinforced by an interview with Greg (film editor, interview, July 15, 2023).

In the early part of the film, during the introductory phase, we see men engaging with adrenaline. Motorcycles, you know. It's related to something masculine, playing with adrenaline and playing like a typical man. Ajo Kawir, as the introduction in the early part of the film, shows that he is brave and not afraid of anything. His opponent had a more serious expression, but Ajo Kawir is a daring person (Greg, a film editor, interview, July 15th, 2023).

3.2. Aggression

The icon of aggression begins with a scene of a fight between Ajo Kawir and a group of men. It starts with Ajo Kawir throwing peanut shells at the male actors who inquire about Ajo Kawir's impotence condition, leading to a fight between the two characters. However, the fight escalates as more people get involved, and Ajo Kawir gets outnumbered, resulting in him being beaten down and stomped on by the group of men. The fight scene is visualized with a low-angle camera angle, which emphasizes the view from below or at the same level as Ajo's fallen body. This angle showcases the power of the men ganging up on Ajo Kawir and his vulnerability as he cannot fight back, portraying a sense of dominance among the men. This scene consists of the body movements of Ajo and the other men as icons of aggression, including punching, self-defense, and stomping on body parts. These movements are accompanied by Ajo Kawir's expressions, where he smiles with an upward widening of the lips, showing the upper teeth, and the corners of his eyes crinkle. Ajo also shows expressions of pain, with his eyes closed tightly, mouth open, and cheeks pushed up. Ajo Kawir's expressions differ from his opponent, Man C, who shows anger with furrowed eyebrows, bulging eyes, and a narrowing of the lips. The dialogue of Man C saying, "Hey, Jo, how's your dick doing?" is an index of aggression. This dialogue falls into the category of insult directed at Ajo Kawir, who is experiencing impotence. This insult leads Ajo to throw peanut shells at Man C's face as a defensive action. When someone challenges another person's masculinity, it is often responded to with defensive actions and violence [10]. Regarding aggression and masculinity, Greg has the following opinion:

Ajo Kawir himself, as we know, has a problem where he can't get an erection. Men are not supposed to show their weaknesses, so his way of covering it up is by immediately resorting to punching, engaging in fights, and getting into brawls. However, even when he's being ganged up on, Ajo Kawir doesn't show himself as a weak man; he laughs while being beaten. This is what Ajo is trying to portray. The atmosphere and the dangdut music played in the billiard hall indeed depict the Pantura people, their universe, environment, and prideful men (Greg, a film editor, interview, July 15th, 2023).

The next index is found in the sound effects of punches and body impacts. Indexes are also found in the lighting technique, which predominantly uses natural light with a focus on the object's back, resulting in only the shadow of the camera object being visible. The natural light technique creates a tense atmosphere and accentuates the fight scene in the film. Greg has an idea regarding the lighting associated with Ajo's background as follows:


The lighting in this scene aims to appear natural. Ajo Kawir looks darker because he is in a more 'dark' position personally, not shining like the other men, and in the end, he gets stomped on. In other words, Ajo Kawir doesn't appear superior here, not as outstanding as his other male friends (Greg, a film editor, interview, July 15th, 2023).

The symbol of aggression is found in the lighting color of the scene, depicted with dark bluish tones and red colors reflected from the billiard hall's lamp. This scene has a predominantly dark color, creating a gloomy atmosphere that can evoke negative or uncomfortable feelings. The combination of blue and black can signify danger, mystery, the presence of hidden threats, or impending disaster. Blue is often used in films to make the audience feel alienated and uncomfortable, while the red color from the lamp's reflection creates a dim atmosphere that indicates wrongdoing (behavior), danger, gloom, and wildness [24]. The second symbol of

aggression lies in the background music of dangdut, which depicts a harsh environment. Besides the background music, the symbol of aggression is also found in the visual background of the billiard hall. Billiards is a game with a masculine nature, as seen in the history of billiards in the 1920s, where it was an environment where men gathered and played [25]. The billiard hall is visualized as a dark place, which also signifies the presence of aggression. Table 2 is the Scene of Ajo Kawir fighting at the billiard place. The billiard hall as a symbol is further reinforced by Greg's words in the interview, as quoted below:

Ajo Kawir (is) in a cruel environment, with a harsh and contrasting look. The effectiveness of the shot is quite important because it uses a 16mm camera, which uses cellulite. Performances (scenes and camera techniques) are used to strengthen the feel of Ajo Kawir's character, who lives in a cruel environment, and the contrast in dark lighting is an important part of the setting.

