

ANALYSIS OF THE MEANING OF MASCULINITY IN BIRDS OF PREY

Naomi S Hutabarat¹, Flori Mardiani Lubis², Oky Oxygentri³

^{1,2,3}Communication Science, Bachelor's Degree, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang
Corresponding email: naomihutabarat27@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

"Birds of Prey" is a DC-produced action adventure superhero film, adapted from DC Comics under a different title. The film tends to feature a representation of masculinity from Harley Quinn's character. Masculinity is usually attached to men, however, in this film it is aimed at women. The film is also a female-led film, the partner of batman's enemy Joker. Therefore, the author is interested in analyzing the film Birds of Prey so that the research is titled "Analysis of the Meaning of Masculinity in Birds of Prey". This research aims to find out the meaning of denotations, connotations and myths about masculinity presented in the film Birds of Prey played by Harley Quinn. This research is qualitatively descriptive using Roland Barthes's semiotic method. The results of this study are myths of masculinity in the film Birds of Prey presented by Harley Quinn through appearance, expression, behavior, environment, music, character and dialogue.

Keywords: Masculinity, Semiotics and Roland Barthes.

INTRODUCTION

Masculine or feminine is not a gender-related thing, but society has assumed that culturally or culturally men should show the masculine side. While women should also show the feminine side. While there is no concrete definition, masculinity or masculinity is better understood as a gender concept of socially constructed and male-related behavior. Although masculine and feminine are contradictory or contradictory concepts of value, they are essentially interchangeable. That is, feminism doesn't have to be owned only by women and masculinity isn't just owned by men.

According to Kimmell (2005) masculinity is an ever-changing set of meanings about male-related things so it has different definitions in each individual and different times. Morgan (Beynon, 2002) says that "what is masculinity is what men and women do rather than what they are" which means masculinity is what men and women do. In general, traditional masculinity considers high values between strength, power fortitude, action, control, self-reliance, self-satisfaction, male solidarity, and work. Among those seen as inferior are interpersonal relationships, verbal abilities, domestic life, tenderness, communication, women, and children (Barker, 2001).

As described in gender, Mansour Fakih (1994) defined gender as an inherent trait in socially and culturally constructed men and women. Moore (1988) defines gender as a sociocultural construction that distinguishes masculine and feminine characteristics. (Hanum, 2018). Women and men have different traits, characteristics, attitudes or behaviors and traits

according to what they learn in their culture. Many psychologists believe that attitudes are the result of the learning process. A child is born with no inclination towards objects that exist outside of him or her. His attitudes were formed after making many social contacts with his environment (Rahman, 2013).

In impressions in films or other media, we often see the use of masculinity in women, this is seen from behaviors, speech style, appearance in dominant women referring to male nature. Like in the movie *Birds of Prey*. The film tells the story of a group consisting of Harley Quinn, Black Canary, Helena Bertinelli, and Renee Montoya (*Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn*). In *Birds of Prey*, Harley Quinn is played by Margot Robbie, showing her masculinity as a woman. Where masculinity is usually described for male traits. Meanwhile, women are portrayed with feminine traits. However, the film shows that masculine is not always to be tocoed to men, but women can also be.

Birds of Prey itself is a spin off from the previous film *Suicide Squad*, in which Harley Quinn is romantic with the Joker played by Jared Leto. While in the film *Birds of Prey* itself, it is told that Harley Quinn has parted ways with the Joker, Harley Quinn feels fierce (in KBBI; /ga·lau/: crowded, chaotic not mind) as if women were generally heartbroken, but the time of the upset did not last long, Harley Quinn began to rise from his time, Harley began to live his day as usual. The news that Harley Quinn broke up with the Joker spread quickly in gotham city, Harley Quinn began to hunt down enemies – his enemies because no more Jokers played by Ewan McGregor helped and protected him, especially his hereditary enemy, Black Mask played by Ewan McGregor.

On Harley Quinn's journey against the Black Mask, Harley meets Black Canary, Helena Bertinelli, and Renee Montoya who unite to fight the Black Mask and save the little boy who black mask hunted for the diamond swallowed by the little boy. In *Birds of Prey*, Harley Quinn is played by Margot Robbie. It is a DC Comics character film directed by Cathy Yan's "*Birds of Prey*" which premiered February 5, 2020 in action adventure superhero. Adapted from DC Comics, the film will be nuanced and target a female audience.

