THE ATTEMPT OF LEONARD DEKKOM TO GAIN THE POWER IN *GEOSTORM (2017)*: MACHIAVELLI'S PERSPECTIVE

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This research analyzed Leonard Dekkom's attempt to gain power in the film *Geostorm (2017)* through Machiavelli's perspective. This research aims to see how Machiavelli's theory applies to the actions taken by Leonard Dekkom, the strategies used, and the motivations behind the sabotage of the Dutch Boy system. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, collecting data through film analysis of scenes and dialog to relate the findings. The results of this study show that Leonard Dekkom reflects Machiavellian traits, such as manipulation, cunning strategies and tactics that override moral values to achieve his personal ambitions. Succes in achieving power in politics prioritizes the goal over morality, such as Leonard Dekkom's sabotage. This study concludes that Leonard Dekkom reflects the complexity of power politics, which is in line with Machiavelli's thinking that prioritizes strategy and ambition over moral values.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is the expression of human personality in the form of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, enthusiasm, and beliefs in the form of concrete images that arouse fascination with language tools (Lawolo et al., 2024; Zuhroni & Syamsurrijal, 2023). Literary works are tools writers use to convey their experiences and ideas (Pomolango & Baghtayan, 2024; Salamah et al., 2024). Literary works originate from the imagination or delusion of the author which not only contains beautiful elements to be enjoyed by the audience, but literary works also contain life values that can be exemplified and applied. In the author's work, the audience can feel the soul and mind of the author by including thoughts and feelings.

Film is a form of literary work. Film is the latest communication tool in the form of audiovisual media and can be used as a means of entertainment that has been used since ancient times, as well as presenting stories, events, music, drama, comedy, and other technical offerings to the general public (Abdillah et al., 2020). Arta et al. (2024) said that films are a means to convey messages to the general public of artistic expression where artists and filmmakers can express their ideas and story concepts. Films can give an impression of someone's life because they can make the audience feel like they are in the movie scenes. The viewers can have deep memories of the messages contained in the film. The message conveyed in the film can captivate the audience's emotions.

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The film *Geostorm (2017)* is a film directed by Dean Devlin in 2017 that tells the story of a global climate control satellite network called Dutch Boy, which was created by world leaders led by US and China along with scientists from 17 countries led by Jake Lawson to control natural disasters due to catastrophic climate change throughout the world surrounding the planet. After successfully protecting the earth for 3 years, Dutch Boy experiences a malfunction in its system which could cause a geostorm that could destroy the entire world. Leonard Dekkom's character as the US Secretary of State has a plan to sabotage Dutch Boy by inserting a virus into the system. Leonard Dekkom plans to utilize Dutch Boy malfunction to create world chaos so that he can eliminate America's enemies and rule the world.

The viewers not only see the film *Geostorm (2017)* as entertainment but also invite the viewer to think about political issues. In the current political phenomenon, many individuals or groups will gain power by doing everything possible. This can be seen in the film *Geostorm (2017)*, where political ambition can encourage manipulative actions that create complicated changes in power.

Leonard Dekkom's character in the film *Geostorm (2017)* is portrayed as a manipulative person who does everything possible to gain power. Leonard Dekkom's plan to sabotage the Dutch Boy system shows how he utilizes his position to take advantage of opportunities to carry out his action. In this case, Leonard Dekkom's character reflects the current political phenomenon. Many people use methods like this to gain power or maintain their positions. Gaining power by doing everything possible demonstrates Machiavelli's principles of gaining power.

Machiavelli's philosophy extends beyond the simple notion of power at any cost, incorporating nuanced ideas about adaptability, perception, and historical necessity. His concept of *virtù* (a combination of strength, cunning, and decisiveness) and *fortuna* (luck or circumstances beyond one's control) underscores the idea that a successful leader must skillfully navigate unpredictable events while maintaining control over their image and authority. Machiavelli also recognized that rulers must balance fear and love but emphasized that fear is the more reliable tool for maintaining stability. His political thought acknowledges the moral ambiguity of leadership, arguing that ethical considerations must sometimes be set aside to preserve the state. Additionally, his pragmatic approach to governance suggests that deception and manipulation, when used strategically, are not inherently evil but necessary tools for maintaining power in an unstable world.

Based on the film *Geostorm (2017)*, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title "The Attempt of Leonard Dekkom to Gain the Power in *Geostorm (2017)*: Machiavelli's Perspective." This film is relevant to discussing political power, which reflects Machiavelli's principles that justify gaining power at all costs. The objective of the study are to explain Machiavelli's perspective as reflected in Leonard Dekkom's in *Geostorm (2017)*, to describe how Machiavelli's perspective is reflected in Leonard Dekkom actions in *Geostorm (2017)*, and to analyze the reasons behind Leonard Dekkom's decision to sabotage Dutch Boy in *Geostorm (2017)*.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Power Based on Machiavelli's Perspective

Machiavelli's pragmatic view of leadership highlights the importance of power dynamics over moral values. Skills in adapting to the various situations encountered, and prioritizing performance that can achieve goals consistently are required in effective leadership. In Machiavelli's perspective, power must be used for the benefit of the state and not influenced by morality. To gain and maintain power, a person will do everything possible, even if it means being strict or cruel. Machiavelli emphasized that a ruler must have a strategy in maintaining or obtaining power by doing all means, even if these actions deviate from moral values (Syarofuzzaman, 2024). Leaders should prioritize state stability and power control over morality, which is the pragmatic view of politics proposed in Machiavelli's II *Principe* (Boim et al., 2023).

