

Audience Interpretation of Masculine Domination of Female Superhero Characters: A Reception Analysis Study on the *Captain Marvel* Film

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui bagaimana pemaknaan khalayak (interpretasi audiens) berdasarkan pengalaman dan latar belakang yang berbeda-beda mengenai dominasi maskulin karakter superhero perempuan dalam film *Captain Marvel*, yang memiliki unsur maskulinitas perempuan di dalamnya. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dalam paradigma interpretif dan menerapkan metode analisis resepsi Stuart Hall yang berfokus pada proses encoding dan decoding, pemaknaan khalayak (interpretasi audiens) dalam penelitian ini terbagi dalam tiga posisi hipotetis: *dominant-hegemonic position*, *negotiated position*, dan *oppositional position*. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan enam informan (tiga laki-laki dan tiga perempuan) yang dipilih secara purposif guna memastikan keberagaman dan pemahaman terhadap film tersebut. Wawancara pendahuluan diikuti wawancara mendalam, ketika enam adegan dari film tersebut disajikan untuk diinterpretasikan. Data yang terkumpul ditranskrip, dikodekan, dan dianalisis untuk menentukan posisi masing-masing informan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interpretasi audiens (pemaknaan oleh khalayak) terhadap maskulinitas perempuan di *Captain Marvel* dipengaruhi oleh pengalaman, pengetahuan, dan latar belakang masing-masing individu, yang menghasilkan pemahaman yang beragam terhadap isi pesan film tersebut. Interpretasi ini menempatkan informan ke dalam salah satu dari tiga kategori, di mana sebagian besar audiens menerima interpretasi film tentang maskulinitas perempuan.

Kata kunci : pemaknaan khalayak, maskulinitas perempuan, posisi hegemoni, posisi yang dinegosiasikan, posisi oposisi.

ABSTRACT

This research explores how audiences interpret messages about masculine dominance in the portrayal of female superhero characters in the film *Captain Marvel*, emphasizing its elements of female masculinity. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm, the study applies Stuart Hall's reception analysis method focusing on encoding and decoding. Audience interpretations are categorized into three hypothetical positions: *dominant-hegemonic*, *negotiated*, and *oppositional*. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with six informants (three male, three female) selected via purposive sampling to ensure diversity and familiarity with the film. Preliminary interviews were followed by main interviews, during which six scenes were presented for interpretation. The collected data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to determine the informants' positions. The findings show that audience interpretations of female masculinity in *Captain Marvel* are shaped by their individual experiences, knowledge, and backgrounds, leading to varied understandings of the film's messages. These interpretations place informants within one of the three categories, with most audiences accepting the majority of the preferred readings.

Keywords: Reception analysis, female masculinity, hegemonic position, negotiated position, oppositional position.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of gender equality has gained prominence in public discourse and is often reflected in artistic works. Gender inequality stems from disparities in the roles and positions of women and men in daily life, with women frequently occupying subordinate roles in areas such as power, social status, political influence, and economic resources (Fakih, 2003, cited in Safira & Sunarto, 2022). Cinema, as a medium, represents social realities through codes, conventions, and ideologies (Sobur, 2003, in Safira & Sunarto, 2022). Conversely, media can construct social realities, as seen in the film *Captain Marvel* (2019), which seeks to challenge conventional gender roles. The portrayal of *Captain Marvel* suggests that women striving for equality must initially conform to male standards to achieve a dominant masculine identity.

Films serve as tools for conveying messages, combining narrative and cinematic elements (Asri, 2020). Audience interpretation is influenced more by their cultural backgrounds and experiences than by the intentions of the filmmakers (Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019). Thus, a single text can generate multiple meanings (Pertiwi, Ri'aeni & Yusron, 2020).

This study references three prior research journal articles by Safira and Sunarto (2022), Sitepu and Sucipto (2021), and Hasanah and Ratnaningtyas (2022). First, Safira and Sunarto (2022) analyze how masculine dominance influences gender equality in *Captain Marvel* using a descriptive qualitative approach and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, concluding that Carol Danvers embodies masculine traits, suggesting women must align with male standards for equality. Second, Sitepu and Sucipto (2021) explore female audience interpretations of *Captain Marvel* using reception analysis, identifying dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional readings reflecting views on feminism and gender equality. Finally, research by Hasanah and Ratnaningtyas (2022) employs a semiotic approach to examine Ji Woo's masculine traits in a Korean drama, finding that her strength and independence diminish reliance on men. Building on this research, the current study aims to explore how both male and female audiences interpret the representation of masculine dominance over female superhero characters in *Captain Marvel* and its significance for viewers.

