



Female Representation in the *Amazon Lily* Arc of *One Piece*: A Beauvoirian Feminist Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the representation of women in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece* (Episodes 408–421) using Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework, particularly the concept of women as "the Other." The study employed a descriptive qualitative method with a textual and discourse-oriented approach. The data consisted of dialogues, character interactions, narrative structures, and visual elements from the selected episodes. Data were collected through close observation, scene documentation, and selective transcription, then analyzed using the qualitative analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that women's representation operates through three interrelated dimensions: structural authority, relational identity, and symbolic subordination. At the structural level, women are portrayed as politically and militarily dominant within Kuja society. However, at the relational level, female subjectivity is shaped through emotional dependence and narrative alignment with Monkey D. Luffy. At the symbolic level, visual framing and emotional coding reinforce gendered expectations of femininity. The study concludes that female empowerment in the *Amazon Lily* arc is conditional rather than absolute because institutional authority coexists with relational and ideological limitations. These findings contribute to feminist media studies and critical media literacy by demonstrating how anime narratives simultaneously construct and destabilize gender-based power relations.

Keywords: female representation, One Piece, feminist analysis

Representasi Perempuan dalam Arc *Amazon Lily* dari *One Piece*: Analisis Feminisme Beauvoirian

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis representasi perempuan dalam arc *Amazon Lily* dari *One Piece* episode 408–421 menggunakan kerangka feminisme eksistensial Simone de Beauvoir, khususnya konsep perempuan sebagai "the Other." Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan tekstual dan berorientasi pada analisis wacana. Data penelitian berupa dialog, interaksi antartokoh, struktur naratif, dan elemen visual dari episode yang dipilih. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi mendalam, dokumentasi adegan, dan transkripsi selektif, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis kualitatif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, interpretasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa representasi perempuan beroperasi melalui tiga dimensi yang saling berkaitan, yaitu otoritas struktural, identitas relasional, dan subordinasi simbolik. Pada tingkat struktural, perempuan digambarkan memiliki dominasi politik dan militer dalam masyarakat Kuja. Namun, pada tingkat relasional, subjektivitas perempuan dibentuk melalui ketergantungan emosional dan penyaluran naratif terhadap Monkey D. Luffy. Pada tingkat simbolik, framing visual dan pengkodean emosional memperkuat ekspektasi gender terhadap feminitas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemberdayaan perempuan dalam arc *Amazon Lily* bersifat kondisional, bukan absolut, karena otoritas institusional berjalan berdampingan dengan keterbatasan relasional dan ideologis. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada kajian media feminis dan literasi media kritis dengan menunjukkan bagaimana narasi anime secara simultan membangun sekaligus mendestabilisasi relasi kuasa berbasis gender.

Kata kunci: representasi perempuan, One Piece, analisis feminis

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INTRODUCTION

Anime has become one of the most influential forms of contemporary popular media consumed globally through television broadcasting, streaming platforms, and digital communities. Its popularity has expanded beyond entertainment functions and developed into a cultural medium that shapes social meaning, identity, and public understanding. Through visual storytelling, character construction, and narrative organization, anime participates in the production and negotiation of cultural values, including values related to gender roles and power relations. The increasing accessibility of anime through digital media also strengthens its role in everyday cultural consumption across different societies and age groups.

Scholars have highlighted the influence of anime on identity formation and cultural interpretation. Kovacic (2014) explains that anime functions as a global medium through which audiences negotiate cultural identity and social meaning across national boundaries. Similarly, Fukuda (2025) argues that exposure to anime narratives can influence emotional awareness, self-understanding, and perspectives toward social reality. Fukunaga (2006) further states that anime contributes to cultural literacy practices because audiences actively interact with media texts in constructing meaning and identity. These perspectives indicate that anime is not merely entertainment but also a discursive medium that shapes how audiences interpret social relationships and cultural norms.

One important issue frequently represented in anime narratives is gender representation. Media narratives often construct and reproduce ideas regarding masculinity, femininity, authority, and social hierarchy. Within the perspective of critical media literacy, audiences are viewed not as passive consumers but as active interpreters who negotiate ideological meanings embedded in media texts. Javed et al. (2025) explain that contemporary media continue to reproduce gender discourses that prioritize masculine authority while positioning women in subordinate or relational

roles. Consequently, media representations contribute to the normalization of gender hierarchy within everyday social understanding.

