Deconstructing Masculinity in the Clothing Representation of Ghibli Anime Characters by the TikTok Account @Delvinyauu

(A Roland Barthes Semiotic Study on Japanese Popular Culture in Indonesia)

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Abstract

This study explores the representation of masculinity in TikTok content by creator @Delvinyauu, focusing on the portrayal of characters from Studio Ghibli films. The research examines how these representations challenge traditional masculine stereotypes in Japanese culture, particularly through the lens of soft masculinity. Using a descriptive qualitative method combined with a critical approach, the study aims to analyze the existing portrayals, integrating Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to explore the denotative and connotative meanings behind fashion choices, body language, and character depictions of Ghibli anime characters in @Delvinyauu's TikTok content. The findings indicate that the creator's content resonates with viewers, presenting a softer, more empathetic masculinity that diverges from conventional ideals. This shift promotes a nuanced understanding of masculinity, encouraging emotional expression and individuality in contemporary society. Through Derrida's deconstruction of masculine stereotypes, the study reveals how past ideals of masculinity differ from those of today, which emphasize greater freedom of expression. The study further concludes that TikTok serves as a platform for redefining masculine identity, reflecting the evolving perceptions of gender roles among Indonesia's younger generation.

Keywords: *Masculinity Deconstruction, Studio Ghibli Anime, Roland Barthes Semiotics, Japanese Pop Culture, Delvinyauu*

INTRODUCTION

The presence of anime in Indonesia has also fostered strong fan communities, particularly among Generation Z. Through social media and online forums, these fans not only enjoy anime as a form of entertainment but also use it as a means of self-expression and interaction with fellow enthusiasts. This phenomenon demonstrates that Japanese anime plays a significant role in shaping the social and cultural dynamics of Indonesia's youth, influencing various aspects such as lifestyle trends, ways of thinking, and perspectives on the global world. Generation Z, growing up amidst technological advancements, is the demographic most exposed to anime content, leading to a deep interest in Japanese popular culture. This interest extends to areas such as lifestyle, fashion, music, and the visual arts characteristic of anime. This statement is supported by previous research on anime communities in Yogyakarta, where the growing number of anime fan groups, such as Rinjun Bu, ANOMAn, and AWSubs, indicates the increasing prevalence of "Jejepangan" (Japan-inspired) communities across the country (Prista & Hendrastomo, 2017). Many also associate Japanese anime with gender values, as anime often portrays gender norms through its character representations, influencing societal perceptions of gender roles. Anime offers a complex depiction of gender roles, where male and female characters sometimes

transcend traditional boundaries of masculinity and femininity. Some anime, particularly those targeting younger audiences, including Generation Z, are increasingly featuring characters with more fluid and diverse gender identities. This phenomenon has sparked important discussions about how anime contributes to either the transformation or reinforcement of gender stereotypes among its viewers. Additionally, it raises questions about how the gender values represented by anime characters shape the perspectives of younger generations regarding gender roles in real life. One previous study linking gender values, titled "Reception Analysis of University Students in Surabaya on *Soft Masculinity* in the Manga Tokyo Revengers," explores this connection further (Indira et al., 2023), The study revealed that the reception of students, in understanding *soft masculinity*, is shaped by their environment. Specifically, the informants interpreted *soft masculinity* in Tokyo Revengers as male characters exhibiting feminine traits. This understanding of *soft masculinity* reflects how male characters are portrayed in the manga as embodying qualities traditionally associated with femininity, yet still maintaining their masculine identity. The findings suggest that cultural and social contexts influence how young audiences interpret these gender representations, highlighting the impact of media like manga in shaping perceptions of masculinity.

This study is motivated by previous research findings that indicate the acceptance of gender values portrayed in Japanese anime characters by Indonesian audiences. Building on earlier studies, this research strengthens prior work conducted by the researcher titled "Analysis of Gen Z Surabaya's Reception of Studio Ghibli Anime Characters in TikTok Styling Content by @Delvinyauu." The aim is to further investigate and focus on semiotic signs of masculinity in clothing and character portrayal within @Delvinyauu's TikTok content, specifically in recreating Studio Ghibli outfits. The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of social media content, particularly the TikTok account @Delvinyauu, as a representation of Studio Ghibli anime characters within the context of Japanese popular culture. This culture has permeated Generation Z through the digital era, emphasizing how online platforms play a significant role in shaping and reflecting contemporary interpretations of masculinity and fashion based on anime.