The film is a live image, or often called a movie. The film as a medium of mass communication is not separated from the relationship between the film and the society itself, as Oey Hong Lee pointed out, "the film as the second mass communication tool that appeared in the world, had its growth in the late 19th century, in other words at a time when the elements that hindered the development of newspapers had been made to disappear. This means that from the beginning of its history the film could more easily become a true means of communication, as it did not experience the 9th elements of engineering, political, economic, social and demographics that hindered the newspaper's progress in its in the 18th and early 19th centuries (Sobur, 2006:126).

This *Birds of Prey* film has a message of meaning conveyed to its audience. Therefore, researchers use semiotic methods. According to Eco, 1979 (in the book Sobur, 2012:95) is etymologically, semiotic derived from the Greek word semeion meaning "Sign". The sign itself is defined as something that is on the basis of social conversion. Termionologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide range of objects, events throughout culture as a sign. Semiotics is defined as "sign science" and everything related to it: how it works, its relationship to other words, its delivery, and its acceptance by those who use it.

Semiotic figures include Roland Barthes. Basically, there is a difference between denotation and connotations understood by Barthes. Etymologically, the term semiotic or semiological comes from the Greek Semeion which weighs "sign". The sign itself is defined as something that on the basis of a previously established social convention, can be considered to represent something else (Eco,1979:16 in Sobur,2006:95). However, in Roland Barthes's semiotics, denotation is a first-rate signification system, while connotations are second-rate. Barthes connotations are used to explain how cultural symptoms seen as signs can have special meaning. Barthes developed connotation theory to examine culture and build theories about culture. In cultural studies this connotation theory was developed into a theory about myth.

On the basis of the background reviews that have been presented, the formula line up of the problem is "How is the analysis of the meaning of masculinity in birds of prey?". The expected exodus from this study seeks to address the problems that exist, namely providing information about the meaning of denotations, connotations and myths in the film.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach that is descriptive with the technique used is semiotics. Semiotics is a technique that works to see visible signs in images, advertisements, or movies. The semiotics used are theories from Roland Barthes that describe the two levels of the sign, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is a sign relationship with the reality of the sign. Connotations are aspects of meaning given by feelings and emotions and cultural values.

At a later stage related to this, the sign works through myths. Because myth is how culture explains or understands some aspects of reality or the symptoms of nature. Myth is a product of a social class that already has dominance.

DISCUSSION

3.1 Scene 1 "Harley at the Café" (00:03:25 – 00:05:43)

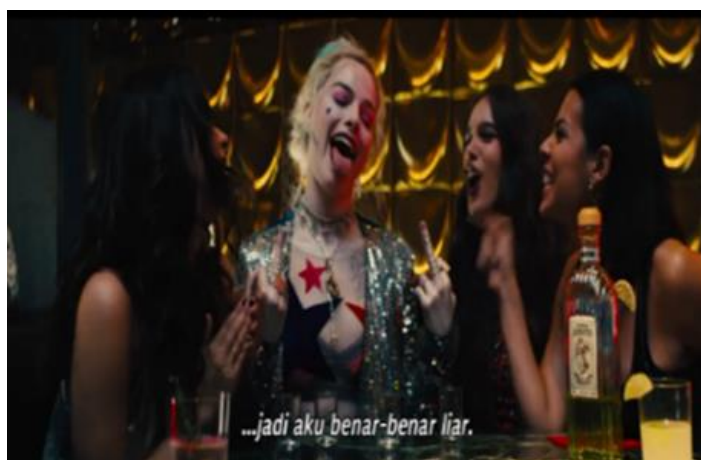


Figure 1. Harley at the bar Source: Screenshot



Figure 2. Harley at the bar. Source: Screenshot



Figure 3. Harley's drinking. Source: Screenshot



Figure 3. Harley's drinking. Source: Screenshot



Figure 4. Harley danced. Source: Screenshot

1. Meaning of Denotation

Harley and three women sat down for a few drinks. Harley shows his middle finger and sticks out his tongue after drinking it visible on the frame (1). Harley stands up while raising both hands upside down on the right left side of the waist and stares at the person around who is staring at him visible on the frame (2). Harley sips a glass of water using his right hand with an irritated facial look after the Black Mask talking to him is seen on the frame (3). Harley dances freely with a drunken state among the crowd, showing himself Harley so freely enjoying the world of the night seen on the frame (4).

2. Meaning of Connotations

From Character Scene 1:

Harley is a Gotham resident who has the physical characteristics of a woman of average height as a foreigner. Beautiful face, white skin with white hair with a touch of pink on the right side and blue on the left side. The clothes used by Harley reflect his personality with a eccentric costume.