Table 2. Scene of Ajo Kawir fighting at the billiard place


Sign	Peirce's Semiotics		
	Icon	Index	Symbol
	Ajo Kawir fights with a man	Ajo Kawir's expression	Light color Biliary tract Dangdut music
Minutes 04:29-05:2		Punch sound effect Lighting Dialogue of Man C: "Eh, Jo, burungmu apa kabar?" "Hey, Jo, how's your bird going?"	

3.3. Male Genitalia As a Symbol of Virility

The icon sign is depicted through a visual representation of Ajo Kawir masturbating in the bathroom, with his upper body exposed and a visual of a foaming soap bar. The act of masturbation is shown with the upper body swaying and his arms moving back and forth repeatedly. Ajo's masturbation movement is reinforced by his expression, showing effort with furrowed brow and raised eyebrows, closed eyes, narrowed lips, and flushed cheeks. The visual portrays Ajo's character resorting to masturbation to cope with his erectile dysfunction, especially after falling in love with a woman named Iteung. The index sign is shown through a close-up shot of the soap bar. The visual of the soap bar is depicted with foaming, indicating the act of masturbation, where the soap serves as a means to facilitate the activity due to its slippery nature. The scene is also marked by the presence of a sound effect of handshaking on the genitals, indicating Ajo's act of masturbation. Another index sign is found in Ajo's feeling of annoyance, characterized by hitting the wall of the bathroom and his expression with furrowed brows and sharp gaze. Ajo's sense of frustration signifies his feeling of pressure and failure to achieve an erection. The symbol sign can be found in Ajo Kawir's dialogue, saying, "*Burung. Kau harus bangun!*" (Dick, you must wake up!). Symbolically, the word '*burung*' (bird) in Indonesia refers to the male genitalia, and the word '*bangun*' (wake up) carries the meaning of erection. Moreover, the word '*harus*' (must) in this context indicates something that should naturally happen, particularly in this case, where Ajo masturbates after meeting and interacting with Iteung. Thus, Ajo tries to combat his impotence by masturbating to establish a romantic relationship with a woman. Another symbol sign is found in the lighting, which consists of brown, blue, and black colors, creating a cold ambiance and portraying a gloomy feeling [26]. Table 3 is the Scene of Ajo Kawir masturbates. The connection between the semiotic signs and the character of Ajo Kawir is further supported by Greg's statement as follows:

Lighting shows a natural direction; Ajo Kawir was hit by a silhouette because Ajo Kawir was in a 'darker' position personally, not shining, unlike the others, so in the end he was trampled. In other words, Ajo Kawir doesn't look superior and doesn't really stand out compared to his other male friends.

Table 3. Scene of Ajo Kawir masturbates

Sign	Peirce's Semiotics		
	Icon	Index	Symbol
 <p>Minutes 19:02 – 19:27</p>	Ajo Kawir masturbates	Soap Ajo Kawir's feelings of frustration Sound effects masturbate	Ajo Kawir's dialogue " <i>Burung, kau harus bangun!</i> " "Dick, you must wake up!" Light color


3.4. Emotional Repression

Iconic signs are found in the scene where Ajo Kawir is sitting in a semi-conscious state. Ajo Kawir falls in love with Iteung, and vice versa. His impotence condition causes him to lack confidence in front of Iteung. After several encounters with Iteung and receiving a love song sent through the radio, Ajo Kawir chooses to avoid her. Feeling vulnerable, he spends his night with alcoholic drinks and a desire to fight, which also reflects the iconic signs of emotional suppression and aggression. The expression of Ajo Kawir, while being semi-conscious at *Warung Wa Sami*, is depicted by half-closed eyelids, slow speech tone, and sluggish motor movements. The indexical signs in this scene are found in the side-lighting technique that focuses on the character Ajo Kawir and his emotions in detail. This technique creates shadow effects on the object and presents a dim light effect, thus creating a dramatic and sorrowful atmosphere. Analyzing the index, Greg has points regarding the relationship between the lighting technique and Ajo's character:

The development of lighting colors here shows a clash between cool and warm colors. This clash then indicates that Ajo Kawir tries to be on the cool side, but he also needs warmth, which is represented by Iteung. However, Ajo tries to maintain his masculinity, seeing that he dominantly stays on the cool side (Greg, a film editor, interview, July 15th, 2023).

