

Body Discipline in the Movie “Turning Red”: Foucauldian Discourse

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the concept of body discipline and its implications in the movie "Turning Red," focusing on the character Meilin Lee and her portrayal of female regulation. The research method used in this study is qualitative research. Specifically, the study uses descriptive research primarily focusing on describing the characteristics of the main character. For collecting the data, the researchers watched the Turning Red movie repeatedly and highlighted the issue related to the research problem through the dialogues and scenes in the movie. Meanwhile, in analyzing the data, the researchers classified and analyzed the types of body discipline and impacts on Meilin Lee through the lens of Foucault's theory. Then, drew the conclusion. The analysis reveals that family and social space significantly influence the constraints imposed on the main character, depicted as the Red Panda, transforming her behavior, resulting in anger or frustration, shock, and eventually acceptance. Through this research, the movie "Turning Red" serves as a platform to explore and highlight the effects of body discipline on individuals, particularly in the context of female regulation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strong societal beliefs about how men and women should behave, which often stem from cultural interactions and norms, are known as gender stereotypes. These stereotypes lead to different behaviors in private and personal spaces, impacting both men and women. Traditionally stereotypes in this context have been attached to women. Societal needs have emphasized features such as being attractive and polite for women, which maintains gender stereotypes by reinforcing certain standards of behavior. Women had also been taught several skills by their mothers since they were children, such as cooking, sewing, maintaining the home, taking care of themselves, charm, and modesty (Saputri & Neisya, 2021). The social image of women is closely associated with the standards and value schemes put on in a communal cluster. Meanwhile, if viewed from a psychological aspect, women cannot be separated from what is called femininity (Aprilia & Neisya, 2022). In the family, for example, women act as wives, mothers, and family members, each bringing consequences to socially interrelated attitudes. The social production of stereotypes uses changeable and ineradicable indications such as culture, ethnicity, social position, sexual category, and stage to eliminate and marginalize persons and societies (Pardede & Neisya, 2020). Women's social image is also a matter of self-experience, such as being imaged in women's



self-image and social image, these experiences determine women's social interactions in public. This refers to how women are perceived and judged by society based on various factors such as appearance, behavior, accomplishments, and societal expectations. Women's beautiful appearance always follows them, both young and old, rich-poor, low education, tertiary education, women who are active in the domestic to the public, which is sure always to get attention from women in various walks of life (Nurdiyana & Najamudin, 2021).

Moreover, every ethnicity, race, and country has a beautiful concept according to each individual and group. The idea of beauty body regulation is relative and contextual and does not have class. Everyone has their view of beauty. For example, for Asian women, the standard of beauty is a woman with a bright or white skin color, female skin should be soft, supple, hairless, and silky. Ideally, it should show no signs of drying out, a skinny, sharp nose, good teeth, straight hair, etc (Kartika, 2021). The self is not already there when humans are born, the "self" is dynamic (Anindya et al., 2022). In this case, women whose bodies are regulated according to the beauty standards of each region certainly have a significant impact on their lives. For example, women feel that they are not independent with what they have, feel insecure, and cannot express themselves. A woman cannot eat according to their will because she is worried about weight gain. They feel intimidated to do activities and wear any clothes to maintain proper femininity because women's bodies are far more the target of observation by the humanities than men's. The existence of beauty standards makes women want to follow the existing standards to avoid the insecurities that can arise (Sekarwening, 2021).

According to Cash and Pruzinsky (Sari & Ansyah, 2022), satisfaction with one's body image is directly related to how a person perceives their body image. Body image disclosure is a judgmental attitude consisting of positive and negative judgments about one's body shape. Some researchers are also interested in the same topic. King, Dyke, and Carlos & Jorge also adopt Foucault's theory. (King, 2004) examined the discipline of the female body with the title "The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Discipline of the Female Body". Another previous research by (Hunger et al., 2012) also investigated body discipline, entitled "Discipline and the Docile Body: Regulating Hunger in the Capitol". Then, research (Martins & Jiménez Muñoz, 2019) also investigated the body discipline using Foucault's theory in "Modernity and the Regulation of Bodies: Elias meets Foucault".