In previous research on Roland Barthes' semiotics in Japanese fashion by (Ningrum & Oemiati, 2022), produced a study on the denotation and connotation in each scene concerning Japanese culture and its social phenomena, thereby representing Japanese culture in the anime Kamisama Hajimemashita and focusing on the depiction of scenes within the anime. In Second Research (Khoirum, 2020), produced online media that presents the notion that women have the freedom to express themselves through their hijabs, as discussed in articles on Japan. The gap in previous research in this study lies in the use of Ghibli anime as the research object, focusing on one TikTok content creator, @Delvinyauu, as a representation of fashion styles within Japanese popular culture, which delves deeper into the clothing choices in relation to gender values.

Masculinity in Japan

Masculinity is an element of gender discourse that is socially and culturally constructed by society, including in Japan. In Japan, the term for masculinity is known as 男らしさ (otokorashisa) or 男性性 (danseisei). These terms refer to masculine concepts closely related to manliness and slightly lean towards the term takumashī (逞しい), which means macho (Humairah, 2019). Over time, Japan has experienced changes in the meaning of masculinity. The concept of masculinity often includes traditional stereotypes depicted as strong, aggressive, and dominant. The image considered representative of traditional Japanese masculinity is that of the samurai (侍) and the sararīman (salaryman), who dominated from the 1960s to the 1980s, as well as the oyaji (親父).Entering the early 1980s, the awareness among Japanese youth regarding the judgments directed at them increased,

particularly concerning physical appearance and sexual attractiveness. This crisis of masculinity reflects the decline of the samurai and sararīman as symbols of ideal masculinity. The emergence of herbivore men represents a new form of masculinity characterized by gentler and less dominant traits compared to traditional men. They tend to enjoy activities typically associated with women, such as dressing up, cooking, and having a fondness for sweet foods. These characteristics are frequently found in shoujo-manga (girls' manga) and have influenced the fashion and appearance of the younger generation. (Srimulyani, 2022).

Masculinity in Japan has undergone a significant transformation alongside social and cultural changes, reflecting a shift from traditional stereotypes toward more modern forms. Historically, traditional Japanese masculinity was often depicted through the figure of the Samurai (侍), symbolizing strength, resilience, and dedication. The Samurai's distinct topknot hairstyle initially served a practical purpose, facilitating the use of helmets in battle. Conversely, modern Japanese masculinity is represented by the *Sararīman* (サラリーマン)—corporate professionals whose attire of suits and black bags signifies commitment to career and professional achievement. Additionally, the figure of *Oyaji* (おやじ), referring to a father or adult man within the family, represents masculinity in a family context, marked by stability, resilience, and authority. As masculinity in Japan has evolved, modern interpretations increasingly reflect more open values. For example, many aesthetic salons or *Esute salon* (エステサロン) now offer specialized beauty services for men, supporting a masculinity that emphasizes self-confidence and self-worth as essential elements. Additionally, the term *Ojōman* (オジョーマン) has emerged to describe urban young men who are no longer bound by conventional masculine stereotypes. These men often express interest in fashion, music, and art, maintaining an elegant appearance distinct from traditional masculinity norms. *Ojōman*-style men create space for a more flexible masculinity in Japanese society, paving new ways for more diverse and positive self-expression (Humairah, 2019).