Although many contemporary media narratives portray women as independent and powerful figures, these portrayals frequently contain contradictions. Female characters may appear empowered through leadership, physical strength, or central narrative roles while simultaneously being framed through emotional dependence, relational identity, or conventional femininity. This contradiction demonstrates that representations of empowerment do not always dismantle patriarchal ideology but may instead reproduce it through symbolic and narrative mechanisms. Therefore, representations of women in popular media need to be examined not only at the surface level of visual appearance but also through ideological and narrative structures.

This contradiction can be identified in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece* (Episodes 408–421), which portrays a women-only society governed entirely by female authority. At the surface level, the narrative appears to challenge patriarchal structures because women occupy political, military, and social power within the Kuja community. Female characters are represented as physically strong, socially dominant, and independent. One of the central figures in this arc is Boa Hancock, the empress of *Amazon Lily*, who is portrayed as respected, feared, and highly authoritative. However, despite her dominant position, her characterization also reveals emotional vulnerability, particularly in relation to Monkey D. Luffy, the male protagonist of the series. This narrative dynamic reflects a contradiction between institutional authority and relational dependence.

Based on the background above, the problem of this study is formulated as follows: How are women represented through character construction and narrative structure in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece* based on Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist perspective?



This study aims to analyze the representation of women through character construction and narrative structure in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece* using Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist perspective, particularly the concept of women as "the Other." The study specifically examines how female characters are positioned in terms of power, identity, and agency within a female-dominated environment and how these representations reflect broader ideological assumptions embedded in the narrative.

The benefits of this research can be viewed from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, this study contributes to feminist media studies by expanding the discussion of gender representation in anime through Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework. It also contributes to narrative and media studies by emphasizing the relationship between character construction, ideology, and symbolic power. Practically, this study contributes to the development of critical media literacy by encouraging audiences, particularly students and media consumers, to critically evaluate gender ideology represented in popular culture and digital media narratives.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist perspective, particularly the concept of women as "the Other." According to de Beauvoir (1953) women have historically been positioned not as autonomous subjects but as relational beings defined in relation to men. De Beauvoir explains that "humanity is male, and man defines woman not in herself but in relation to him," indicating that women are socially constructed as secondary subjects. Mahon & Campling (1997) further explain that de Beauvoir identifies the duality of Subject and Other as structurally connected to the distinction between man and woman, where men occupy the normative position of subjectivity while women are positioned as "the Other." This framework enables gender representation to be examined not only visually but also ideologically

through narrative structure and relational positioning.

In addition, representation theory is important in understanding how media constructs meaning through discourse and symbolic systems. Hall (1997) argues that representation is the process through which meaning is produced and exchanged culturally through language, images, and discourse. Media texts therefore do not merely reflect reality but actively construct ideological perspectives and social assumptions. Through this perspective, representations of female empowerment in anime can be examined beyond visual appearance to reveal how narrative organization and symbolic structures shape the positioning of women within media discourse.

Several previous studies have examined gender representation in anime, particularly in *One Piece*. Puspariani (2019) found that female characters such as Nami and Nico Robin are represented as independent figures while simultaneously conforming to male-centered beauty standards. Similarly, Felayati et al. (2023) reported that female bodies in anime are frequently portrayed in overly sexualized ways that reinforce stereotypes about women. Sugitanata et al. (2024) argued that female characters in the *Amazon Lily* arc simultaneously embody autonomy and emotional vulnerability, reflecting contradictions within gender representation. Furthermore, Saputra et al. (2026) identified a form of "narrative dissonance," in which female characters contribute significantly to the storyline while also being reduced to comedic objects or visual spectacle.

