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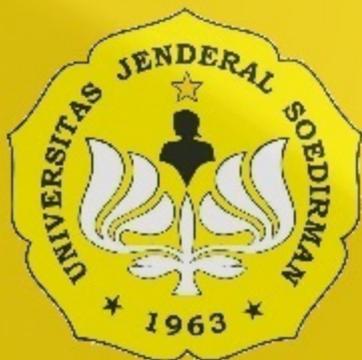
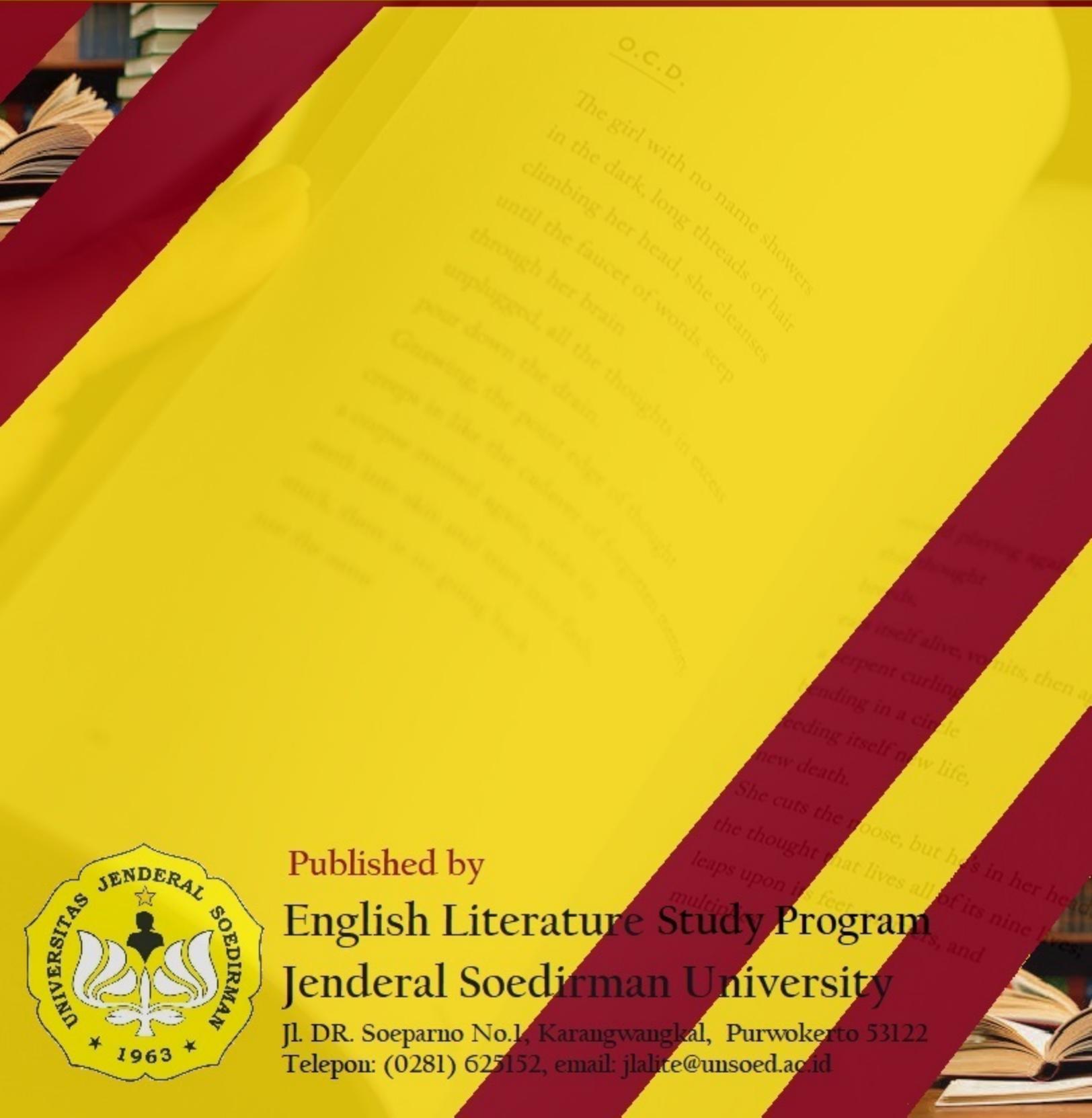