Black Mask is a Gotham resident who has the physical characteristics of a grown man, with a flat height like a stranger. Handsome face with black hair color brownish pattern. The clothes used in this scene are navy-colored suits, black T-shirts inside, wearing glasses. The clothes she wears are neatly worn formally, due to the character of the Black Mask itself.

From The Activity in Scene 1:

Harley and three women sit down and enjoy some seloki (in KBBI; /se-lo-ki/: small glasses for drinking – booze) alcoholic beverages, which Harley describes as entertaining. Harley shows his middle finger and sticks his tongue out towards the camera after drinking it, which means Harley's expression of anger and madness shows the whole person seen in the frame (1). Harley stands up while raising both hands upside down on the left right side of the waist and staring at the person around who is staring at him, which means Harley doesn't care about the actions he takes to look at the frame (2). Harley sips a glass of water using his right hand with an upset facial look after a Black Mask talking to him shows Harley is so upset that Black Mask asks about the Joker seen on the frame (3). Harley is seen getting drunk and dancing freely

among the crowd, showing himself harley so free to enjoy the song and the atmosphere of cafe seen on the frame (4).

From the settings and objects shown in Scene 1:

The setting used indoors of a Café, in indoor shooting the use of lighting or light is necessary, because using lighting can regulate the light required, because if the lack of lighting will make noise. The setting in the Café shows the time at night when people are still enjoying the world of the night.

In scenes many are focused on the angle of shooting in medium shot, medium close up, long shot. In the frame (1), using medium shot shooting techniques its usefulness shows/clarifies facial expressions to hand gestures by giving the viewing space. Clearly visible, Harley's gesture shows the middle finger and pulls out the tongue showing Harley is able to spend some water. In the frame (2), use a long shot shooting technique that results in the image being an entire object, until the background is visible. Clearly Harley stands with a confused expression raising both hands upside down on the right left side and looking around him. On frame (3), use medium close up shooting technique. At this distance, focus on the face as a composition for the depiction of emotional messages. Harley's expression is clearly visible when talking to black mask which is smiling and annoyed after chatting while sipping a glass of water. On the frame (4), use long shot shooting techniques. Clearly Harley stands in the crowd while dancing to the rhythm of the music and sometimes the tempo of the video is so fast with smiling and laughing expressions.

From the backsound in scene 1:

In frame (4) the genre of hiphop/rap soundtrack song (Doja, boss bitch) is a selection of songs used in the café atmosphere, because this song tells about encouraging and entertaining yourself.

3. The Meaning of Myths

A person who has masculinity traits, one of which avoids female behavior or characteristics (Dermatoto, 2010). Clearly seen in this Scene (1), Harley is so unconcerned his behavior or appearance should be like women in general. Where women are generally known to be graceful, affectionate and polite.

3.2 Scene 2 "Harley Chased Renee, Ralph Murry and Mr. Sionis's driver" (00:13:58-00:17:52)



Figure 5. Harley with Renee at a crossroads. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 6. Harley at the Market. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 7. Harley's hanging. Source: Screenshot.

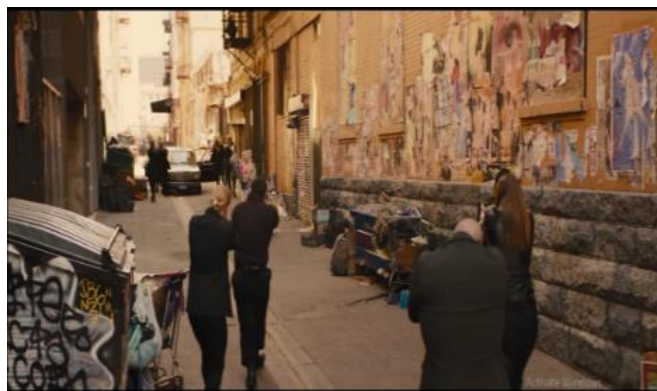


Figure 8. Harley's surrounded in a street alley. Source: Screenshot of the screen.

1. Meaning of Denotation

In this scene 2, Harley is about to cross the street while eating a sandwich, Renee yells while pointing a gun at Harley. Instantly, Harley turns towards Renee, a smiling expression and then runs across the street visible on the frame (1). Harley enters the market area, driven by Ralph Murry with an angry expression visible on the frame (2). Harley hangs on to the roof of the

building using both his hands with a smiling expression after successfully escaping from Renee, Ralph Murry and Mr. Sionis's driver who chases him visible on frame (3). Harley in a street alley while pulling out tissues surrounded by several people pointing guns at him is seen on frame (4).