According to Machiavelli, the state exists only for power. Power refers to the freedom of people to act according to their intuitive impulses. Freedom is the element that builds the nature of protecting and defending the freedom that people already have. Therefore, with power, a person can defend a city and those who are accustomed to freedom will protect it by the means of their society rather than other means (Qomariyah, 2024).

Machiavelli's concept of virtù and fortuna, Machiavelli does not define the exact meaning of virtù. Machiavelli states that virtù describes the qualities, advantages and important factors that a leader can master and develop to achieve honor, success and glory. Fortuna, on the other hand, is luck. Fortuna symbolizes luck and destiny that can determine the direction of one's life such as success and failure that cannot be controlled (Maiwan, 2019). Leaders who have virtù or advantages can be an example and can achieve their goals (Rahayu & Agustina, 2022).

Machiavelli's emphasis that the use of power deviates from moral values has influenced political concepts and leadership throughout time. Adolf Hitler is one example of a historical figure who illustrates and applies Machiavelli's ideas in his leadership. He maintained his power in a way that was unethical for his interests (Qomariyah, 2024). Machiavelli noted that dictatorship can provide stability in certain situations, espicially when facing external threats or internal problems. A strong and courageous leader creates stability by exercising strong control, but he also realizes that to achieve his goals, a good leader must involve the people.

Military power plays a major role in Machiavelli's political ideas, where he considers the military as an important factor for the security and stability of a state. In his *Art of War*, he highlighted the importance of having an experienced and loyal army, which was also needed to maintain internal stability, not just to deal with external threats. Machiavelli argued that the military serves as an important tool for leaders to overcome external and internal threats so as to strengthen power. Machiavelli's involvement inthr Florentine militia in 1506 informs his theoretical views on military matters according to his experience, especially in his work Art of War. Machiavelli emphasized the importance of a strong military to maintain the stability of a state, which is also an important tool for leader to maintain his power (Borello, 2023).

The manipulative actions often taken by leaders reflect Machiavelli's act of deception that still occurs today. Power can influence a leader to act against their differences, a tactic often used in political manipulation (Noggle, 2021). Although Machiavelli's theory says that manipulation can be a powerful weapon for leaders who often undermine fair agreements, it raises concerns about making decisions that are inviolable and capable of destroying moral values (Noggle, 2021).

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The monopoly on information is a major factor supporting the success of propaganda (Bachtiar et al., 2016). Machiavelli argues that a leader must be willing to manipulate and propaganda to maintain power. Even though this is very contrary to moral values. Machiavelli believes that power is not related to morality, a leader must be prepared to use cunning and cruelty to achieve his goals (Qomariyah, 2024).

The concept of power according to Machiavelli, a leader must be ready to use cruelty, cunning, and use all means that deviate from moral values to gain power or maintain power. In his idea, Machiavelli emphasized that power can be divided into two types, the first, a leader achieves power by using all means including cruelty even though it is an immoral act. In contrast to the first one who uses cruelty in achieving power, Machiavelli argues that power that has support of its people is preferable, because they are not only focused on their own goals but also focus on what their people need, this is called constitutional power (Syarofuzzaman, 2024).

Machiavelli's *The Prince* states that if one would be love or feared, one would choose both, but if one has to choose one, then they would rather be feared that love. According to Machiavelli, leaders should avoid being hated but should be feared, because hatred can trigger resistance. Machiavelli emphasizes that leaders must act unethically to achieve power, suggesting that political morality must be in accordance with individual behavior and conditions (Ramsay, 2024).

According to Machiavelli's perspective, facing challenges and complex situations is the first step to understanding and applying the principles of effective power. This remains true in situations where a leader has to deal with disagreement and uncertainty.

2.2 Previous Study

In this study, the researcher took the film *Geostorm (2017)* directed by Dean Devlin to analyze. There are many reviews discussing this film, but no research has been found that discusses the character of Leonard Dekkom who wants to gain power at all costs using Machiavelli's theory.

In the first research conducted by Humairoh & Chirstantyawati (2018) entitled "Representasi Relasi Kuasa Negara Adidaya Amerika dalam Film Geostorm," the author discusses how the power relations of the American superpower towards the misuse of technology which resulted in natural disasters. This research uses the narrative analysis method by Vladimir Propp and the theory of media cultural power by Douglass Kellner. The result of this research shows that this film makes an impression on the public about the acquisition of political-economic power that creates changes in power through various characters and scenes, as well as paying attention to Hollywood's desire to show America's superiority and complex cultural representations.

