

Representing Soft Masculinity: An Analysis of .Feast's “*Membangun & Menghancurkan*” Discography

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ABSTRACT

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Digitalization and global cultural shifts have catalyzed a significant transformation in gender representation within popular media. In the Indonesian context, where masculinity is traditionally associated with power, stoicism, and physical dominance, the emergence of soft masculinity presents a radical ideological alternative. This study investigates the representation of soft masculinity in the album “*Membangun & Menghancurkan*” by the Indonesian rock band .Feast. Using a descriptive qualitative design grounded in Roland Barthes’s semiotic framework, the research analyzes denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings across six selected tracks: “Membangun”, “O, Tuan”, “Masimarah”, “Tarot”, “Nina”, and “Arteri.” The findings reveal that .Feast systematically deconstructs the “Stoic Mask” and “Absent Provider” myths, replacing them with a new masculine identity built upon three dimensions: Tender Charisma, Purity, and Politeness. The lyrical narratives reconstruct the male figure as a humanist and multidimensional individual who embraces emotional vulnerability, intellectual humility, and active nurturing as markers of true strength. This study concludes that the album serves as a critical cultural text that shifts the paradigm of masculinity from vertical dominance toward horizontal equality and emotional transparency. By naturalizing these narratives, .Feast provides a new blueprint for modern masculinity, where dignity is achieved through self-sovereignty and empathy rather than the oppression of others. This research contributes to the discourse on gender representation in rock music and highlights the role of the creative industry in fostering more inclusive social values.

INTRODUCTION

Digitalization has profoundly changed how individuals communicate and express complex emotions. Music acts as a pivotal medium for conveying socio-cultural ideologies and personal experiences, providing a voice for feelings that often remain unarticulated (Cahya & Sukendro, 2022). As a form of mass media, music effectively constructs perceptions regarding gender and identity through various symbols and narratives (Yulianti, 2021). In Indonesia, masculinity is traditionally viewed through the lens of power, bravery, and independence (Sari & Wirawanda, 2019). This hegemonic standard often

marginalizes alternative expressions of manhood by establishing rigid standards for “true” masculinity (Fauziah & Asrita, 2022). However, the digital era has facilitated a shift toward soft masculinity, which emphasizes empathy and emotional vulnerability over physical dominance (Siagian & Saifudin, 2025). This phenomenon indicates a significant negotiation of male identity within modern social structures (Masturoh & Junaedi, 2021).

The Indonesian rock band .Feast, previously recognized for its aggressive political critiques and angry narratives, illustrates this transition in the album “*Membangun & Menghancurkan*”. Despite the high-

energy nature of the rock genre (Musyahadah & Fajarini, 2025), this work pivots toward domesticity and personal vulnerability. The album's cultural resonance is evidenced by its victory at the 2025 AMI Awards and reaching over one billion streams on Spotify (Ami Awards, 2025). The viral success of the song "*Nina*" further highlights a widespread public acceptance of these softer masculine narratives, suggesting that rock music can effectively convey domestic affection.

Nevertheless, the semiotic construction of soft masculinity within a traditionally aggressive genre remains under-researched. This study addresses this gap by utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings within the album's lyrics. The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of how .Feast deconstructs conventional masculine myths and replaces them with a celebration of vulnerability. By mapping these signs, this research contributes to the discourse on gender representation and cultural shifts in the digital age, illustrating how media effects can alter audience perceptions and attitudes toward masculinity (Siagian & Saifudin, 2025).

Previous research provides a conceptual foundation for understanding gender representation in popular culture. Siagian and Saifudin (2025) explored male audience reception of soft masculinity in NCT Dream's "*Candy*" music video. Using Stuart Hall's Reception Theory, they found that while some audiences accept soft imagery as a modern masculine expression, others still adhere to traditional norms.

In a different scope, Masturoh and Junaedi (2023) analyzed Yura Yunita's "*Tutur Batin*" music video using Roland Barthes' semiotics. Their study revealed how media can empower women by countering passive stereotypes. Furthermore, Sari and Wirawanda (2025) utilized Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the "*Boys Don't Cry*" advertisement. Their findings suggest that media acts as a tool to deconstruct patriarchal values by promoting empathy and emotional expression in men.