Another indexical sign is found in Tokek's dialogue, saying, "*Orang bisa mati kalau gak tidur*" (People can die if they don't sleep), indicating that Ajo Kawir is experiencing anxiety or emotional instability related to his romantic relationship with Iteung. In this scene, Tokek also tells Ajo Kawir to meet Iteung with the phrase, "*Temuilah dia. Minimal kau balas lagu-lagunya. Katakan kau mencintainya atau semacamnya*" (Meet her. At least reply to her songs. Say that you love her or something like that), and Ajo responds with, "*Ku tak ingin mencintai siapapun*" (I don't want to love anyone), showing that Ajo's impotent condition leads him to avoid involvement in love emotions, which can be linked to a lack of self-confidence. Ajo Kawir resorts to alcohol to cope with his emotions, indicating how men struggle to express sadness, leading to alcohol abuse. Literature shows that sadness can be challenging for men because the expression of sadness and vulnerability is regulated and controlled by dominant masculine values. These values include rationality, and men who grieve may feel judged and alienated. While not all men are driven to conform to masculine norms, some men engage in risk-taking behaviors, including alcohol use, to cover up, control, or release their sadness [27]. In this scene, Ajo Kawir also shows his ambition to fight by saying, "*Aku ingin menghajar orang!*" (I want to beat someone up!), which serves as an index that the vulnerability experienced by Ajo makes him want to act aggressively as an outlet for his emotions. This scene is accompanied by brown lighting combined with black and blue colors, which symbolize the suppression of emotions, as it carries meanings of sadness, unhappiness, and heartbreak [28]. Table 4 is the scene of Ajo Kawir at the *Wa Sami* grocery store.

Table 4. Scene of Ajo Kawir at Wa Sami grocery store

Sign	Peirce's Semiotics		
	Icon	Index	Symbol
 Minutes 20:36-21:27	Ajo Kawir listens to the radio in a semi-conscious state	The sound effect of a glass bottle Lighting Ajo Kawir's dialogue "Aku ingin menghajar orang!" "I want to beat someone up!"	The meaning of brown light

3.5. Oppression of Women

The icon sign of character oppression in this scene is shown through the actions of Ajo and Tokek when they were a child who were peeping at Rona Merah as a woman being harassed by men. As a flashback story, the scene is captured using a point of view camera angle from Ajo Kawir's perspective as he peeks through the window vent, and the scene is filmed with a medium shot that details the body movements of Man 2 in committing sexual harassment to Rona Merah. Table 5 is the scene of Ajo and Tokek peeping on Rona Merah. The index sign of character oppression is shown through Ajo Kawir's dialogue when he asks Tokek, "Eh, liat apa sih?" (Hey, what are you looking at?) which indicates the act of secretly peeping into Rona Merah's house. This action falls under the objectification of women's bodies, which is considered an index of oppression toward femininity. In terms of visual pleasure, women are portrayed as objects of male enjoyment [29]. The sexual gaze becomes a mechanistic thought process due to the normalization or habituation in everyday life that places women's bodies as sexual objects [7]. This sexual gaze becomes a power for men and a sign that grants them the freedom to visually explore their environment compared to women. Women are reduced to objects not to be admired, but their bodies are considered worthless, thus allowing this practice to continue unchecked [7]. The index sign in this scene is also shown through the visualization of practical light coming from the bathroom, creating a dim lighting effect that emphasizes the darkness and horror of the rape scene. The practical light also helps to direct attention to the movements of the rapist. The finding of lighting as indexical of oppression is reinforced by Greg's statement as follows:


The cool colors show that there is no warmth in this house. But when Ajo peeps, we see them (Rona Merah and the two men) in a brownish light. This color can symbolize passion, desire, and heat. When they arrive, the atmosphere is cold; there is no passion. But when they enter, the light is turned on in the bathroom, and there appears passion (Greg, a film editor, interview, July 15th, 2023).

