

*Femme-Masculine Representation in Monster Movie*

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Abstract

This study examine Monster movie that portray the character of Saori Mugino through a femme-masculine representation. The primary objective is to critically deconstruct the femme-masculine representation shown in the movie. To achieve this, the study employs the theoretical framework of Popular Culture Theory. In addition, the study employs Roland Barthes semiotic analysis to examine the denotations, connotations and myths associated with femme-masculine. The research I grounded in qualitative approach and adopts a critical paradigm. The results showed that femme-masculine in Monster movie is shown as an integration between feminine characteristics and masculine characteristics. Femme-masculine characteristics are described as a female figure exhibits both traditionally feminine and masculine traits, including being attentive, irritable, emotional, fond of colorful clothing, engaged in domestic responsibilities, while also simultaneously brave, independent, hardworking, responsible, masculine physical appearance, expert in driving vehicles, and parenting style associated with a man. The study also identifies a distortion in the conventional meaning of femininity, which has become interwoven with elements of masculinity. As a result, femininity and masculinity are no longer perceived as binary opposites, but rather as components of a single, fluid dichotomy.

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Gender is frequently utilized as a commercial concept in movies, where the portrayals of masculinity and femininity are used to attract audiences and generate profit. Masculinity is commonly associated with strong, brave, and mighty men. It is often

portrayed as a defining characteristic of the male leaders. Women, on the other hand, are often portrayed as feminine. Even not infrequently, women are typically linked to gentleness, emotional sensitivity, gracefulness, and passivity. The traits which are frequently presented as ideal for women.

Sociologists and Anthropologists generally define gender in similar terms. It is viewed as a set of behavioral pattern and role distribution between men and women that have been formed at a certain time [1]. This understanding of gender is socially constructed, strengthened, and reinforced from generation to generation [2]. While the roles between men and women have been standardized in traditional and closed societies, modern and open societies are witnessing a gradual transformation in these roles [3]. This shift is often influenced by several factors including circumstances, parental upbringing, and the surrounding environment.

An example of this evolving gender dynamic can be seen in the figure of the masculine woman, particularly in the case of single mothers. Often, a single mother possesses masculine traits due to the demands of her situation, most notably, the absence of a male partner in the household. The absence may result from death, divorce, neglect, or several other factors. Consequently, the single mother is often compelled to fulfil both traditionally masculine and feminine roles, addressing both the material and emotional needs of the family. This view of gender role shift is increasingly represented in several audio-visual media, particularly movie. Movies often serve to provide messages or meanings about issues circulating in the community. One such recurring theme is the portrayal of a single mothers, reflecting broader changes in societal perceptions of gender roles and expectations.

The representation of single mothers is frequently explored in cinematic narratives, including in *Monster* (2023), a Japanese film with a runtime of two hours and six minutes. The film presents a compelling portrayal of the character Saori Mugino, a single mother whose masculine traits emerge as she struggles to protect and provide for her child. Saori's character illustrates that women are not inherently dependent on male figures and can independently fulfill both parental and economic responsibilities. This is evident in multiple scenes, such as one early moment in the film where Saori is shown returning home after working from morning until night.



Figure 1: Minato's Mother Just Came Home From Work

Source : Screenshot from *Monster* movie (2023)

The masculinity in *Monster* is further depicted through Saori's physical appearance and style. Unlike traditional portrayals of femininity, Saori is rarely shown wearing makeup or traditionally feminine clothing. Her minimalist appearance reinforces the masculine side of her character. However, despite the emphasis on masculinity, the film does not neglect her feminine qualities. As a working single mother, Saori continues to express warmth, emotional attentiveness, and deep affection toward her child. Her dual role, as a provider and nurturer, constructs a figure that blends both masculine and feminine traits, a hybrid identity best described as *femme-masculine*.

