

## Representation of Masculinity and Femininity Values on “Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku” by Garin Nugroho 2019

**Murniati, Putri Intan Nalumsari, Khoirul Muslimin**

Universitas Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Jepara

[murniati@unisnu.ac.id](mailto:murniati@unisnu.ac.id), [putriintan1705@gmail.com](mailto:putriintan1705@gmail.com), [muslimin@unisnu.ac.id](mailto:muslimin@unisnu.ac.id)

Received March 15, 2023; accepted May 10, 2023 ;published June 08, 2023

### **Abstract**

*Masculinity and femininity are often associated with stereotypes created by society and culture at large. However, the values associated with these traits can be viewed with an open and conceptual mind. This study aims to determine the classification of masculinity and femininity and analyze the representation of values displayed in Juno's character according to Bem's perspective.*

*This qualitative study utilized the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) theory for data collection and the semiotics theory of Charles Sanders Pierce for data analysis, as well as the supporting theory of Sachiko Murata. The data collection technique involved the analysis of text, audio, and visuals.*

*The results of the study reveal that Juno's character has 15 masculine and 17 feminine personalities out of 20 personalities, according to Bem's theory. Based on the classification of masculinity and femininity, traditionally, Juno is considered a feminine man, and the representation of Juno's masculinity and femininity values has a negative self-adjustment. However, non-traditionally, Juno is considered both a masculine and feminine man, resulting in a representation of Juno's masculinity and femininity values with both positive and negative adjustments*

**Keywords:** Masculinity , Femininity , Values

### **INTRODUCTION**

Film is a mass communication medium in the form of audio-visuals that encompasses specific story concepts and serves as a vehicle for conveying messages or information from screenwriters to the audience or the public. According to Wibowo, film also serves as a medium for artistic expression, allowing artists and filmmakers to convey their ideas and stories. Fundamentally and significantly, films possess the power to profoundly influence society's recipients. (Wibowo, 2006: 196).

As a communication medium, film represents the reality of people's lives and is projected onto a screen for public consumption. Apart from its influence on society, film can also be used as a medium for cultural publication. One such example is the film

"Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku," produced by Ifa Isfansyah and directed by Garin Nugroho. The film made its debut at the 75th Venice International Film Festival in 2018 and premiered in Indonesia at the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival the same year. It received notable recognition, winning eight awards out of twelve nominations at the esteemed Indonesian Good Citra Cup FFI (Indonesian Film Festival) in 2019. Furthermore, it proudly represented Indonesia at the 2020 Oscars.

In her renowned book "Sex and Gender: An Introduction," Hillary M. Lips provides a comprehensive definition of gender as the cultural expectations that society places upon men and women (Lips, 1993:4). This viewpoint finds support in the words of Mansour Fakih, who emphasizes that women are often regarded as gentle, beautiful, compassionate, and nurturing, while men are commonly associated with strength, rationality, and masculinity (Fakih, year: page). Furthermore, Manda's perspective suggests that a man's masculinity is often linked to physical attributes such as height, well-built physique, and masculine behavior (Manda, 2018: 272). Consequently, cultural expectations align women with femininity and men with masculinity.

However, according to Julia Kristeva, individuals, including women, have the agency to embrace both masculine and feminine aspects (Saputra, 2018: 3). Kristeva's perspective sheds light on the notion of gender equality, highlighting that both men and women have the capacity to embody qualities traditionally associated with masculinity and femininity. Hence, it can be argued that every individual possesses both masculine and feminine attributes.

It is important to differentiate between the concepts of masculinity and femininity in relation to gender, as they are distinct from sexuality. Meggie Hum asserts that gender refers to the societal roles and expectations assigned to men and women, encompassing emotional and psychological characteristics that align with specific cultural norms and are influenced by physical appearances (Hum, 2007:53). On the other hand, the term "sex" pertains to the biological and anatomical distinctions between males and females (Meggie, 2007:53).

The film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" garnered significant attention as it achieved critical acclaim while also stirring controversy upon its release in Indonesia. The film received

diverse reactions both domestically and internationally. Within the country, "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" was perceived to address LGBT issues, despite its rich exploration of social life, cultural contexts, socio-political aspects, and inherent values.

From a social and cultural perspective, "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" shed light on the intertwining of femininity and masculinity within an individual, rooted deeply in Indonesian traditions. This is evident in the Lenggèr art form that emerged and has been preserved since 1755. Moreover, considering the predominant Muslim population in the archipelago, religious influences are also at play.