The symbolic sign of oppression is shown through the dark blue light outside Rona Merah's house, which symbolizes sadness or darkness [26]. Another symbolic sign is found in the lighting during the harassment scene in the bathroom. The scene has a combination of brown and blue colors, resulting in a negative impression and symbolizing dishonesty and filth [26]. The solar eclipse phenomenon in 1983 is also considered a symbolic sign, as the government prohibited people from directly observing the eclipse as it was believed to cause blindness. This phenomenon serves as a connection or marker to the events of Ajo Kawir and Tokek peeping during the rape incident. The solar eclipse becomes a symbol that Ajo and Tokek's act of objectifying women or witnessing the harassment before their eyes causes a disaster that leads Ajo to experience impotence. The findings of symbolic signs in this scene are reinforced by Greg's statement as follows:

They peeped because there was an event. What they did was indeed a reflection of toxic masculinity and also the back story of why Ajo Kawir became the man he is now. But the point of the story is the event that occurred when they peeped at men using women for their sexual satisfaction. Women became objects, even though the

woman there had mental problems. But she (the woman) was used for their sexual desires and Ajo Kawir witnessed it. This event becomes an experience that completes Ajo Kawir's journey to becoming like this. Then As for the solar eclipse phenomenon, it is associated with something harmful if we observe it directly; maybe it will harm ourselves, and here it is exemplified by Ajo Kawir witnessing before his very eyes, which then shapes his personality to be rough, as we saw earlier (Greg, a film editor, interview, July 15th, 2023).

Table 5. Scene of Ajo and Tokek peeping on Rona Merah

Sign	Peirce's Semiotics		
	Icon	Index	Symbol
<div></div> <div>Minutes 47:29 – 52:10</div>	Tokek and Ajo Kawir are peeking into the house of Rona Merah.	Lighting Ajo's dialogue "Eh, liat apa sih?" "Hey, what are you looking at?"	Light color 1983 solar eclipse phenomenon

The findings from the analysis of the “*Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*” movie highlight the culture of violence within society, particularly among men with impotence who live in such an environment. The culture of violence is a construction of masculine values, which encompass rough behavior, violence, aggression, physical strength, and dominance, whether it is expressed physically, verbally, or psychologically [7]. As a result, men are expected to correct or change their masculinity, but at the same time, they are also considered unaware of the pressures and impacts of these masculine concepts [30]. Ajo Kawir adopted toxic masculinity traits at an early age. Ajo peeked at Rona Merah, who was inside the house and being harassed by a man. His action was influenced by his friend, Tokek, who had already peeked. Ajo's curiosity about Tokek's behavior led him to exhibit toxic masculinity by objectifying women. Based on this, male peers play a role in the occurrence of toxic masculinity. Peers influence individuals in shaping masculine values or behaviors [31], [32]. When boys transition into adolescence, they center their social circles around peers in forming and perpetuating masculine norms. This behavior is done by contributing to the enforcement of masculine norms by challenging each other physically and verbally and encouraging risky behaviors, such as alcohol consumption, drug use, and unsafe sex [33]. The group of male peers displays their masculinity through an interest in heterosexual relationship activities, such as seducing or sexually conquering women [34]. Male friendships also contribute to the normalization of objectification and harassment of women's bodies [4], driven by the view of masculinity that considers placing women as sexual objects to be acceptable for men [7]. Previous research has shown that young men perceive their male peers to be less supportive of gender equality and non-violent masculine norms [35]. Ajo and Tokek's actions of secretly peeking at Rona Merah resulted in Ajo being caught and sexually assaulted by a police officer who raped Rona Merah. This incident caused Ajo to experience erectile dysfunction as a manifestation of the trauma he endured.

Overall, Ajo's toxic masculinity behavior becomes more extreme after experiencing erectile dysfunction. This condition is related to the value of masculinity based on the notion of male genitalia as a social construct. The male genitalia is considered a symbol of dominance and strength, which is part of an individual's masculinity. Strength or virility related to the male genitalia is measured by size [36], erectile ability [3], sexual penetration [37], and other factors. A focus on male genitalia-centered sexuality can lead to confusion about one's personality or sexual identity. And when the male genitalia does not function according to the dominant concept, men perceive it as a loss of their manhood [38]. Therefore, men who are unable to perform sexually ideally may manifest marginalized or subordinate forms of masculinity, leading to feelings of humiliation or despair. Ajo Kawir also resorts to aggression towards other men who attempt to demean him due to his impotence condition. In the masculine world, men with low masculinity values or those who do not conform to the ideal conditions set by society

