

**The Representation of Toxic Masculinity in the "Do Revenge" Movie**

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**A B S T R A C T**  
 Toxic masculinity is a social condition created by society in which men can't express their feelings, and they shouldn't cry and be weak otherwise, they will be violating the norm, that's because they can't express their feelings; they use violence, emphasizes power, discrimination against gender in general. Netflix's movie entitled Do Revenge present an american teenager with some problems in their life, and it presents the character that represents the behavior of toxic masculinity named Max Broussard. This study used the theory of toxic masculinity by Kupers (2001) to identify how Max's character represents toxic masculinity in the movie. The qualitative method with a case study approach was the primary methodology of this research. The researcher gathered the data by watching the movie, reviewing earlier studies, and concentrating on the language and the scene that addressed either direct or indirect toxic masculinity issues. Previous research has not specifically classified various forms of toxic masculinity, such as misogyny, greed, homophobia, and violent domination, within the context of character behavior in the movie. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in the more detailed classification of the forms of toxic masculinity that emerge in the character of Max in the movie "Do Revenge". The results of the study showed that the character represents toxic masculinity in the movie with 13 scenes and 15 dialogue data in the form of misogyny with the criteria hatred towards women, aggressive, likes to organize women, greed with the motive of sex, and violent domination with the category control, intimidation, and bullying.

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**Introduction**

The discussion about gender is very concerned to talk about, especially when it's happening in society. Gender is a manifestation of society in which only certain genders can engage in social practices. According to Dwiri & Okatan (2021) that in society, the term "gender" refers to the categorization of each sex into distinct features, as well as to what is supposed of men and women in terms of behavior. It is different from gender identity (sex), which Litosseliti (2013) in Yonata (2020) explains that gender (sex) is the physical or biological difference between men and women that is genetic. It is supported by Blackstone (2003) in Valera & Casakin (2022) that states how gender is socially constructed by people, groups, and societies give people certain traits, statuses, or values based on their gender, but these attributions vary across societies and cultures and over time within the same society. This gender phenomenon makes society see men as one person who must be strong and cannot be weak, and therefore the phenomenon of masculinity arises where men must follow the attitudes constructed by society.

A quality that many men strive for is masculinity. In reality, masculinity is a notion or a trait that is produced through culture and social interaction in society rather than something we are born with, Pleck (1993) Salim and Winardi (2020). In a general perspective, masculinity is a quality of character that is essential to becoming a leader and having a position of authority, the highest position in the social hierarchy. This may occur

as a result of widespread misconceptions about how to use masculine features. This misinterpreted phenomenon of masculinity gave rise to a new phenomenon called toxic masculinity.

Toxic masculinity is a free term that is utilized to allude to a subset of those practices which are hurtful or ruinous. It is frequently utilized as a kind of shorthand to describe practices related to indignity, domination, and control (Johnson, 2005 in Hidayah, 2020). According to the factnews.medium.com (2019) article titled "Toxic Masculinity," bullying occurs in men because of a more feminine body's character, shape, or gesture. Other examples of toxic masculinity include societal expectations that men must be strong, control their emotions when angry, manage relationships, and be less dominant in those relationships. It is supported by Falcão, Marcedo, & Kurtz., (2021) said that when faced with pressure and failure, men who are imprisoned in toxic masculinity always express their anger. Based on that explanation, toxic masculinity is a phenomenon that can be found in society, toxic masculinity is a norm where men should not have behaviors that deviate from what men should be, men who violate this norm will become someone who is labeled weak, seeing that situation men tend to commit violence so that they are considered more dominant, more powerful, more respected than women, and be seen as a real man.

Nowadays, watching movies is more than just a thing; it is an exciting and fun activity. A movie constitutes literature which is very interesting because the movie is a medium of communication that is audio-visual to convey a message to a group who gathered in certain places, Effendi (1986) Sugianto, Mingkid, & Kalesaran, (2017). In this movie, there are many things, such as the character, the plot, the setting, the theme, social aspects, messages, and values contained in the film. Netflix's movie was the one that selected for this study, which is called *Do Revenge*. *Do Revenge* is a 2022 American teenager black comedy movie on Netflix, the movie starts when Drea, the Alpha it-girl on campus and at the height of her high school powers, has her sex tape leaked to the entire school, apparently by her boyfriend and the undisputed ruler of the school, Max, her entire existence goes up in flames. There are some representations of toxic masculinity in this movie portrayed by one of the characters in the movie named Max. In this *Do Revenge* movie, it depicts a character who represents toxic masculinity, therefore, researchers want to research and describe some of these aspects by analyzing the character and the movie, for that reason, the researcher is going to reveal the toxic masculinity phenomenon that happened in the *Do Revenge* movie.