The second researcher from Moreno (2023) entitled "The Joker and Dark Personalities: The Dark Triad Across His Representations in Movies" This research combines analysis of the Joker character from various film versions using the Dark Triad theory which includes narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. The Joker character in this research shows that he is one of the most famous villain characters who uses all means to achieve his goals such as deception, betrayal, and even murder. This study uses the construct of a corpus methodology where there are roles that are relevant to the Joker character. Then proceed with reading various literature relevant to the Joker to analyze it more deeply. This analysis provides relevant insights for the analysis of Leonard Dekkom's character in the film *Geostorm (2017)* and can be applied to further research Leonard Dekkom's character based on Machiavelli's principles in terms of gaining power by justifying any means to achieve his goals.

This third study was written by Maroua (2024). The title of this study is "Cinema Addressing of Machiavellian Theory Between Creativity and Threatening Social Values - A Case Study of the Movie The Dark Night." In his research, the author explains the Machiavellian idea which acts as a depiction of value conflicts in society by exploring the character of the Joker in the film The Dark Night. This study shows that the Joker character can inspire and influence the public to commit crimes in the real world against his character in the film such as the character "Dent" who takes revenge by becoming a killer influenced by Joker after his fiancé dies. This study emphasizes that this film can endanger and change the audience's perception in real life. This research can help understand Leonard Dekkom's actions in *Geostorm (2017)* in his attempt to gain power using Machiavelli's theory.

This research was conducted by Rahmawanti (2017) entitled "Machiavellian Characters in Disney's Reverie." This research discusses several villain characters in Disney films, the characters discussed in this research are Prince Hans from Frozen and Jafar from Arabian Night. In this research, the author uses a qualitative descriptive approach, this method is used to analyze characters that reflect Machiavellian traits. At the end of this research, the author concludes that several Disney characters have various Machiavellian traits. The character of Prince Hans is someone who uses crime even though he loses his honor to gain power, while the character of Jafar shows his manipulative and ascendancy. These two characters can be compared to the character of Leonard Dekkom in the film *Geostorm (2017)* who also does everything he can to gain power using Machiavellian.

In the research titled "Black Panther: A Characterization Study of Erik Killmonegr's Machiavellianism" by Agatha et al. (2020) which analyzed the character of Erik Killmonger in the Black Panther film which depicts used a descriptive qualitative method, this method was used to analyze Erik Killmonger as a Machiavellian who shows manipulative behavior, lack empathy, has cold emotion, and has great ambitions to rule Wakanda. Social and political conditions can motivate and influence the actions of Machiavellian characters which shows how Killmonger's character is related to the history of the civil rights movement. In this study, Killmonger's character can help analyze the character of Leonard Dekkom who also has a manipulative character to achieve his power.

Research by Braithwaite (2018) entitled "Wealth is the Only Reality: Black's 7 and Thatcherism," shows that this study analyzes how Black's 7 is shown in his character who describes and criticizes the dictatorial government during Thatcher's reign in Machiavellian behavior. The researcher uses the concept of cognitive estrangement to describe how science fiction can provide a critical view of social and political facts. This research is suitable for Leonard Dekkom's analysis in *Geostorm (2017)*, whose character is also described as manipulative and wants to gain power. The study provides insight into how Machiavellianism is used by Leonard Dekkom in his ambition to gain power.

In the article, Jagun Jagun by Atanda (2023) discusses African politics with the theme of power and abuse. The character of Ogundiji in this film faces an ambition for power that reflects Machiavellian behavior that shows cheating of conservative leaders and oppresses weaker kingdoms to expand the power of the king, this reflects the abuse of power for personal gain. This article is very relevant to Leonard Dekkom's character who is similar to Ogundidji's character who achieved power in the wrong way, namely manipulative and deviant.

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The study entitled "The Portrayal of Political Power in Divergent (2014) Film" was compiled by Anggraeni (2017). In this study, Machiavelli's theory of power is applied to analyze the character of the leader of the Erudite faction, Jeanine Matthews. This study reveals how Jeanine controls the faction system to gain power and the plans used to overthrow the power of Abnegation. Jeanine's distrust of human nature makes her power only temporary, even though she succeeds in gaining power. The application of Machiavelli's theory in this study makes a significant contribution to exploring the changes in power in science fiction films. This study can be used as material for analyzing the character of Leonard Dekkom who tries to gain power by doing anything and how Leonard Dekkom plans to achieve that power which reflects Machiavelii's principles.

The study entitled "The Development of Villains in B. Stroker's Dracula, AC Doyle's 'The Final Problem' and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Saga" by Kalinin (2020) discusses how evil characters such as Dracula, Moriarty, and Voldermort show egoism and ambition for power. This analysis is linked to Machiavelli's theory of power and morality. This study is relevant to analyzing the character of Leonard Dekkom who tries to gain power by doing anything like Machiavelli's principles. This study presents a theoretical framework to analyze Leonard Dekkom's actions regarding his power.