The *femme-masculine* concept challenges traditional gender norms by illustrating that women need not conform strictly to femininity. Instead, they may embody and express elements of both femininity and masculinity in their identity and appearance. Saori's representation exemplifies this fluidity, showing that women can resist societal expectations and redefine gender roles on their own terms. This is particularly significant in the context of Japanese society, where gender inequality continues to be a sociocultural issue. Historically, male dominance has been institutionally reinforced, as exemplified in the Meiji Constitution, which prioritized men over women in both the public and private spheres [4]. However, *Monster* demonstrates how these traditional views are gradually being challenged through popular culture, which serves as a medium for reimagining gender identities and power relations.

Popular culture in simple terms can be defined as a mass produced cultural product design for mass consumption [5]. According to the popular culture theory, such media do not only entertain, but also create societal norms and values. Thus, audiences are not merely passive recipient, they actively interpret the meanings

embedded in cultural texts. From this perspective, the femme-masculine figure presented in *Monster* becomes a powerful symbol through which viewers may come to understand and appreciate gender diversity. It allows us to see popular culture (i.e. movies) as a representation of identities and influences our understanding in the society. Motivated by this dynamic representation, this study seeks to examine how femme-masculine identities are constructed in *Monster*, particularly through the character of Sao-ri as a single mother. The research problem is thus formulated as follows: How is the femme-masculine representation constructed in the figure of a single mother in the film *Monster*? Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to deconstruct and analyze the femme-masculine representation within *Monster* using Popular Culture Theory and semiotic analysis. The study is titled: “Femme-Masculine Representation in *Monster* movie”.

Research Methods

Research Paradigm

Kuhn was the first scholar to introduce the concept of a paradigm, defining it as a fundamental belief system [6]. A paradigm encompasses a set of underlying assumptions and values that inform the way researchers conduct their studies. The adoption of a specific paradigm helps ensure that research is conducted in a systematic and purposeful manner, allowing for coherent and measurable outcomes. In the context of scientific research, Kuhn identified several major paradigms commonly employed in scholarly work. The first is positivism which holds the view that natural science is the only true source of knowledge. The second is post-positivism which views reality as something real, and in accordance with the laws of nature. The third is the constructivist paradigm, which posits that knowledge is constructed by individuals through their experiences and social interactions [6].

Lastly, Kuhn outlines the critical paradigm which is grounded in a deep skepticism toward dominant structures and ideologies. This paradigm also emphasizes social change that not only criticizes injustice, but also seeks to change structures or systems to be more just [6]. Given its focus on emancipation and structural change, the critical paradigm was selected for this study. This research adopts a critical

paradigm because it aligns with the objective of deconstructing dominant gender representations and advocating for marginalized identities, such as the femme-masculine figure represented in the film *Monster*.

Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is inductive in nature. According to, qualitative research begins with empirical data and gradually develops conclusions based on observed phenomena [6]. Rather than focusing on quantifiable measurements, qualitative research emphasizes the exploration of entities, processes, and meaning that are not easily reduced to numerical data [7]. This approach is particularly suitable for uncovering hidden or implicit meanings within social and cultural phenomena, as it allows for in-depth analysis and interpretation [8].

Moreover, qualitative research is characterized by its subjective orientation, wherein the researcher maintains close engagement with the data and the research context. Unlike quantitative methods that prioritize large sample sizes, qualitative research emphasizes data depth over data breadth, focusing on the richness and contextual relevance of the information gathered [9]. For those reasons, a qualitative approach is appropriate for this study as it enables a nuance analysis of the femme-masculine representation within *Monster* movie.

Research Methods

The method employed in this study is semiotic analysis, a field of study concerned with signs and the meanings they convey. Semiotics is a science or method of analysis of signs and meanings [9]. It can be further described as the study of how society produces meaning and values in a communication system [10]. In this context, a sign refers to anything that represents something else and serves as a tool for navigating the world. Thus, semiotics focuses on finding the meaning behind any signs. Through this method, the researchers aim to deconstruct the signs embedded within the movie and reveal the deeper significance of the femme-masculine portrayal in *Monster* movie.