This research is applied to Kupers' (2001) theory on toxic masculinity for classifying, interpreting, and concluding the term toxic masculinity represented by Max in the *Do Revenge* movie. The theory was selected because the component of the theory is related and specific to analyzing toxic masculinity.

### **Previous Research**

The topic of the social issue in the movie was chosen in this research because, at this present, the gender issue is something that must be cared about, one is toxic masculinity which will be the primary topic of this study. The other researcher has already done research related to toxic masculinity. Salim & Winardi (2020) investigate the character of toxic masculinity that is portrayed within masculinity and that individuals use it incorrectly and misinterpret. The study's subject is based on David Fincher's movie *Fight Club*. The major character's words and the main character's emotional expression in the film serve as the researchers two main sources of information on the study's subject. The researchers of this study employed a qualitative approach with a couple of theories,

one of them using Kupers' theory to get the necessary data from the study's subject. The outcome of this research is a breakdown of toxic masculinity traits that are derived from masculinity traits. Knowing which forms of masculinity are deemed harmful and which are not requires the right perspective and awareness. The result of Sinta & Siagian (2021) based on their research about A Portrayal of Toxic Masculinity in Thanos's Avengers: Endgame found that Thanos is a greedy characteristic which he wants eliminated half of the population of humans in order to fulfill his objective of creating a better future, also the aggressive power as the toxic masculinity issue then portrays Thanos as a man who kills children, women, and innocent adults without regard for who they are. Toxic masculinity relates to power, Each of the three stages is a representation of the social elite, with Thanos as the father who rules the civilization's daughter. Sinta & Siagian (2021) used the theory of Terry A. Kupers (2001) to analyze toxic masculinity and Gaventa's (1980) theory to analyze the power that relates to toxic masculinity.

Different from the others, the next is about analyzing the toxic masculinity in a novel. Romadani (2020) found in his research in "Toxic Masculinity in Nadia Hashimis's The Pearl That Broke Its Shell" that the two most significant themes in the novel are violence and the subordination of women. Because it places them in a position of inferiority, the thought of women being subordinated may have negative effects on them. When males failed to live up to society's expectations of what it is to be a "genuine" man, this notion was destructive to them as well. The notion that males must be capable of using violence to assert their manhood is another aspect of toxic masculinity. Based on this concept, several of the novel's protagonists engage in violent behavior in an effort to live up to social expectations of what it means to be a "genuine" man.

Based on previous explanations about what toxic masculinity is, how the movie depicted a social issue, and the other researcher who has done research about toxic masculinity has been presented to understand this phenomenon. The uniqueness of this research lies in its detailed classification of toxic masculinity behaviors in the specific character of Max within the Do Revenge movie, providing a more focused and nuanced analysis compared to previous studies. The importance of this research has also been highlighted in facing the increasingly complex social reality and understanding the role of media in shaping society's views on gender and sexuality. In the following chapters, the concept of toxic masculinity and its application in a movie will be discussed in more detail. This research hope will provide a broader understanding of toxic masculinity and contribute to the discussion of gender and media in Indonesia.

### **Research Method**

This research approach aims to get answers to the problems contained in the research question, to be presented and analyzed in depth in the study of the representation of toxic masculinity in the Do Revenge movie, The design is used in a qualitative way. According to Olejnik & Reshetkova (2021), the qualitative research method is a method for gathering and analyzing non-numerical data (such as text that is an interview transcript, audio, or video) in order to grasp concepts, identify key elements of phenomena, or discover people's perspectives or experiences on a certain subject.

The main data of this research is a movie that contains the idea of toxic masculinity on Netflix's platform, the title of the movie is "Do Revenge". Therefore, the main data of this research is the movie and the transcript/subtitle of the movie. The data of this study will be taken from the discourse of the Movie. The source of the data will be in the form of visual/screenshots of the movie and texts in the form of dialogue from Max's character.

