

## DEAR DAVID FILM RECEPTION AMONG INDONESIAN YOUNG WOMEN

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### Abstract

The film Dear David is a film released in 2023 that raises the issue of feminism. The film itself was directed by Lucky Kuswandi. After its screening, this film attracted a lot of controversy from people from various groups, there were those who agreed and there were also those who rejected it. The existence of this controversy made the author want to know more about the reception of film screenings for teenagers, especially about the issue of feminism raised in this film. In further analyzing teenagers' receptions related to this film, researchers used basic theory to assist researchers in finding research data. The basic theory used in this film is reception analysis theory which is a development of Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory. Stuart Hall also explained that this process goes through three different moments, namely encoding,

In this study, researchers used research methods with a qualitative approach. Then, the subjects of the research were Indonesian teenagers aged 18 - 24 years, female, and had watched the film Dear David. This research uses primary data conducted through interviews and observations and secondary data obtained from previous research, scientific journals, books and other sources relevant to the research. The results of this study indicate that there are differences in the answers given from the 13 informants in the study. The results obtained are that there are two informants who are in a position of dominant hegemony. Then, five informants were in negotiating positions, and 6 informants were in opposition positions

### Keywords

Reception Analysis, Dear David, Young Girls



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INTRODUCTION

Film is a part of mass media that has the ability to convey messages. Films consisting of audio and visuals have the ability to influence the emotions of the audience from the visual images presented (Alfathoni 2020:1). These elements are motivated by a story that contains a message that the director wants to convey to the audience. Therefore, a film can have an implied meaning in it that the filmmaker wants to convey to the audience. Apart from that, film is also a mass communication product whose influence can reach all social segments of society. Films can represent a culture and function as a cultural process of a society which is presented in the form of moving images. Filmmaking is of course also influenced by the background and culture of the makers. Some films are usually lifted from everyday life or based on problems and situations that occur in real life, ranging from bullying, sexual harassment, and many more. One film that raises some of these issues is the film Dear David (2023).

This Indonesian film entitled Dear David (2023) is a romantic fantasy drama film directed by Lucky Kuswandi. The film Dear David tells the story of a teenage girl who is still in high school named Laras. He is a child whose parents are proud, because he has many achievements. Even at school, Laras is known as a smart student and student council president who is loved by the teacher. But it turns out behind his mask as an outstanding student in front of many people, Laras has a secret he is hiding. No one knows that Laras is a wild fantasy blog writer.

The film Dear David caused controversy, there was a lot of debate among netizens who watched it, and it received an unexpected reaction from Joko Anwar, who is a famous director, screenwriter and producer in Indonesia. Via Twitter social media on February 12 2023, Joko Anwar commented in the form of a thread on his personal Twitter account (@jokoanwar) emphasizing that films do not need to be given the burden of educating. Movies provide experience, follow the journey of the characters, and use it as material for thinking about our own lives. Films that meet our expectations give us satisfaction, films that don't meet our expectations provide material for reflection.

This film seems to describe the paradigm of our society towards women. So far, there are still many assumptions that say that women who wear open clothes will become victims of harassment, or what is even more tragic is the myth in society that women who wear open clothes are women who stimulate sexual harassment themselves. Furthermore, the existence of a bad stigma against women is also conveyed in the Kompasiana article. Where can the article be accessed at [www.kompasiana.com](http://www.kompasiana.com) This mentions that in several scenes in the film it shows that Dilla is

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Stigma is the disapproval of a person or group of people based on certain distinguishing characteristics or their existence being undesirable in society. According to Merriam Webster (2019, accessed 3 July 2023). Stigma is also a negative belief that a person has to underlie the injustice that a group of people has about something.

Women's stigma can occur in various aspects of life, including at work, in the family, in politics, in the mass media, and in popular culture. Examples of common women's stigma include the assumption that women are less competent or capable in certain fields, the idea that women are weaker or more emotional than men, gender role stereotypes that require women to be the caretakers of the household, and so on.

Not only that, women's stigma can also produce gender gaps and inequalities in terms of income, employment opportunities, political participation, access to education and health services, and reproductive rights. Also, women's stigma can also lead to injustice, harassment, or violence against women.

### Reception Analysis Theory

Reception Analysis is one of the audience studies in mass communication. This theory is used to examine the reception and meaning of messages by audiences as well as the role of messages received by audiences through the media. Reception itself comes from Latin which means *recipere*/reception (English) which means welcoming or receiving readers. Reception with a broad understanding, namely, ways of giving meaning and processing text to television shows, so as to provide a response to it. Reception theory (reader's meaning) focuses on how the reader or audience receives the message, not on the sender of the message. The meaning of the message depends on the audience's cultural background and life experiences.

### RESEARCH METHODS

The research subjects that will be used in this research are female teenagers. Of course, those who will be research subjects are also required to have several criteria, namely female gender, Indonesian citizens (WNI), aged 18-24 years, and have watched the film Dear David. The determination of these criteria was based on the fact that prospective informants who met the criteria determined by the researcher had a more in-depth view of the film Dear David, especially teenage girls who already had knowledge and perspectives on feminism, which is an issue from the screening of this film. In this regard, the determination of these criteria is expected to be able to provide a more in-depth description and information to researchers regarding their views and opinions regarding the film Dear David.