The research by McNeal (2023) entitled "Ambiguous Morality in the Human Condition as Reflected by Modern Villains from Popular Culture" analyzes evil characters such as Darth Vader and Palpatine to study the issue of power and morality. The struggle between good and evil, as well as manipulation to achieve power are reflected in the characters in this study. Machiavelli's theory emphasizes the importance of planning and control to achieve goals. This research is relevant to analyzing Leonard Dekkom's character, which is related to Machiavelli's theory of gaining power.

The research from Mayolla (2021) entitled "Kualifikasi Penguasa Ideal Telaah Filsafat Politik Machiavelli terhadap Tokoh Frank Underwood dalam Serial TV House of Cards." His research on the House of Cards TV series about Frank Underwood reflects the manipulative and pragmatic actions of the Machiavellian nature. Despite disregarding moral and ethical values, Underwood managed to maintain and gain power using his strategy of cunningly manipulating politics. This research also shows how leaders are often faced with decisions between their moral values and goals and the problems of norms in works of fiction about politics. Therefore, this research shows how films can depict and assess current political phenomena, which is also reflected in the character of Leonard Dekkom, which can be analyzed as an illustration through Machiavelli's thoughts of using all means to achieve power.

This research is unique compared to existing research. Most researchers will take the main character, but only a few take the side characters or the antagonists in their research. This study will focus on a side character who has a significant role in the film *Geostorm (2017)*, namely Leonard Dekkom, who is one of the antagonist characters in the world of cinema and shows Machiavellian traits prominently.

As done by previous researchers, who discussed the film *Geostorm (2017)*, how a character like Leonard Dekkom who acts as an antagonist who reflects Machiavelli's theory of achieving power. Leonard Dekkom's character plans to do everything possible to achieve his goals. It is Leonard Dekkom's ambition for political power and his manipulative nature that will be emphasized in this study. By highlighting the character of Leonard Dekkom, this research can add

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new insights into the nature of fictional characters that can be used as an illustration of the current political situation by filling in the gaps in the literature and influencing the audience's understanding of ethics and political power more broadly.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative method with an analytical descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to understand reality through an inductive process, focusing on describing events and phenomena in their specific contexts. The study analyzes Leonard Dekkom's character in the film *Geostorm (2017)* through the lens of Machiavelli's theory of power, exploring his actions and strategies for gaining control within the narrative framework.

The material object of this study is the science-fiction film *Geostorm (2017)*, directed by Dean Devlin, which revolves around a global satellite network controlling natural disasters. The formal object centers on an in-depth analysis of Leonard Dekkom's actions, employing Machiavelli's perspective on power to interpret his tactics and their implications. Primary data consists of dialogues, monologues, and actions of Dekkom's character. These elements are analyzed to describe the plans and tactics carried out by Leonard Dekkom to gain power as well as the results of these actions based on Machiavelli's perspective. While secondary data includes Machiavelli's theories, film criticism, and expert opinions.

Data collection involves multiple techniques: watching the film to understand its context, taking screenshots of relevant scenes, and reading literature on Machiavelli's theory. Important data are noted and categorized, focusing on scenes and dialogues that illustrate Dekkom's power strategies. Researchers then connect the data with theoretical insights, identifying patterns and interpreting the relationship between Machiavelli's principles and Dekkom's actions.

The method used to ensure data validity by adopting various approaches or perspectives in the analysis process is triangulation. Triangulation in this research is applied as the main approach that combines several theories and perspectives to analyze data. This technique aims to increase the credibility of the analysis by comparing the analysis obtained based on several different theories.

In this research, theoretical triangulation was carried out using Machiavelli's theory as the main basis for analyzing Leonard Dekkom's attempts to gain power in the film Geostorm (2017). Apart from that, additional theories to develop views and provide deeper understanding can use film criticism, political analysis, and literary appreciation experts. To increase the validity and complexity of the analysis of Leonard Dekkom's actions in the context of power, this approach can ensure that the findings in this research do not only come from one perspective but are based on various theoretical perspectives.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Machiavelli's Perspective Found in *Geostorm (2017)*

4.1.1.1 Principles of Power and Morality

In the film *Geostorm (2017)*, it shows that Leonard Dekkom adheres to power unrelated to moral values. In the picture below it can be seen that Leonard Dekkom says:

Figure 1. Scene (01:25:28 – 01:25:41)

Leonard Dekkom : Wait, wait, wait a minute. I've given you an opportunity, Mr. President. You should take it.
Presiden Palma   : An opportunity? Let him go. It's genocide, Leonard.
Leonard Dekkom   : You say genocide, I say preemptive strike.
Presiden Palma   : You've lost your mind!
"You say genocide, I say preemptive strike."

This sentence reflects Machiavelli's perspective that rulers must be able to deviate from moral values in order to achieve their goals, even if they have to do cruel things. This reflects Machiavelli's pragmatic view.

4.1.1.2 Manipulation and Control

In the conversation between Max Lawson and President Palma, it was mentioned that Leonard Dekkom was manipulating to gain his position and control the situation.

Figure 2. Scene (01:18:06 – 01:18:30)

Presiden Palma   : Dekkom?