In addition to Japanese pop culture, which transcends fashion, it encompasses a variety of cultural products originating from Japan, such as comics, films, music, and technology that are rich in traditional nuances. In Indonesia, manga and anime dominate fan preferences, with their long-lasting popularity even surpassing Korean trends. The term 'anime' itself is derived from the word 'animation.' According to Hidetoshi Kato, 'pop culture' in Japanese is more accurately referred to as 'taishuu bunka' or 'mass culture,' indicating the broad appeal of these cultural products among the public, both in Japan and in other countries (Nugroho & Hendrastomo, 2017). This research focuses on the representation of masculinity in films produced by Studio Ghibli, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, offering a unique and distinct approach to depicting masculinity compared to traditional portrayals. The uniqueness of Studio Ghibli's anime lies in its creation of highly diverse characters, encompassing various categories such as humans (ranging from children, teenagers, and adults to the elderly), animals (including fish, mammals, insects, and birds), imaginary beings (anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, metamorphic, ghosts, monsters, and spirits), as well as inanimate objects that are brought to life through visual representation (Hidajat, 2017). In this research, the term "Ghibli boy" refers to male characters in Studio Ghibli films who possess unique personalities that differ from the stereotypical masculine characters commonly found in anime. These characters are often depicted with peaceful, simple, and unassuming traits, lacking excessive physical features such as flashy hairstyles or gravity-defying looks. Despite this, they are still portrayed as steadfast individuals determined to achieve their goals. Another notable characteristic of "Ghibli boys" is their softer and more empathetic nature, particularly in their interactions with female characters, which often aligns them with the concept of the "soft boy."(Psikologi, 2023). Several characters, such as Howl from the film Howl's Moving Castle, exhibit flamboyant and colorful clothing styles that reflect their eccentric and emotional personalities. Howl is portrayed not only as possessing physical strength but also as having a gentle and vulnerable side, demonstrating that masculinity can be expressed in various forms. Meanwhile, Haku from Spirited Away showcases a unique style of dress

that blends traditional and modern elements. The clothing worn by these characters often reflects their traits—be it strength, softness, or vulnerability—thereby adding depth to their fashion choices. Anime films produced by Studio Ghibli significantly influence fashion trends, as evidenced by the outfit recreation content of Ghibli characters by TikTok creator @Delvinyauu. TikTok serves as a platform that allows the younger generation to explore and access entertainment information, including within the realm of fashion. Content focused on outfit styling on TikTok emphasizes the importance of fashion as a medium of expression.. According to (Kaiser, 2012) Fashion serves as a means to express an individual's social, gender, and cultural identity through clothing and accessories. It can be defined as the popular style of dress adopted by a particular culture, encompassing everyday wear as well as attire for special occasions. While fashion typically refers to clothing styles, it also includes accessories, trousers, hairstyles, and makeup.Content creators on TikTok have produced a variety of videos related to outfit styling, ranging from masculine to feminine styles, as well as recreating outfits from characters in Japanese anime. One prominent account is @Delvinyauu, which began its activity in January 2021 and started posting content related to outfit styling in August 2021. Delvin, the creator behind the account, is known for his unique approach to reconstructing the clothing of anime characters from Studio Ghibli films, earning him the nickname "Ghibli Boy." Ghibli films often showcase fashion trends that prioritize simplicity and comfort. This trend is consistent with contemporary fashion themes that emphasize functional clothing without excessive detail. From simplicity to creativity in styling, the influence of Ghibli continues to resonate in contemporary fashion, encouraging individuals to explore their identities through clothing choices inspired by the stories and characters they cherish. In Indonesia, this phenomenon is evident in the public's interest in cosplay and everyday fashion that incorporates elements from Ghibli films (Furness, 2023)

Masculinity in Studio Ghibli films reflects a paradigm shift in how we understand male roles in society. By showcasing characters who are gentle, empathetic, and multidimensional, Miyazaki (the animator behind Ghibli) successfully transforms the standard narrative surrounding masculinity. This approach inspires viewers to recognize that true strength is not solely associated with dominance or physical toughness but also with the ability to understand oneself and others emotionally. Ghibli films present a form of non-toxic masculinity where male characters can express their emotions without feeling constrained by traditional gender norms. They illustrate that strength lies not only in physicality but also in the capacity to empathize with and support others.This concept is also evident in the TikTok content of @Delvinyauu, which highlights the stylistic representations of Ghibli characters "Seiji Amasawa" and "Taku Morisaki."