Another previous research by (Rose & Safana, 2022) also used the same object as the current research, entitled "The Representation of Chinese-Canadian Parenting Styles for Daughters Depicted in Movie *Turning Red*". This research applies Stuart Hall's Representation theory and aims to analyze the representation of the Chinese-Canadian Parenting Style.

From all the previous studies there is still no research that brings up the issue of body discipline in the movie *Turning Red*, so why hence, the researchers are interested in conducting the research of it. This research is helpful to contribute to enriching literary research, especially in the woman's body discipline that is mostly found in literary



works. This research is also beneficial for finding the impact of body discipline on the personality described in this movie. This research aims to describe body discipline and the impact of body discipline in the movie *Turning Red*, especially in which the main character Meilin Lee portrays the issue of women's regulation. For various reasons, research on body discipline is very important, and viewing a movie like "*Turning Red*" can be an interesting object of research because research on body discipline is so important and why the movie can be an interesting object, researching this issue can help us understand how societal norms, beauty standards, and pressure to conform impact a person's life. Moreover, by conducting *Turning Red* on this research it deals with body transformation and self-acceptance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of body discipline, Foucault examines how discourses establish norms and standards for bodily skill, behavior, and functions (Betasari, 2019). An important part of Michel Foucault's broader theory of power, knowledge, and social control is the idea of the "discipline of the body". Foucault studied the various methods and mechanisms modern societies use to regulate and control the body. According to Foucault, societies create norms and standards that regulate how bodies should function, behave, and look. Various institutions, such as schools, hospitals, prisons, and the media, create these norms. Individuals internalize these norms and regulate themselves to conform to society's values, known as bodily discipline. Female figure rules have varied over time and across cultures. Reflect cultural obsessions and preoccupations in ways that are still poorly understood. Given the well-documented discomfort, difficulty breathing, and displacement of internal organs caused by 19th-century corsets, the exciting analogy with Foucault's writings on torture, which according to him, should "mark the victim: it was intended, either by the scars it leaves on the body, or the spectacle that goes with it, branding the victim with ugliness" (Foucault, 1977, p.34). Foucault examines how power operates through various techniques and practices of the discipline. There is a relationship between discipline and punishment that sees the whole of society as the object of monitoring and applying discipline (Foucault, 1982). This disciplinary power is not just exercised by individuals or institutions but dispersed throughout society, shaping individual behavior, actions, and bodies. According to him, power is not a possession, but a strategy. Power strategies are everywhere because there are rules, and regulation systems, where people are connected, that's where power works (Mustofa, 2017). Transforming women into socially adapted requires immense discipline and can cause discomfort, not to mention countless feelings of inadequacy. That confirmed the status of women as a body. The word "discourse" evolved in the modern world, especially in current politics such as democracy, human rights, civil society, or people's representatives. According to Foucault as cited by (Robin & Pricila, 2021) word "discourse" is not only in the realm of communication science, but is used in



sociology, linguistics, and even psychology. Discourse includes the language, practices, and institutions that produce and shape knowledge in a particular social, cultural, or historical context. Foucault argues that discourse is closely related to power because it reflects and strengthens power relations in society. Power is not something that belongs solely to individuals or groups, but is spread across social structures, institutions, and discursive practices. (Salamet & Fil , 2020). Discourse serves to establish and maintain power by defining what is considered normal, acceptable, or right in a given society or historical period. One of Foucault's key insights is the concept of "disciplinary power," which refers to how institutions, such as prisons, schools, and hospitals, exercise power and control over individuals through various techniques of surveillance, normalization, and discipline. In the context of this body discipline phenomenon, it is visible, that this is known in the life of Mei as the main character who is regulated, directed, and formed in such a way with rules by her family so that she is disciplined in carrying out her daily routine. Disciplinary power operates through specific discourses that shape and regulate individual behavior, knowledge, and subjectivity. Foucault also explores the notion of "genealogy", which involves tracing historical developments and transforming discourses and power relations. By examining how knowledge and power have evolved, Foucault aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms that shape social practices and institutions. These discourses not only diagnose and treat illnesses but also create a framework for regulating and disciplining bodies to conform to societal expectations.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method. Descriptive research primarily focuses on describing the characteristics of the research samples. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Neisyra et al., 2023). According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a human social problem. The research belongs to qualitative research because the researchers analyze the data descriptively and the result is informed in written form. According to Creswell & Guetterman (2018), qualitative research makes the researcher very dependent on information from objects or participants on a broad scope, general questions, and data collection mostly from text or words. This method involves a thorough examination and interpretation of the film's content, which includes dialog, scenes visuals, and themes. This method aims to find patterns, recurring motifs, and underlying messages to gain an understanding of the meaning and consequences the movie is trying to achieve. Participants explain and analyze the texts collected subjectively. The analysis focuses on the forms of body discipline of Meilin Lee and the impact on the personality of Meilin Lee.