Max Lawson	: *It's the perfect weapon, sir. All right? Dekkom is trying to change the map of the world.*
Presiden Palma	: *Then what? Blame it on a computer glitch?*
Max Lawson	: *Yeah, that and a dead president. He'll take office after wiping out everyone in the line of succession."It's the perfect weapon, sir. All right? Dekkom is trying to change the map of the world."*

In the dialogue between Max Lawson and President Palma, it shows that Leonard Dekkom is trying to take advantage of the situation for his personal interests, which is in line with Machiavelli's thoughts on control in government that can provide stability in certain situations.

4.1.1.3 Personal Ambition and Desire for Control

Leonard Dekkom's motivation for his mission to destroy the earth was to kill the president who stood in his way of power.
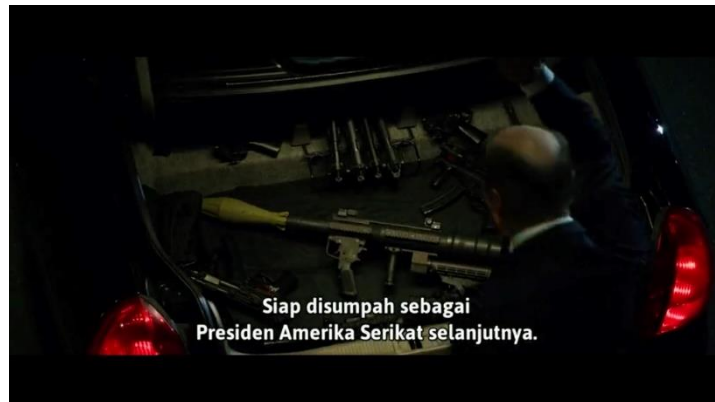

Figure 3. Scene (01:23:55 – 01:24:14)
"Yeah, right after it passes, I'll be the sole survivor…ready to be sworn in as the next president of the United States."

This dialogue shows that Leonard Dekkom's ambition to achieve his goal is to do so at all costs. This trait reflects Machiavelli's principle of the importance of ambition in politics.

4.1.1.4 Strategy and Tactics

In the face of challenges to achieve his goals, Leonard Dekkom uses cunning strategies to overcome complex problems.
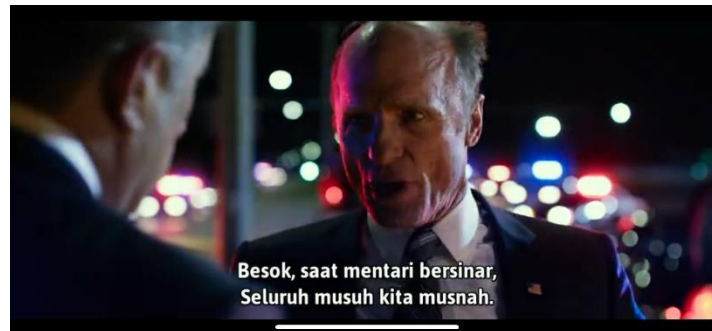

Figure 4. Scene (01:25:42 - 01:26:05)

Leonard Dekkom : Tomorrow, the sun will rise, all our enemies will be gone. Wipe away as if by the hand of God!
Presiden Palma   : Why would you do this?
Leonard Dekkom : Because no one else would. I'm turning the clock back to 1945... when America was a shining city on a hill... not just a bank disguised as a country.
Presiden Palma   : By playing God?
Leonard Dekkom : What the hell is Dutch Boy if not playing God? "Tomorrow, the sun will rise, all our enemies will be gone. Wipe away as if by the hand of God!"

This scene not only shows Leonard Dekkom's confidence in the success of his plan, but also explains Machiavelli's ideas on how to use intelligent action to achieve his goal of gaining power.

4.1.2. How Leonard Dekkom Achieved Power

Leonard Dekkom, who plays the antagonist in the film *Geostorm (2017)*, is portrayed as someone who is ambitious to achieve the power, he wants by using devious means. Leonard Dekkom takes advantage of his position as US Secretary of State by sabotaging the Dutch Boy system to disrupt the rest of the world that could benefit his plans. By controlling the public's view to cover up his actions, however, he has other intentions to get rid of people who stand in the way of his mission.

4.1.2.1 Manipulating Information

Leonard Dekkom installed a virus to damage Dutch Boy system and covered this up as a technical error. In this case Leonard Dekkom worked with Duncan, one of his technicians who was an expert in programming. Duncan was the only person who could insert the virus into Dutch Boy system, lock the back door, and who could help Leonard Dekkom carry out the manipulation. Leonard Dekkom did this, causing one of technicians named Makmoud to be sucked out of the space station.

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Figure 5. Scene (00:47:48 – 00:47:55)
"This wasn't a malfunction. No. Someone intentionally killed Makmoud. No doubt the same person that tampered with Hong Kong satellite."

This statement suggest that Makmoud's death was the result of deliberate sabotage by making it look as if the door had been knocked down, but it had actually been programmed. There was someone who did not want the information discovered by Makmoud to be known to others. This illustrates one of Machiavellis's principles of power manipulation and control.