Research Materials

In this study, the *Monster* movie serves as the primary research material. Like any other movie, *Monster*

comprises two fundamental elements: audio and visual components. The audio elements analyzed in this research include background music, ambient sounds, the soundtrack, sound effects, and dialogue. The visual elements consist of scene footage and text animations, both of which contribute to the overall narrative and thematic construction of the film.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques employed in this study involve both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are obtained directly from the film through systematic observation, specifically through the documentation of selected scenes via screenshots. These visual observations serve as the core material for analysis. Secondary data, on the other hand, are collected through literature review, including books, academic journals, and other scholarly sources relevant to the research focus.

Data Analysis Techniques

This study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis as its primary analytical method. Barthes conceptualized signification as a three-tiered process consisting of denotation, connotation, and myth. He argued that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is not inherently natural or scientific, but rather arbitrary and culturally constructed [11]. Through this framework, Barthes emphasized how society creates and perpetuates meaning, particularly through myth, which reflects dominant ideological values embedded in cultural narratives [10].

Denotation in the view of Barthes is seen as a meaning that is actually mutually agreed upon, and refers to the existing reality. Then connotation is seen as an implicit meaning, which is uncertain and indirect, thus opening the door to new interpretations. While the myth is seen as the development of connotations, where these connotations have been formed for a long time in society [10]. So that the myth is not unreasonable reality, but a message that serves to express justification on the values that are at a certain time [11].

In this study, denotation is seen as a study that attempts to analyze the characteristics of femme-masculine representations embodied by the character of Saori Mugino, a single mother. While the connotation

of this study address the deeper and implicit meanings associated with femme-masculine identity in *Monster* movie. Finally, the myth in this study refers to the broader cultural perspective on the social reality of femme-masculine in society.

Results and Discussion

General Description of the Research Object

Monster is a Japanese movie that tells the complexity of perspectives in a school conflict. Saori Mugino, a single mother, has trouble understanding the behavioral changes of her son Minato, who has a "pig's brain". Saori suspects that there is an indication of the influence of Minato's teacher, Hori Michitoshi, as the cause of her son's behavior change, so Saori decides to find out what happened to her son to the school.

However, the conflict is getting more complicated. Although Saori defends herself fiercely against the school, the school still takes her son's problems for granted. To the point that Saori has to intervene, looking for evidence from her son's classmates. Eventually, with her courage and determination, Hori apologized publicly and validated her suspicion.

However, the film then shifts perspective, first presenting the teacher Hori's point of view, and later, Minato's. From Hori's perspective, Minato appears to be the aggressor, involved in bullying another student named Yori. Meanwhile, Minato's own narrative reveals a close and affectionate bond with Yori, suggesting a profound misunderstanding at the heart of the conflict. Through these three points of view, the movie shows how this conflict is much more complex than what is seen. The movie shows how a single mother constantly struggles to protect her child, but is also faced with the reality that the truth can be many-sided.

Analysis Results

Meaning of Denotation Connotation



Figure: 2 Saori Prepares Minato's Needs
(Source: Screenshot from Monster movie)

Denotation

In the first image, the scene depicts a medium long shot focusing on a woman and a boy. The woman figure in this image is estimated to be around thirty years old and is in a room which looks like a kitchen or dining area. The boy, who looks to be around ten years old, is positioned walking toward an exit as indicated by his body orientation and the presence of bags suggesting he is about to leave. The setting includes several household equipment. There are a dining table, glasses and bowls scattered on the dining table, a refrigerator full of stickers, a sink, two napkins, an oven, a kitchen cabinet, a dispenser, and a wooden window. The woman is seen preparing a drinking bottle, which the woman fills with a glass teapot filled with brown water. She has short hair and appears wearing green and black long-sleeved clothes paired with green and white plaid trousers. On the other hand, the boy carries a black backpack and a striped bag in his left hand. He is dressed in a light blue jacket and brown shorts, appropriate for a casual outing. The composition, props, and positioning of both characters indicate a moment of everyday morning preparation.