Although these studies provide important contributions to gender representation research, most remain focused primarily on visual and descriptive analysis. Previous studies have not sufficiently examined how narrative structures ideologically position female characters through an explicit existentialist feminist perspective. This limitation creates a gap in understanding how female empowerment may coexist with symbolic forms of subordination within narrative construction. Therefore, this study applies Simone

de Beauvoir's concept of "the Other" to analyze how women are represented through character construction and narrative structure in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece*. By focusing on narrative organization, relational positioning, and ideological assumptions, this study seeks to reveal how representations of female empowerment may simultaneously contain subtle forms of symbolic dependence and gender-based subordination

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with an interpretative approach to analyze the representation of women in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece*. Qualitative research is appropriate for examining meaning, ideology, and narrative construction embedded in cultural texts rather than focusing on numerical measurement. Denzin (2018) explains that qualitative research emphasizes interpretation and contextual understanding of social and cultural phenomena. In addition, Eagleton (2008) states that literary and media texts are not neutral representations of reality but are shaped by ideological forces that can be critically examined. Therefore, this study adopts a textual and discourse-oriented perspective to investigate how representations of female empowerment are constructed while simultaneously examining how gender ideology is constructed within the narrative.

The method used in this research is qualitative textual analysis combined with discourse-oriented media analysis. The analysis is grounded in feminist media studies and existentialist feminist theory. Specifically, this study applies Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework, particularly the concept of women as "the Other," as the primary analytical lens. According to de Beauvoir (1953), women are socially positioned as relational beings defined in relation to men rather than as autonomous subjects. This framework is relevant because it enables the analysis of how female characters may appear empowered structurally while remaining ideologically positioned within patriarchal

relational systems. Through this perspective, the study examines how character construction, narrative organization, and symbolic representation shape women's positioning in the text.

The data collection process was conducted from January to March 2026 through repeated observation and documentation of Episodes 408–421 of *One Piece*, which constitute the *Amazon Lily* arc. The data source consisted solely of primary textual and visual data obtained from the selected episodes. These episodes were selected because they portray a female-dominated narrative space that emphasizes leadership structures, emotional dynamics, and symbolic subordination of female characters, particularly Boa Hancock and the Kuja tribe. The unit of analysis included dialogue, character interactions, narrative development, gestures, facial expressions, camera framing, and symbolic imagery related to gender representation and ideological positioning.

The instruments and techniques of data collection involved qualitative textual observation and documentation. The researcher acted as the primary research instrument because qualitative analysis depends on the researcher's interpretative ability in identifying patterns and meanings within the text. Data collection was conducted through close observation by repeatedly watching the selected episodes to identify scenes relevant to gender construction, female positioning, and symbolic patriarchal structures. Relevant scenes were documented through systematic note-taking and selective transcription of dialogues. Visual elements such as body gestures, emotional expressions, costume representation, and camera focus were also recorded as supporting analytical data. To ensure systematic data selection, scene identification was guided by analytical indicators derived from Simone de Beauvoir's concept of "the Other," including relational identity, symbolic subordination, and the myth of eternal femininity (de Beauvoir, 1953). Analytical memos were additionally developed during the observation

process to connect the collected data with the theoretical framework and research objectives.

The data were analyzed using the qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of four interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on scenes relevant to the research objectives and theoretical framework. Data display was conducted by organizing the selected findings into thematic categories related to structural authority, relational identity, and symbolic subordination. Data interpretation involved examining patterns, contradictions, and ideological meanings within the narrative, particularly the tension between apparent female empowerment and underlying patriarchal positioning. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified by ensuring consistency between the findings, theoretical framework, and research objectives. Because this study is qualitative and interpretative in nature, the analysis did not involve statistical calculations but

emphasized contextual interpretation and ideological examination of the media text.

RESULT

1. Structural Authority of Women in *Amazon Lily*

The *Amazon Lily* arc in *One Piece* (Episodes 408–421) presents a narrative setting in which women function as the sole inhabitants and governing authority of the island. The Kuja tribe is portrayed as a female society with collective governance, military organization, and hierarchical social structures. Within the narrative setting, women occupy positions related to leadership, law, and military activity.

Female characters are shown participating in governance and collective decision-making processes throughout the arc. Boa Hancock appears in scenes related to political authority, legal judgment, and external affairs. Female warriors and council members are also shown participating in military and institutional activities.

