

Abstract

This study investigates audience reception of male objectification in the 2023 Indonesian Netflix film "Dear David," employing a qualitative approach and Stuart Hall's reception theory. While objectification typically focuses on women in patriarchal societies, this research explores the less-examined topic of male objectification and its interpretation by viewers. The analysis reveals diverse audience perspectives. Some viewers perceive male objectification as a narrative device highlighting female desire, while others adopt negotiated or oppositional stances, questioning its execution and purpose in media. Factors influencing these interpretations include personal backgrounds, peer influence, media exposure, and pre-existing views on gender roles. Findings show that dominant-hegemonic positioned informants view male objectification as a means to validate female desire. However, others contextualize it within broader gender studies, reflecting the complexity of the issue. However, most agreements do agree that male objectification is in fact and underdiscussed issue in modern society, and its awareness is yet to be shown clearly. This research contributes to the understanding of evolving gender discourse in Indonesian society, illuminating the intricate relationship between cultural norms, personal experiences, and audience interpretation. By examining these nuanced perspectives, the study offers insights into how audiences engage with and interpret gender representations in contemporary media, particularly in the context of changing gender dynamics in Indonesia.

Keywords: Male Objectification, Audience Reception, Stuart Hall, Female Gaze, Film