In the second image, the woman is seen again as the central focus captured in a medium long shot in the front yard of her house. This is supported by the existence of property equipment such as a yellow car parked in front of the house, a yellow painted house, the asphalt roads, power cables hanging above, and

the sight of a bright blue sky which indicates this situation occurs in the morning. The woman is seen pointing at someone while saying "Ah, if you go over the white line, it's hell". The street appears to be quiet with minimal activity and there is a yellow high-rise building as well as a retaining wall located across the street. The audio elements in this scene include ambient sound and sound effect both of which contribute to a realistic grounded atmosphere.

Connotation

The scene under this analysis utilizes a medium long shot. This is a technique that displays the character's body from the knees to the top of the head. This shot allows a more balanced composition between the character and the surrounding background [12]. This type of shot is often used in dialogue which allows the characters to move around within the space [13].

The medium long shot technique serves to capture Saori and her son's daily activity, but also the atmosphere of her house. Visually, this scene is dominated by brown color tone, deliberately chosen by the filmmaker to give the impression of warmth, comfort, and security [14]. Psychologically, the color brown conveys a sense of strength and reliable [14], which contributes to emotional relationship between a mother and a child. The brown color palette emphasizes the movie's portrayal of Saori as a strong single mother figure with dual role as both a caregiver and a provider. Traditionally, these are gendered roles but Saori performs both seamlessly. This creates a masculine image, which represents her as a femme-masculine figure [2]. The audio ambient and sound effect contribute to the scene's atmosphere. The use of ambient sound establishes a naturalistic tone, describing the surrounding environment and create a soothing background sound [15]. The inclusion of the sound effects, that are not musical in nature, provide a different artistic, dramatic, or accent narrative to the scene [16].

In the first image, Saori is depicted in the kitchen preparing a drinking bottle for her son, Minato. Simultaneously, Minato appears to be getting ready for school, which is indicated by the black randoseru backpack he is wearing. The randoseru is a type of backpack commonly associated with elementary school children in Japan [17]. signifying that Minato is likely still in primary school.

This scene also conveys Saori's role as a nurturing mother, particularly in terms of her attentiveness. She is directly involved in preparing her child's necessities specifically by filling up Minato's bottle before leaving for school. Saori continues to take care of her son despite him already being in the fifth grade, while many mothers encourage children prepare their own needs [18]. The act of caregiving shown by Saori indicates her feminine side. The act is often associated with the femininity [19].

The use of medium long shot in this scene does not only frame the interaction between Saori and her son, but also reveals the actual condition of Saori's kitchen. Although her kitchen space is not spacious, it is equipped with essential appliances, such as an oven, refrigerator, dispenser, and sink. The availability of kitchen facilities reflects middle class socio-economic status [20]. Her possession of these appliances within a limited space signifies her position within the middle social strata.

Furthermore, the disorderly state of the kitchen indicates that Saori does not have the image of a female pillar. This image generally characterizes a woman to have a responsibility to maintain the physical aesthetics and cleanliness of the house [20]. In this situation, Saori's messy kitchen, with bowls and glasses scattered on the dining table and some items cluttered near the sink and window, undermines the traditional feminine ideal and instead introduce a masculine trait. This is because the concept of messiness is often culturally associated with masculinity [21]. Her lack of concern for tidying up her kitchen further supports this interpretation, as cleaning and tidying up is often associated with female characters [22].