Table-1
Structural construction of female empowerment (Episodes 408–412)

Episode	Scene	Evidence
408 (08–18 min)	Monkey D. Luffy is found unconscious and later wakes up in a women-only environment after being rescued by Kuja warriors. He realizes all inhabitants are female and no men exist on the island.	No male inhabitants are present; all visible characters are female
409 (05–16 min)	Kuja warriors are introduced during patrol and combat training sequences. They are shown defeating external male pirates attempting to invade the island.	Female warriors engage in organized combat and defeat external enemies
410 (10–22 min)	Boa Hancock enters the scene on a royal platform while subjects bow before her. She is introduced as “Snake Princess” and empress of <i>Amazon Lily</i> .	Characters bow to Hancock; she is positioned on an elevated platform
411 (07–18 min)	Luffy is placed on trial before Kuja elders after violating sacred rules. Female council members discuss execution or punishment decisions.	Female council members discuss punishment and make legal decisions

Table-1 presents scenes related to political leadership, legal authority, and military organization involving female characters within the narrative.

2. Relational Identity and Emotional Dependency

Several scenes in the *Amazon Lily* arc show changes in Boa Hancock's behavior during interactions with Monkey D. Luffy. These scenes include emotional reactions, hesitation, interruptions during formal proceedings, and protective behavior.

Scenes involving Hancock contain emotional expressions and reactions connected to Luffy's presence. Dialogue, gestures, and character responses appear during scenes involving interpersonal interaction and conflict situations.

Table-2
Relational identity and emotional dependency (Episodes 410–416)

Episode	Scene	Evidence
410 (15–22 min)	Boa Hancock returns to her palace after capturing Luffy. Instead of executing him immediately, she becomes emotionally disturbed by his lack of fear toward her authority.	Hancock shows visible emotional disturbance and hesitation
411 (10–18 min)	During the trial, Hancock repeatedly interrupts execution proceedings due to emotional conflict regarding Luffy's presence. Her authority appears unstable.	Hancock repeatedly intervenes due to emotional conflict
412 (14–23 min)	Hancock privately reflects on Luffy's behavior and shows unusual emotional vulnerability, including blushing and protective behavior.	Displays blushing, protective gestures, and emotional reactions
413 (06–15 min)	Kuja members observe Hancock's emotional behavior but normalize it as part of her leadership identity.	Other characters observe and acknowledge her emotional state
415 (09–19 min)	Narrative shifts focus heavily toward Luffy's survival and actions during conflict escalation. Hancock's role becomes secondary.	Scenes prioritize Luffy's actions and survival
416 (11–20 min)	Hancock struggles between her role as empress and emotional desire to protect Luffy during crisis.	Dialogue and expressions show tension between duty and emotion

Table-2 presents scenes containing emotional responses, interpersonal interaction, and character reactions involving Hancock and Luffy.

3. Symbolic Subordination in Narrative and Visual Structure

The analysis identified patterns related to visual presentation and narrative emphasis in several scenes. These patterns include emotional tone

changes, stylized gestures, camera framing, and repeated visual focus during dialogue sequences. Several scenes show changes in Hancock's speech patterns and emotional expressions when Luffy is mentioned. Other scenes contain dramatic facial expressions, gestures, and visual framing focused on appearance and character positioning. Several scenes also present Luffy's actions during conflict situations.



Table-3
Symbolic subordination in narrative and visual structure (Episodes 411–416)

Episode	Scene	Evidence
411 (12–19 min)	During court proceedings, Hancock suddenly shifts from authoritative speech to exaggerated emotional reactions when Luffy is mentioned.	Hancock changes tone abruptly during dialogue
412 (10–18 min)	Hancock displays intense romantic fixation behaviors, including refusal to maintain formal composure.	Repetitive emotional expressions and exaggerated reactions
413 (08–16 min)	Female court members react with dramatic expressions and stylized gestures during decision-making scenes.	Stylized gestures and dramatic facial expressions
414 (11–20 min)	Camera framing repeatedly focuses on Hancock's body, facial expressions, and aesthetic presentation during dialogue.	Camera frames emphasize facial expressions and body positioning
415–416 (09–20 min)	Story progression prioritizes Luffy's survival and actions over Hancock's governance role.	Narrative focus centers on Luffy's actions and movement

Table-3 presents scenes containing visual emphasis, emotional expressions, camera framing, and character positioning within the *Amazon Lily* arc.

DISCUSSION

Structural Authority of Women in *Amazon Lily*

The findings presented in Table-1 demonstrate that women occupy central institutional positions within the *Amazon Lily* narrative structure. Female characters are represented as political leaders, military actors, legal authorities, and decision-makers within the Kuja society. Throughout Episodes 408–412, women appear in scenes involving governance, territorial protection, law enforcement, and collective military coordination. The narrative setting itself is constructed as a female-only society in which no male characters occupy formal institutional positions. This representation creates a social structure that differs from conventional patriarchal systems commonly found in action-oriented narratives.