Deconstruction by Jacques Derrida

According to Derrida, as stated by (Ratna, 2004), the theory of deconstruction serves as a critique of logocentrism and phonocentrism, which create various binary oppositions and hierarchical, dichotomous modes of thinking. Deconstruction aims to weaken or loosen rigidly established structures. In other words, deconstruction is an endeavor to diminish the intensity of entrenched constructions, encompassing concepts, structures, and orders deemed universal. This method generates controversy, particularly in environments that do not espouse communist views, although it has significantly influenced the field of humanities, especially literary studies. Deconstruction is developed from Ferdinand de Saussure's theory regarding the arbitrary relationship between signifiers and signifieds (words and meanings). In his approach, Derrida reorganizes and reinterprets remnants of prior textual constructions. This study applies deconstruction theory to analyze the mindset that produces gender

stereotypes, particularly masculinity, by deconstructing old stereotypes and reconstructing them in alignment with modern contexts.

Roland Barthes Semiothic Theory

This research employs the theory of semiotics to study signs and symbols, examining how these symbols produce meaning and how certain elements possess significance. In recent times, this field of study has also been referred to as semiotics. This approach is influenced by the works of Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Roland Barthes. Saussure argues that a sign comprises a physical signifier (such as gestures, written text, or musical symbols) and an immaterial signified, which refers to the ideas or concepts associated with these physical signifiers (Han, 2009).The concept of semiotics was introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure through the dichotomy of the sign system, consisting of the signifier and the signified. This concept views meaning as emerging from the associations or, conversely, the lack of relationship between the signifier and the signified. Barthes posits that everything considered natural within a society results from a process of connotation (Tazid, 2017).

Stuart Hall's Representation Theory

In general, representation theory serves as a conceptual framework for understanding how meanings and understandings of culture are constructed and articulated in the world. These meanings and understandings are created, communicated, and maintained through specific symbols, images, or signs. Consequently, the representations constructed can influence perceptions, identities, and social relations. Therefore, representation plays a crucial role in cultural studies. As stated by (Hall, 2017), "representation connects meaning and language with culture." The meaning of representation operates through two main components: concepts in the mind and language. These components are interrelated, where the concepts formed in human thought involve the use of language, symbols, and images to represent those meanings.

Representation theory also examines how meanings are generated and conveyed through various media and communication practices within society. This process involves coding, whereby producers of representation select, edit, and assemble specific meanings into symbols and signs. (Hall, 2017), asserts that "meanings are shaped by systems of representation, and are established through codes that connect our conceptual systems with language systems." In this regard, representation not only depicts reality but also shapes how we understand the world through the process of coding.

The Meaning Of Masculinity

The supporting concept in this research, namely *soft masculinity* in the context of gender, is based on the Nurture Theory, which posits that the differences in gender roles between men and women are not influenced by biological factors but rather by social constructions. According to this theory, social roles are more dominant and are regarded as standards followed by society, akin to religious doctrines. These roles are not inherent or derived from divine will but are the result of norms and cultures that develop within society (Utaminingsih, 2017). Through the process of transculturation, a type of masculinity known as "*mugujeok*" (non-national) has emerged, characterized by men's ability to pay attention to their appearance and apply makeup to present themselves attractively. Due to the blending of various cultures, this softer form of masculinity is often accepted by society (Indira et al., 2023).

METHODE

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a critical perspective. According to Budi Hadirman, within a critical approach, each research endeavor must focus on understanding das sein (the existing reality) rather than das sollen (what is ideal or should exist). Consequently, the research merely

reproduces the existing social conditions without promoting the occurrence of change or improvements for the better (Butsi, 2019). This method is chosen to explore in depth the meanings and symbols associated with fashion trends influenced by Studio Ghibli films and the role of content creators on social media platforms, particularly the account @Delvinyauu. Roland Barthes' semiotics is an effective method for analyzing signs and visual symbols, such as fashion choices, which carry meanings beyond mere surface appearances. Barthes categorizes sign analysis into two levels: denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal or direct meaning of the observed signs, while connotation encompasses deeper meanings related to the culture, values, and perspectives present within society (Lustyantie, 2012). In the context of this research, Barthes' semiotics aids in unraveling the hidden meanings behind fashion trends inspired by Ghibli films, as well as understanding how content creators shape public perception through the styles they promote.