Gender Representation in Media

Media often reinforces traditional representations of masculinity, particularly regarding strength and visual appeal. It portrays masculinity as a set of attributes that can unconsciously influence both men and women to aspire to embody these characteristics (Yuliyanti, Bajari & Mulyana, 2017). Essentially, masculinity is closely tied to the male identity, reflecting cultural values that serve as benchmarks for certain behaviors. Discussions on masculinity are inherently linked to gender, which is a biological construct, while gender is a dynamic social and cultural construct that evolves over time (Kurnia, 2004). Definitions of masculinity and femininity are shaped by environmental and cultural factors, leading to instances where individuals exhibit traits typically associated with the opposite gender. For instance, men may display traditionally feminine traits and vice versa (Hasanah & Ratnaningtyas, 2022). In *Captain Marvel*, the representation of masculinity in women is exemplified by Carol Danvers, who is depicted as formidable and courageous. Her character illustrates female masculinity through her demeanor, behavior, and style, suggesting that female masculinity is characterized

by traits traditionally associated with men, thereby fostering greater independence from the opposite sex (Hasanah & Ratnaningtyas, 2022).

Stuart Hall's Reception Analysis

Stuart Hall, a prominent figure in cultural studies, introduced the concept of reception analysis, which involves the processes of encoding and decoding. This approach considers how the audience's contextual experiences influence the media's meaning (McQuail, 2000, in Meilasari & Wahid, 2020). It recognizes that encoding and decoding are often asymmetrical, leading to potential distortion or misunderstanding due to inequalities in communication (Hall, 2001). Reception analysis focuses on the recipient's perspective, examining how they interpret and ascribe meaning to messages based on their experiences (Pamungkas, 2017).

Hall's typology categorizes audience positions based on the decoding process (Avriyanty, 2012, in Pertiwi, Ri'aeni & Yusron, 2020). Those who accept the media's intended meaning occupy a dominant-hegemonic position, suggesting alignment with the media's portrayal. For instance, if informants concur with the representation of masculine dominance in the character of *Captain Marvel*, they align with this position. Here, messages are interpreted harmoniously, minimizing misunderstandings (Dickinson & Linne, 1998, cited in Xie, Yasin, Alsagoff & Ang, 2022).

Informants in a negotiated position partially agree with the message but adapt their interpretation based on personal beliefs, indicating neither full acceptance nor rejection. They may emphasize aspects of disagreement regarding media messages (Zhao, 2014, cited in Xie, Yasin, Alsagoff & Ang, 2022). Conversely, informants adopting an oppositional stance reject the sender's intended meaning, creating their own interpretations that are contrary to the original message (Xie, Yasin, Alsagoff & Ang, 2022).

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm to gain insight into the nuances of social life and the ways in which informants imbue meaning and relevance into their everyday experiences (Pamungkas, 2017). The objective of a reception analysis in this study is to explore the interpretation of media meanings by message recipients. Thus, it aims to understand how audiences interpret the portrayal of masculine dominance in Carol Danvers, a female superhero in *Captain Marvel*, and the significance they attach to it.

Six informants (three male, three female) were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diverse backgrounds and prior viewing of the film. In-depth interviews were conducted, beginning with preliminary interviews on 13 June 2023, followed by main interviews between 29 June and 20 July 2023, during which six scenes were presented for interpretation. Data analysis followed the reception analysis method of Jensen and Jankowski (2002), involving documentation and interview transcriptions, coding, and interpretation. The data were classified into three positions: *dominant-hegemonic*, *negotiated*, and *oppositional*. The findings focus on audience reception of masculine dominance in *Captain Marvel* (Pamungkas, 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview

Captain Marvel is a motion picture produced by Marvel Entertainment that features a female superhero. It was released on 6 March 2019 in Indonesia and on 8 March 2019 in the United States. The film, which has a runtime of 124 minutes, narrates the tale of the most formidable superhero in the Marvel Universe, tasked with safeguarding the universe. Notably, this superhero is a woman. Previously, Marvel Entertainment had consistently released films featuring solo male superheroes. The role of *Captain Marvel* is played by Brie Larson, who portrays a character named Carol Danvers. *Captain Marvel* (2019) is the inaugural solo female superhero film released by Marvel Entertainment.