In terms of costume, Saori is seen wearing a green and black negligee paired with green and white plaid pants. The dominant use of green in her attire signifies a sense of calmness and composure [14]. The use of negligee also creates Saori's feminine identity. This is because negligee is a garment which is linked to femininity [23]. Meanwhile, Minato is dressed in a blue jacket and brown pants, indicating that Minato is a calm and warm figure [14]. In this first picture, it is also seen that Saori has a short haircut, where this hairstyle adds a masculine impression to her. It diverges the societal norms where long hair is commonly

associated with femininity [24]. Therefore, her appearance blends the traditional feminine and masculine traits which is consistent with her female masculine identity.

The sound effects enhance the realism of the scene. The inclusion of sounds such as water being poured into a bottle, footsteps, and the opening door enriches the audience's sensory experience.

In the second image, Saori is pictured standing in the courtyard of the house. Through the use of medium long shot, the filmmakers convey that Saori belongs to the middle-income class. This is indicated by the type of car she owns, a first-generation Toyota Sienta, which was first introduced in Japan in 2003 [25]. The car is considered an older model. Historically, the release of the first generation of Toyota Sienta coincided with the period of economic growth in Japan, where the middle-class people in Japan enjoyed a better standard of living [25].

The color of Saori's car also carries symbolic meaning. Yellow color represents warmth and a sense of happiness [14]. It suggests that the car may indicate as a source of add warmth and happiness to Saori's family. Moreover, the medium long shot also reveals that she does not live in a typical housing estate as there are no other houses immediately surrounding Saori's house. The only visible house in Saori's neighborhood is a yellow painted house that has yellow paint located next to Saori's house. Even across the street, there is no visible house and there is only retaining wall and a tall building at the end of the street, which further reinforces that Saori does not live in a housing estate. In this scene, Saori is also seen pointing at her son, Minato while saying "Ah, if you go over the white line, it's hell", which can be translated into English as "skip the white line, you will be harmed".

This statement implies that crossing the white lines leads to negative consequences, possibly reflecting a lesson about boundaries and discipline.

Moreover, in the interaction between Saori and Minato suggest a friendly peer-like dynamic. This type of parenting approach is typically associated with paternal parenting [26]. However, in this case, Saori as a mother actually takes on the role. This suggests that

the concept of masculinity in upbringing is not limited to gender. In addition, this scene includes an ambient obtained from the sound of birds chirping and the sound of footsteps which contributes significantly to the scene. Overall, the researchers conclude that femme-masculine is described as a collaboration between attention, appearance, and parenting style that challenge the traditional gender roles.

Based on the analysis of denotation and connotation by Roland Barthes, the researchers identifies seven scenes that represent femme-masculine in *Monster* movie. The study reveals that femme-masculine is characterized by an integration between traditional feminine and masculine characteristics. Feminine characteristics are depicted through a female figure who is attentive, irritable, emotionally expressive, fond of wearing colorful clothes, and skilled in household management. In contrast, masculine characteristics are represented by a woman who is brave, independent, hardworking and responsible. She may also exhibit a masculine appearance, demonstrate proficiency in driving a vehicle, and adopt a parenting style typically associated with men.

Myth

A number of studies in the literature have shown that the concept of femme-masculinity is interpreted in diverse ways. In Indonesia, for example, the dominance of masculine culture still largely dictates how women are expected to behave and position themselves in society. Even today, modern women often remain under the shadow of patriarchal power, confined to traditional domestic roles. Furthermore, masculinity in men is commonly associated with strength, leadership, and responsibility. Those expectations do not only burden women but also place significant, often unacknowledged, pressure on men due to an uneven distribution of social roles and responsibilities [27]. In fact, gendered divisions of labor based on traditional notions of masculinity and femininity still persist in Indonesia [28]. Adding to these challenges is the influence of religious doctrines, which frequently shape and reinforce gender roles [27]. These factors present ongoing obstacles for Indonesia in its pursuit of gender equality.