There are several steps employed in analyzing the data. First, the context of each data will be provided from Document Analysis. Second, the data will be classified as the four types of toxic masculinity according to Kupers (2001). They are misogyny (with categorizes hatred towards women, aggressive, and likes to organize women), homophobia (with categorizes irrational hatred, discomfort, and fear of homosexual people), greed (the intense and egotistical longing for something with categorized frequent motives are sex, money, material goods, celebrity, and attention or adoration), and violent domination (with the categorizes control, intimidation, bullying, physical aggression and dominance in particular circumstances). If it has been classified, the data will be analyzed using classification, interpreting, and concluding.

### Result and Discussion

This movie tells the story of teenagers who are full of twists and turns, telling the story of Drea and Eleanor, who work together to take revenge on their bullies, Max and Carissa. The duration of the movie is two hours and forty-nine seconds long. Max Broussard in the movie is portrayed by Austin Abrams, Max is famous for his wealth and being a handsome boy; as the student president of his school, he earns honor and is respected among the students in his school and someone who is very socially acknowledged. Once he gets into trouble related to his honor and dignity, to maintain his honor and remain socially recognized, he acts in a way, an attitude that shows toxic masculinity. Max's character was chosen because he exhibits several attitudes that show toxic masculinity, and this is the main focus of this research. The researcher would tell about how Max's character represents the toxic masculinity in the movie.

The results of the study showed that the character represents toxic masculinity in the movie with 13 scenes and 15 dialogue data in the form of misogyny with the criteria hatred towards women, aggressive, likes to organize women, greed with the motive of sex, and violent domination with the category control, intimidation, and bullying. This is an example of the results that the researcher found in the movie.



**Figure 1.** Max's misogyny scene in the form of hatred towards women (01:44:57 --> 01:45:13)

Data #4

Drea: "Where are you going with this, Max? What's your plan?"

Max: "Well... I put you through enough. I was just gonna let it all go. Really? No, not really. Why would I do that? I hate you."



**Figure 2.** Max's misogyny scene in the form of aggressive (01:49:31 --> 01:49:33)

Data #9

Allegra: "Aw!"

Max: "What are you doing, you stupid bitch?"



**Figure 3.** Max's misogyny scene in the form likes to organize women (06:16 -06:32)

Data #1

Max: "Yes. You were so hot. You know, maybe you could send me something to keep me company this summer."

Drea: "What do you mean?"

Max: "Well, just like a little something."

Drea: "Yeah?"

Max: "A little video."

Drea: "A little video?"

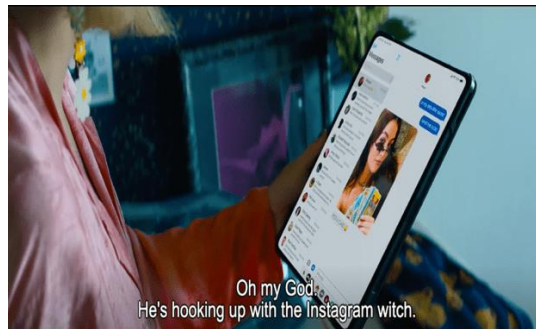
Max: "Yeah."

Drea: "You really want me to?"

Max: "Yeah., I love you."



**Figure 4.** Max's greed scene in the motive of sex (37.25)



**Figure 5.** Max's greed scene in the motive of sex (40:54 - 40:56)

Data #1

Drea: "Oh my God. He's hooking up with the Instagram witch."



**Figure 6.** Max's violent domination scene in the form of control (1.49.52)

Data #10

Max: "Fuck you. You're fucking nothing without me. You'd all be fucking nothing!"

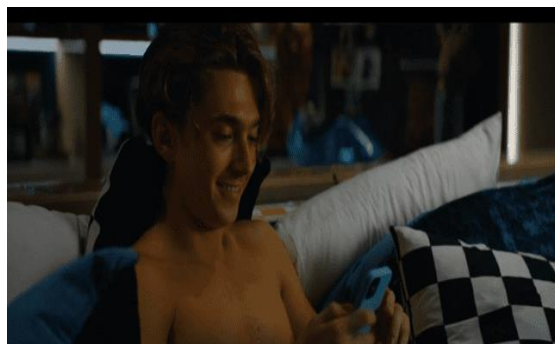


**Figure 7.** Max's violent domination scenes in the form of intimidation (1.03.45)

Data #8

Tara: "Fuck you, Max. We're over."

Max: "Goddamn it. Fuck! Fuck! Say goodbye to your daddy's Senate career."