The approach utilized in this research is descriptive qualitative, aiming to provide a thorough and detailed description of the phenomenon being studied. Rather than relying on quantitative data or numerical figures, this approach focuses on understanding the social and cultural contexts that underpin the phenomenon. The data collected in this study consists of observations, documentation, and content analysis, derived from social media as well as fashion representations in Ghibli films. Through descriptive qualitative analysis, this research seeks to delve deeper into how existing fashion symbols shape public perception and influence consumer behavior and identity, particularly among the youth in Indonesia. This study not only presents what is visible on the surface but also strives to uncover deeper meanings related to fashion trends in the evolving masculinity of the digital and social media era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The TikTok account @Delvinyauu has attracted an audience of 713.4K viewers, garnering 82.9K likes and 854 comments. The average audience feedback in the comment section indicates that content creator @Delvinyauu offers representations of "Ghibli Boys" and "Cute Boys." This aligns with previous research on traditional gender, which states that traditional gender stereotypes remain deeply entrenched in society, underpinned by the belief that men should exhibit characteristics such as strength, aggression, and dominance, in accordance with traditional masculinity ideals. This perspective is often reflected in specific fashion trends, where men are expected to wear sporty, casual attire in dark colors with minimal accessories. However, the evolution of men's fashion is beginning to shift, particularly influenced by modern Western society, where the notion that men do not have to be entirely bound by traditional masculinity concepts is gaining traction. This shift paves the way for hybrid configurations in men's clothing, integrating softer and more flexible elements without dismissing the overall aspects of masculinity (Barry, 2018). The concept of *soft masculinity* is often associated with a more feminine appearance in media. The term "kkonminam," derived from the combination of "pretty" and "boy", refers to a popular notion of *soft masculinity* in Korea. This type of masculinity demonstrates that men can possess sensitive, delicate, or gentle characteristics without diminishing their masculine identity. *Soft masculinity* offers an alternative to traditional masculinity, which tends to emphasize physical strength and dominance, by highlighting emotional aspects and sensitivity among men in modern society. (Kartika & Wirawanda, 2019). When examined through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the TikTok content recreating the outfit of the Anime Ghibli character "Taku Morisaki" by the account @Delvinyauu can be described as follows:

Tabel 1. Konten Taku Morisaki

@Delvinyauu TikTok content "Dressing as Taku Morisaki from Ocean Waves"		
Visual Elements	**Denotation**	**connotation**
Shirt Color (Red))	Bright red long-sleeved shirt.	The color red reflects passion, courage, and energy. In the context of masculinity, red can signify the bravery to express oneself more freely, unbound by traditional masculinity concepts that often shy away from bright or "bold" colors. Additionally, red can symbolize vitality and a positive sense of self-confidence.
T-shirt (White)	A plain white t-shirt worn underneath the shirt.	The color white symbolizes simplicity, innocence, and purity. It suggests a softer and calmer masculinity, complementing the red shirt with a more neutral and straightforward balance. This color choice creates a contrast that balances the overall appearance, merging the bold side (red) with the tranquil side (white).
Pants (Light Blue)	Light blue loose-fitting jeans..	The light blue color symbolizes tranquility, peace, and softness. The loose cut of the pants reflects comfort and flexibility, suggesting a masculinity that is not bound by rigid masculine stereotypes. Light blue also represents emotional openness and inner calm, aspects that are often associated with *soft masculinity.*
Shoes (Light Brown/Cream)	Light brown or cream casual shoes.	The cream or light brown color is often associated with earthiness and stability, suggesting a grounded, simple, and practical masculinity. These casual shoes reflect a nature that is understated and unpretentious, reinforcing the impression of masculinity that is closer to nature and everyday comfort, which also indicates qualities of being down-to-earth and comfortable.

Pose & Expression	Standing pose with legs crossed and one hand against the wall. The facial expression is cheerful and relaxed, featuring a broad smile.	This pose reflects a relaxed and unpretentious masculinity, contrasting sharply with the more rigid and formal stereotypes of traditional masculinity. The cheerful facial expression and casual stance convey a gentle and non-dominant self-confidence, reinforcing an image of masculinity that is humanistic, sensitive, and characterized by self-comfort.
Accessories (Glasses)	Dark-colored round-framed glasses.	Eyeglasses convey an intellectual and reflective impression, adding a deeper dimension to the portrayal of masculinity. This accessory reinforces the notion that masculinity encompasses not only physical appearance or strength but also intelligence, thoughtfulness, and emotional sensitivity. This emphasizes a more multidimensional and empathetic understanding of masculinity.