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## Focus and Scope

**J-Lalite: Journal of English Studies** which is published twice a year (every June and December) is a double-blind peer-reviewed publication consists of research-based and review articles, fresh ideas about language, literature, cultural studies which have never been published before. The journal covers all aspect relating to topics including:

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# The Manifestation of Hegemonic Masculinity in The Characters of Santa Monica Studio's *God of War* (2018)

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**Article History:** **Abstract.** This research entitled "*The Manifestation of Hegemonic Masculinity in The Characters of Santa Monica Studio's God of War (2018)*" aims to figure out how hegemonic masculinity is manifested in the characters of the video game *God of War* (2018). The primary data is Santa Monica Studio's *God of War* which was observed with qualitative method. Moreover, the researcher used Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to analyze the traits of hegemonic masculinity through the characters. This research also uses characterization to further examine the characters' physical attributes and behavior in investigating their masculinities. The findings of this research indicate that hegemonic masculinity is represented through the characters of Kratos, Atreus, Brok, and Sindri. Using the above theories, the researcher found that those characters' dialogues, actions, and behavior demonstrate hegemonic masculinity. Another important finding is that each character who performs less hegemonic can still show their hegemony through their actions and speeches. It is also discovered, to an extent that the personalities and the degree of hegemonic masculinity of the characters stem from their respective backgrounds.

**Keywords:** *Characterization, God of War, hegemonic masculinity, video game.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In modern times, men are now facing a masculinity crisis. Although men have more privilege than women (Deutsch, 2004), that does not mean they do not have their problems to deal with, Zeilinger (2015) stated that even with ever-present privilege, men face their own set of destructive barriers that restrict what it means to be a man and how a man can express himself. This issue of difficulty in expressing oneself and defining what a man should be like stems from the influence of hegemonic masculinity on modern society. Coined in 1985 by Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell, hegemonic masculinity is a concept of masculinity that puts

hegemonic and masculine men above women and lesser men in the social hierarchy (Connell, p.77).

In this hierarchy, the men considered hegemonic or masculine are placed in a dominant position which enables them to dictate what is considered masculine or not; whereas men who do not fit in that criteria will be relegated to the lower end of the social spectrum. Because of this, many men strive to be hegemonic (Bufkin, 1999; Messerschmidt, 1997, as cited in Connell, p.834) but most cannot do so due to the unattainable expectations set by the hegemonic group. As a result, many men feel conflicted about their masculinity since men were taught to keep their feelings to themselves from childhood (Miles, 2017); they have difficulty in conveying their thoughts and emotions.

However, in reality, hegemonic masculinity has different extents, which can help men realize that hegemony is not the only degree of masculinity in society. These different degrees of hegemonic masculinity can be seen in the video game entitled *God of War* (2018), by Santa Monica Studio. In the latest entry in the *God of War* franchise, the story of the game focuses on the character Kratos and his son, Atreus, as they go on a journey through the harsh Nordic world to honor his wife's last wish. As the story progresses, the player learns more about these two characters.

Kratos is *depicted* as a brave warrior and knowledgeable about surviving the harsh world in which they live. Nevertheless, he has trouble opening up his feelings to his son and has difficulty in trying to bond with him. He is also quite reserved and only speaking when he needs to. On the other hand, Atreus is unlike his father; he is more talkative than Kratos. However, he is insecure about himself and he, thus, constantly tries to prove himself to his father. He is also more emotionally open than his father. Other than those two main characters, the supporting characters who are mostly men also have different masculinities from each other. All of those masculinities are similar to the degrees of hegemonic masculinity, and how they are shown in this game will be the main focus of this research.