Sachiko Murata posits that in the human realm, masculinity and femininity encompass both positive and negative aspects. According to Murata, striking a balance between these aspects is crucial to avoid potential harm. The concepts of masculinity, femininity, and the interplay of positive and negative traits are also present in the Quran, as highlighted by Murata (Ulvah, 2020: 312).

Hence, the researcher aims to evaluate both aspects of Juno's character, specifically masculinity and femininity. The objective is to investigate the societal reception of the values associated with masculinity and femininity, considering their respective advantages and disadvantages. Thus, in assessing masculinity and femininity the researcher uses additional theory as an indicator for determining masculinity and femininity. The researcher acknowledges that the portrayal of masculinity and femininity carries inherent value from the opposing side. The research discussion covers socio-cultural and conceptual aspects that are prevalent in Indonesian society as a whole.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur. It involved various existing methods and remained flexible to accommodate changes if additional facts were discovered (Moleong, 2017: 5). In this study, the semiotics of Charles Sanders Pierce was employed as an approach to interpret the representation of masculinity and femininity in the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku."

The primary data for this research were obtained from the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku," directed by Garin Nugroho, with a duration of 1 hour 45 minutes 55 seconds

(17+), divided into 4 story acts. The data collection technique employed the BSRI (Bem Sex Role Inventory) indicator as a determinant of masculinity and femininity data.

The data collection techniques employed in this study were as follows:

1. The researcher watched and observed the entire film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" multiple times.
2. The researcher categorized the signs based on the focus of the study, namely masculinity and femininity. Following Bem's indicators of masculinity and femininity, repeated screenings of the film were necessary.
3. The researcher documented and comprehended conversations and dialogue texts relevant to masculinity and femininity.
4. The researcher analysed these signs using Pierce's semiotic process, which involves three stages: representation (sign), object, and interpretation.
5. The researcher arrived at final conclusions by interpreting the representation (sign), object, and interpretation based on the theory employed.

The data analysis techniques used in this study included data reduction, data presentation, data analysis, and conclusion (Fitria, 2017: 46). In the process of data analysis, alongside employing representation theory and semiotic approaches as the primary theories, the researcher incorporated the viewpoints of Bem and Sachiko Murata to analyze the data on masculinity and femininity.

## **DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the results presents data findings based on the theory used. Using Bem's 20 characteristic scale for researching masculinity in the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku," the researcher employed the semiotic method and identified 15 masculine characteristics displayed in the film. The analysis revealed that these characteristics include the ability to fulfill one's own needs, individualism, strong personality, masculinity, independence, willingness to take a stand, readiness to take risks, self-reliance, analytical thinking, ambition, decision-making ease, assertiveness, athleticism, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. On the other hand, from Bem's perspective on feminine characteristics, the researcher found 17 feminine traits exhibited in the film. These characteristics encompass

loyalty, obedience, cheerfulness, innocence, understanding, soft-spokenness, sympathy, compassion, shyness, desire to soothe hurt feelings, gentleness, emotional depth, warmth, femininity, love for children, sensitivity to others' needs, and meekness.

According to Bem's perspective, masculinity and femininity can be understood through two gender role orientation models: the traditional and non-traditional models. The traditional model categorizes masculinity and femininity as separate entities, with individuals classified as having either high masculinity and low femininity, or high femininity and low masculinity. Based on the data analysis and the theory employed, it was found that in the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku," there were more signs of femininity in the character of Juno compared to signs of masculinity. Therefore, from Bem's viewpoint and the traditional model, Juno's character can be regarded as having higher femininity and lower masculinity, often referred to as a feminine man due to the deviation from conventional masculine representation.

The non-traditional model recognizes that masculinity and femininity are distinct concepts that can lead to new categorizations. Bem identifies four categories: feminine, masculine, androgynous, and neutral. Based on the data analysis and the theory employed, it was found that in the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku," Juno is portrayed as someone who possesses both masculine and feminine characteristics. The researcher identified numerous signs indicating that Juno embodies both masculinity and femininity. These signs encompass 15 out of 20 indicators of masculinity and 17 out of 20 indicators of femininity, according to Bem's perspective. Moreover, the film emphasizes Juno's strong personality right from the beginning, portraying Juno as a figure who possesses a serene and calm demeanor (feminine) while also exhibiting strength akin to a mountain (masculine).