In Japan, gender distinctions remain strongly embedded in both society and language. Japanese features

gendered language use, where *danseigo* refers to male speech patterns, and *joseigo* refers to female ones. The use of these linguistic forms reflects and reinforces gender norms, with speech styles conveying the speaker's masculinity or femininity [4]. A study entitled "Dee Japanese and "Gender Differences" found that these linguistic gender differences not only mirror social expectations but also vary based on context, interpersonal relationships, and generational shifts [29].

In contrast to Indonesia and Japan, Afghanistan presents a unique case of female masculinity through the cultural practice of *Bacha Posh*. In families without sons, daughters are raised and presented as boys, allowing them to take on male roles and responsibilities. While female masculinity is often viewed as a form of resistance against gender norms, in Afghanistan it serves a practical function, creating "tomboy" girls to fulfill societal and familial needs [30].

Thailand offers yet another perspective. The country is internationally recognized for its large and visible LGBTQ+ communities and for its complex understanding of gender [31]. Thailand legally acknowledges a "third gender" and socially recognizes up to 18 different gender categories. These identities encompass a wide range of gender expressions, including but not limited to Straight Male, Straight Female, Tom, Dee, Tom Gay, *seua bai* (bisexual men), gay king, gay queen, *kathoe* (transgender), *kathoe* *plaeng phet* (transsexual), and *khon sorng phet* (hermaphrodite), among others [32].

A similar phenomenon can be observed in South Korea. Although many people still resist the idea of masculinity in women, a growing number of South Korean media works have begun to depict women with masculine traits. These portrayals shift away from traditional beauty standards and instead highlight female courage and strength. This change is evident in several popular works that have sparked public attention, including *Extreme Job*, *Miss and Mrs. Cop*, *Kim Ji-young: Born 1982*, and the series *Sweet Home* [33]. As society becomes increasingly critical and engaged with feminist issues, audiences have begun to demand media that reflects real-life gender dynamics more accurately.

In response to these demands, filmmakers have started to compete in developing new, unconventional representations of female characters (personifications that had rarely been explored before) [33]. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the understanding and acceptance of femme-masculinity vary widely across countries. These differences are largely shaped by each nation's cultural values, religious beliefs, and socio-political history.

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis, researchers found evidence of both a consolidation and a shift in the myths surrounding the concept of femme-masculinity. While some people view femme-masculine traits as deviant or unnatural, others interpret them as a transformative force. Something that fosters a more open and accepting society. In particular, the researchers' analysis of the *Monster* movie reveals that femme-masculinity is portrayed as an integration of both feminine and masculine traits within a single female character.

Dominic Strinati, in his theory of popular culture, outlines three interrelated themes: (1) the question of what or who defines popular culture, (2) the impact of commercialization and industrialization on popular culture, and (3) the ideological function of popular culture [5]. These themes are useful in analyzing *Monster* as a cultural product.

To address the first theme, researchers argue that *Monster* fits into the category of "low culture" which means a popular media created by filmmakers and the mass media, often for specific ideological or economic purposes. Notably, *Monster* was directed by Hirokazu Kore-Eda, who intended the film to provoke critical thought and challenge viewers to engage in deeper discussions about gender dynamics in contemporary society.

Regarding the second theme (the influence of commercialization), researchers note that in the realm of popular culture, commercial value and profitability are often prioritized. Films, as products of mass communication, are largely profit-driven. In this context, *Monster* is no exception. Financial data shows that the film generated global revenues of approximately \$21,949,762 USD, or about 357.5 trillion rupiah.

This commercial success indicates strong audience engagement and satisfaction, underscoring how economic factors shape and sustain popular cultural forms.

The third theme concerns the ideological role of popular culture. Films, as mass communication products, inevitably carry embedded ideologies. In *Monster*, the central ideology centers on femme-masculinity which translates as the coexistence of feminine and masculine characteristics in a single female character. This character is portrayed as nurturing, emotionally expressive, interested in diverse clothing styles, and skilled in domestic tasks all of which are traits traditionally coded as feminine. Simultaneously, she exhibits masculine traits such as bravery, independence, responsibility, technical skills (e.g., driving), and a male-associated parenting style. This duality reflects a nuanced portrayal of gender that transcends binary norms.