The data collection methods used in this research are the researchers repeatedly watching the *Turning Red* movie, writing and analyzing the issue using Foucault's theory, underlining the statements of the body discipline of the main character, and collecting all the data. Meanwhile, for the techniques of analyzing data, the researchers analyze, classify, and underline the types of body discipline and the impact of body discipline in the movie using Foucault's (1977) theory. Then, the researchers specifically interpret the scene to show the body discipline and the impact. After the data had been interpreted, the researchers found and drew the conclusions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research and discussion are described from the scene and narration of the movie *Turning Red*. The results of this study present data obtained from data sources adapted to the formulation of the problem and research objectives. The data obtained were analyzed according to the theory Foucault used in this research. Then, the results of the analysis are presented in descriptions. After these steps, it continued with a discussion of the results of the analysis carried out in the literature.

4.1 The body Disciplines

Researchers focus on thoroughly exploring the body discipline of Meilin Lee contained in the movie *Turning Red* based on Foucault's perspective, especially from the institution. *Turning Red* is a movie that explores themes of identity, cultural norms, institutional power, social order, and stereotypes through the lens of the China-Canadian experience. The movie's narrative structure as a screenplay allows the writer to examine various body disciplines. Below are some forms of body discipline discussed in this movie.

4.1.1. Institutional Discipline

Institutional discipline refers to the system of rules, regulations, and procedures established within an organization or institution to maintain order, enforce compliance, and correct behaviors that are deemed inappropriate or disruptive. The effort to control, and regulate the body becomes part of a social phenomenon that is reinforced by the existence of supporting institutions. It is commonly found in various settings such as schools, universities, workplaces, and correctional facilities.)According to Foucault, the nature of power is gradually developed in local habits one after another, which are generally in what is called institutional discipline (Soraya, 2020). Foucault argues that modern societies are characterized by systems of discipline and control that operate through various institutions, including families and society. The family is an important center for the functioning of other social institutions in society (Awaru, 2021). Societies are always undergoing institutional processes. To avoid conflict, societies are fenced in by certain rules, norms, and values when carrying out their activities. Society needs a social platform to do many things (Mei Ling, 2020).



a. Family

The family is the social unit that provides the human capital for the growth and maintenance of human capital to the next generation (Lee, Ahmad, Tarmizi, & Ibrahim, 2023) The family institution refers to the social unit that forms the basic structure of




society, which consists of individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and live together under the roof of a household. There is interaction and communication in their respective roles and usually pass down a custom and practice in their way (Wahid et al., 2019). The family is one of the oldest and most fundamental social institutions and plays an important role in the socialization, support, and development of its members. This movie examines the history of a Canadian-Chinese child who experienced body discipline by the family. Family discipline refers to the rules, policies, and methods used to prohibit and enforce behavior within the family unit.