The film is set in the year 1995 on the planet Hala, which serves as the imperial capital of the Kree. Vers, a female warrior belonging to the elite Starforce, a special forces unit within the Kree military, suffers from amnesia and frequently experiences recurring nightmares in which she encounters a female figure who appears to be significantly older than her. In that year, the Kree were engaged in hostilities with the Skrulls, an alien race with the capacity to shapeshift into any form. In addition to this, Vers and the remainder of the Starforce were dispatched on a mission of rescue, with the objective of engaging in combat with the Skrulls. Vers was apprehended by the Skrulls and, during his period of resistance, managed to evade capture and flee to Earth. Upon arrival on Earth, an incident resulted in Vers' encounter with S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Nick Fury and his former colleague from the Air Force, Maria Rambeau. On numerous occasions, Vers ascertains that the Skrulls are not the malevolent beings the Kree allege, but rather a displaced people seeking assistance in locating a new habitat following the destruction of their planet by the Kree. During her investigation of the Pegasus project archives, Vers discovers that she is an Earthling, her true name is Carol Danvers, and her identity is that of a US fighter pilot. Additionally, Vers discovered that the elderly woman who had appeared in his dreams was a scientist named Dr. Wendy Lawson, who had sought to assist the Skrulls and was a rebel from the Kree nation named Mar-Vell. Six years prior, Vers and Dr. Lawson undertook a test flight of an aircraft equipped with the scientist's engine. However, en route, they were intercepted by Kree forces and subsequently involved in an aircraft accident. Prior to his demise, Mar-Vell requested that Vers destroy the machine to prevent the Kree from abducting him. However, the explosion resulted in Vers being exposed to energy radiation, which subsequently conferred upon him the ability to harness superhuman abilities.

The cast of *Captain Marvel* (2019) includes Brie Larson as Carol Danvers, the eponymous *Captain Marvel*; Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury; Ben Mendelsohn as Talos, also known as Keller; Jude Law as Yon-Rogg; Annette Bening as the Supreme Intelligence, also known as Dr. Lawson or Mar-Vell; Lashana Lynch as Maria Rambeau; Lee Pace as Ronan; and Clark Gregg as Phil Coulson.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Name	Gender	Region of origin	University	Age
Dyah	female	Batam	UB	19

Gama	male	Mojokerto	UB	22
Ina	female	Gorontalo	UIN	20
His	male	Denpasar	Udayana	22
Sastri	female	Jakarta	UB	21
Satria	male	Bekasi	UB	22

Preferred Readings

In order to identify preferred readings or dominant discourses, researchers initially undertook an encoding stage. A total of six scenes were collected, with each scene lasting between one and three minutes. The six scenes have been selected based on their relevance to the research topic, namely the masculine dominance of *Captain Marvel's* female superhero character. Consequently, each scene displays or discusses elements that can be characterized as female masculinity.

Table 2 Preferred Readings

No.	Preferred Readings	Scene	Denotation	Connotation
1	Carol Danvers is often considered inferior, looked down upon, and underestimated every time she shows her skills in a field that is usually occupied by men.	Carol Danvers' past and time under the military leadership of the Air Force.	Carol Danvers' past memories from childhood to adulthood were always subjected to low treatment and demotivating words.	Shows how the male characters in <i>Captain Marvel's</i> film are superior, undermining women's abilities in men's fields.
2	Carol Danvers was able to break the assumptions of the superior party that demeaned her in doing masculine activities.	Carol Danvers flying an Air Force plane with her best friend, Maria Rambeau.	Carol walked out of the building to the aircraft car park and put on her pilot's uniform. Carol and Maria boarded and flew their respective planes.	Carol and Maria's expressions were proud when they saw the large field where the aircraft was parked. This signalled their pride and confidence in their achievement.
3	Carol Danvers is able to equalise her position with men.	Carol Danvers takes the lead and plans when going on missions.	Along with Nick Fury, Maria, and Talos, Carol Danvers piloted the plane and led the charge	Carol Danvers is trusted by her friends to lead the Skrull rescue mission.