*God of War* has become the object of various previous studies. One of those research conducted is Kratos' Struggle in Fatherhood in Santa Monica Studio's *God of War* by Mikhael Sianturi (2021). Another previous research about *God of War* is Reconstruction of Norse Myth in videogames: the case of *God of War* by Ekaterina Koshkina (2020). What differentiates this research from those previous studies is that this research focuses on how hegemonic masculinity is manifested in the characters of the video. Since the main focus of the research is the effects of hegemonic masculinity in the video game *God of War*, the theory of hegemonic masculinity will be used to analyze its aspects in the object. Additionally, characterization will be employed to support the main theory.

Hegemonic masculinity was coined by Australian Sociologist R.W Connell. It is primarily influenced by the hegemony theory by the Italian philosopher, Antonio Gramsci. Within the context of masculinity, hegemony refers to the dominant social position of masculine men, the subordinate social position of women, and lesser men. Moreover, hegemonic masculinity ensures that men maintain dominant social roles over women (or men) perceived as feminine (Dailami, 2014).

In regards to how a hegemonic masculine man interacts with other men, Connell (2005) posits four degrees of masculinities with each being labeled as personality types. These are hegemony, subordination, complicit, and marginalization. Hegemony is the dominant one which determines what masculinity is. Subordinated men who are dominated by the hegemony group are flamboyant or feminine. The complicit men strive to be hegemonic even though they are not hegemonic themselves; lastly, marginalized men are those who are unable to comply with the hegemonic group. This inability is caused by them being racially different or having a physical disability.

It is also important to note that to understand how hegemonic masculinity displays itself in the characters, it is vital to understand their personality as they help indicate their degree of masculinity. As a result, characterization is employed to support the main theory. Currently, there are many ways an author or storyteller uses characterization to better shape their characters. Reams (2015) described four commonly used methods including physical description, action, reaction, and speech/dialogue. Physical description means how a character looks can indicate their personality, whereas a character's action and reaction can also reveal their nature. Another way of guessing a character's personality is by examining on how they talk. How they have a conversation can be used to display their personality.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a qualitative research which focused on descriptions of objects as the data instead of numbers and statistics. According to Toloie-Eshlaghy et al. (2011), qualitative research is described as an umbrella term to cover the methods and techniques that are not quantitative. The primary data source of this research is the 2018 video game *God of War*, developed by the American video game developer *Santa Monica Studio*. To support the primary data source, the researcher also gathers data from various articles, journals, books, and internet sources related to the topics of discussion to make sure the analysis will be thorough. According to Aarseth (2004) there are three dimensions to game analysis, namely Gameplay (the players' actions, strategies and motives), Game-structure (the rules of the game, including the simulation rules), and Game-world (fictional content, topology/level design, textures etc.). This research focuses on the game world since the main discussion is the characters and their travels across the game world.

Regarding with the data collection, there were several steps in collecting the data for the research. The first was playing and replaying the video game. Secondly, it was continued by gathering the data and collecting them from supporting sources. These data were obtained from various books, articles, journals, and internet sources related to the theories used in this research. Lastly, the final step was classifying the data collected from the two data sources.

In the following subchapter, the results of the research were analyzed accordingly with the main theory. The results are the degrees of hegemonic masculinity found in the game.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Hegemonic Masculinity in The Characters from *God of War***

The following part only analyzes characters that are important to the story or frequently recurring in the video game. These are Kratos, Atreus, Brok, Sindri, and Mimir. To identify what character exhibits masculinity, it is necessary to view those characters through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, specifically, the masculine personality degrees that Raewyn Connell wrote in her book *Masculinities* (2005).

To find out characters' personality and degree of masculinity, the analysis focuses on their physical appearance, actions, dialogues and reactions to other characters and their environment. The traits of hegemonic masculinity are present in *God of War's* main character, Kratos, as seen in the introduction.



*Figure 4.1. A Picture of Kratos from God of War 2018*

Based on his physical appearance, Kratos is a physically robust man. With broad shoulders and a muscular build, Kratos exudes power and strength and uses them to achieve his goals in the game. The way he uses them varies, from fighting enemies to removing an obstacle, such as a boulder, in his journey with Atreus. Whether it is slaying monsters or lifting a massive boulder, Kratos displays his strength with little hesitation. He also rarely lets his emotions get the better of him; further this makes him a stoic character. This stoicism often shows when he runs into one of the enemies in the game. During the early part of their journey, Kratos and Atreus encounter a group of cannibals. When facing them, Kratos says, "Wait here. I will handle this" (Barlog et al., 2018, 48:10).

