

## **PATRIARCHY CULTURE OF TOULA'S FAMILY IN THE BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING MOVIE (2002)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This writing discusses about patriarchy culture of Toula's family in The Big Fat Greek Wedding movie. Patriarchy culture is a social system in which men hold and control power. It is still found in many societies around. The Big Fat Greek Wedding tells about a Greek woman who falls in love with a non-Greek man and struggles for her family to accept the man as they confront their heritage and cultural identity. The purpose of this writing is to show that Toula's family in this movie still adheres and resistances to patriarchy culture. Method used in this writing is qualitative method. Qualitative method is a method that involves an interpretive, description, creative, and unique, in the sense of understanding the subject matter. The data are collected and analyzed based on the perspective of literary criticism. The direct conversation and some gestures display related with patriarchy culture are taken. It is found that Toula's father as the head of the family seems to have the power to take the decision for his family, meanwhile Toula as the child and Maria as the wife do not have. Based on the theories taken, patriarchy in this movie includes in private patriarchy. Private patriarchy originates in the home area as the first and foremost area of men's power over women. So, it shows that Toula's family still holds the patriarchy culture.

**Keywords: Patriarchy, Gender Inequality, Gender Roles, Greek**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The term patriarchy refers to a social system in which men hold and control power while women are excluded from a large share of that power. According to Walby (1990), patriarchal culture is a structure created from a series of various patriarchal practices. In the realm of philosophy, religion, education, and traditional norms, women are often the object of humiliation, while men are the subjects who have the 'right to rule'. Patriarchy is a system that gives men a lot of privileges and power. Inequality between the roles of women and men is the basis that individuals in society do not have equal access. Many people associate patriarchy with gender oppression, such as female subordination or male domination. Others see gender oppression as occurring solely within the family. There, male patriarchs or father figures wield considerable power over family decision and the lives of women, his child or junior male in the household, and domestic servants who are all subject to his rules. Turner (1987:97) described a patriarchal relationship is one in which the male head of household dominates the member of the house whether these are male, female, adult or juvenile. This patriarchal structure is legitimized by legal, political and religious norms which give the adult male a virtual monopoly over the subordinate groups within the traditional household. Patriarchy culture is still found in many societies around, even though the feminism movement has been intensified by activists. The patriarchy system encourages the formation of gender inequality that affect various pieces

and aspects of human activity in general. In addition, the patriarchy system that places women can be a source of exploitation in the form of violence, sexual harassment, underpaid female employees, and others. The practice of patriarchy is seen in domestic activities, politic, custom, and culture. Patriarchy is usually a derived culture from the previous generation. In every country, focus the form of patriarchy can be different. However, in Indonesia itself there are more patriarchy in domestic activities. For example, restriction and even prohibition on activities when women are married. Even though the women are able to carry out activities without neglecting her obligation. But this is not allowed by her husband and ended in domestic violence because they were considered disobedient to the head of the household. Another case is a woman who have higher income than her husband. Ego of this man will be scratched and eventually will be raised various problems. This is very detrimental to women because they cannot get access to experiences that are equal to men.

Patriarchy culture is still very close to our lives make scenes which depicting the problem brought up through the media. One form of communication media is movie. Movie convey more information, education, and entertainment. Movie is one of the media in revealing the reality of human life and social phenomena. Movie can also be a means of conveying criticism and ideas from scriptwriter and producer to be conveyed to the wider community. The movie audience is diverse in terms of age, gender, culture, and so on. The increase variety of movie media make movies is one of the tools for conveying messages to people, both implicit and explicit. The absorption level of messages conveyed through movie proven to be much better than other communication media. Movie are considered better than other communication media because of its audio-visual. Movie that is able to tell a lot in a short time will make the audience feel that they are getting information without feeling bored because of the short duration of time. When we watch a movie, the audience seems to be carried away by the events in the scene and can go through space and time which can ultimately affect the audience. The movie contains significant element that make it more systematic and detailed. Scientists at New York University have discovered that the human brain's reaction to scenes, colors, and back sound in a movie can affect the audience in cognitive, affective, and conative ways. Because movie is one of the media in revealing the reality of human life and social phenomena, so the depiction of patriarchy can be seen in the movie titled *The Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002). This Joel Zwick's movie is a romantic comedy movie. This 2002 movie tells the story of a traditional Greek family living in America. Nia Vardalos played as Fortoula Portokalos or Toula, John Corbett played as Ian Miller, Michael Constantine played as Gus Portokalos or Toula's father, Lainie Kazan played as Maria Portokalos or Toula's mother, and others appeared in this movie. This movie is about Toula, who comes from a traditional Greek family and lives in America. Toula is thirty years old and should have married by rush. But Toula was looking for more in her life. Then she met Ian Miller, a WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). They are in a serious relationship which have intention to the marriage life. Because they are from two different culture, both of them learn to accept the diversity of their cultures. Toula so sick about her culture which still hold the principle "Nice Greek girls are supposed to do three things in life: marry Greek boys, make Greek babies, and feed everyone until the day we die" because it depicts traditional Greek family culture, one of their cultures is patriarchy. Actually, Toula appreciate the Greek family culture but what is Toula wants is just not to embrace that culture anymore because they are already in America. Toula wants her family to embrace