Table 1. Family Institution analysis

Number/Scene Visualisation	Time	Dialogues Interpretation	Type of Content Analysis
<p>1.</p> 	<p>0:48-01:22</p>	<p>A point highlighted in the dialog is the cultural or societal expectation to respect and obey parents. While the perspective presented by Meilin emphasizes the importance of showing respect and gratitude to parents for their sacrifices, it also provides a cautionary note about potentially neglecting one's own needs and boundaries in the process. This dialogue suggests that while honoring parents is important, there must also be a balance that ensures individuals do not neglect their well-being and aspirations.</p>	<p>Family Institution</p>
<p>2.</p> 	<p>26:49-29:29</p>	<p>This scene describes their mysterious relationship with the Red Panda. It appears that the family employs a unique method of discipline. This can be seen from the quote provided, to become powerful mythical beasts, this discipline entails controlling and utilizing their emotions. Is seen as both good and bad, as it can become troublesome and difficult to control. Family rituals can temporarily stop the transformation but require strict discipline to prevent strong emotions as they can trigger the release of the Red Panda spirit. If</p>	<p>Family Institution</p>



		one cannot control the transformation during the ritual, one may never be free of the red panda spirit. As a result, the ability to manage emotions and control transformation seems to be an important component of their family discipline.		
4.		39:33-39:53	The body discipline depicted in the scene is part of the Meilin family's customs. It seems that this tradition includes a ritual called "animal exorcism", which allows female family members to be themselves. It seems that this ritual aims to transform oneself through spiritual practice and discipline. The Meilin family's cultural or religious beliefs may be the source of discipline in this tradition. Perhaps the name "Sun Yee" mentioned in the scene refers to a deity or spiritual figure associated with the Mei family tradition. The family may believe that they can gain blessings or guidance from Sun Yee to achieve spiritual transformation through their rituals and disciplined practice.	Family Institution



b. Society

Social institution is a term often used to describe social institutions. According to Kluckhohn, as cited by (Jaelani, 2020), social institutions consist of concepts, ideas, and plans known as blueprints that consist of a combination of human reactions to their environment or ethos that becomes the basic value of life.

Table 2. Society Institution Analysis

Number/Scene Visualisation	Time	Dialogues Interpretation	Type of content analysis
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<p>1.</p> 	<p>34:35-34:47</p>	<p>Some of Mei's friends feel that it doesn't matter who and how Mei is, Mei can still be loved and accepted by anyone, the scene also means that you still have to be yourself.</p>	<p>Society</p>
<p>2.</p> 	<p>59:25-59:30</p>	<p>In general, to be a normal girl of her age, Mei should be able to express herself, for example in appearance, liking the opposite sex, liking music or concerts, and so on, as Devon said in the scene, instead of having to obey all the wishes of her parents, dress neatly and become a temple guard.</p>	<p>Society</p>


4.2 Form of Body Discipline Impact Personality of Meilin Lee in the Movie Turning Red

The body and personality are related in complex and varied ways. The physiological processes that help maintain balance and stability in the body are known as body regulation. In contrast, "personality" refers to a person's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving that makes each person unique. Genetics, environment, and society influence it. Although the regulatory influence of bodily factors on personality may not be direct, there are several ways in which the two correlate with each other. This body discipline impacts the personality of Meilin Lee:

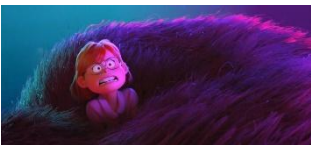
4.2.1 Anger

Emotion is the feeling of people regarding external stimuli, affects their judgment and behavior, and includes physical and psychological elements (Aren & Nayman Hamamci, 2020). Anger is one of the simplest and primary emotions felt by humans, but it can give rise to a range of negative emotions such as frustration, aggression, annoyance, sadness, grief, and pain (Thomas & Vatsa, 2022). Anger is a natural emotion that is experienced by everyone at different times. This is a normal reaction to a challenge, which helps us strengthen our defenses or defend ourselves. It usually occurs in response to thoughts or feelings such as pain, irritation, worry, envy, discomfort, rejection, or embarrassment. (Beames, Grisham, Moulds & Denson, (2019).