			towards Mar-Vell's laboratory or the Kree cruiser.	
		Carol Danvers winning the fight.	Shortly after the victory, Yon-Rogg threatened Carol again. Without further ado, Carol instantly paralysed Yon-Rogg and returned him to his home in Hala.	Despite being angered by the Kree taking advantage of her existence, Carol made the wise decision to send Yon-Rogg home without killing him.
4	<i>Captain Marvel</i> is the strongest hero in space.	Carol Danvers has become a reliable superhero.	While being held captive by the Kree, in her subconscious, Carol met with the Supreme Intelligence to demonstrate her abilities. At first, Carol's powers didn't work, but after seeing flashbacks of past memories, Carol managed to gather all her powers.	It shows how Carol's existence has always been underestimated. Despite always being treated unfavorably, Carol never gave up.
		Carol Danvers doing her heroic deeds as a hero and fighting the enemy.	With her body, Carol destroyed the bomb that Ronan launched to earth along with Ronan's spaceship. Carol showed	It shows how persistent and brave Carol is to fight the enemy alone in space to protect the earth. Carol is fearless and intimidating,

herself in front of Ronan as <i>Captain Marvel</i> , and Ronan immediately left.	as Ronan is not an ordinary enemy that other heroes can fight alone.
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Based on the results of the encoding process, researchers identified four dominant discourses in the *Captain Marvel* film:

1. **Carol Danvers' inferiority:** Carol is often considered inferior and underestimated in showing her abilities in fields that are usually dominated by men. The film shows how she was always considered weak, both before and after gaining superpowers. Since childhood, Carol was often scorned when she was involved in masculine activities, whether in sports or military training.
2. **Breaking the Presumption of Superiority:** Carol managed to break the assumptions of her superiors who belittled her. Despite hearing demotivating words, she proved her worth by becoming an Air Force pilot and the strongest superhero, emphasising that she is equal to those who put her down.
3. **Equality with Men:** The film shows Carol's struggle to gain trust and become a leader. She successfully leads a Skrull rescue mission in space, showing that she is capable of making wise decisions.
4. **Strongest Heroine:** *Captain Marvel* is portrayed as the strongest hero in space. Carol, now *Captain Marvel*, shows courage and strength in fighting various enemies, including Ronan, the main enemy in *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014).

These discourses illustrate Carol Danvers' journey from being considered weak to a strong and empowered figure.

Data Interpretation Based on Stuart Hall's Reception Analysis Theory

In the first context, *Captain Marvel* (2019) tells the story of the strongest female superhero in space who used to be an ordinary human being and worked as a member of the Air Force military. Not only while undergoing military training, but Carol's past as a child was also always humiliated and ignored because she was a woman. Carol was often underestimated because she always pursued fields that were generally dominated by men, such as baseball, kart racing, and the military. Informants in the dominant-hegemonic position will accept that male characters in *Captain Marvel* (2019) often consider themselves superior and undermine women's abilities in male fields. Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted by researchers previously, five of the six informants were in the dominant-hegemonic position, namely Dyah, Gama, His, Sastri, and Satria. Meanwhile, Ina is in the oppositional position.

The researcher refers to a scene that proves this context, namely at the beginning of the film which displays Carol's memories of the past when her abilities were always underestimated by

men. In relation to this scene, Dyah as one of the informants in the dominant-hegemonic position argues: *"It's really visible here that social society is too compartmentalized in terms of careers, especially when Carol is portrayed as having a career in the military. The military seems to be only a place for men, while Carol is a woman. Her presence in the military is always questioned, even though she may have made it in, so she has automatically reached the required qualifications. Just because she is a woman, she is considered not to fit the frame of the military as a place for men, so she is always questioned"* (Dyah, 29 June 2023).

Dyah's statement is in line with what she experienced while pursuing an undergraduate education majoring in Soil Science, which she thought was rough, and there is a contradiction related to this with neighbors around her house who questioned why Dyah was willing to enter the forest and dig the soil, when the purpose of undergraduate education is to live a comfortable life. According to Dyah, majoring in Earth Science was part of her dream and journey, but the surrounding community seemed to put restrictions on women who wanted to pursue something. Just because she is a woman, she is deemed unsuitable to study a field of study that involves travelling in the heat, digging in the dirt, and getting dirty.