4.1.2.2 Perception Control

Leonard Dekkom utilizes his authority to influence the perceptions of others in the government so that his actions in sabotaging the Dutch Boy system are not known. This is shown in his statement in the film:

Figure 6. Scene (00:12:01 – 00:12:05)
"And let's not forget, people, it's an election year. We shut Dutch Boy down, the press is gonna jump all over this."

Based on this quote, Leonard Dekkom attempted to use political and media concerns to show the perception that closing Dutch Boy would have adverse consequences on political reputation. This action reflects Machiavelli's pragmatic principle, in which one uses any means to achieve one's goals, manipulation being one example.

4.1.3 Leonard Dekkom's Motivation and Ambition for Power

His ambition to control the world using his position as US Secretary of State drives Leonard Dekkom to achieve his goal by eliminating all officials who stand in his way including the President. By ensuring that all control remains in his hands, even if it deviates from moral values.

4.1.3.1 Desire to Control

As US Secretary of State, Leonard Dekkom utilized his position to control important decisions under his control. This is evident in his actions to sabotage Dutch Boy system by introducing a virus into the system, masking it as a technical error and limiting access to information on the hologram. This is shown in the dialog:

Figure 7. Scene (00:34:16)
"My access has been blocked"

This statement spoken by Cheng shows that access to information is deliberately restricted by someone. Leonard Dekkom not only inserted a virus into the Dutch Boy system to control the system, but also attempted to create global chaos. This action has been carefully planned by Leonard Dekkom for years. This can be seen in Sarah's dialog below:

Figure 8. Scene (01:19:48 – 01:19:53)
"It took years for Dekkom to plan this, sir. President's schedule always changes last minute. This is the only day and date he could be sure wouldn't move."

This dialog shows how Leonard Dekkom uses strategic information and tactics to create an irreversible situation to ensure his plan does not fail and goes according to plan. This shows that he has organized his plan to stay within his control for the success of his plan. This is in line with Machiavelli's principle that leaders need to control every situation to achieve their goals, even if is against the norm.

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4.1.3.2 Personal Ambition

Leonard Dekkom's motivation to gain power was also driven by his ambition to be a leader who wanted recognition and influence. With his ambition he sabotages and causes chaos, that he will make himself out to be the savior of the world. This can be seen in the following dialog:

Figure 9. Scene (01:25:42 - 01:25:45)

"Tomorrow, the sun will rise, all our enemies will be gone. Wiped away as if by the hand of God!"

In this statement, it can be seen that Leonard Dekkom considers his actions as an effort to realize his goals in accordance with his vision of the world, even if he has to deviate from moral values. This is reinforced by Leonard Dekkom's ambition to restore the glory of the United States in the following dialog:
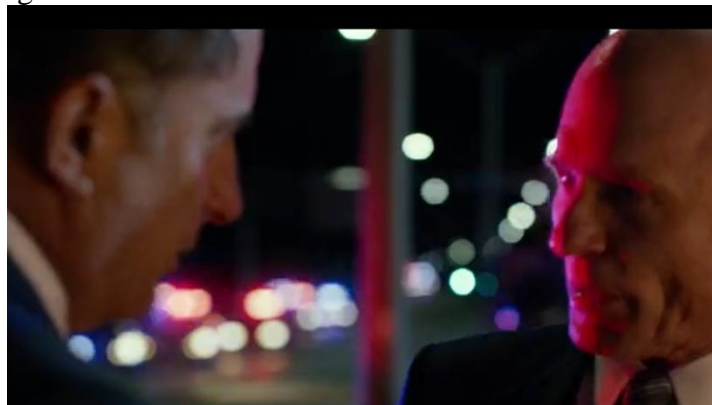

Figure 10. Scene (01:25:51 - 01:26:00)

"Because no one else would. I'm turning the clock back to 1945…when America was a shining city on hill…not just a bank disguised as a country."

This reflects his desire to be a leader who can rule the world by returning America to its glory days after World War II by ruthless and manipulative means. This personal ambition shows that he is driven by the desire to make the world fit his vision, of which he is the leader. It is also shown that Leonard Dekkom is ambitious to become the President of the United States.

Figure 11. Scene (01:24:02 - 01:24:08)
"Yeah, right after it passes, I'll be the sole survivor…ready to be sworn in as the next president of the United States."

This statement shows Leonard Dekkom's plan to get rid of other officials though the chaos he creates, so that he can take over the position of president without any interference. This ambition reflects Machiavelli's view of using any means to gain power, which is Leonard Dekkom's goals.

4.2 Discussion
This research shows how Leonard Dekkom's character in *Geostorm (2017)* reflects Machiavelli's principles of power, through manipulative actions, control of political perceptions, and great personal motivation and ambition to achieve power. This character shows how politics often uses pragmatic means, such as utilizing all means to achieve power.