### **1. Representation of Masculinity and Femininity Values in the Film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku"**

The film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" portrays the journey of masculinity and femininity within an individual. Masculinity and femininity are societal constructs and gender stereotypes attributed to men and women. Traditionally, these values are associated with specific gender roles and expectations. Masculinity is considered positive when it aligns with ideal masculine characteristics, while femininity is viewed positively

when it adheres to ideal feminine traits. Society and culture perceive men as good if they embody masculine qualities, while women are expected to display feminine attributes.

In this research, data on masculine stereotypes were examined by exploring the alignment between gender roles and societal expectations. The findings revealed that the film reflects a greater conformity to general masculine culture. Masculinity is deemed positive when it encompasses the ability to fulfill one's own needs, individualism, a strong personality, masculinity itself, the willingness to take a stand, the readiness to take risks, self-dependence, the ease of decision-making, assertiveness, athleticism, and aggression. However, the researcher also identified some signs that deviate from the traditional masculine culture, such as independence, analytical thinking, ambition, and competitiveness. These deviations arise from Juno's work, which is typically associated with occupations performed by women

Meanwhile, in terms of feminine stereotype signs, the researcher found that all of Juno's feminine characteristics align with societal expectations and are consistent with the perspective of feminine culture in general. Thus, it can be concluded that Juno's femininity is considered positive. On the other hand, Juno's masculinity is perceived as negative because both the classification of signs and data analysis indicate a lower level of masculinity compared to femininity.

From a non-traditional perspective, this research examines the values of masculinity and femininity separately and from a conceptual standpoint. Non-traditional perspectives embrace a more inclusive understanding of masculinity and femininity, emphasizing gender equality and the potential for creating new gender roles. Conceptually and independently, the researcher found that Juno possesses both positive and negative aspects of masculinity and femininity.

Juno's positive masculinity is manifested through visible masculine traits, including the ability to meet one's own needs, a strong personality, masculinity itself, independence, a willingness to take risks, self-dependence, analytical thinking, ambition, ease of decision-making, assertiveness, and athleticism. On the other hand, Juno's negative masculinity is reflected in characteristics such as individualism, a willingness to

take a stand, aggression, and competitiveness. Regarding Juno's positive femininity, it is demonstrated through characteristics such as loyalty, obedience, cheerfulness, understanding, soft-spokenness, sympathy, compassion, a desire to soothe hurt feelings, gentleness, emotional depth, warmth, femininity, and sensitivity to others' needs. Juno's negative femininity is displayed in characteristics such as innocence, shyness, childlike behavior, and gentleness.

## **2. Analysis of Masculinity and Femininity Values based on Semiotic Methods**

The following is an analysis of the value of masculinity displayed in the film “Kucumbu Berlian Indahku”.

First, the ability to meet one's own needs carries positive values both traditionally and non-traditionally. This masculine characteristic signifies independence, as seen in Juno's role as a self-sustaining individual through trading or selling goods. Consequently, Juno is able to fulfill his own needs successfully.

Second, individualism presents positive values in the traditional sense but carries negative connotations from a non-traditional perspective. In the traditional context, individualism aligns with the general culture of masculinity. However, conceptually, this characteristic represents unfavourable social values due to Juno's limited interaction with others. His preference for solitude and distancing himself from those around him can impact his social life within the community.

Third, possessing a strong personality is considered positively both traditionally and non-traditionally. This characteristic reflects Juno's self-identity, as evidenced by the names given to him by his parents. Names serve as symbols of hope and prayers from parents for their child's future, with the expectation that the child will embody the desired outcomes of those hopes and prayers.

fourth, masculinity is portrayed positively in both traditional and non-traditional contexts. This characteristic is demonstrated through Juno's engagement with wayang, a traditional Indonesian puppetry medium. Wayang is predominantly performed by men, thus aligning with the masculine identity. By participating in wayang, Juno embodies the masculine values associated with this cultural art form.

Fifth, independence carries negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. The value of independence is exemplified through Juno's ability to cook for himself. Traditionally, cooking is predominantly associated with women's roles. However, from a conceptual perspective, Juno's independence in cooking stems from being accustomed to it from a young age and the necessity of self-reliance.

Sixth, willingness to take a stand possesses positive values traditionally and negative values non-traditionally. It is positively regarded within the context of masculinity, where men are encouraged to assert their opinions confidently. However, conceptually, this characteristic reveals ethical concerns, such as neglecting studies, being easily influenced by others' words, and lacking trustworthiness. Such behaviors may arise due to external instigation, necessitating conscious decision-making in taking a stance.

