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HOW IS MASCULINE IDEOLOGY REPRESENTED IN RADITYA DIKA'S STAND-UP COMEDY?

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Abstract

This research aims to explicate how the ideology of masculinity is represented in Raditya Dika's stand-up comedy. Stand-Up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) is a collection of stand-up comedy performances created by comedian and writer Raditya Dika since 2016. Humor centered around masculinity and all things related to it consistently features in Raditya Dika's stand-up material. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, this research examines masculinity within the context of SUCRD performances, with a specific focus on one episode titled Cowok Goblok featuring two monologues. This episode serves as an illustrative example of how masculine ideology is represented. The researcher limits the scope to one episode to avoid data saturation. Two key findings emerge from this study. Firstly, masculine ideology is conveyed verbally through the use of affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor. Secondly, masculine ideology is represented through narratives about decision-making, maturity, characteristics, expectations, and

appearance of men. Stand-up comedy serves as a medium and space for the perpetuation of masculinity.

Keywords

Masculinity, Humor, Stand-up Comedy, Raditya Dika

1. Introduction

Stand-up comedy is originating from America has gained popularity through various channels (Cooper, 2019; Lindfors, 2019) and has become a creative business in the era of new media (Sihombing, Fajri, Sonali, & Lestari, 2023). Stand-up comedy revolves around the relationship between the audience and the comedian (Abrahams, 2020). Comedians do not merely aim to make the audience laugh but to laugh together with the comedian or laugh at each other (Kawalec, 2020). The audience's trust in the comedian significantly influences the humor's hilarity.

This is especially true when the humor is delivered by Raditya Dika, the founder of Stand-Up Indo and Indonesia's finest comedy writer. Starting his career as a blogger and writer, Raditya Dika has also starred numerous films. His fame led his way to create his personal YouTube channel, which now has more than 10 million subscribers (Raditya Dika, 2023). On his channel, Raditya Dika commonly uploads his various performances in Stand-up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) from year to year. This spectacle managed to attract audience attention. For example, SUCRD 2019 has surpassed 19 million viewers. The 1 hour 5-minute video is the video with the most views among other SUCRD videos. Raditya Dika always presents jokes about relationships and masculinity, which are closely related to the common teenage problems. As in the 2017 SUCRD trailer entitled *When a Girl Breaks Up*, Raditya Dika talked about the difference between men and women when dealing with friends who have just broken up with them.

The aforementioned description is a factual condition when masculinity is used as humor in SUC material, especially SUCRD, which makes it a noteworthy research topic in this study. This is also strengthened by the author's personal preference as the research background since Raditya Dika is one of the most popular comics with huge fans and endless brilliant works. His fame is well portrayed in an article published on sindonews.com with the title *Let's Peek at 6 Famous and Influential Comics in Indonesia*, placing Raditya Dika in the first place. Having a popular stage name as Radit, this figure plays an important role in the development of the SUC trend, and serves as a pioneer and driving force through various communities.

In addition to examining Raditya Dika within the Indonesian context, the author compares him on an international scale. For instance, the popularity of Chappelle's Show, which addresses issues of race and black masculinity in its humor (Balkin, 2023; Padilla, 2023; Wetterberg, 2012; Zakos, 2009). Using Du Bois' double consciousness approach, Wetterberg (2012) demonstrates that Dave Chappelle's performance is a non-violent protest against racial and social disparities. Furthermore, on September 8, 2023, five female comedians from Texas, namely Avery Moore (Amazon Prime), Angelina Martin (Comedy Central), Sonia Trevino (Funniest in the RGV), Genivive Clinton (Kill Tony Podcast), and TPR's Tori Pool (Worth Repeating Podcast), appeared in TPS's Creekside Comedy Sessions. During their performance, they discussed sexism among comedians (Padilla, 2023). There is also the Hong Kong-based female comedy group, Bitches in Stitches, which addresses issues of female empowerment (Anggraini, 2022). These examples highlight how gender relations have become a dominant issue within the realm of comedy and humor (Pauwels, 2021).