An important part of Leonard Dekkom's rise to power was his manipulative strategies that he used to his advantage by controlling information and taking advantage of situations. In his actions, Leonard Dekkom deliberately sabotaged Dutch Boy system by inserting a virus into it with the help of one of his trusted technicians to ensure that no one was aware of the sabotage, he created global chaos under the guise of a technical error in the system. This action taken by Leonard Dekkom shows how he controls technology and information as a strategic weapon to secure his position, not just using cunning. This is in line with research from Cai et al. (2023) that strategy demonstrates Machiavelli's idea that leaders must use deceit and cunning to maintain their power, even if it means deviating from norms. The utilization of technology and propaganda to influence political outcomes is commonly seen in modern political contexts (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020).

In addition to manipulation, Leonard Dekkom also used his position as US Secretary of State to control the views of the government and the public. Leonard Dekkom capitalized on the sensitive political situation by using the election as a distraction to aid his actions. By orchestrating political views it would raise political concerns from the impact of closing Dutch Boy, in that way Leonard Dekkom could hide his plans from the government. Control over perceptions is a very important factor for maintaining power, especially in a political context that is constantly changing, as demonstrated in this method. This strategy is very relevant to Machiavelli's principles, which emphasize that a ruler needs to take advantage of situations in politics to protect his positions in achieving his goals (Mujahid, 2020). This shows how politics today often utilizes strategic issues to cover and maintain power amidst the pressure of social dynamics.

While Leonard Dekkom's actions in *Geostorm* (2017) reflect many Machiavellian principles, his approach to power also reveals key departures from Machiavelli's ideal ruler. His

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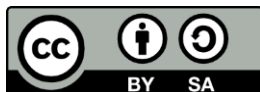
use of manipulation, deception, and ruthless ambition aligns with Machiavelli's belief that a leader must prioritize power over morality. Dekkom's ability to control perceptions, leverage technology, and create crises to further his agenda mirrors the pragmatic strategies Machiavelli advocates in *The Prince*. His plan to eliminate political rivals and manufacture chaos for personal gain illustrates the Machiavellian concept that a ruler must not shy away from cruelty when necessary. However, Machiavelli also warns that excessive cruelty and unchecked ambition can lead to a ruler's downfall, as stability and public support are essential for sustained power. Dekkom's reckless pursuit of power, without securing long-term legitimacy or loyalty, ultimately leads to his failure—contradicting Machiavelli's emphasis on strategic foresight.

Furthermore, Machiavelli's ideal leader is not merely a power-hungry schemer but a statesman who ensures the stability of the state. Dekkom's strategy of global sabotage is self-serving rather than state-serving, making him more of a villain than a Machiavellian prince. Machiavelli argues that a ruler must be feared but not hated, as excessive hatred leads to resistance. Dekkom, however, positions himself as an enemy of the world rather than a calculated ruler who balances fear and respect. His failure to anticipate resistance from key figures, such as the president and scientists working against him, demonstrates a lack of *virtù*—the adaptability and prudence Machiavelli deems essential. In this sense, Dekkom embodies some aspects of Machiavellianism but ultimately lacks the strategic depth and long-term vision that define a truly Machiavellian leader.

Leonard Dekkom's personal ambition is a major factor in his cunning and manipulative pursuit of power. Leonard Dekkom has a grand vision to make the world the way he sees it, one of which is to restore the glory days of United States as it was after World War II. It is this ambition that drives him to make plans to take over the position of President of the United States by getting rid of all the officials who stand in his way. This action shows that his goals are more important than maintaining moral values. Leonard Dekkom believes that only he can make big changes. This idea is in line with Machiavelli's idea of prioritizing political success over ethics (Nederman & Bogiaris, 2018). The actions taken by Leonard Dekkom show his ambition to make the world fit his vision, which is in line with the dynamics of modern politics, where the main driver for significant change comes from personal ambition whether it is positive or negative.

Leonard Dekkom's actions in *Geostorm (2017)* reflect the complexity of political dynamics, where power is often gained by circumventing moral values. The movie illustrates how power can serve as a highly effective weapon to achieve goals, but can also be disastrous. The character of Leonard Dekkom reflects Machiavelli's perspective, which emphasizes that ambition, strategy, and control often take precedence in politics over morality (Maity et al., 2024). This makes the character of Leonard Dekkom a true representation of a Machiavellian leader who seeks power by any means necessary.

Geostorm (2017) presents a narrative deeply rooted in contemporary anxieties about political corruption, technological control, and global crises, making Leonard Dekkom's Machiavellian approach to power especially relevant. The film critiques how those in positions of authority manipulate crises for personal and political gain, reflecting real-world concerns about state surveillance, misinformation, and power struggles in global politics. Dekkom's attempt to weaponize climate-control technology echoes modern fears of cyber warfare, political destabilization, and the ethical dilemmas surrounding artificial intelligence and data control. His
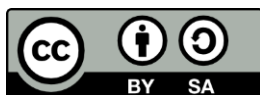
actions also highlight the fragile nature of democracy, where individuals can exploit political systems for authoritarian ambitions—an issue that remains at the heart of contemporary geopolitical tensions. By portraying a leader who justifies unethical means for a vision of national restoration, *Geostorm* raises questions about the balance between security, morality, and governance, reinforcing its relevance in an era of increasing political polarization and technological warfare.