**Figure 8.** Max's violent domination scenes in the form of bullying (07.21)



**Figure 9.** Max's violent domination scenes in the form of bullying (1.45.13)

The discussion below is used to further explore the reason or analysis of utterances and scenes that appear in the *Do Revenge* movie regarding toxic masculinity. The analysis will be supported by the theory from Kupers (2001). Based on the research conveyed above, there are the components that are discussed in the research finding. The component consists of the types of toxic masculinity that are represented by Max. This movie is about a teen drama that was pointed out by Drea, who broke up with Max after he leaked the sex video tape to everyone in her school, and after that, Drea and her friend Eleanor planned to get revenge on Max. From the data obtained from the document analysis of the movie and script movie on *Do Revenge* movie. Kupers (2001) explain several behaviors of toxic masculinity, which are Misogyny, Homophobia, Greed, and Violent Domination.

### ***The Misogyny Represented by Max***

Misogyny is defined as the hate of women and girls: "a sense of animosity against the female sex, a "disgust or abhorrence" toward women as an undifferentiated social category" (Gilmore 2018, cited in Walker, 2022). Max represents misogyny with hatred towards women, is aggressive to women, and likes to organize women, this picture and the data above is one of the examples of misogyny and hatred towards women. The scene and the dialogue shown at 1:45:13 describes that Max planned to destroy both Drea and Eleanor, and when asked by Drea what Max planned, Max lied when he was going to stop doing anything and chose to let go of what he had done, but he lied, he said why would he let go, he hated Drea. The dialog show "I hate you." above shows that Max hates Drea, and this is one of the criteria of Misogyny, namely hatred towards women.

His misogyny showed at 1:49:32 show when Max's secret gets leaked about how he leaked a sex video of his ex-girlfriend and how he hated his ex-girlfriend to the point of bullying her, then when it all came out, Max panicked, and he met one of his mistresses, and he got angry and took it out on her by speaking harshly to her. The dialog with the utterance "What are you doing, you stupid bitch?" shows that Max speaks harshly to Allegra, which can be included in the Misogyny criteria, namely hatred towards women. An aggressive misogyny scene appears at minute 1.49.33 where this scene shows when Max's secret is revealed he starts to riot and convinces people to avert their eyes from him and continue partying when he walks back and he nudges one of the women who is one of his mistresses and says rude things to her.

The scene and dialog show Max seducing Drea to send Drea a sex tape video so that Max can fulfill her desires. This scene and dialogue show that Max can organize Drea, and this shows one of the characteristics of Misogyny which is likes to organize women; this is shown by Max at minute 06:16 --> 06:32. "You know, maybe you could send me something to keep me company this summer." This dialog shows that Max is

asking Drea by seducing her to send him her sex tape video, this represents that Max likes to organize women. Max's misogyny is highlighted in the scenario when his secret of leaking a sex tape of his ex-girlfriend is revealed. In a flash of rage and terror, Max directs his rage at Allegra, one of his mistresses, using insulting language and referring to her as a "stupid bitch." This aggressive behavior reveals not simply his disregard for women but also how authoritarian ideas linked with toxic masculinity can lead to aggression against women.

According to Adrian (2021), one of the reasons men do toxic masculinity is that toxic masculinity refers to the incorrect view of masculinity. This ailment is also frequently cited as one of the causes of men developing misogyny. Some examples of toxic masculinity include the ideas that males shouldn't weep, that men are always stronger and rougher than women, or that women are objects of sexual desire. Some males may develop hatred towards women as a result of this thinking because they are unwilling to understand that there are women who are more successful than they are. This mindset typically results from a strong patriarchal culture in the family or society.

The analysis of the movie "Do Revenge" reveals the presence of misogyny as a significant aspect of toxic masculinity in the character of Max. Through scenes and dialogues, the film portrays Max's hatred towards women, aggressive behavior, and desire to control and organize women. Max doing misogyny because he has a very strong patriarchal background, ranging from wealth, many connections, and power because he is the president of his school, that reason makes him commit misogyny which is a component of toxic masculinity which is mentioned by Kupers (2001).

### ***The Motive of the Greed's Character Is Sex***

Max also shows Greed in this movie; Terry A. Kupers (2001) claims that "toxic masculinity" includes "hegemonic masculinity's" socially destructive traits, one of which is greed. Greed is the compulsive want to acquire or accumulate things in excess of what one needs. It may be for anything, but the most frequent motives are sex, food, money, material goods, celebrity, and attention or adoration (Tripathi, 2019). The scene that appears at 37:25 shows Max looking relaxed and happy when there are two women by his side, this shows that Max's motive is to have more than one woman, and that motive is included in sex, which is a criterion of Greed in Toxic Masculinity. At 40:54, His greed shows when Eleanor investigates Max's iPad for Drea (Max's ex-girlfriend). She found out that Max was actually cheating on Tara, despite being in a relationship with her at the time. Max's greed is that he is never enough of one woman, he cheats on half girls at school, even though at that time, Max was also in a relationship with Tara, and he even announced it when he dated Tara.