Based on the above dialogue, there is no sign of worry or fear. Kratos just accepts the situation in front of him and decides to take action on it. This action is proof of his stoicism since one of its characteristics is not exhibiting what

individuals are feeling but rather accepting whatever is happening to them (Vocabulary, n.d.).

A hegemonic man is closely associated with a range of characteristics including physical strength, wage labor and the ability to provide, heterosexual desire and potency, fatherhood, and emotional stoicism balanced with “appropriate” displays of aggression (Shumka, Strega, and Hallgrimsdottir, 2017). Moreover, Trujillo (2009) described hegemonic men display features such as physical force and control, occupational achievement, familial patriarchy, frontiersmanship, and heterosexuality.

Throughout the video game, Kratos exhibits many of those traits. One of those is frontiersmanship which is understood as ability to live and survive the outdoors; and this behavior is present at the beginning of the game. In his article, Trujillo (2009) wrote that masculinity is hegemonic as symbolized by the daring, romantic frontiersman of yesteryear and the present-day outdoorsman.

To test Atreus for the task of spreading his mother’s ashes, *Kratos* has him track a deer. It is at this moment where Kratos begins giving lessons about the outdoors. At one point, Atreus sustains minor injury to his hands, and Kratos has Atreus hold a ball of snow on them to nullify the pain. He also dispenses advice about hunting to Atreus when they travel as shown in the following dialogue.

*Atreus:* Aaah! Found it (The Deer).  
*Kratos:* Slow down, boy!  
*Atreus:* Sorry...  
*Kratos:* You are hunting deer - not chasing it.  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 11:15)

The other characteristic of hegemonic masculinity is emotional restraint (McKenzie et al., 2018); Kratos shows this when Atreus failed to shoot the deer. Rather than simply scolded him, Kratos held back his anger as shown in the following dialogue.

*Kratos:* (screaming) What are you doing? Now its guard is up! Only fire...  
(deep breath) Only fire when I tell you to fire.  
*Atreus:* I’m sorry...  
*Kratos:* Do not be sorry. Be better. Find it.  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 11:59)

However, this emotional suppression also brings side effects on Kratos’ capacity to express his love to Atreus. One of the moments in the game which showcases this in detail is when Atreus had finally found and shot the deer. *Kratos* had him kill the deer, only to find his son uncomfortable at the prospect of doing it. Still, Kratos insisted, and, with his help, Atreus finally killed the deer.



*Figure 4.2. Kratos Trying to Comfort his son*

As seen in the picture above, Kratos tried to console his son, but he could not. Instead of putting his hand to reassure his son, he retracted it back. This behavior is evidence of hegemonic masculinity at play. Kratos, the hegemonic man, is struggling to convey his care to his son because it is one of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. In an article written by Murnen et al. (2002), the themes of masculinity are resilience, aggression, and inexpressiveness. In this instance, this form of inexpressiveness prevents Kratos from bonding with his son. This is a recurring even it is in the game. However, that lack of emotion has an advantage, as proven in the following dialogue.

*Kratos:* Close your heart to it. On our journey, we will be attacked by all manner of creature. Close your heart to their desperation. Close your heart to their suffering. Do not allow yourself to feel for them. They will not feel for you.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 38:30)

Based on the dialogue above, it is evident that Kratos was trying to make Atreus stronger and less fearful of enemies. Another trait of hegemonic masculinity that exists between father and son is familial patriarchy. In her book called *The Creation of Patriarchy*, American historian Gerda Lerner, wrote that patriarchy is the exhibition and incorporation of male dominance over women and children in the family, and the extension of male dominance in society in general (1986, p. 239). In that respect, Kratos projected authority and dominance to his son whenever he saw Atreus had disobeyed his orders, or he felt his son was misbehaving. Throughout the story, Atreus rarely defied his father's commands or did something that his father forbid. However, in rare occasions, Kratos had no problem reminding Atreus of his authority and his son's mistake. For example, after Atreus and Kratos' hunt, they encountered a troll. Kratos ordered him to be in control when fighting the troll, yet Atreus was still erratic. After defeating the troll, Kratos swiftly scolded his son for his folly and deemed him unready for the journey ahead. It is shown in the following dialogue.