The findings reveal that Leonard Dekkom's character in *Geostorm* (2017) embodies several Machiavellian principles, particularly in his strategic manipulation of power and disregard for morality. Machiavelli's concept of *virtù*, which refers to a leader's ability to be pragmatic, adaptable, and ruthless when necessary, is evident in Dekkom's actions. His sabotage of the Dutch Boy system and orchestration of a political crisis align with Machiavelli's assertion that rulers must be willing to deceive and act immorally if it secures their power. Furthermore, his ability to control information, create chaos, and exploit political instability mirrors Machiavelli's emphasis on perception management and strategic deception. However, while Dekkom's actions reflect Machiavellian tactics, his ultimate failure highlights a crucial deviation from Machiavelli's ideal leader. Machiavelli warns that unchecked cruelty and ambition can lead to a ruler's downfall, as excessive hatred breeds resistance. Dekkom's inability to secure long-term legitimacy or maintain strategic alliances ultimately results in his exposure and defeat, reinforcing Machiavelli's caution that power must be sustained through a balance of fear and calculated political maneuvering.

Additionally, Machiavelli's notion of *fortuna*—the role of chance and external circumstances in political success—further contextualizes Dekkom's downfall. While Machiavelli argues that great leaders must control *fortuna* by seizing opportunities and mitigating risks, Dekkom underestimates the resilience of his opponents and the unpredictability of political landscapes. His failure to anticipate resistance from President Palma and Jake Lawson demonstrates a miscalculation in power dynamics, contradicting Machiavelli's belief that successful rulers must be adaptable to changing circumstances. This misalignment between Machiavellian theory and Dekkom's approach suggests that while he embodies Machiavellian strategies in his ascent to power, his inability to exercise prudence (*prudenza*) and secure stability ultimately leads to his collapse. Thus, the film does not merely depict a Machiavellian leader but rather critiques the consequences of misapplying Machiavellian principles without strategic foresight and sustainability, reinforcing the complexity of political power in contemporary governance.

5. CONCLUSION

After conducting research on the film *Geostorm (2017)*, the researcher found that Leonard Dekkom's character reflects Machiavelli's theory of power. The image of a pragmatic leader who uses all means in achieving his goals, even if he has to take manipulative actions, deviate from moral values, and is full of personal ambitions is reflected in Leonard Dekkom's character.

To gain power, Leonard Dekkom used various strategies, such as sabotaging the Dutch Boy system to control public perception by manipulating information, and utilizing his position to carry out his actions. These actions reflect Machiavelli's idea that a leader must be willing to do things that violate moral values such as manipulation and cunning to gain and maintain power.

This research shows Leonard Dekkom's personal ambition to become the most powerful leader, to restore the glory days of the United States after World War II, which led him to plan his goals that would benefit himself, even if it means getting rid of all who stood in his way, including the American President. In accordance with Machiavelli's principle of prioritizing political success over ethics and goals over moral values, according to Leonard Dekkom.

The film *Geostorm (2017)* shows the dynamics of politics today where positions often make them dissatisfied with what they have achieved. The trust they build and their articulate speech can be used as a tool to manipulate the public in order to gain power. Leonard Dekkom's character reflects a Machiavellian leader, who always emphasized his great ambition, and controls other to gain power.

Leonard Dekkom's character in *Geostorm* (2017) reflects Machiavellian principles through his strategic manipulation of power, deception, and exploitation of political instability. His sabotage of the Dutch Boy system aligns with Machiavelli's belief that rulers must prioritize power over morality, using cunning and ruthless tactics to achieve their goals. However, Dekkom's downfall highlights a key deviation from Machiavelli's ideal leader—his unchecked ambition and failure to secure long-term legitimacy ultimately lead to his defeat. Machiavelli emphasizes that power must be maintained through a balance of fear and calculated maneuvering, yet Dekkom underestimates opposition and fails to adapt to shifting political dynamics, demonstrating a lack of *prudenza*. Furthermore, his inability to control *fortuna*—the unpredictable elements of power—contributes to his downfall, reinforcing the idea that successful leadership requires both strategic foresight and adaptability. Thus, rather than portraying a true Machiavellian ruler, the film critiques the consequences of misapplying Machiavellian principles without sustainability and calculated control.

This research focused on Leonard Dekkom's efforts to gain power in the film *Geostorm (2017)* by using Machiavelli's perspective. In this film, there are still many other aspects that can be explored more deeply about the political dynamics. Future researcher is expected to analyze Leonard Dekkom's character through various other factors in the film. Future researcher can explore other characters in *Geostorm (2017)*, such as Jake Lawson, Max Lawson, or President Palma, who provide different views on power, responsibility, and sacrifice. To analyze the film effectively, the researcher must understand the storyline and main concepts by going deep into each scene. To get an in-depth analysis it will be easier if you have watched the film repeatedly by focusing on important details. In this way, future research can develop insights into the relationship between literary work and political power in works of fiction.

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