It also shows Carol as a child being pushed around by someone who said, 'Give it up, you're weak!' to scenes such as Carol falling while racing go-karts and playing *baseball*. Even during her military training, her male recruits and seniors told her that she was too weak and emotional, that she didn't belong in the military, that she wasn't strong enough, and that their superiors wouldn't allow her to fly a plane. As one of those in the *dominant-hegemonic* position, Gama supports the interpretation of the message: *"Because she's a girl, she's underestimated when doing men's work like driving, racing. During army training, as usual, guys see girls as not stronger than guys, so when Carol tried, she was always given negative words. This scene shows that guys see themselves as superior to girls"* (Gama, 7 July 2023).

Still in the same context, one of the informants in the *dominant-hegemonic* position also responded to how Carol as a woman is often looked down upon by the men around her: *"[This scene shows] about men who think women are inferior, as if they don't need to have the same opportunities as men. Because what I see, from the scene it's emphasized that Carol doesn't have the right to race, or join the military."* (His, 3 July 2023).

In addition to the three informants mentioned who agreed with the message, two other informants were also in the *dominant-hegemonic position* and stated that:

'I see this as a form of anger from Carol over the past, when she was humiliated, and it forms a painful memory that helps her to rise later' (Sastri, 4 July 2023).

'I think this is a scene where Carol remembers her past where she was humiliated by a boy' (Satria, 20 July 2023).

On the other hand, one informant had different thoughts about this scene. Ina responded that it is normal for someone to experience a phase of failure while in the process of learning: *"That's the past where she is still learning. In my opinion, things that make us fail and make people doubt us often happen. It's also a process and learning"* (Ina, 7 July 2023).

Unlike the other informants, in this scene Ina believes that the things Carol experienced during the military training period are normal things that happen when someone is in the process phase. This makes Ina refute the content of the message in this scene which says that Carol is being humiliated by those who consider themselves superior. This statement is in line with Ina who admits that she has a fierce and hard character, which is carried over from her cultural environment in Sulawesi. This is what Ina believes makes her different from other women in general.

In the scene that shows how Carol is often humiliated and underestimated by men because she is a woman, most informants accept the meaning of the message so that they are classified in the *dominant-hegemonic* position where they agree with the attitude of male characters who feel superior. And in the scene, one of the informants, Ina, stated that she considered what Carol experienced in her past was natural because everyone always fails and is doubted when they are in the process phase.

The next topic to be discussed is how the film *Captain Marvel* (2019) shows how Carol managed to break the assumptions of the superior party that undermined her in doing masculine activities. This scene shows Carol's past memories when she was in a pilot uniform and was about to fly an Air Force plane with her best friend, Maria Rambeau, right after the flashback scene of Carol's past memories when she was belittled and humiliated by the men around her because she was a woman. The scene is supported by one informant's response: "*Carol has gone through a lot of processes where she learnt to finally be able to fly a plane and become a pilot with her friend who is also a woman. Here they managed to prove that they are not inferior to male military members*" (Ina, 7 July 2023).

For more details, this scene shows Carol walking out of the building towards the aircraft car park in her pilot uniform. She walks side by side with her best friend, Maria, and it is clear that the proud expressions on their faces mean that they are happy with this achievement. This is also supported by a response from one of the informants: "*I think this is the answer to the previous scene, when she was previously underestimated. In this scene, he feels proud because he managed to prove that he can and make what other people say about him wrong*" (Satria, 20 July 2023).

Satria's statement is in line with his life experience proving that what others say is wrong. In his third year of high school, he attended a tutoring consultation and shared his grades with his mentor. Despite his ambition to join the Sociology Department at Brawijaya University, his mentor dismissed his chances, claiming his scores weren't sufficient. Undeterred, Satria applied through the national selection process for public university admissions (SNMPTN) and successfully gained entry into the Sociology Department at Universitas Brawijaya. This accomplishment became a source of pride for Satria, showcasing the strength of his determination and self-confidence.