Source: Research Processed

The denotative and connotative meanings within Roland Barthes' semiotics in the TikTok content of @Delvinyauu can be observed through the visual components of the presentation. At the denotative level, the outfit worn consists of a red shirt, a plain white t-shirt, light blue jeans, casual light brown or cream shoes, and round-framed glasses. The relaxed body posture and bright smile are also clearly evident. At the connotative level, the combination of colors and types of clothing reveals a concept of masculinity that is softer, more empathetic, and courageous enough to display emotional aspects. The colors red and white create a balance between boldness and simplicity, while the light blue jeans emphasize tranquility and peace. The casual shoes and body posture reinforce the idea of masculinity that is non-rigid, self-assured, yet friendly and comfortable in expression. This is further supported by previous research indicating that the creator account @Delvinyauu features a distinctive visual style that highlights male characteristics with an aesthetically appealing appearance, as well as showcasing a gentle and calm personality. This style aligns with the concept of *soft masculinity*, which, in the context of *Mugujeok* (non-nationality), describes masculinity that is not solely based on physicality or strength but also on a "beautiful" and sensitive visual presentation. *Soft masculinity* encompasses attention to appearance, such as stylish clothing choices and the use of makeup, creating a refined and aesthetic masculine image without compromising the essence of masculinity (Indira et al., 2023).

In modern Japanese culture, there has been a significant shift in the understanding of masculine identity, where traits such as sensitivity and empathy are increasingly recognized as legitimate elements of masculinity. The choice of fashion adopted is not merely a matter of style; it becomes a representation of the concept of new masculinity. Previous research has suggested that casual attire is often utilized to represent this new masculinity, serving as a means to construct an ideal and nearly perfect social image within a cultural context (Khoirunnisaa et al., 2023). Styles reflecting *soft masculinity* demonstrate that masculinity can be expressed through subtle aesthetics without sacrificing its masculine meaning. In this context, the concept of *mugujeok*—masculinity free from adherence to specific citizenship

standards or norms—illustrates how masculine identity in Japanese popular culture can present itself as softer, fashionable, and unconstrained by rigid stereotypes. This fashion style conveys the message that masculinity can emphasize values of empathy, beauty, and sensitivity. This form of masculinity is more flexible and reflective, which, from Derrida's perspective, not only represents reality but also challenges and expands it by offering a more inclusive interpretation of masculine identity within contemporary culture.

Table 2 Content Seiji Amasawa

@Delvinyauu TikTok content "Dressing as Seiji Samawa from Whisper Of The Hearth"		
Visual Elements	**Denotation**	**Connotation**
Yellow Sweater	Knitted sweater in yellow worn over a white shirt.	The color yellow reflects cheerfulness, warmth, and optimism. In the context of masculinity, the choice of this yellow knitted sweater demonstrates a soft, bright, and positive masculine quality, contrasting with the more serious or darker stereotypes of masculinity. Yellow is also often associated with creativity and emotional openness.
A Plain White Shirt Worn	A plain white shirt worn underneath the yellow sweater, showcasing its collar.	The color white symbolizes purity, simplicity, and innocence. The white shirt here provides an understated formal feel, creating a contrast with the casual yellow sweater. In this context, the combination of the shirt and sweater merges formality with softness, eliminating the impression of rigid masculinity.
Celana Jeans (Biru Muda)	Light blue straight-cut jeans that are casual in style.	Light blue jeans symbolize tranquility and freedom. The simple and casual cut reflects a more comfortable masculinity that is not burdened by formal or rigid dressing norms. These jeans also reinforce a masculinity that is close to nature and everyday life, emphasizing a relaxed aspect of daily existence.
Casual White Shoes	Casual white shoes with green accents on the sole.	White shoes symbolize simplicity and purity, aligning with the theme of clothing that emphasizes practicality. The green accents on the shoes highlight a playful casual touch, demonstrating that *soft masculinity* can also encompass elements of fun and activity without compromising comfort. These shoes further reinforce the aesthetic of relaxed masculinity.