From one perspective, this representation may be interpreted as a form of female empowerment because women are portrayed as

dominant actors within public and institutional spaces. Female characters are not positioned merely as supporting or domestic figures but are actively involved in leadership and collective decision-making. The Kuja warriors are represented as disciplined fighters capable of protecting their territory without male assistance, while Boa Hancock is portrayed as an authoritative ruler whose decisions influence the political and legal structure of *Amazon Lily*. These findings support Sugitanata et al. (2024), who explain that female characters in the *Amazon Lily* arc are represented as autonomous and powerful individuals within their society. Similarly, Puspariani (2019) argues that female characters in *One Piece* are frequently constructed as independent and capable figures rather than passive narrative objects.

The representation of institutional authority in the *Amazon Lily* arc may also be interpreted as a narrative reversal of traditional gender hierarchy. In many popular media texts, positions of military and political power are commonly associated with male authority, whereas female characters are often represented within supportive or secondary roles. However, in *Amazon Lily*, women control military systems, legal structures, and governance processes. The absence of male authority figures creates a

narrative environment in which women function as visible holders of institutional power. This structural arrangement therefore presents an alternative social order that differs from conventional male-centered leadership patterns in popular action narratives.

However, from another perspective, structural authority does not necessarily indicate complete autonomy of female subjectivity. Although women occupy dominant institutional positions, the findings also demonstrate that narrative development changes after the appearance of Monkey D. Luffy within the storyline. The introduction of a male protagonist influences interpersonal dynamics, emotional responses, and character positioning within subsequent episodes. This pattern aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's concept of women as "the Other," in which women are frequently positioned relationally in relation to masculine-centered subjectivity (de Beauvoir, 1953). According to Beauvoir, women may appear socially significant while still being ideologically defined through relational structures connected to masculine norms and perspectives.

The findings suggest that institutional power and relational positioning coexist simultaneously within the narrative. Female authority remains visible at the structural level, yet narrative progression increasingly incorporates emotional and interpersonal elements connected to male presence. This indicates that representation of empowerment within media texts may function differently at the institutional and relational levels. Women may appear dominant within systems of governance while still being narratively positioned through relationships and emotional alignment connected to masculine-centered progression.

Compared with previous studies, the present research expands the analysis of gender representation beyond bodily appearance and visual depiction. Earlier studies by Puspariani (2019) and Felayati et al. (2023) primarily focused on beauty standards, sexualization, and visual representation of female characters. The present study extends these findings by examining institutional organization, narrative structure, and

relational positioning simultaneously. One of the strengths of this study lies in its multidimensional analysis, which integrates structural authority, interpersonal interaction, and symbolic subordination within the same analytical framework. This broader approach allows gender representation to be analyzed not only through visual appearance but also through systems of power and narrative organization.

Relational Identity and Emotional Dependency

The findings in Table-2 indicate that Boa Hancock's characterization changes significantly during interactions with Monkey D. Luffy. Emotional reactions, hesitation, protective behavior, and interruptions during formal proceedings repeatedly appear in scenes involving interpersonal interaction between the two characters. Several episodes also shift narrative attention toward Luffy's actions, survival, and movement during conflict situations. These changes demonstrate that relational interaction becomes an important component in character development within the *Amazon Lily* arc.

From one point of view, these emotional expressions may be interpreted as forms of character development that contribute to emotional complexity within the narrative. Leadership figures in fictional narratives are often portrayed not only through institutional authority but also through emotional depth and interpersonal relationships. In this context, Hancock's emotional reactions toward Luffy may function as narrative devices that humanize her character and create interpersonal tension within the storyline. Emotional vulnerability therefore does not necessarily eliminate female authority but may instead contribute to the development of a multidimensional character identity.

This interpretation aligns with perspectives in narrative studies that view emotional complexity as an important aspect of characterization. Characters who display emotional conflict are often perceived as more dynamic because they demonstrate internal struggles and psychological depth. Hancock's hesitation, emotional



disturbance, and protective behavior may therefore be interpreted as components of narrative development rather than simply signs of weakness. The combination of leadership authority and emotional vulnerability creates contrast within her characterization, making her role more narratively prominent throughout the arc.