Still on the same topic, five out of six informants were in the *dominant-hegemonic* position because they understood the meaning of the scene. This is also evidenced by the response of one informant who is in the *dominant-hegemonic* position: "*[This scene shows] that she as a woman can do these things that a man might think a woman cannot do*" (His, 3 July 2023).

This statement is also supported by two other informants, Dyah and Gama, who are also in the *dominant-hegemonic* position: *"She [Carol] has gone through a lot, and in the end Carol can be more confident and professional in her career. Here she managed to fly a plane, especially since her friend is also a girl. It's only right."* (Dyah, 29 June 2023) . *"It's cool to see girls flying a plane. That's a fighter aircraft. It's normal for a guy to fly an aircraft like this. But because she's a girl, it's unique. It's a new thing for me"* (Gama, 7 July 2023).

On the other hand, one of the six informants had a different idea about the meaning of the scene. Sastri interpreted Carol's expressions and gestures as doubts about herself: *"I feel like basically the memories of her being patronized, being underestimated because she's a woman, it makes her doubt herself for what she's capable of. And it makes her inhibited, unable to progress. It's because she's overthinking that she actually can't and isn't capable of flying a plane"* (Sastri, 4 July 2023).

On the topic where Carol is shown in a pilot uniform and flying a plane together with her best friend, Maria, it is accepted by five out of six informants who agree that Carol succeeded in achieving her goal as a pilot and broke the assumption that she did not belong in a masculine world. Therefore, five out of six informants were classified in the *dominant-hegemonic* position. Meanwhile, one of the informants, Sastri, thought that Carol was *overthinking* and thought she could not.

After discussing the topic that shows that Carol can break the thoughts of others who underestimate her abilities, the next topic is about Carol being able to equalize her position with men. In this topic, there are two scenes that will be discussed and the informants will be in the *dominant-hegemonic position* if they capture the meaning of these scenes that display Carol Danvers' masculinity.

The first scene is where Carol Danvers takes the lead and plans the rescue mission for the Skrulls trapped in the Kree cruiser. With Nick Fury and Talos as passengers, and Maria as the copilot, Carol Danvers flies the plane and leads the rescue plan. His as one of the informants in the *dominant-hegemonic* position stated: *"Carol and Maria have the ability to drive the plane, it's more of an affirmation that Carol has the ability and leadership. Even though she is a woman, she can lead a journey in which there are Talos and Nick Fury who are men."* (His, 3 July 2023).

Gama also supports this statement by responding that this scene does show Carol's masculinity that can equalize her position and position with men: *"From the Avengers films, the character that I think is cool is Nick Fury because even though he is an ordinary human with no powers, he can lead and coordinate the Avengers well. Nick Fury is also the leader of S.H.I.E.L.D. But in this scene, we see that Nick Fury really believes in Captain Marvel . This shows how cool Carol Danvers is as a girl. She can lead Nick Fury and Talos as one of the leaders of two superior civilizations, human and Skrull."* (Gama, 7 July 2023).

All informants are in the *dominant-hegemonic* position in this scene. They all understand the meaning that the media wants to convey that Carol has succeeded in equalizing her position with men. This is shown by her leadership and courage in the Skrull rescue mission. One of the informants agreed with this statement by responding: *"Her colleagues, like Nick Fury or*

Maria can trust what Carol Danvers does. She's a woman but she can be listened to." (Dyah, 29 June 2023).

The next scene to be discussed that also shows how Carol is able to equalize her position with men is when she manages to win the fight against the Kree. Shortly after her victory, Carol and her former Kree mentor, Yon-Rogg, descend to Earth, where Yon-Rogg again threatens Carol to prove her worth. Despite remembering that the Kree had taken advantage of her memory loss, Carol made the wise decision to send Yon-Rogg back to his home on Hala. As one of the informants in the *dominant-hegemonic* position, Satria stated that: *"Carol is a wise character because when she was asked to fight, she only attacked once. She also doesn't kill the person, instead sparing his life and helping his enemy to return to his place of origin."* (Satria, 20 July 2023).

The interpretation of this scene is also supported by Ina's statement as one of the informants who is also in the *dominant-hegemonic* position: *"Here it seems that the mentor still underestimates Carol, but Carol casually faces the situation and conditions. She learnt from her past to be able to control her emotions. This controlling power makes Carol look masculine and suitable to be a leader because she is not something that is easy to control."* (Ina, 7 July 2023).