Poses and Expressions		
	Standing pose with arms crossed and a relaxed expression, slightly smiling.	This pose reflects a masculinity that is confident yet non-dominant. The crossed arms convey a sense of calm and self-assurance, while the smiling expression represents a friendly and open masculinity. This stands in contrast to the stereotypes of masculinity that are often serious or aggressive, emphasizing a masculinity that is empathetic and approachable.

Source: Research Processed

In the second piece of content, recreating the outfit of the Studio Ghibli character "Seiji Amasawa," the video garnered 567.1K views, 60.6K likes, and 877 comments. At the denotative level, the outfit consists of a knitted yellow sweater, a white shirt, light blue jeans, and casual white shoes with green accents. The facial expressions and relaxed body posture are also prominently displayed. At the connotative level, this combination of colors and types of clothing signifies a softer, more sensitive, and warmer masculinity. The yellow sweater conveys happiness and creativity, while the white shirt adds an element of simplicity and purity. The light blue jeans and casual shoes present a masculinity that is non-rigid, more relaxed, and comfortable, thereby reinforcing the concept of a more empathetic and non-confrontational masculinity.This assertion aligns with previous research indicating that casual appearances are utilized as symbols of the concept of new masculinity (*soft masculinity*) This style of dressing is part of a process of mythologization, a method of social image formation aimed at depicting an ideal or nearly perfect figure within the cultural context of a society. Such appearances create an impression of luxury while still appearing relaxed, thus offering a casual and non-rigid demeanor. Individuals adopting this style of clothing are often referred to as metrosexuals, men who pay attention to their appearance and fashion without being bound by the more rigid or formal stereotypes of traditional masculinity (Prasetiyo, 2022).

From the perspective of Derrida's deconstruction, an analysis of Seiji Amasawa's clothing reveals that masculinity need not be confined to limited traditional definitions. Instead, this approach opens up space for more diverse self-expression, where soft and creative fashion choices illustrate masculine character in broader terms. In Japan, this shift reflects changing attitudes towards masculinity in the modern era, now encompassing traits such as sensitivity and empathy as acceptable aspects of male identity. Seiji's appearance represents a metrosexual man—one who values appearance and aesthetics, unconstrained by traditional masculine stereotypes. In this regard, Seiji's look articulates that "masculinity can be expressed inclusively and variably" (Arisandy, 2019). From Derrida's viewpoint, Seiji's clothing serves to challenge logocentrism in the construction of masculinity. While traditional masculinity is dominated by strength, assertiveness, and formality, Seiji's appearance suggests a form of masculinity that is more fluid, subtle, and non-confrontational. Deconstruction, in this context, diminishes the intensity of conventional masculinity, offering an alternative that is more flexible. By dismantling these stereotypes, Derrida encourages us to understand masculinity not as something fixed or rigid but as a form of identity that can be adapted and varied, reflecting a more personal and multidimensional character.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study demonstrates that the TikTok content from the account @Delvinyauu successfully captures audience attention by showcasing a representation of masculinity that is softer and more empathetic,

often referred to as *soft masculinity*. In the two analyzed examples, which involve impersonating the characters Taku Morisaki and Seiji Amasawa from Studio Ghibli anime films, @Delvinyauu presents an interpretation of masculinity that diverges from traditional stereotypes. The visual aesthetics employed highlight a combination of vibrant colors such as red and yellow, along with casual and comfortable clothing choices, which integrate elements of a more refined and sensitive masculinity.

The semiotic analysis based on Roland Barthes reveals that the clothing worn in this content serves not only as an aesthetic element but also conveys cultural meanings associated with shifting perspectives on masculinity. The colors red, white, light blue, and yellow, as well as the casual style choices like knitted sweaters and casual shoes, reflect a form of masculinity that is non-rigid, empathetic, and open to emotional expression. In contemporary society, this more flexible masculinity is increasingly embraced, where men are viewed not solely through the lens of physical strength or dominance but also in terms of sensitivity and emotional awareness.This content aligns with the concept of *soft masculinity*, which is also prevalent in countries like Korea, where attractive, fashionable, and sensitive men contribute to a broader understanding of masculine identity. This research supports the notion that new masculinity creates space for men to express themselves through more casual and vibrant clothing styles without losing the essence of their masculinity.

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