*Kratos:* Your anger... you can get lost in it. The path ahead is difficult and you, Atreus, are clearly not ready.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 22:30)

Beside Kratos, other characters also commit hegemony even though they are not necessarily hegemonic men. It is important to note that even they are marginalized or other lesser forms of masculinity, they can perform hegemony.

Marginalization does not define gender performance. Many marginalized people often perform hegemony to gain benefits from within their group and society as a whole. Performing hegemonic masculinity by a marginalized person is seen as a passing behavior that distracts from their stigma. (Cliff Cheng, 1999, p. 299)

One of these is subordinated masculinity. It is the second personality type in Connell's hegemonic masculinity model. A subordinated male is considered lesser by the hegemonic group; therefore, they are often the case of subordination. One of the characters in the game that fits in this category is Sindri, the dwarf blacksmith. A trait of subordinate masculinity is that they have no trouble in conveying their feelings and thoughts. This is no exception to Sindri as he is more emotionally open than Kratos. He is squeamish, easily sickened by the sight of blood. For example, he has no trouble expressing disgust for anything that is considered unsanitary.

*Sindri*: I just need a tooth from that dragon. Watch where you grab tha... oh... never mind. So unclean. So, so unclean. Oh, the smell! Perfect, that should do. Ugh. Yeaah... I'm not touching that. Just hold it out.  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 3:00:09)



Figure 4.1. *Sindri from God of War 2018*

Sindri's physical appearance also denotes his personality. With a short stature and a slender build, he is considerably less intimidating than Kratos and certainly less than his brother, Brok. In this regard, *Sindri* being the lesser man than *Kratos* is both figurative and literal. Despite being a subordinated male, he is capable of showing hegemonic actions at a certain point. When he first met *Kratos*, he

thought Kratos had stolen the axe he and his brother made for his late wife. Assuming this, he stood up to Kratos.

*Kratos:* Step aside.

*Sindri:* I can't. See, the woman we made it for... I was, well, I am... quite fond of her. And I would be somewhat... displeased if it turns out that... you did something to her.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 1:19:30)

Despite being physically weaker than Kratos, Sindri stood up and was ready to fight him. In that respect, he was assertive to Kratos, and assertiveness or boldness is one of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity (Tseole & Vermaak, 2020).

Another character that fits the characteristics of subordinate masculinity is Atreus, Kratos' son. Unlike Kratos, Atreus is more talkative than his father and fondly enjoying conversations with anyone he meets throughout the story. Atreus is also noticeably much more compassionate than Kratos. This trait is evident when they encounter a dragon that is attacking Sindri.

*Atreus:* I can distract him (The Dragon).

*Kratos:* What are you doing?

*Atreus:* We have to help him.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 2:51:08)



*Figure 2.4. Atreus from God of War 2018*

Another part of what makes him subordinated character is that Kratos always ordered him around throughout the entire of the game. Whether translating a Norse rune or making sure enemies not present, Atreus had always to comply. This treatment is frequently shown in the video game, such as the following:

*Witch:* I'm... not sure I understand what... (notice Atreus new arrows) Wait... Where did you get those? The arrows... Give them to me. NOW.

*Atreus*: They were a gift...

*Kratos*: Do as she says, boy.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 3:33:08)

Despite his gentle and compassionate nature, Atreus commits a few actions and behaviors that can be identified as hegemonic. This change begins when Kratos revealed to his son that he was a god. This happens in the middle of the game.

*Kratos*: The truth... The truth. I am a god, boy, from another land far from here. When I came to these shores, I chose to live as a man. But the truth is... I was born a god. And so were you.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 5:14:45)

After this revelation, Atreus' whole demeanor changed. Where he once was naïve and kind, later he had become overconfident and boastful. This behavior is evident when they reached the base of a mountain.