American culture that is more liberal and comfortable for her. This movie demonstrates that the traditional Greek family still holds their patriarchy culture. One of the intriguing aspects of this movie is patriarchy culture as a manifestation of Greek culture. Men are considered superior in a patriarchy culture, while women are considered inferior. In this Greek culture, the stereotype of a man or father in the household is making decision, having power, being firm, rational, and more powerful than other family member. Meanwhile, ideal role for women includes housekeeping, being a support system for their husbands, and simply being a follower in all of her husband's decision. In fact, the actual role of men is as breadwinner, protector, and head of the household. According to Burgess, a family is a group of people who connected by marriage, blood, or adoption; consists of one head of household, interacting and communicating with each other in the role of husband and wife who respect each other, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, and creating and maintaining their culture (Burgess in Duvall, 1985: 63). Agreeing with Burgess, Sudiharto defines the family as a group of people connected by the bonds of marriage, adoption, and birth which aim to improve and maintain a common culture, increase the physical, mental, emotional and social development of each member (Sudhiarto, 2007: 23).

Theory is needed to explain and help to understand the issue as comprehend. The theory that writer used is Theorizing Patriarchy by Sylvia Walby in sociology journal. Patriarchy divided into two, such as private and public patriarchy. But in this context, private patriarchy become the background of this. Private patriarchy originates in the home area as the first and foremost area of men's power over women, which is limited to the home. The point is all issues related to policy matter, decision making, and so on, which only cover the household domain. In the household, power is in the hands of the individual (male). Home as a place where the first patriarchy socialization took place. An individual patriarch as the position of husband or father directly acts as an oppressor to benefit from women as wife or child. Men with power can provide all the rules that must be obeyed by women in a family. In private patriarchy, women are taken away by an individual. Deprivation is carried out by means of a strategy of thought. As a result, the family has evolved into a "small country" with rules that are detrimental to women's interest. The family is constantly transformed into a means of patriarchal power and a discursive apparatus in which the husband, as the head of the family, become the leader who represent the interest of patriarchy society and state. One of the Marxist feminist thinkers, Kate Millet (1969), says provocatively "The main patriarchal institution is the family which is a reflection of and relations with the wider community; patriarchal unit within the patriarchal whole. As the fundamental instrument of the basic unit of patriarchal society, the family and its roles are prototypical. As agents of the wider society, the family not only persuades its members to conform, but also acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state that governs its citizens through the heads of their respective families. Even in patriarchal societies where they are legal citizens, women tend to be controlled through 'solitude' in the family and have little, or no, formal relations with the state". So, the purpose of this research is to show that Toula's family in this movie still adheres patriarchy culture and Toula's resistances to patriarchy culture.