Ina's statement that Carol is suitable as a leader and is not easily controlled is in line with her experience when she joined the Student Executive Council (DEMA) organisation. Her friend who was a woman ran for DEMA Chair and her opponent was a man. Many people mocked and doubted her ability, this is because it is rare for a woman to run for DEMA Chair in Ina faculty. But her friend remained confident in facing the situation, worked hard to prepare the debate material, and finally won and succeeded in occupying the position of Chairman of DEMA. Ina said that her friend has a strong character and is not easily underestimated. According to Ina, this shows that women can have higher power.

One informant had a slightly different response. Although she recognizes that this scene shows Carol's masculine side, she still sees her feminine side. This also puts Sastri in a *negotiated* position: *"I have an interesting thought. Even though she always showed her masculinity before, behind the masculine Danvers, here she shows the feminine side by pouring her feelings, compassionately forgiving her enemy, empathy, and sending him home."* (Sastri, 4 July 2023).

This statement is in line with Sastri's beliefs regarding the concept of masculine and feminine as prevalent in Indonesia. According to her, masculine is what women crave about men, while feminine is about how women act as a complement to the masculine, where these two things should coexist, but feminine is subordinate. Sastri believes that the shackles of this thinking must be broken free. That is why for her, masculine and feminine traits must be equalized.

In conclusion, on the topic where Carol is able to equalize her position with men, the majority of informants are in the *dominant-hegemonic* position because they can accept the meaning of the message well. Although in the scene Carol wins the fight, one of the informants is in a *negotiated* position because she does not fully accept the meaning of the message but also does not fully reject the meaning of the message.

Continuing to the last topic, *Captain Marvel* is the strongest hero in space. In this film, there is a scene where Carol Danvers turns into a reliable superhero. At that time Carol was being held captive by the Kree, and in her subconscious she met the Supreme Intelligence who constantly challenged her strength. At first Carol's powers have no effect on the Supreme Intelligence until finally Carol continues to focus, does not give up, and manages to gather her strength to attack the Supreme Intelligence in the subconscious and the Kree in the real world. This scene shows Carol's transition into becoming a reliable superhero. His stated: *"It's cool. This is one of the scenes that I said was memorable. It confirms that she [Carol Danvers] is a superhero by showing her powers."* (His, 3 July 2023).

In this scene, all informants are in the *dominant-hegemonic* position because they can accept the meaning of the message well which is that by showing Carol as a hero who never gives up, this proves that she is the most powerful hero in space. One informant who is in the *dominant-hegemonic* position stated: *"In my opinion, for the Tesseract to enter someone's body, not everyone can withstand the Tesseract, which has a lot of energy. Whereas Carol is resistant and can. She can master and control the energy of the Tesseract in her body so that it can have power."* (Ina, 7 July 2023).

This interpretation is also supported by one of the informant's responses who is also in a *dominant-hegemonic* position: *"Carol Danvers symbolizes masculinity with the strength she has. That's why I see Carol Danvers with her toughness, showing her masculine side."* (Sastri, 4 July 2023).

Still on the same topic, the next scene is when Carol Danvers performs her heroic actions as a hero and fights the enemy. All informants are in the *dominant-hegemonic* position because they are able to understand the meaning of the message in the scene that *Captain Marvel* is the strongest hero in space. One informant mentioned, *"I believe Carol has the courage to fight her enemies, and she is also capable of making decisions and willing to sacrifice, especially when facing many opponents."* (Satria, 20 July 2023).

This scene shows when Carol Danvers is able to destroy the spaceship and bombs launched by Ronan to earth using her own body. Ronan, who is known to also appear as the main enemy in the film *Guardian of The Galaxy* (2014), here Carol is not afraid to fight him alone. This is also evidenced by the response of one informant who is in a *dominant-hegemonic* position: *"I salute Captain Marvel because even though she has energy that can be fired like Iron Man, she prefers to destroy her enemies by herself, such as destroying rockets by crashing herself. Captain Marvel 's trademark is to just hit it. That shows a very brave attitude, because we don't know what will happen if for example we hit an aircraft, suddenly the aircraft is destroyed, we are also destroyed. Iron Man even though his armor is strong, he searches for something using his laser, if Captain Marvel uses her own body."* (Gama, 7 July 2023).