are at risk of experiencing intimidation and discrimination [32], [39]. Men who spend most of their time living and interacting with other men demonstrate an excessive adherence to traditional male role norms. As a result, men classified under this concept tend to compete with their male peers, often trying to become rougher and more dominant [40]. Being seen as honorable is considered the most important construction of masculinity [41]. However, when faced with heterosexual relationship issues, Ajo shows vulnerability and a lack of self-confidence. The encounter between Ajo and Iteung leads Ajo to feel unworthy of being in a relationship with a woman due to his inability to have an erection. Men with erectile dysfunction have the belief that when they cannot sexually satisfy a woman, it is a failure on their part [37].

Regarding the analysis of the *"Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas"* movie, the characteristics of toxic masculinity that Ajo possesses intersect with each other. The implications of these characteristics can be observed through the relationships of dominance with the oppression of women and aggression. Dominance in toxic masculinity represents the power of men as the superior party in various societal contexts [10], and this is implemented through the conquest of the inferior party by oppressing women and using aggression towards other men to maintain hierarchical power. The next connectivity of characters is the relationship between the suppression of emotions and aggression. The value of masculinity requires men to exhibit toughness, including not showing vulnerable emotions such as sadness. As a result, men may struggle to express emotions and, instead, produce feelings of anger [42]. At a more dangerous level, this anger can turn into aggression and potentially harm others. Thus, it can be said that toxic masculinity is a concept of masculinity that seeks to uphold the dominant position of men and preserve ideal masculine values in society through destructive means.

Related to the characteristics of toxic masculinity, this research identifies a complementary character in Kupers' concept, which is excessive sexual prowess. In the male world, they perceive sexual strength as the most powerful asset in life, demonstrated through erections, penetrations, and prolonged sexual encounters to be considered a 'true man' [43]. According to Ester Lianawati, male genitalia is used as a symbol of virility and can be a means to acquire power [3]. Men who have issues with their sexual abilities, including impotence, it leads to feelings of pressure. In the *"Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas"* movie, Ajo Kawir lives in an environment with an excessive understanding of normative masculinity or toxic masculinity. His sexual inability causes Ajo to become aggressive and develop a lack of self-confidence. Specifically, men experiencing erectile dysfunction or impotence tend to interpret it as a threat to their masculinity, leading to anxiety and the belief that they are not real men [41]. The failure in men's sexual abilities also results in increased anxiety, fear, loss of self-confidence, and symptoms of depression [6]. This not only affects individuals but also depicts a perception of sexual dominance over women [44]. This scheme of toxic masculinity characteristics can be seen in Fig.1.



Fig. 1. Toxic Masculinity Characteristics

4. Conclusion

Based on the presentation and data analysis of the research, the following conclusions can be drawn: the data analysis of 5 film scenes resulted in representations of toxic masculinity with characteristics such as suppression of feminine aspects, male domination, aggression, and the male genitalia as a symbol of virility. The research found that the toxic masculinity displayed by the main character, Ajo Kawir, began at an early age influenced by peer pressure. As a boy experiencing impotence, Ajo Kawir subsequently adopted toxic masculinity traits, especially in the form of aggression, to demonstrate or uphold his masculinity within the societal environment. As a whole system, the various traits of toxic masculinity are interrelated in shaping masculine norms within society and in *Seperti Dendam Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas* movie. The traits of aggression, oppression of women, and dominance are influenced by the concept of male genitalia as a symbol of virility. Toxic masculinity in this film is also depicted as a recurring pattern that starts in a boy's childhood and then turns them into a victim of toxic masculinity while unconsciously perpetuating and propagating this concept back into society. Considering the importance of this research in understanding toxic masculinity in men, several limitations need to be addressed to assist future research. The use of semiotic methods in this study only focuses on examining signs of toxic masculinity in the film. Therefore, future research is encouraged to employ case study methods to further explore the causes of toxic masculinity in men with impotence from social, cultural, and other aspects. Furthermore, the research finds that toxic masculinity in men is often depicted as tough and suppressing emotions. Therefore, for the creation of similar films it can encourage the portrayal of male characters expressing vulnerability, emotions, and struggles. Move away from the traditional depiction of being stoic and emotionless to show that vulnerability is a human experience, not exclusive to any gender.

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