One noteworthy scene that highlights Max's greed is the one where he is pictured encircled by two women at 37:25. In this scenario, Max appears at ease and content, suggesting that having several women is his motivation. This fits with the sex-related part of greed seen in toxic masculinity. Additionally, at 40:54, Max's greed is exposed when Eleanor looks into his iPad and finds proof that he cheated on Tara, his then-girlfriend, with Drea, his ex-girlfriend. This scenario exemplifies Max's greed by showing his inability to be content with just one woman and his propensity to look for several lovers. These results are consistent with earlier research by Zeelenberg & Breugelmans (2022), who found a link between characteristic greed and actions, including looking for casual partners for sex, pursuing social status, and engaging in excessive consumption. These inclinations are shown in Max's actions throughout the film, as he puts his personal needs ahead of other people's emotional well-being.



The way that Max's character is portrayed as being greedy adds to the broader depiction of toxic masculinity in the film "Do Revenge." Max's greed reveals an attitude of entitlement and disrespect for other people's feelings and well-being, especially women. His actions contribute to a culture of objectification and exploitation by reinforcing the negative expectations and stereotypes associated with toxic masculinity. The film exposes the damaging effects of toxic masculinity by emphasizing Max's greed, giving viewers a chance to critically analyze and question these harmful actions and attitudes. It serves as a reminder of the value of encouraging wholesome, respectful relationships where people are respected for their character rather than their wealth or sexual prowess.

### ***Homophobia Absent in the Movie***

Homophobia is a culturally created fear of or prejudice towards homosexuals that occasionally displays itself in legislative limitations or, in extreme circumstances, bullying or even violence against gays (often referred to as "gay bashing"). Homophobia is a fear of or prejudice against homosexuals (Anderson, 2023). Homophobia behavior doesn't found in Max's character in the movie. In the movie, when Max's secret chats with several girls spread around his school, showing that he is cheating, Max's friends look for ways to help him get out of trouble. They begin to tell Max that with his girlfriend Tara, the relationship status is an open relationship where one partner can switch with another person with consent. After the story spread, many people wanted to date Max; even men also wanted to date Max, then there was no homophobic attitude or treatment of Max towards men in the movie.

Analyzing the visual and verbal data reveals that no images or language in the film indicate Max as being homophobic. This finding is consistent with the researcher's observations that Max's character primarily exhibits behaviors connected with violent dominance and misogyny. In the movie, Max's behaviors and views concentrate on wielding power and control over others, particularly women. His portrayal as a disturbed adversary character who bullies and engages in toxic masculinity behavior fits into the genre of violent domination.

### ***Exploring How Violent Domination Represented by Max***

According to Kupers (2001), toxic masculinity encompasses a range of behaviors, including violent domination, which involves the use of violence to establish power, such as through bullying, domestic violence, an authoritarian approach, etc. Feder, Levant, & Dean (2010) in American Psychological Association (2018) state that masculine ideals, like not being able to show how they feel and feeling pressured to live up to expectations of dominance and aggression, may make it more likely for men to do acts of violence, like bullying, assault, and/or physical and verbal aggression. The character represents violent domination with control, intimidation, and bullying, this picture and data are examples of bullying that represent violent domination in toxic masculinity. The picture data and dialog show the violent domination that represents by Max.

The scene appears at 1.49.52, this scene depicts Max being angry because no one took his side when his dirty secret was revealed, this is an act of violent domination because he is aggressive and he wants to have the power to control someone. The scene shown by Max is when people want to always be under his control, so he said, "Fuck you. You're fucking nothing without me. You'd all be fucking nothing!". He said that because he has control over them so he speaks harshly and feels superior. In terms of control, Max exhibits a strong desire to be in charge and have power over others. He believes that he

is intellectually superior and rational, even when he may lack knowledge or understanding. This desire for control is evident in his interactions with others, where he expects them to comply with his decisions and ideas without question. Max's aggressive and superior demeanor in the scenes indicates his need for dominance and control. The scene of control shows at 1.03.45 when Max's secret is revealed at the end of the movie, all hell breaks loose at the party, and he intimidates Tara, this is one of the criteria of Toxic Masculinity, violent dominance with the reason Max intimidated Tara.