In his humor, Raditya Dika focuses on the dominance of men over women through mockery and ridicule as a form of entertainment. For example, he states, *"In terms of evolution, perhaps short guys are often considered weak. Because women really want tall, muscular guys who can protect them,"* and *"Let me tell you, men are definitely cheating. It's inevitable. We were created to hunt from the beginning."* Previously, research conducted by Lubis (2017) analyzed Raditya Dika's linguistic style in comedy. Sudarsono (2016) revealed how language serves as a medium for demonstrating the representation of women's assumed dominance over men in Raditya Dika's stand-up comedy. Therefore, this research complements the academic discourse by addressing the research question: *How is the masculine ideology represented in Raditya Dika's Stand-Up comedy material?*

Another reason to examine this topic is attributed to the fact that the issues of masculinity are relatively less studied than the issues of femininity, which have been widely addressed by so many researchers. Hence, this research aims to develop and deeply examine the issues of masculinity from various perspective, as many researchers did for femininity.

It is expected that this research can contribute to educational aspect by way of enhancing insight related to masculinity humor, especially as contained in SUC material. It also aims that to broaden readers' minds in examining and understanding how masculinity is used as humor in SUC or even everyday social life. In this context, this research is intended to answer the following

research question: how is the representation of masculine humor as shown in stand-up comedy material in Raditya Dika's Stand-Up Comedy YouTube show?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Humor

Raditya Dika became famous comedian and represented stand-up comedy on Indonesian television programs. He is a writer, actor, film director, You Tuber, and social media personality. He wrote eight national bestselling books and played the main character in *Cinta Brontosaurus* (2013), *Manusia Setengah Salmon* (2013), *Kambing Jantan* (2005), *Marmut Merah Jambu* (2010), *Ubur-ubur Lembur* (2018), *Radikus Makankakus: Bukan Binatang Biasa* (2007), *Babi Ngesot: Datang Tak Diundang Pulang Tak Berkutang* (2008), and *Koala Kumal* (2016). He appeared in the television comedy series *Malam Minggu Miko* on Kompas TV, as a judge for Stand-Up Comedy Indonesia and Stand-up Comedy Academy and host of Comic Action on Indosiar. He is one of the first Indonesian You Tubers who receive YouTube Partner Rewards and the first Indonesian You Tuber who gain more than 1 million subscribers.

Raditya Dika is the only comedian who has studied stand-up comedy. He gained the knowledge from a short course in Australia that made him increasingly trusted by the public. According to him, comedy is a technique for making people laugh. While humor is a natural human trait. Humor refers to everything used as a joke to stimulate others to laugh, which can be delivered verbally or non-verbally, intentionally or unintentionally. Rahmanadji (2007) defined humor as something funny that brings to laughter. A theory of humor has provided thorough explanation regarding how something can bring someone's to laughter. Apart from just conveying jokes, humor is also said to be another way of communicating with the aim of conveying a message or information through jokes as an alternative method.

There are four dimensions of humor:

(1) *Affiliative Humor*: tend to say funny things, to tell jokes, and to engage in spontaneous witty banter to amuse others, and to facilitate relationships;

(2) *Self-Enhancing Humor*: This dimension involves a generally humorous outlook on life, a tendency to be frequently amused by the incongruities of life;

(3) *Aggressive Humor*: This relates to the use of sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision,

(4) *Self-Defeating Humor*: involves excessively self-disparaging humor, attempts to amuse others by doing or saying funny things at one's own expense as a means of ingratiating oneself or gaining approval (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003).

One of the practices message deliveries of humor can be seen from SUC. Humor in SUC is presented by conveying a monologue orally and directly in front of an audience. Research conducted by Fadilah (2015) stated that the most dominant element in SUC humor is the verbal element, using the linguistic aspects to build humor. However, not all SUC humor uses language to stimulate the audience's laughter. Even though it is dominant, comics also often make use of their facial expressions or gestures in creating humor. Every comic featuring SUC usually has a different sense of humor. Therefore, every comic has his/her own way of doing comedy and a different way of conveying his humorous message to the audience to make them understand the joke and feel entertained when they hear it.

2.2 Masculinity

Masculinity is the counterpart of femininity, which refers to a concept related to how the male should behave. According to Beynon (2002), masculinity is emphasized as something that is diverse and culturally constructed and defined (both in writing and action) in time and place, rather than directly determined biologically.