Carol's persistence and courage to fight her enemy alone in space to protect the earth shows how fearless she is. So is the way she intimidates Ronan, who is not an ordinary enemy that other heroes can fight alone. The scene when Carol reveals herself in front of Ronan, immediately makes Ronan decide to leave the location in an instant. This is also proven by Dyah's statement, as one of the *dominant-hegemonic* informants: *"Why Captain Marvel is one*

of the female heroes that counts, because Ronan himself is the main enemy in the Guardian of The Galaxy film, while the Guardian of The Galaxy only fights together, but here Carol really fights alone. She can balance and put aside that she is a woman. Ronan immediately resigned." (Dyah, 29 June 2023).

In conclusion, the topic that discusses Carol as the strongest hero in space is well received by all informants so that the six informants in this study are included in the *dominant-hegemonic* position.

Table 3 Preferred Reading

Preferred Reading	Informant reception		
	Dominant Hegemonic	Negotiated position	Oppositional position
Carol Danvers is often considered inferior, looked down upon, and underestimated every time she shows her skills in a field that is usually occupied by men.	3 male and 2 female: <i>Just because she's a woman, she's not considered to fit the frame of the military as a place for men, so she's always questioned."</i> (Dyah, 29 June 2023)	NA	1 person, female: <i>"That's the past where he's still learning. In my opinion, things that fail and make people doubt us often happen. It's also a process and learning."</i> (Ina, 7 July 2023)
Carol Danvers is able to break the assumptions of superior parties who humiliate her in doing masculine activities.	<i>Carol has gone through a lot of processes where she learnt to finally fly a plane and become a pilot with her friend who is also a woman. Here they managed to prove that they are not inferior to male military members."</i> (Ina, 7 July 2023)		<i>I feel like basically those memories of her being patronized, being underestimated because she's a woman made her doubt herself for what she's good at. And it makes her inhibited, unable to move forward. It's because she's overthinking that she actually can't and isn't capable of flying a plane."</i> (Sastri, 4 July 2023)
Carol Danvers is able to equalize her position with men.	<i>This controlling power is what makes Carol look masculine and suitable to be a leader</i>	<i>1 female: "I have an interesting thought.</i>	

	<p><i>because she is not something that is easy to control." (Ina, 7 July 2023)</i></p> <p><i>[This scene shows] that she as a woman can do things that a man might think a woman can't do." (His, 3 July 2023)</i></p>	<p><i>Although she always showed her masculinity before, behind the masculine Danvers, here she shows the feminine side by pouring her feelings, compassionately forgiving her enemy, empathy, and sending him home." (Sastri, 4 July 2023).</i></p>
<p><i>Captain Marvel is the strongest hero in space.</i></p>	<p><i>"Carol Danvers symbolizes the masculine with her strength. That's why I see Carol Danvers with her roughness, showing her masculine side." (Sastri, 4 July 2023)</i></p>	<p>NA</p> <p>NA</p>

CONCLUSION

From the discussion, it can be concluded that, in general, audience reception is situated within the dominant-hegemonic position. Most preferred readings can be accepted by almost all audiences, given the knowledge, experience, and background of each audience in interpreting and interpreting the meaning of the message. The personal backgrounds of the informants exert a significant influence on their capacity to accept and interpret the elements of masculine dominance in female superhero characters as depicted in the film *Captain Marvel* (2019). In light of the findings yielded by the research team, it can be posited that: The research informants who have viewed the film *Captain Marvel* (2019) concur that the film features elements of masculine dominance.

Following the completion of the encoding process, four dominant discourses were identified by the researchers. In interpreting two dominant discourses, five out of six informants were

situated in the dominant-hegemonic position, while one was positioned appositionally. In the third dominant discourse, one informant was in a negotiated position, while five others were situated in the dominant-hegemonic position. In the final dominant discourse, all informants were situated in the dominant-hegemonic position. The knowledge, experience and background of each informant affects their perception and interpretation of the topic under discussion, which in this study is female masculinity.

In light of the findings of this study, it is hoped that future research will engage in a more profound examination of the audience's reception of masculine dominance in films. Additionally, it is hoped that future research will delve more deeply into the audience's reception of female masculinity in films, utilising a more diverse range of informants.

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