2. Meaning of Connotations

From the characters in scene 2:

Harley is seen wearing the same outfit in scene 1.

Renee is an adult woman who has the characteristics of a beautiful face, curly shoulder-length blonde hair, dressed in a (formal) shirt with her signature gun. Shows Renee working as a cop in gotham city.

Roller Dummy is a woman who has the characteristics of black skin, curly hair and tomboy appearance. Shows the character of the Roller itself.

Ralph Murry was a man of possessed features - a chubby physique, blonde hair, mustache and beard, dressed in a white T-shirt, jacket and blue-yellow pants. Shows Ralph's character working as a salesman in a pet shop.

Mr. Sionis's driver is a grown man who works as a former Black Mask driver. He uses a wheelchair, as Harley breaks his leg, indicating his poor condition due to Harley's actions.

From the activities in scene 2:

In this scene 2, Harley is about to go home across the street while eating a sandwich, and renee is seen yelling while pointing a gun at Harley. Instantly visible on the frame (1). Harley enters the market area, driven by Ralph Murry with an angry expression visible on the frame (2). Harley hangs on to the roof of the building using both his hands with a smiling expression after successfully escaping from Renee, Ralph Murry and Mr. Sionis's driver who chases him visible on frame (3). Harley in a street alley while pulling out tissues surrounded by several people pointing guns at him is seen on frame (4). In Scene 2 this means harley is hunted not only by criminals but by the authorities, which means Harley is hunted by almost everyone.

From the settings and objects displayed scene 2:

The scene in scene 2, using medium shot and extreme long shot shooting techniques. Seen in the frame (1) using a medium shot technique (shooting from waist to head), Harley turns towards Renee who yells at her while holding the sandwich she wants to eat. Renee pointed a gun at Harley. Harley's part is to let go and focus on Renee. In frames (2) use extreme long shot shooting techniques (covering a fairly large area). Clearly inside the market area, Harley pauses for a moment as he drives a truck driven by an angry Ralph Murry. In the frame (3) use a medium shot shooting technique (to bring out more detail of the body language and expression of the subject). Harley clearly hangs on to the roof of the building with a smiling expression after successfully escaping from Renee, Ralph Murry and Mr. Sionis's driver. In the frame (4) use extreme long shot shooting technique (covering a fairly large area). Clearly visible in a street alley, Harley is surrounded by several men pointing guns at him while Harley pulls out tissues.

3. The Meaning of Myths

A person who has a masculine trait is to be an important figure or someone. Where masculine can be measured from the success, power and admiration of others. Seen in scene 2, Harley becomes an important figure and he is famous in gotham city for what Harley has done to others.

3.3 Scene 3 “Harley at the Police Station” (00:21:42 – 00:23:35 & 00:46:43 – 00:55:01)



Figure 9. Harley's pointing a gun. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 10. Harley shot a police officer. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 11. Harley's in action against criminals. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 12. Harley fights criminals with baseball bats.
Source: Screenshot of the screen

1. Meaning of Denotation

Harley goes to the police station, breaks in at gunpoint and slaughters a police officer in search of Cassandra Cain seen in frame (1). Harley slaughters a police officer who tries to get him, and looks so chaotic the area inside the office is seen on the frame (2). When Harley finds Cassandra in the holding room, some criminals escape from the custody surround harley. Harley bravely fights against the villains seen on the frame (3). Harley chases Cassandra who tries to escape into the barn. Some criminals are still chasing, Harley uses a baseball bat to slaughter the villain seen on the frame (4).

2. Meaning of Connotations

From the characters in scene 3:

Harley initially disguised himself in a robe, hat and glasses. Then pull out a gun and slaughter police officers. That Harley is a woman who is never afraid and always acts as she pleases. Cassandra is a child who is being held in prison for stealing someone else's property. Cassandra always looks tomboyish with bandages on her left hand (stolen storage). Some of the criminals are people who commit crimes in gotham city, all of them grown men.