Monster, as a Japanese film, reflects the characteristics of mass or "low" culture. It is a form of culture shaped by industrialization and commercialization that alters societal cultural conditions. Such mass-produced culture often carries constructed moral narratives, shaping audiences' understanding of identity and society. By portraying femme-masculinity, the film contributes to broader conversations about gender diversity and challenges conventional ideas of femininity and masculinity.

Ultimately, gender representation in mass media serves as a site of ideological contestation. In *Monster*, the femme-masculine character challenges the rigid binary between masculinity and femininity which often seen as divinely ordained or "natural." Instead, the film proposes an inclusive and complex understanding of gender, revealing that identity can embody both traditionally masculine and feminine traits. This ideological message supports the development of a more open-minded and accepting society, where diverse gender expressions are recognized and valued.

Conclusion

After conducting this research for approximately four months (February 2024 – June 2024) the researchers concluded that there has been a consolidation and shift in the understanding of femme-masculine identity

across culture.

The solidification of the femme-masculine identity can be observed in how different societies accommodate and interpret this hybridity. In Afghanistan, femme-masculine is seen as a pragmatic solution in patriarchal societies, as in the Bacha Posh tradition of raising girls as boys to fulfill social roles. In Thailand, femme-masculine is recognized as part of a broad and dynamic gender spectrum, demonstrating the acceptance of positive gender expression. In South Korea, femme-masculine is considered a symbol of social transformation, supported by media outlets that encourage young people to be more open to diverse gender expression.

Conversely, the shifting myths surrounding femme-masculine identities also show variations in cultural perceptions. Where in Indonesia, femme-masculine identity is considered as a form to oppose patriarchy, challenging the dominance of a strong masculine culture. Meanwhile in Japan, femme-masculine is described as a gender dichotomy, which reflects the traditional view of society that separates gender roles firmly, including in different aspects of language for men and women, which shows how Japanese society sees and regulates gender behavior.

Director Hirokazu Kore-Eda's portrays the concept of femme-masculine through female characters integrating feminine and masculine elements, which defy conventional gender norms. This aligns with three key themes of Strinati's Popular Culture Theory. First, popular culture theory highlights that popular culture is determined by creators such as Kore-Eda, who use the mass media to influence gender perceptions. Second, commercialization and industrialization influenced popular culture, with *Monster* movie successfully attracting a wide audience and generating huge profits. Third, popular culture serves as an ideological function embedding messages about gender acceptance and integration, encouraging people to be more open and accepting of various gender expressions. Through these insights, the study demonstrates how *Monster* not only tells a compelling story but also plays an active role in reshaping cultural understandings of gender.

In this study, there are also three suggestions by researchers including:

Academic Recommendation

Future researchers are encouraged to explore the representation of femme-masculine identities across a various forms of media. Comparative analyses of different films, series, or cultural texts can deepen our understanding of how these representations influence public perceptions of gender. This research also opens pathways for interdisciplinary studies involving gender studies, media studies, and cultural anthropology.

Practical Recommendation

Filmmakers and content creators are advised to use these findings to develop more diverse and multi-dimensional characters. The nuanced portrayal of femme-masculine identity in *Monster* movie demonstrates the potential for broader depictions of gender identity that are not tied to traditional stereotypes. By doing so, the film industry can both reflect and shape changing societal norms, attracting broader audiences and fostering greater inclusivity.

Social Recommendation

Audiences and educators are encouraged to use movies like *Monster* as tools for raising awareness about the concept of femme-masculine and the challenges. The film can serve as a medium for promoting empathy and understanding toward individuals whose gender identities do not conform to conventional expectations. By increasing visibility and fostering dialogue, media representations of femme-masculine identities can contribute to reducing stigma, supporting marginalized communities, and building a more inclusive society.

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