However, from another perspective, the findings also indicate that Hancock's characterization becomes increasingly connected to relational attachment with the male protagonist. Emotional reactions and behavioral changes repeatedly occur in scenes involving Luffy's presence, while narrative focus gradually shifts toward his actions and survival during major conflicts. This pattern supports Mahon & Campling (1997) explanation that women are often represented relationally in connection to masculine-centered narratives. Female identity may therefore be constructed not entirely through autonomous self-definition but through emotional and interpersonal alignment with male-centered progression.

The findings also demonstrate that institutional authority becomes increasingly accompanied by emotional disruption. In several scenes, Hancock interrupts formal legal proceedings, hesitates during decision-making, and displays emotional reactions connected to Luffy's presence. This indicates that relational interaction influences the representation of leadership within the narrative. While Hancock continues to occupy the highest institutional position in *Amazon Lily*, her characterization becomes increasingly associated with emotional attachment and interpersonal response.

Compared with previous studies, the present research extends discussion beyond visual representation by examining relational identity formation within narrative structure. Previous studies by Felayati et al. (2023) mainly focused on bodily representation and sexualization, while the present study demonstrates that relational positioning also contributes significantly to the construction of female representation. The

interaction between emotional attachment, interpersonal dynamics, and narrative focus therefore becomes an important mechanism through which representation is produced within the *Amazon Lily* storyline.

Another contribution of this study is its emphasis on the interaction between institutional authority and emotional positioning. Earlier studies generally analyzed empowerment through visible markers such as strength, leadership, or combat ability. The present findings demonstrate that empowerment may coexist simultaneously with emotional dependence and relational attachment. This multidimensional condition indicates that representation cannot be examined solely through surface-level depictions of strength or authority but must also consider narrative organization and interpersonal dynamics.

Symbolic Subordination in Narrative and Visual Structure

The findings in Table-3 demonstrate patterns related to emotional tone, visual framing, gestures, bodily positioning, and symbolic presentation within the narrative. Several scenes contain exaggerated emotional reactions, dramatic facial expressions, stylized gestures, and visual emphasis focused on appearance and emotional display. Camera framing repeatedly highlights facial expressions and bodily presentation during dialogue scenes involving Boa Hancock and other female characters. These findings indicate that symbolic and visual elements play an important role in shaping representation within the *Amazon Lily* arc.

From one perspective, these visual and symbolic elements may be interpreted as stylistic conventions commonly found in anime narratives. Anime frequently employs emotional exaggeration, comedic reactions, dramatic gestures, and expressive facial animation to intensify emotional atmosphere and audience engagement. Romantic reactions, stylized expressions, and exaggerated body language are commonly used within anime storytelling to

communicate emotional states more clearly to viewers. In this sense, symbolic presentation functions as part of the genre's visual and narrative conventions rather than exclusively as ideological positioning.

The use of dramatic gestures and emotional exaggeration may also serve narrative and entertainment purposes within the storyline. Emotional shifts and stylized reactions create comedic tension and emotional variation that contribute to pacing and audience involvement. Within popular anime culture, these expressive techniques are often normalized as part of the medium's aesthetic style. Therefore, visual emphasis and emotional coding may partly reflect conventions of anime storytelling rather than intentional gender subordination alone.

However, from another perspective, repeated visual emphasis on emotionality and bodily presentation may also reinforce gendered representation patterns. Hall (1997) explains that representation is produced through discourse, symbols, and visual systems that shape meaning within media texts. Visual framing is therefore not neutral because it contributes to the construction of social meaning and ideological interpretation. In the *Amazon Lily* arc, emotional expressions and bodily presentation repeatedly appear together with scenes involving authority and leadership. As a result, institutional power becomes visually accompanied by emotional and aesthetic coding.

Similarly, Felayati et al. (2023) argue that female characters in anime are frequently framed through aesthetic representation and emotional symbolism associated with conventional femininity. In the *Amazon Lily* arc, camera framing often focuses on facial reactions, bodily posture, and romantic expressions during scenes involving Hancock. Although Hancock occupies a powerful institutional position, visual emphasis repeatedly directs audience attention toward emotional display and aesthetic presentation. This creates a symbolic subordination in which authority and emotionality coexist simultaneously within the same character construction.