*Atreus*: Whoa! Phht... I suppose that's Odin's doing too. Nice try! You and mother always said all gods were evil... but we're not! Týr wasn't. Freya neither. The Aesir gods - that's who's evil. And you know what - Odin's right. We are a threat. Cause we know what they are, and we know we can beat them.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 5:47:25)

Besides being more arrogant, he also starts to disobey his father's orders. For example, when they reached the cave that led to the mountain summit, they met an injured Modi, a Norse god; and the son of Thor. He was severely wounded, yet he still mocked Atreus' mother. Atreus immediately killed him despite his father's order.

This act of disobedience culminates in Kratos telling Atreus to not fight Baldur, a Norse god and a son of Odin, and escape immediately. Instead of obeying his father, Atreus shot Kratos with one of his arrows and charged at Baldur himself, resulting in Baldur subduing him. After that scene, Baldur took Atreus, and a chase ensued between Kratos and Baldur. As they fought each other, they reached the magical tree, Yggdrasil, and accidentally opened the portal to the Norse realm of the dead, Helheim. Seeing that it was Atreus' fault that made them stranded in the realm of Helheim, Kratos immediately scolded his son and reminded him of his mistakes.

*Kratos*: You will LISTEN to me and not speak a word. I am your father and you, boy, are not yourself. You are too quick to temper. You are rash, insubordinate, and out of control. This will not stand. You will honor your mother and abandon this path you have chosen. It is not too late... This discussion is far from over. We are here because of you, boy. Never forget that.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 6:00:52)

Since that exchange, Atreus never defied his father's orders again, and he reverted to his old demeanor.

Another type of masculinity is complicit masculinity. The males in this group are not necessarily hegemonic, but they do not challenge hegemony. The characters that fit this description are Brok, the dwarf blacksmith, and Sindri's brother. From his appearance alone, it is clear how the brothers differ from one another.



*Figure 4.3. Brok from God of War 2018*

Compared to Sindri's slim build, Brok's body has a stockier build, the kind of body one would see in a blacksmith. Another noticeable difference is their behavior. Unlike *Sindri*, Brok is the opposite. He is brash and foul-mouthed, has little hesitation to be angry at anyone. This behavior is evident when Kratos and Atreus first encounter him in the story.

*Brok: Hey... you must be smart or somethin', boy. You are a boy aren'tcha? (slaps the elephant) HAAA!*

*Atreus: She have a name?*

*Brok: I dunno. Rude bastard ain't ever asked mine so I ain't ever asked hers. HAAA!!*

*(Barlog et al., 2018, 51:14)*

Brok also preferred making armor and weapons because he thought anything other than those were feminine and delicate, furthering his quality as a complicit male. This notion is shown when Kratos asked him to make a key for their journey. This happened during the end of the game.

*Kratos: Can you make it?*

*Brok: Is it a weapon? Armor? Or likewise an instrument of war of which I'm a master at shaping? No? Then forget it. Even if I wanted to make such an insignificant gewgaw, I'm liable to chink my tools working on something so delicate and ladylike.*

*(Barlog et al., 2018, 6:21:23)*

He also does not hesitate to express his annoyance at his own brother. This idea is as proven by Sindri in the following dialogue. This happened in the optional dialogues in the game.

*Sindri*: Me? Make up with him? Because he is obstinate pig-head, incapable of change. Because he says the most horrible things about me, just because he's insecure about his own work - which, let me tell you, is sub-par. Because he blames me for - for the things that aren't my fault!

From the conversation above, it is clear that Brok often mocked his subordinated brother; thus, this indicates a hegemonic act. However, he seemed to care for Sindri. Surreptitiously, he asked Kratos and Atreus if Sindri was eating enough, as proven in the dialogue below.

*Brok*: Little canker-throat wouldn't know proper weight and balance if it were dangling off his chut. He eating well enough?  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 3:14:08)

This act of subtly caring for Sindri is one of the indications of hegemonic masculinity at play since one of its traits is emotional illiteracy (Scott-Samuel et al., 2009).