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This research design uses a paradigm to help ensure the consistency, validity and relevance of a study. According to the constructivist view, each individual has a unique understanding and interpretation of the world based on their personal experience and context. They do not just receive information passively, but actively interpret and construct their own knowledge. The author chose a qualitative research approach because this approach was deemed suitable to be used as the focus of the author's research entitled, "Dear David Film Reception among Young Girls". Therefore, this research will use a qualitative research approach with a constructivism paradigm.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Dominant Hegemonic Position

Based on the research, it is known that there are at least two informants who are in a position of dominant hegemony, namely Mareta Kristiani Teuf and Cut Dara Anzira. If you look at her profile, Mareta herself works as an English Tutor and is now 24 years old. Then for now he lives in Bali and has a Hindu religion. Meanwhile, Cut Dara is a 23 year old student majoring in Public Administration. Currently Cut Dara lives in Banda Aceh and is Muslim. From these brief profiles, it can be seen that the two informants have different backgrounds, namely place of residence, age, and religion, so it can be said that these three things did not have a major influence on the responses they gave in commenting on the film Dear David. Nevertheless,

### Negotiation Position

Furthermore, there were at least 5 informants who were in negotiating positions. Where, they have balanced answer options, whether it is opposition to dominant hegemony. The five informants who were in negotiating positions were Gabriella Yonathan, Mutiara Jihad, Jingga Kamila, Desi Rindiyanti, and Ifany. The majority of the responses they gave were related to a balanced assessment between the two positions, so that no one was dominant. The Negotiation Position here shows that the informants do not have one vote or reject the message conveyed in the film Dear David.

Basically, if you look at the profile and background, the informants who entered this negotiating position have different backgrounds, starting from domicile, religion, age, and current profession. From this, it can be seen that their different backgrounds make them have the same choice in their position as film lovers.

### Opposition Position

Basically, the opposition position itself is a position where the informant contradicts the message to be conveyed in a film or other work. In this case, there were 6 informants in the opposition

position or it could be said that almost half of the informants were in this position. Where, they think that the film Dear David does not convey a message to the wider community and can actually perpetuate bad stigma for society, one of which is related to clothing style. In the film, it is clear that Dilla, who is a student with a sexy appearance and often uploads "vulgar" photos on her social media, is suspected of being the author of "pornographic" content or stories.

Not only that, in this film it is also depicted that the main character, namely Laras, is a smart student, received a scholarship, looks innocent, is not in the slightest suspected of being the main perpetrator. Instead of placing suspicion on all students, the school actually placed high suspicion on Dilla and the school community was shocked to find out that Laras was the author of the content, who had always been considered an outstanding and innocent student. In this regard, many informants are in oppositional positions in this film.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research entitled "Dear David Film Reception among Indonesian Young Women" aims to determine the position of women in viewing the film Dear David from their point of view. According to reception analysis theory, there are at least three positions, namely the dominant hegemony position, the negotiation position, and the opposition position. Where, this hegemonic position relates to the conformity of the responses expressed by the informants to the content or message to be conveyed by the film, while the negotiating position relates to the responses of informants who do not agree 100% with the meaning conveyed in the film, so that they have their own views even though they are not rejects all arguments in the film. Meanwhile, the position is a position that is contrary to the message conveyed in the film, or can be said to be counter.

1. There were two informants who were in dominant hegemonic positions, namely Maretha Kristen Teuf and Cut Dara Anzira. Where they interpret the message conveyed in the film Dear David with a dominant hegemonic position or in other words, can receive the message in the film. This is because the two informants consider that the main character in the film is not a perfect character and should be a teenager in general so that the two informants can still accept the film Dear David.
2. There were five informants who were in negotiating positions, namely Gabriella Yonathan, Mutiara Jihad, Jingga Kamila, Desi Rindiyanti, and Ifany. Based on the different backgrounds above, the researcher positioned the five informants as a negotiating position because each of them had agreement and disagreement, and had many considerations in giving acceptance to the film Dear David. The disagreement of the five informants was seen in the

violation of privacy committed in the second scene and the stigma against women in the third and fourth scenes for accusing one of the characters which resulted in the character experiencing mental health problems.

3. There were six informants who were in opposition positions, namely Shena Lestari Oktaviany, Abigail Victoria, Rena Dwi Rengganish, Grace Kumala Dewi, Claudy Teressa, and Keukeu Kania Sari. The six informants above the researcher put in an oppositional position because the six informants above showed that there was rejection in the film Dear David. These six informants carried out the decoding process with the opposite meaning to what was given by the media. It can be seen in the scene where there is a violation of privacy and then the stigma of women that appears in this film. These six informants believed that the film did not respect a person's right to privacy and had created a bad stigma against the way women look.

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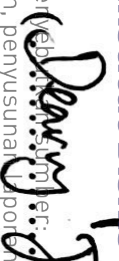
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