Kimmel & Aronson (2004) stated that masculinity varies depending on four different spheres, namely masculinity in every culture, masculinity in various countries from time to time, the course of change of masculinity in each person's life journey, and masculinity in a society at a certain a time. This way Kimmel emphasized that masculinity can have different meanings based on different groups or groups of people, at different times. Thus, it is clear that masculinity cannot be defined concretely and that there is no absolute definition to explain masculinity, because its diverse nature can generate different meanings for everyone and from time to time.

Thus, it is conclusive that masculinity cannot be defined concretely. There is no absolute definition to explain masculinity, because of its diverse nature. It can have different meanings by everyone and from time to time. The same is also true with the concept of masculinity in Indonesia, which can give birth to a new understanding of masculinity. However, Budiastuti and Wulan stated that in academic discourse, studies on the construction of Indonesian masculinity are still limited in number and scope. Boellstorff (2005) highlights that the concept of masculinity is also related

to sexual orientation and efforts in negotiating normative sexual orientation as widely adhered to by Indonesian society.

3. Method

This study used Roland Barthes' semiotic analytical model. In Barthes' view, semiotics examines how to give meaning to something. The keywords of Barthes' semiotics are denotation, connotation, and myth. This study analyzed SUCRD as the research object and the focal point in this research to guide the research activities from data processing to generating research results as a way to answer the questions in the problem formulation.

This research analyzed SUCRD materials as the research object and the focal point of this research to guide the research activities, ranging from data processing to generating research results that will answer research questions as formulated in the research problem formulation.

The first stage of this research was to determine the data source, namely Raditya Dika's YouTube channel. The data source selection was followed by determining of the unit of analysis to be analyzed and processed further. Determination of the unit of analysis also aims to facilitate this research steps to make it more focus only on the unit of analysis. This stage was carried out by carefully examining SUCRD broadcasts on Raditya Dika's YouTube channel, namely SUCRD 2016 "*Cowok Gblok*" (The Idiot Boy) session.

The data analysis stage started when all units of analysis have been collected and ready to be analyzed. The data analysis was carried out by examining SUCRD broadcasts as part of the unit of analysis. Once the entire data have been analyzed, the last step was processing the data, in which the scrutinized data were then collected and processed by applying the predetermined method, in this context is the Roland Barthes semiotic research method. Data processing was carried out by describing each part or scene in SUCRD that contains masculine humor, particularly by classifying each description into denotative meanings, connotations, and related myths.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1.1 Sign on SUCRD 2016

Visual	
Sign	
Monolog 2	“If a man cheats, he will surely be caught. I swear.”
Monolog 3	“Men are stupid. Why do they? Men are sissy. Women are smart.”

(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bs-sxsX4kVY>)

Denotation: Guys will get caught easily upon having an affair. *Connotation:* Women are smarter than men in concealing their affair. It is easy to spot a guy who has an affair. Men with their appearance and character are easy target to predict their affair, especially when the couples have known each other deeper and longer. Radit said that this is attributed to the fact that males are stupid creature, while putting one hand on his chest which could mean that he also felt or acknowledged that he was like that. Hearing this, the audience laughed, maybe because the audience also felt their stupidity when their affairs are revealed. Then, Radit re-emphasized his sentence by saying, “Guys, you will get caught easily if you are cheating, I swear”, while smiling. His smile was triggered by a sense of shame in him as a man who is not good at hiding his own affair. In fact, he uses the word “really” which means it’s very easy to get caught, and “swearing” which means that he is being honest in what he said, although now the use and meaning of the swear has been distorted, and sometimes only refers to as a mere utterance, which doesn’t actually happen.

In contrast to sexist humor, which aims to humiliate certain genders, gender-based humor as the main topic for SUCRD material is more directed at how masculinity is represented by related daily events. For example, Raditya Dika conveyed the different responses and actions between men and women in responding to a problem, how men and women cover something, things that men cannot do but women can do, and so on. Even though it sounds like it contains an element of comparison, in this case Raditya Dika does not subjugate one group of gender over the other. Gender-related materials are only aimed at making jokes without demeaning any gender.