From the activities in scene 3:

Harley goes to the police station, breaks in at gunpoint and slaughters a police officer in search of Cassandra Cain seen in frame (1), which shows Harley brave and has the power to fight back despite confronting the authorities. Harley slaughters a police officer who tries to get him, and looks so chaotic the area inside the office, showing Harley has courage even with the authorities seen on frame (2). When Harley finds Cassandra in the holding room, some criminals escape from the custody surround harley. Harley bravely fights against the villains, showing Harley does not feel afraid even though only himself against the villains seen in the frame (3). Harley chases Cassandra who tries to escape into the barn. Some criminals are still chasing, Harley slaughters criminals using only baseball bats, whose opponents use firearms, showing Harley is not afraid of opponents who use visible firearms on frames (4).

From the settings and objects shown in scene 3:

The scene in scene 3 uses medium shot shooting techniques (shooting from knee to head with slightly narrow space) and long shots (showing the entire subject without being clipped by a frame). Indoor settings such as police station and detention room are necessary lighting or lighting so as not to occur noise.

In the frame (1) using a medium long shot shooting technique, two police officers are seen chatting, then Harley calls while pointing a gun. In the frame (2) using long shot shooting techniques, Harley is seen slaughtering police officers and causing chaos in the office. In the frame (3) using a long shot shooting technique that shows quite clearly the action Harley fights against the criminals in the prison room with the setting of the use of multifunction sprinkle (multifunctional sprinklers) wetting the prison room. In the frame (4) using medium long shot shooting techniques, Harley still fights against criminals using a baseball bat he finds in the barn and immediately helps Cassandra.

From the backsound in scene 3:

In frames (1) and frames (2), there is a soundtrack song with Jucee Froot's R&B/Rap genre called Danger, choosing this song because it has a jerking tone and a sound that complements the choreography. Then on the frame (3) and frame (4) sounded the soundtrack song with halsey's metalcore genre titled Experiment on me, chose this song because of its encouraging meaning and in accordance with Harley's choreography.

3. The Meaning of Myths

A masculinity is what men and women do (Beynon, 2007). That masculine trait certainly has courage and strength, because it is more identical to the aura of a masculine person capable of taking risks (Dermatoto, 2010). Seen in this scene 3, harley quinn's actions show masculine nature as a brave woman, able to fight and power in all her actions.

1.4 Scene 4 “Harley with Cassandra” (00:56:04- 01:01:15)



Figure 13. Harley chats with Cassandra.
Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure14. Harley looks confused. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 15. Harley feeds his pets. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 16. Harley and Cassandra ate cereal. Source: Screenshot of the screen.

1. Meaning of Denotation

Harley invites Cassandra to shop at Self-Service seen in frame (1), Cassandra with a confused facial and Harley with a very enthusiastic facial expressions while picking up some needed items. In the frame (2), Cassandra asks about Harley's life that looks so fun according to Cassandra while walking around and Harley with a visibly irritated face responding to Cassandra's question. In the frame (3), Cassandra looks around in Harley's room and compliments Harley with a happy look. Harley is instantly shocked as he unwraps hyena food. Cassandra sees the hyena and Harley introduces her pet. In the frame (4), Harley and Cassandra watch TV while eating cereal on the couch. Harley and Cassandra look so happy and comfortable with each other.

2. Meaning of Connotations

From the activities in scene 4:

Harley takes Cassandra to the supermarket to shop for some groceries and some other items. Looking like Harley is so enthusiastic, Cassandra looks confused by Harley's intentions and purpose shopping at the supermarket. Cassandra asks and Harley responds, showing Harley making Cassandra comfortable dan a man with herself seen on the frame (1). Cassandra asks Harley because he is so curious about Harley's life. Harley also responds with an upset-looking facial look, as it shows Cassandra getting comfortable with Harley seen on the frame (2).

Cassandra looks around Harley's room and gives a little compliment with a happy look and Harley hears that with a shocked look., indicating Cassandra likes Harley's room. Then Cassandra sees a hyena bathed and Harley introduces her to the frame (3). Cassandra and Harley ate cereal while watching TV on the sofa with happy facial expressions, showing that they are happy and comfortable when doing activities together seen on the frame (4).

From the settings and objects shown in scene 4:

This scene in scene 4 uses medium shot, close up, and long shot shooting techniques. In this scene is also indispensable lighting or lighting settings didalm the room so that there is no noise. In the frame (1) using a medium shot shooting technique, depicting Harley holding a trolley and Cassandra by her side while chatting.

In the frame (2) using a close up shooting technique, depicting an important chat, clearly visible on Harley's face. In the frame (3) using long shot shooting techniques, it is clear Harley feeds the hyena and Cassandra faces him backing the camera and the space is not so narrow. In the frame (4) using long shot shooting techniques, harley and Cassandra clearly sit on the couch while eating cereal and watching TV (visible objects and space).