The findings also indicate that narrative focus increasingly highlights Luffy's movement and survival during conflict situations. Several scenes prioritize his actions during major narrative progression, while female characters frequently appear in supportive emotional roles connected to his presence. This pattern demonstrates that narrative organization and symbolic framing work together in shaping representation. The construction of meaning therefore operates not only through dialogue and character roles but also through visual emphasis, framing techniques, and narrative focus.

Compared with previous studies, this research contributes a broader analytical perspective by combining symbolic analysis with structural and relational examination. Previous studies primarily concentrated on bodily representation and visual sexualization. The present study expands this discussion by demonstrating that symbolic subordination interacts with narrative structure, interpersonal dynamics, and institutional authority simultaneously. This integrated analytical approach becomes one of the major strengths of the study because it allows gender representation to be understood through interconnected ideological mechanisms rather than isolated visual elements alone.

Implications and limitations

The findings of this study indicate that representation in media texts operates through interconnected structural, relational, and symbolic dimensions. Female representation in the *Amazon Lily* arc is constructed not only through visible authority but also through interpersonal interaction, emotional positioning, visual framing, and narrative organization. These findings therefore highlight the importance of multidimensional analysis in examining gender representation within contemporary media narratives.

From an educational perspective, the study reinforces the importance of critical media literacy in analyzing popular culture. Media texts that appear progressive at the structural level may still



contain relational and symbolic patterns that influence representation. In educational contexts, anime and popular media may therefore function as pedagogical materials for encouraging students to critically examine how identity, power, ideology, and representation are constructed within narrative and visual systems. Critical media literacy allows audiences to move beyond surface-level consumption and engage more actively with ideological meanings embedded in media texts.

The study also contributes to feminist media studies by demonstrating how empowerment and limitation may coexist simultaneously within the same narrative structure. Female characters may appear institutionally powerful while still being shaped through emotional, relational, and symbolic positioning. This finding suggests that gender representation should not be interpreted solely through visible indicators of strength or leadership but should also consider narrative progression, interpersonal interaction, and symbolic framing.

Despite these contributions, the present study also has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses only on Episodes 408–421 of the *Amazon Lily* arc and therefore does not fully represent the entirety of *One Piece* or broader anime narratives. Second, the research relies exclusively on textual and visual interpretation without involving audience reception analysis or interviews with viewers. As a result, the findings remain limited to narrative interpretation rather than audience perception. Third, the study applies only Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework, which limits interpretation from other feminist perspectives such as postfeminism, intersectional feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, or queer theory.

Future research may therefore expand the analysis by examining multiple anime narratives, comparing female representation across different genres, or integrating audience reception studies to explore how viewers interpret gender representation in anime media. Future studies may also apply broader feminist perspectives to examine additional dimensions of representation,

ideology, and identity construction within contemporary popular culture.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the representation of women in the *Amazon Lily* arc of *One Piece* using Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework, particularly the concept of women as "the Other." The findings show that women's representation in the narrative is constructed through structural authority, relational identity, and symbolic subordination.

At the structural level, women are represented as political leaders, military actors, and legal authorities within the Kuja society. Female characters occupy dominant institutional positions and actively participate in governance, collective decision-making, and territorial defense. At the relational level, the characterization of Boa Hancock increasingly develops through emotional attachment and interpersonal interaction with Monkey D. Luffy. At the symbolic level, emotional expressions, visual framing, bodily positioning, and narrative emphasis contribute to the construction of femininity within the narrative structure.

These findings indicate that women's empowerment in the *Amazon Lily* arc is represented through multiple interconnected dimensions. Although women occupy dominant institutional positions, their representation is also shaped through relational interaction and symbolic presentation. The findings therefore demonstrate that gender representation in media texts operates not only through visible authority but also through narrative organization and visual systems.

This study contributes to feminist media analysis by examining gender representation through structural, relational, and symbolic dimensions simultaneously. The study also highlights the importance of critical media literacy in understanding how identity, power, and representation are constructed within contemporary popular media narratives.

Despite these contributions, the study is limited to Episodes 408–421 of the *Amazon Lily* arc and applies only Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework. Future research may expand the analysis by comparing different anime narratives, applying broader feminist perspectives, or examining audience responses toward gender representation in anime media.

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