Intimidation is another characteristic of toxic masculinity displayed by Max. He uses verbal threats as a means to intimidate others. In one scene, Max threatens Tara by mentioning her father's Senate career, demonstrating his willingness to harm her reputation and manipulate her through fear. This verbal threatening aligns with the characteristic of intimidation, where the offender uses words to instill fear and achieve their objectives. The scene shows at 07.21 that Max has successfully seduced Drea, so Drea sends her personal sex tape video to Max, and the next day the video is spread and distributed by Max, this is a criterion of Violent Domination, and the category is bully because he spread the video to the whole school.

The scene shown at 1.45.13 describe the situation in that Max admits that he spread Drea's sex tape video, and he feels relieved that he spread Drea's sex tape video, this is an act of Violent Domination, bullying, and dominance in particular circumstances. Because Max spread the video online, it was already a category of cyberbullying where people assumed Drea negatively about the sex tape video that she only sent to Max, but Max spread it instead, and in that situation, Max looked angry and emotional until he dominated in the situation. Bullying, particularly in the form of cyberbullying, is also prevalent in Max's behavior. He spreads a personal sex tape video of his ex-girlfriend, Drea, without her consent that showed in the scenes. This act of cyberbullying demonstrates Max's misuse of power and control to embarrass and humiliate others. The spread of the video negatively impacts Drea's reputation and illustrates the harmful consequences of bullying, especially when it is rooted in toxic masculinity.

The scenes analyzed in this study highlight the harmful effects of toxic masculinity on individuals and society. Max's behavior aligns with the findings of Kupers (2001) also Feder, Levant, & Dean (2010) in the American Psychological Association (2018), who emphasize the link between toxic masculinity and violent domination. The prevalence of control, intimidation, and bullying in Max's actions reinforces the notion that adherence to masculine ideals, such as dominance and aggression, can contribute to the perpetuation of violence. The depiction of these scenes in the movie serves as a reflection of the broader societal issue of toxic masculinity. It sheds light on the harmful consequences of adhering to rigid gender roles and the pressure men face to conform to expectations of dominance and aggression. By analyzing these scenes and understanding the underlying dynamics, we can foster discussions and interventions to challenge and change toxic masculinity norms.

Related to the results and discussion above, this research leads to the conclusion of this findings and discussion section that Max's character represents the toxic masculinity associated with misogyny, greed, and violent domination. Max demonstrates hatred for women in his depictions by devaluing and disorganizing them, exhibiting self-serving, sexual motivations, and using control, intimidation, and bullying to dominate others. Despite the absence of homophobia in Max's character, this study emphasizes the importance of recognizing and analyzing the toxic masculinity portrayed in the movie's characters.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of Max's character in the movie "Do Revenge" through the lens of toxic masculinity, as defined by Kupers (2001), has unveiled distinct manifestations of misogyny, greed, and violent domination. The detailed analysis of 13 scenes and 15 dialogue instances sheds light on Max's explicit representation of toxic masculinity, illustrating attitudes deeply rooted in societal expectations and patriarchal norms.

Max's character vividly embodies misogyny, expressing hatred towards women, displaying aggressive behavior, and revealing a propensity to control and organize them. These behaviors not only reflect toxic masculinity but also emphasize the detrimental impact of such attitudes on interpersonal relationships, underscoring the urgency for a reassessment of societal expectations. Furthermore, the movie portrays Max's traits of greed, particularly in the context of sexual desires. His insatiable appetite for multiple relationships, while in a committed one, exemplifies the toxic nature of such behaviors, contributing to the objectification and exploitation of women. This highlights the need for a cultural shift towards healthier and more respectful relationships. While homophobia is absent in Max's character, the study emphasizes the broader implications of toxic masculinity on societal perceptions.

The research underscores the critical need for heightened awareness of toxic masculinity's representation in media and its potential impact on gender norms. By delving into the nuances of Max's character, this study aims to contribute to discussions surrounding gender expectations and advocate for more positive and inclusive portrayals of masculinity. Moving forward, it is crucial to recognize the influential role of media in shaping societal views and actively challenge the perpetuation of harmful gender stereotypes. Future research endeavors should continue exploring the multifaceted nature of toxic masculinity, fostering a comprehensive understanding of its impact on individuals and society at large.

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