Seventh, willingness to take risks holds positive values both traditionally and non-traditionally. Taking calculated risks reflects a sense of responsibility, as individuals consciously accept the potential consequences of their actions and mistakes.

Eighth, self-reliance carries positive values traditionally and non-traditionally. Depending on oneself signifies the primary means of survival, where individuals rely on their own capabilities and skills to navigate life's challenges. Undertaking tasks independently demonstrates self-reliance.

Ninth, analysis carries negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. The ability to analyze is exemplified through Juno's sewing work. Traditionally, sewing is often associated with women's work. However, conceptually, analytical skills are crucial in various occupations, including sewing, as workers need to predict outcomes and make informed decisions. Developing proper analytical skills requires learning and experience.

Tenth, ambition carries negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Ambition represents an individual's desire to achieve personal goals, as depicted in the film through Juno's ambition to excel in sewing. Traditionally, sewing is predominantly associated with women's work. However, from a conceptual standpoint, to enhance one's abilities, continuous learning and striving are necessary to achieve



desired skill levels. Therefore, ambition serves as a driving force, fuelling enthusiasm for learning and enabling individuals to meet their targets or goals.

Eleventh, ease of decision-making carries positive values in both traditional and non-traditional contexts. Confronting and effectively resolving problems is considered better than avoiding them. Even in conflicts or situations where escape seems tempting, a friend's decision to encourage facing the problem serves as a reminder to remain willing to confront it.

Twelfth, assertiveness possesses positive values traditionally and non-traditionally. An assertive individual communicates openly and confidently, expressing their desires clearly while still considering the feelings of others.

Thirteenth, athleticism carries positive values both traditionally and non-traditionally. Juno is depicted as physically fit with a well-built body, demonstrating athleticism. Male athleticism typically involves having sufficient muscle mass, appearing fit, and maintaining a healthy body weight. This portrayal aligns with the general notion of the male physical identity.

Fourteenth, aggression holds positive values traditionally and negative values non-traditionally. Traditionally, aggression for self-protection is deemed acceptable within the culture of masculinity. However, from a non-traditional perspective, unchecked aggression can be a reflection of uncontrolled emotions and is generally seen as undesirable. Improperly managed emotions can lead to harmful actions, potentially causing harm to others and oneself.

Fifteenth, competitiveness carries negative values both traditionally and non-traditionally. Engaging in healthy competition is commendable when conducted with fairness. However, when competition is driven by ulterior motives, such as winning favor from authority figures, it is viewed negatively.

The following is a discussion of the value of femininity displayed in the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku." In this study, the researcher found that traditionally, all feminine stereotypes shown in the film align with the general culture of femininity. However, since the characters in this study are male, they are considered to have a negative value because they do not conform to their assigned gender.

First, loyalty carries negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. The expression of loyalty is often depicted through waiting. Waiting for the father to return home and welcoming him with a meal reflects the loyalty and devotion of a child towards their parents.

Second, being a follower holds negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Being submissive means avoiding conflict and obediently following orders, whether from parents or other individuals. This behavior may stem from being a good and dutiful child or from a desire to reciprocate kindness by fulfilling the given orders.

Third, cheerfulness carries negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Cheerfulness refers to the emotional state of being joyful, frequently accompanied by laughter and smiles. Even small things that would typically go unnoticed can elicit a big smile and bring happiness to cheerful individuals.

Fourth, innocence holds negative values traditionally and non-traditionally. Innocent individuals exhibit few desires or whims and tend to display behaviors associated with innocence. When faced with bullying, innocent individuals do not respond with aggression; instead, they may appear confused and remain passive, leading others to perceive them as weak.

Fifth, being understanding carries negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. One's understanding can be demonstrated through various actions, such as caring for elderly parents. Providing care for the elderly requires a significant level of understanding, particularly when they are in a vulnerable state. Even if they are not one's biological parents, showing understanding and treating them as if they were is a sign of compassion.

Sixth, speaking softly has negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Properly conveying input or advice is more effective when spoken softly. Soft speech in this film is characterized by a smooth tone of voice, speaking slowly, or avoiding a high pitch.

Seventh, being sympathetic has negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Displaying an enthusiastic attitude while listening to friends' conversations about their struggles is a form of sympathy. As friends, we must be good listeners when our friends are going through difficult times, as it shows understanding and empathy.