Table 3. Impact body discipline on Meilin's personality (anger)

Number/Scene Visualisation	Time	Dialogues Interpretation	Type of Content Analysis
<p>1.</p> 	<p>40:58-41:20</p>	<p>The scene focuses on the concept of "body discipline" which includes control, obedience, and understanding of moral values. Meilin experiences conflict with her mother regarding the limited freedom and trust given to her and her friends. Meilin expressed anger and frustration with her mother for not understanding her</p>	<p>Anger</p>




		feelings. She felt that she had always been obedient and responsible, performed sacred duties, and maintained moral values. This reflects an aspect of bodily discipline, where Meilin consciously carries out her roles and responsibilities according to the norms held.	
2.	 1:15:59- 1:16:33	Mei-Lin expresses her anger and disappointment towards Ming, her mother, and her grandmother. She admits her involvement in the plan to deceive her mother and firmly asserts her identity and independence. In addition, Mei-Lin shows interest in teenage habits, such as attending parties, liking boys, enjoying loud music, and dancing (spinning). She emphasizes that she is thirteen years old and demands that her family accept and consider her wishes and preferences. At the end of the excerpt, shouts and growls show her strong emotions and rebellious spirit.	Anger

4.2.2 Shocked

Shock can refer to a sudden and profound change in a person's behavior, attitude, or emotional reactions as a result of a shocking or traumatic event (Ramadhanti,2022). In this case, Mei experienced a sudden change in personality after experiencing a shock.

Table 4. Impact body discipline on Meilin's personality (shocked)

Number/ Scene Visualisation	Time	Dialogues Interpretation	Type of Content Analysis
1. 	17:44-18:23	Ming tries to offer support, understanding, and reassurance, while Mei Lin is surprised at her initial and emotional reaction to the physical change into a red panda that her mother attributes to menstruation. While crying, Mei Lin expressed her dismay and reproached herself by calling herself a "dirty red monster." This shows	Shocked




		that she has negative thoughts and strong emotions about herself.	
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4.2.3 Proud and Acceptance

Self-acceptance is a state where a person has a positive attitude towards positive attitude towards oneself, recognizing and accepting advantages and disadvantages that exist in themselves and feeling satisfied and accepting themselves as they are (Oktaviani, 2019). Pride and acceptance can greatly affect one's personality, shaping how they interact with the world around them and with themselves. In this case, acceptance means accepting oneself and others. It is the ability to identify and accept one's strengths, weaknesses, and special traits without criticizing them.

Table 5. Impact body discipline on Meilin's personality (Proud and acceptance)

Number/ Scene Visualisation	Time	Dialogues Interpretation	Type of Content Analysis
1. 	1:25:14-1:26:06	It appears that Mei-Mei is proud of herself for deciding to keep the pandas in her body, which is a very important decision in her life. Although Auntie indirectly told her that she should give up the pandas, Mei-Mei remained firm and emphasized that her decision to keep the pandas was her decision and she was proud of her decision. In addition, Mei-Mei tells Ming that she has changed and become her person, and that she is proud of who she is now for making this decision.	Proud and Acceptance

5. CONCLUSION

One of the conclusions drawn through the movie is in the context of the phenomenon of body discipline. The researchers explored the idea of body discipline by emphasizing how institutions construct women's body image. Mei is known as the main character who is regulated, directed, and shaped in such a way by the family and society with rules so that she is disciplined in carrying out her daily routine and this is the factor that most affects the limitations of the main character who is depicted with a Red Panda which ultimately has an impact on the change in nature to become angry, frustrated, and finally able to adapt and arrive at the acceptance phase. Mei struggles to break free from her family's stereotypes that



limit and take away her authentic identity. This research reveals the complex web of power relations that underlie the regulation of women's bodies in modern society. It shows how individual's responses to external expectations that influence their emotions and behavior are shaped by the interplay between family dynamics, social space, and societal norms.

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The organizing committee of LIRE (Language and Literature) Journal hosted by Faculty of Social and Political Science, Bangka Belitung University proudly announces that your article titled

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is **accepted** and will be published in LIRE Journal OJS Volume 7 Number 2 October Year 2023.

We are looking forward to having another collaboration with you soon.

Best Regards,



Andri Fernanda, S.Pd., M.A.

Editor in Chief

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