## **METHOD**

This writing uses descriptive qualitative method to help the analyze the data collection to become rational and objective research. According to Denzin and Lincoln

(1994), qualitative research is a method that involves an interpretive, a description, creative, and unique, in the sense of understanding the subject matter. The qualitative method focuses on arguing meaning in the text based on knowledge to conceive the problem as a whole. Further, according to Satori and Komariah (2011:23), qualitative research is research which uses a natural background, in order to interpreting the phenomena that occur and done by involving various existing method. Even more, this writing also uses descriptive to make a description systematically and accurately based on data that the writer found. Patriarchy culture in The Big Fat Greek Wedding movie represented as the material object of this writing. The data source that writer use is a movie titled The Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002) as the main data and followed by text books and relevant journals. This study's data collection procedure employs the technique of seeing or watching, observing, and analyzing data in The Big Fat Greek Wedding movie as many times as necessary to comprehend the meaning that occurred in the movie. Writer plays an important role in this study. The writer's role as a key instrument influences the final outcome of this writing because the writer is the person who is responsible for analyzing and concluding the data found in the movie.

## **RESULTS**

The Big Fat Greek Wedding movie by Joel Zwick is a movie that show about Toula which has a traditional Greek culture that still holds their belief. Dialogs, scenes, gestures, and other elements of this movie are used as the data. The following number below is the data that the author found in The Big Fat Greek Wedding movie which describes patriarchy culture:

**Table 1.** The result of the findings

<b>Men who hold the high throne in a family who make the decision and it can't be bothered.</b>		
	<b>Narration</b>	<b>Duration in minute</b>
Data 1	"Father is the head of the family. His words must be obeyed. The man is the head of the house."	17
Data 2	"Sir, she is 30 years old." "I am the leader of this house!"	39
<b>Married is the women finish line. Moreover, if they are not married yet at a certain age will be considered a disgrace. After married, women are just doing the domestic activity.</b>		
	<b>Narration</b>	<b>Duration in minute</b>

Data 1	Nice Greek girls who don't found a husband, work in the family restaurant. So here I am, day after day, year after year.	7
Data 2	"1, and almost way pass my expiration date."	8
Data 3	"Oh yes! Get married! Make babies!"	17
Data 4	Maria Portokalos said, "I run a restaurant, cook, clean, wash and raise 3 kids, and teach Sunday school, you know?"	18

**Women who go to school are not good because they have the potential to be rebellious.**

	Narration	Duration in minute
Data 1	"I know she is smart. So, what is for she needs more school? She is smart enough for a girl."	18
Data 2	"Didn't I said, is it mistake to educate women?"	40

**DISCUSSION**

The Big Fat Greek Wedding projecting that Greek culture still holds patriarchy culture. The following case number one, that movie describe how the position of man who hold the high throne in a family who make the decision and it can't be bothered. Women and child have little participation or can be said that have no rights to take the decision for their lives. This is proven in The Big Fat Greek Wedding movie in the 17th and 39th minutes. In that narration, Toula feels so sad because she wants to marry Ian Miller but her father does not approve it. Then Ian went to Toula's father and talked to him because according to Ian who is an American, thirty years old Toula can make and take the responsibility of her own decision. But Toula's father against that statement and said firmly that he is the leader of that house. Those words meant that all decision that would be taken by all family members had to go through his approval because he is the one in control of his family. If you become the leader of the house, automatically all family member in that house must obey his order and rules. His orders or opinions are inviolable. Men are considered to have higher value than women. Women only seen as followers who must accept their husband's or their father's decisions. Everyone who supports gender equality will seek to eradicate the existence of a patriarchy culture because it tends to marginalize the position of women. This is also done by Toula. She has no opportunity to express herself. She also took issue with the position of her mother as the women and she as child in household. This is unfair thing and Toula feels this is wrong. Toula think that men and women should have the same rights in making decisions. Toula argues that she who knows her own capacity, then she has the right to choose what decisions she will take because it is best for her. Women are also creature, they are human

being that have feeling, the right, and voice to make decisions of her life. At that time, the decision of the family definitely in the hands of Gus Portokalos as the head of the family. He is truly control, handle, and dictate Toula and her mother. Women did not have the right to voice their opinion.