Broadly speaking, the representation of masculine humor in SUCRD shows how men take actions, behave, and pay attention to appearance and physical body shape. The concept of masculinity represented in SUCRD is in line with Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) statement, that apart from physical activity, masculinity can also affect thinking, gender, and social hierarchy. Especially for the physical appearance of a male body, Raditya Dika usually refers to himself as a man with a short stature and no muscles, which also refers to a different type of masculinity. This is in accordance with the concept of masculinity put forward by Beynon (2002) regarding the figure of a metrosexual man in the early 2000s, which included paying more attention to appearance and maintaining the body.

The application of humor in SUCRD is in line with Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003). Raditya Dika delivered the positive style of humor, known as affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor. Affiliative humor refers to a type of humor that tends to lead to virtue, telling funny things with the aim of strengthening a relationship. Similar to affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor is associated with being kind to life and being able to laugh at and enhance oneself in a positive way. Like masculine humor in SUCRD material, these two humor styles are in accordance with how Raditya Dika displays his jokes so that masculine humor is represented in his SUC material.

In terms of presentation, Raditya Dika's humor is presented by means of speech and gestures with the intention to criticize, lighten the burden of feelings, to the point of mere entertainment. All these are expressed from the existing humor in the society blended with the sense of humor. The humor styles to represent masculine humor in SUCRD are affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor, which tend to lead to benevolence and kindness towards life.

This is done by the use of repetitive, excessive, and sarcastic language Lubis (2017). His narrative was followed by speech that invited laughter. In this area, there are two domains: competence and intent (Abrahams, 2020). Competence means Raditya Dika's ability to construct and act out his humorous acts. Intention is related to what Raditya Dika means.

The deployment of masculinity ideology through this comedy is subjective. This means that each audience has a different field of experience or frame of reference each other. Considering the different ideologies of masculinity in each society. For example, the values of caring, community, humor and creativity (Tosun, Faghihi, & Vaid, 2018).

As seen from the theory of humor, masculine humor represented in SUCRD material can be based on the theory of superiority, the theory of disengagement, and the theory of incompatibility. Masculine humor is based on a sense of superiority towards masculinity or manhood itself, as a release from the pressure felt by men in its masculine context, which is presented as a joke in SUC material, containing set-ups and punch lines.

Humor is medium for expressing hegemonic masculinity on SUCRD because it offers Raditya Dika safety through the 'just joking' defense, while allowing them to express a fantasy or desired version of masculinity (Plester, 2015). Gender performances can parody dominant norms through 'subversive and exaggerated repetition of parodic practices' (Butler, 1990) and thus gender is ritualized through repeated acts – which can make it appear natural (Plester, 2015).

5. Conclusion

There has been a constant growth of construction of masculinity in social life, until finally this issue becomes common sense for the public at large. The prevalence of gender issues and the existence of diversity between genders make it easier for them to be brought up in the midst of everyday life, and even used as the butt of jokes. For example, in the SUC material, the topic of masculinity is packaged in such a way that it becomes a humor that is favored by the audience. The existence of the SUC trend and the audience's interest in the topic of masculinity also make this masculine humor enjoyed by some groups, which leads to the popularity of its presence as the widely discussed issue in SUC material. One of them is SUCRD which addresses the topic of masculinity without demeaning gender itself or other genders, as indicated as a form of expression, criticism, to create a positive atmosphere.

In this line, Raditya Dika has his own tendency in bringing masculine humor throughout his SUCRD materials as a way to tell about the general nature of men in love relationships, both from the way of behaving, making decisions, maturity, traits and principles, the appearance to show, to the expectations and misunderstandings involving men in a relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the representation of masculine humor shown in stand-up comedy material in Raditya Dika's YouTube stand-up comedy is about how men take action, behave, pay attention to appearance, and their physical body shape.

The limitation of this research is the lack of reference as it merely refers to online references about previous research that also addresses the same topic, which is related to humor

and its correlation with masculinity. Another limitation is the unavailability of online access to some reference searches, since many of the online research files can only be accessed by related agencies.

Further research on this topic is expected to pave a way for other researchers in understanding humor and masculinity in the future. It is also hoped that more research will be published on the relation of humor and masculinity with different varieties, objects, sides and points of view so as to enrich references and literacy regarding gender issues in their relation to humor. In terms of gender issue on masculinity, it is also noteworthy to consider that currently the research development of this issue is arguably still far behind compared to the issue of femininity. This is intended to make people become more familiar with the topic of gender and masculinity from different angles.

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