The last masculinity type in Connell's model is marginalized masculinity. The men in this category are unable to achieve or gain benefits from hegemonic masculinity. The reasons include being not of the same race as the hegemonic group or having some forms of disability. Out of all the characters in the game, the only one who seemingly matches the description of marginalized masculinity is Mimir, the Norse god of knowledge.



*Figure 4.4. A picture of Mimir with Kratos and Atreus from God of War 2018*

The reason for his marginalized state is the condition of his body. When he is first introduced, his entire body was implanted into a massive tree by Odin. He requested to be decapitated so that Kratos could reanimate his head with the help of the goddess, Freya. Thus, for the rest of the game, Mimir is a head dangling from Kratos' hip.

Throughout the course of the story, Mimir is just a reanimated head indicating he is disabled. This means that he almost meets the requirements of marginalized masculinity. The reason for that is, despite being just a decapitated head dangling in Kratos' hips for the majority of the game, Mimir manages to benefit from Kratos.

To further explain Mimir's predicament, it is necessary to see real examples of marginalized men. One example of marginalized masculinity is the condition of black men in the United States of America. Connell (2005) wrote that even though particular black athletes are exemplars of hegemonic masculinity, the fame and wealth of individual stars have no trickledown effect; it does not give social improvements to black men in general (p.81). In Mimir's case, though being a severed head in Kratos' hips, his life was improved. This improvement started when he asked Kratos to decapitate him. This happened after explaining his condition to Kratos.

*Mimir:* He tortures me, you know. Every day, brother. Odin himself sees to it personally, and believe me, there is no end to his creativity. Every. Single. Day. This... this isn't living.  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 3:08:41)

*Mimir:* Your father won't let me go, Baldur, and he won't let you kill me. You have nothing to offer me. Do take your questions, take your threats, take this two worthless wankers, and piss off.  
(Barlog et al., 3:05:17)

Besides, Mimir also displays assertiveness, another hegemonic trait, during a few moments in the story. For example, when Baldur asks him to tell where Kratos is and Atreus is in exchange for his freedom, he refuses.

### **Motivation for the Character's Masculinity**

This section will focus on the motivation of the characters' masculinity particularly why they commit their respective masculinity. Therefore, the following analysis will focus on the reasons that make the characters the way they are. The first character that is going to be analyzed is the main character, Kratos.

Throughout the story, Kratos has taught plenty of lessons to his son. One of these is emotional restraint. As Kratos puts it, "Do not allow yourself to feel for them. They will not feel for you". From this line, it is clear that Kratos wanted his son to be effective in combat; this was a good thing since the world they lived in is full of enemies. This point is proven when Sindri met Kratos and Atreus in the realm of Aflheim.

*Sindri:* Be careful where you're going. There's nobody nice out here anymore since all of the people left. I mean, I hate to generalize, but, umm, mostly they just try to kill you.  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 1:27, Alfheim)

Another reason why Kratos is hegemonic and teaches hegemonic values to his son is to make Atreus become strong and capable to survive whatever danger the world might pose. This notion is proven when Atreus had just killed a man for the first time, and Kratos tried to encourage him through the following words.

*Kratos:* Listen to me... To be effective in combat, a warrior must not feel for his enemy. The road ahead is long and unforgiving... no place for a boy. You must be a warrior.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 50:08)

In contrast, Atreus's character is softer than Kratos's. His gentle disposition and subordinated masculinity results from his upbringing. He was raised primarily by his mother since his father had spent most of his time outdoors. This trait is proven when Kratos and Atreus had reached the realm of Alfheim to acquire its magical light; and when Kratos stepped into the light to recover it, he entered Atreus's memory and came across this monologue.

*Atreus:* ...alone with him. He always leaves. He's never here. He doesn't want me and never will. I don't know him and he doesn't know me. Doesn't seem to want to. I'm strong. I'm smart. I am not what he thinks I am. I know better. He doesn't talk to me. Doesn't teach me.

(Barlog et al., 2018, 2:04:58)

This monologue explains why Atreus is distant from his father and inexperienced in the world. It also explains why he is eager to go through the journey with his father since it would prove to him that he is strong and self-reliant. This eagerness is seen when Atreus and Kratos have just left their house and encounter enemies.