The following case number two is women have finish line which is married. Moreover, if they are not married yet at a certain age will be considered a disgrace. After married, women are just doing the domestic activity. Women only dwell on the domestic sector such as cook, do housework, pregnant, gave birth, and so on. Women tend to be positioned as people who subordinate, categorized into the domestic world, and limited their rights to enter the public world, even though women and men have the same potential and therefore should have the same rights. In accordance with the culture in Greek culture, Toula had to live the principle of Greek girls. And the principle is "Nice Greek girls are supposed to do three things in life: marry Greek boys, make Greek babies, and feed everyone until the day we die." This principle shows that Greek women or girls just dwell on the domestic sector. Beside of that, married is the women finish line. Moreover, if they are not married yet at a certain age will be considered a disgrace. Toula is thirty years old but not married yet. Moreover, because she is already thirty years old, she feels that she will pass his expiration date as soon. Toula think that way because there is a patriarchal system instilled in her which women should get married as soon as possible. She was urged by her family to immediately marry Greek boys. Toula introduced and matched by her parents with some Greek men. Even Gus Portokalos does not know how their character, it still Toula's parent do just because the men are Greek descent. It shows a portrait of system still consider women who are old but not married yet as a big problem for the family.

Higher education and freedom of choice are luxuries that women of Greek descent including Toula cannot to catch on. This patriarchy culture in Greek culture can be proved by depicting in case number three. Toula is a woman who very curiosity. She wants to try new things in her life. But when she asks his father's permission to school more, it always becomes a matter that ends in debate. Gus Portokalos as Toula's father think that women who go to school are not good because they have the potential to be rebellious. As a result, she has to work in the family restaurant year after year. This trait arises because she cannot try and explore things outside of what her parents instructed. She was not allowed to work out there even though Toula wanted to work in position that using computer technology in the process. In fact, Toula's talent when using computer must be admittedly excellent. She is fast learner and very passionate. Her father know that she was smart and a fast learner. But her father did not allow Toula to take a computer course because according to him women no need school more because they will only take care of the household and children.

A patriarchy culture is one that does not allow for equality, so the existence of women is unimportant and has no power. This sentence is in line with the statement of AH Tanjung and NR Dewi (2021:44) which stated that women considered as minority and powerless in society. In general, patriarchy can be defined as a system in which men wield power. Furthermore, patriarchy culture develops as a result of human cultural institutions. Boys are taught to be aggressive, to go outside, and to play outside through family education. Girls are taught to cook, to feel at home, to do housework, and to serve their fathers and brothers. This education will result in men being served and women as a serving. Patriarchy culture is still considered normal in a patriarchy society. The power

of each of the two parties is considered "reasonable" because it is recognized as the respective authority. In a patriarchy society, husband and wife are considered natural that it is the husband who makes many decisions in various related matters in his family life (Sajogyo, 1985: 41). Gender inequality is frequently associated with women's disadvantageous positions. Patriarchy is frequently viewed from the perspective of men and women in the family. The existence of oppressed genders as a result of male dominance can lead to a patriarchy culture. The patriarchy system that dominates society's culture leads to gender inequality and injustices that affect many aspects of human activity. Men play a dominant role in society, while women have little or no participation or rights in general areas of society, such as socially, economically, politically, and even psychologically, including the institution of marriage. Thus, it can be concluded that Toula's family as Greek descent still holds patriarchy culture. The patriarchy hold by Toula's family is a private patriarchy because it originates in the home area as the first and foremost area of men's power over women, which is limited to the home. This can be proven by the data number one, two, and three that described above. The regulation only applies for Toula's family and is in the realm of the Toula's family with her father, namely Gus Portokalos as the head of the family who has the power to control all the decision will be taken.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on description above, it is clear that Toula's family still holds patriarchy culture. The patriarchy shown in this movie is a type of private patriarchy. Private patriarchy originates in the home area as the first and foremost area of men's power over women, which is limited to the home. Women and child are under male domination. The representation of patriarchy culture in *The Big Fat Greek Wedding* shows in Greek three values or principle. It shows when Gus Portokalos as the head of the household, have a power to take decision and it can't be bothered. Toula's position as the child have little participation or can be said that have no rights to take the decision for her lives. Then, married is the women finish line. Moreover, if they are not married yet at a certain age will be considered a disgrace. After married, women are just doing the domestic activity. Also, when there a principle says that "Nice Greek girls are supposed to do three things in life: marry Greek boys, make Greek babies, and feed everyone until the day we die." This principle shows that Greek women or girls just dwell on the domestic sector. Last representation of private patriarchy in this movie is women who go to school are not good because they have the potential to be rebellious.

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