Eighth, showing compassion has negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Compassion is not limited to parents and siblings but can be extended to everyone, including friends. Compassion in this film is demonstrated by offering food as a way to comfort a friend.

Ninth, shyness has negative values traditionally and non-traditionally. Shyness is characterized by feelings of nervousness, worry, and even awkwardness. In this film, it is depicted through covering the face, although a blushing smile is observed for some reason. Such reactions are considered excessive for men.

Tenth, wanting to soothe hurt feelings has negative values traditionally and positive values non-traditionally. Offering encouragement to someone who is sad is a way of wanting to alleviate their emotional pain. This attitude can make someone a good friend.

Eleventh, Softness, which traditionally has negative values but non-traditionally has positive values, is portrayed in this film through a child massaging and cleaning the feet of individuals who are considered as parents to him. This signifies the tenderness of heart and body, which is included in filial behavior towards parents.

Twelfth, Filled with emotions that traditionally hold negative values but non-traditionally hold positive values, a profound feeling is depicted when a child cries because his parents have left him forever. Mourning for the deceased is an act of mercy, and excessive lamentation is considered reproachable.

Thirteenth, Warmth, which traditionally carries negative values but non-traditionally holds positive values, is displayed through a friendly attitude when meeting new people. Initiating the conversation with a warm greeting helps create a warmer atmosphere and may even establish kinship ties.

Fourteenth, Femininity, which traditionally has negative values but non-traditionally holds positive values, is culturally depicted through men who dance and dress like women. The clothing worn includes garments that, when worn by women, are open, but when worn by men, they still cover the male genitalia.

Fifteenth, Childlike behavior, traditionally associated with negative values but also present non-traditionally, is exemplified by thumb sucking, a habit common among children. However, in this context, thumb sucking is not a habit but rather a response to prevent further bleeding caused by self-injury.

Sixteenth, Sensitivity to the needs of others, which traditionally holds negative values but non-traditionally holds positive values, is demonstrated when people in distress require assistance. Without being prompted, individuals show sensitivity by empathetically offering immediate help to those facing difficulties.

Seventeenth, Meekness, traditionally viewed with negative values but non-traditionally regarded positively, cultivates polite manners, abstains from using harsh words, and embodies humility. Both in speech and actions, meekness is a behavior that can also foster patience.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the representations of masculinity and femininity in the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" revealed 15 signs of masculinity and 17 signs of femininity displayed by Juno, the main character. Traditionally, this classification led researchers to perceive Juno as a man with feminine traits, distant from traditional masculinity. However, from a non-traditional perspective, researchers found that Juno embodies both masculine and feminine characteristics.

According to the traditional model, the characterization of Juno's masculinity and femininity is negatively adjusted, as it portrays a man with low masculinity and high femininity. Conversely, the non-traditional model presents both positive and negative aspects, recognizing that every trait has its good and bad sides.

## REFERENCE

- FFI, Komite. 2019. "Piala Bagus Citra Indonesia FFI 2019", dalam <https://festivalfilm.id/ffi-2019> , diakses pada 10 September 2021.
- Fitria, Rini. 2017. "Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Pierce dalam Iklan Kampanye Pasangan Calon Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Provinsi Bengkulu Tahun 2015", *Manhaj*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2017.
- Humm, Maggie. 2007. *Ensiklopedia Feminis*. Yogyakarta : Fajar Pustaka Baru.
- M. Lips, Hillary. 1993. *Sex & Gender, An Introduction*. California: My Field Publishing Company.
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2017. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung : Rosdakarya.
- Nur'aeni, Ulvah. 2020. "Maskulinitas dan Feminitas dalam Al-Qur'an", *Nukhbatul 'Ulum*, vol. 6, no. 2 th 2020.
- Nurhadi, Zikri Fachrul. 2018. "Model Komunikasi Sosial Laki-Laki Feminim", *Ilmu Komunikasi*, vol. 16, no. 3 th 2018.
- Saputra, Eko Rizal, Hapsari Dwiningtyas. 2018. "Representasi Maskulinitas dan Feminitas pada Karakter Perempuan Kuat dalam Serial Drama Korea", *Interaksi Online*, vol. 6, no. 3, Juli, 2018.
- Wibowo, Fred. 2006. *Teknik Program Televisi*. Yogyakarta : Pinus Book Publisher.