*Atreus:* How was that? Did I help?

*Kratos:* If you want to help, distract them. Whoever is not my focus should be yours... but only when safe to do so.

*Atreus:* I can do that.

In the dialogue above, Atreus was keen to show his father that he could take care of himself. Beside Atreus, another subordinated male is Sindri. He is emotionally open about his disgust for germs, hence, he always prefers things to be clean. This fixation causes him to be fussy, and that is why his brother often mocks him. The reason for his open obsession with disgust for germs stemmed from his encounter with a witch who has told him about the existence of germs. This behavior is illustrated when Atreus asked Sindri about his fixation on hygiene.

*Sindri:* No, I was just as unsanitary as the next dwarf until the day a Vanir witch set me straight. She discovered with her magic that there are thousands of thousands of tiny beasties on everything around us, so small you can't even see them.

On the other hand, Brok is less open than his brother. He is also considerably ruder to people, especially to Sindri. This animosity toward Sindri is originated from Sindri's meticulous nature, mainly toward hygiene. This notion is proven when Sindri asks Atreus about Brok.

*Atreus:* Yeah! He (Brok) said you lost your talent.

*Sindri*: Oh, and that I'm selfish (no), I'm sure. That I value a weapon's look (no) over its purpose. That I am pretentious (no) and uptight. Fussy. I know what he thinks. But he can't hurt me any- AH!!! Burn that.  
(Barlog et al., 2018, 2:59:35)

In the dialogue above, Brok thinks Sindri as fussy and uptight, which is related to Sindri's hygiene complex.

The last character is Mimir. He is imprisoned due to Odin suspecting him of aiding his enemies, the giants. This fact is proven when Mimir is talking about the giants.

*Mimir*: Odin came to regard him as a threat to his rule... he suspected Týr of collaborating to aid the Giants instead of helping to steal their secrets for the Aesir. Same thing he accused me of, frankly- though in Týr's case, I believe he was right.

Odin confines him for 109 years when he met Kratos and Atreus; he was eager to help them as that would release him from imprisonment. Even to the point of asking Kratos to behead him, he wished to be free of his torment.

## **CONCLUSION**

By employing Raewyn Connell's hegemonic masculinity model as the primary theory and characterization, the researcher discovered that in the video game, each character exhibits their masculinity primarily through speech because a person's way of talking indicates their personality and masculinity. Those who are precise and bold with their words classifies as hegemonic men.

Another indicator of masculinity is their physicality. Men like Kratos, whose muscular and well-built body are obviously displayed as hegemonic; their physical presence emanates power and authority. On the other hand, men like Atreus or Sindri, who is not physically imposing, are placed into non-hegemonic masculine types such as subordinate, etc. The other indicator of a man's masculinity is their actions. Hegemonic men tend to be more assertive and aggressive. This bold behavior is evident in Kratos. In the video game, he often violently defeats his enemies and always states his intentions clear to the various people he encounters.

In contrast, characters such as Sindri rarely standing up for himself, always caters to others. The researcher also finds that the degrees of masculinity in Connell's model that are below hegemonic can commit hegemony to various extent; they perform hegemony through speech and actions. These characters become more assertive, and they begin to be more confident in their words. This behavior can be seen in Atreus when he learns of his godly heritage or when Sindri stands up to Kratos.

Another important finding is that each of the characters' background and surroundings have affected their behavior and, by extension, their masculinity. Kratos, who spends most of his entire life being a frontiersman in the Nordic

wilderness, has learned ways of surviving it; while, Atreus, who was primarily raised at home by his mother, is bound to be inexperienced about the world.

Conclusively, hegemonic masculinity expresses itself in many ways in this video game. These multiple expressions are due to masculinity in men that can be identified by various indicators namely their physical appearance, speech, or actions. Those traits portray the characters differently; and they stem from their social background. Based on the discussion, hegemonic masculinity that is present in the characters of this video game shows that different degrees of men exist and that a hierarchy will be formed based on the differences. The strongest and the most competent have the power and authority to determine how a man should look and behave; while the rest have to either follow or face the risk of being marginalized.

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