3. The Meaning of Myths

There is a myth in this scene, it appears harley has tenderness, although he looks annoyed and must immediately hand Cassandra over to black mask. However, she still has a good heart and a sense of pity to help Cassandra. Where a masculine has tenderness for example taking care of a child. Not only is it feminine, but masculine can also be gentle. (Beynon, 2007).

Scene 5 “Harley sells jewelry” (01:39:37 – 01:41:26



Figure 18. Harley drives a car. Source: Screenshot of the screen.

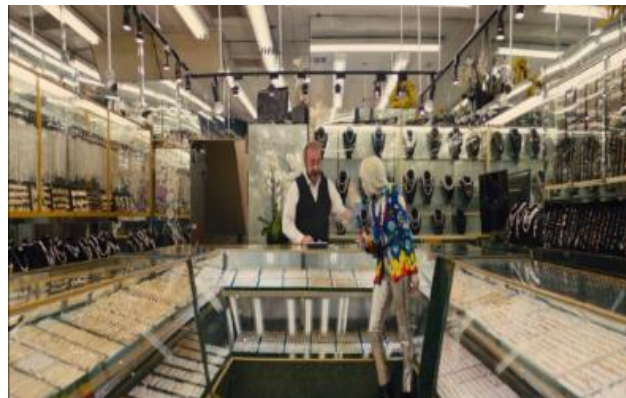


Figure 19. Harley at the decorating store. Source: Screenshot of the screen.



Figure 20. Harley Quinn's business card. Source: Screenshot of the screen



Figure 21. Harley with Cassandra and Bruce. Source: Screenshot of the screen

1. Meaning of Denotation

Harley drives a car while conveying his narrative, seen in the frame (1). Harley visits the jewelry figure and paws the diamond, seen on the frame (2). Harley gives his business card and the seller sees the card using his left hand with a confused looking facial on the frame (3). Afterwards, he sideways Cassandra and Bruce who are waiting in the car. Harley gets in the car giving money and Cassandra delivers a wrapped sandwich. Both look so happy, on the frame (4).

2. Meaning of Connotations

From the characters in scene 5:

In frame (1) Harley drives a car while conveying his narrative, showing Harley going to the decorating shop. Harley visits a jewelry store with the aim of pawning diamonds, meaning Harley wants to make money for himself and his business on the frame (2). Later, he gave the business card to the seller. The seller holds the right hand and sees it, showing Harley offering the business to the seller it looks at the frame (3). Afterwards, Harley sideways Cassandra and Bruce who are waiting in the car. Harley gets in the car, gives money and Cassandra delivers a wrapped sandwich. Both look so happy, showing a happy ending for Harley and Cassandra on the frame (4).

From the backsound in scene 5:

In this scene using kesha's electropop soundtrack Woman, choose this song because of the meaning of her song a woman who can live and succeed not because of a male figure or without a man.

3. The Meaning of Myths

Judging by the connotations above, Harley pawned diamonds for money and started a new business with Cassandra. Harley and Cassandra decided together to have a better life. The myth in this scene is that a masculine shows a flamboyant and perlente lifestyle of yuppies. According to Beynon (2007), that masculine nature suggests a flamboyant and perlente lifestyle means increasingly self-indulgent commercial products such as cars, clothing, property and so on that make it seem successful.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion stipulated by the researchers using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory in the previous chapter on the representation of the value of Harley's masculinity in the film *Birds of Prey* can be concluded that a masculine.

1. **Meaning of Denotation**

The back-and-forth plot in *Birds of Prey* tells the story of Harley, a tomboy woman featured by the film, always showing that Harley has an orientation like a man called masculine.

2. **Meaning of Connotations**

The meaning of the connotations contained in this study is the masculine traits contained by Harley as the main character in *Birds of Prey*. The masculine traits in this study were divided into three categories of masculine traits, namely bold, strong and important attitude categories. Where Harley's main character has an important role in the film so many know him in Gotham city. Harley also looks brave and strong, he is able to fight without fear and is so smart in using whatever weapons he finds.

3. **Myths**

There are several myths contained in this study including masculine being gentle. Attitudes and traits are not just attached to someone who is feminine. A masculine who is able to fight and is good at using weapons. Things related to being able to fight today are acceptable from both men and women, because there are karate and taekwondo classes provided. And when someone follows him, it makes him stronger and tougher. And the use of weapons for now has also provided several places that can train and teach the use of weapons such as: arrows, pistols, and so on.

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