A synthesis of these studies shows that most research focuses on audience reception or general gender imagery. However, there is a significant research gap regarding the specific construction of soft masculinity within the Indonesian rock scene. This study fills that gap by utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotics to analyze how .Feast represents soft masculinity through denotative, connotative, and

mythical meanings in the album "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*."

While previous literature heavily correlates soft masculinity with the visual and polished nature of K-pop or the melodic sentimentality of Indonesian pop, examining this phenomenon within rock music is critical. Rock music has historically been rooted in aggressive, high-energy sonic expressions and hyper-masculine subcultures. Deconstructing these rigid boundaries within an aggressive genre like rock reveals a more profound ideological shift. Therefore, this article contributes significantly to gender and media literature by demonstrating that the redefinition of masculine norms is not confined to inherently 'soft' visual genres, but is actively reshaping counter-cultural spaces and heavier musical landscapes in contemporary media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Soft Masculinity

Masculinity is fundamentally a dynamic social construct. Traditionally, hegemonic masculinity emphasizes physical strength, rationality, and dominance, establishing a rigid patriarchal standard that dictates ideal male behavior through media representations (Shabil et al., 2024). In Indonesia, these traditional norms are deeply intertwined with religious and cultural values, pressuring men to remain tough and dominant, an expectation that frequently creates internal conflict between ideal and actual identities (Hasyim, 2020).

However, globalization and digital media have catalyzed a significant cultural shift, introducing "soft masculinity" as a viable alternative. This concept deconstructs hegemonic norms by embracing empathy, emotional vulnerability, and aesthetic consciousness without entirely erasing core masculine identities (Nabila & Daulay, 2025; Saputra & Sulastri, 2024). Although initially met with resistance in Indonesia's patriarchal framework, soft masculinity gained widespread traction, largely driven by the influx of South Korean popular culture (Pratiwi & Suharjo, 2025).

Theoretically, Jung, (2011) outlines three prominent characteristics of soft masculinity: Tender Charisma (a harmonious blend of firm leadership and empathetic gentleness), Purity (innocent, sincere, and transparent emotional expression), and Politeness (refined, well-mannered, and non-aggressive behavior). Currently, this paradigm is increasingly

accepted in modern Indonesian society, as evidenced by the normalization of men's grooming practices and emotional openness (Fauzi, 2021; Febianti, 2024). Ultimately, soft masculinity reflects a broader socio-cultural transformation, reshaping rigid gender expectations and accommodating more diverse identities in contemporary society (Saputra & Sulastri, 2024).

Roland Barthes's Semiotics

This study utilizes Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, which expands upon Ferdinand de Saussure's foundational linguistic concepts. While Saussure defined a sign as the arbitrary relationship between a signifier (physical form) and a signified (mental concept) with a focus on literal interpretations, Barthes elevated this framework by exploring how media constructs and reproduces cultural ideologies (Utari & Hikmah, 2024). To achieve this, Barthes introduced a two-order system of signification designed to decode textual meanings comprehensively (Wibisono & Sari, 2021).

The first order of signification is denotation. It represents the literal, explicit, and objective meaning of a sign. At this primary level, the relationship between the signifier and signified directly reflects reality without ambiguity or hidden interpretations (Mabruroh et al., 2025).

The second order is connotation, which emerges when the established denotative sign functions as a new signifier. Connotation embodies implicit, figurative meanings shaped by human emotions, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts (Rahma et al., 2024).

Ultimately, Barthes posits that these connotative meanings operate within the realm of myth. Myth functions as an ideological tool that naturalizes dominant cultural values, presenting socially constructed beliefs as objective, natural truths (Utari & Hikmah, 2024). By applying this theoretical framework, lyrics can be analyzed not merely descriptively, but interpretatively, revealing the deeper ideological layers and cultural myths embedded within the text.

Representation in Media

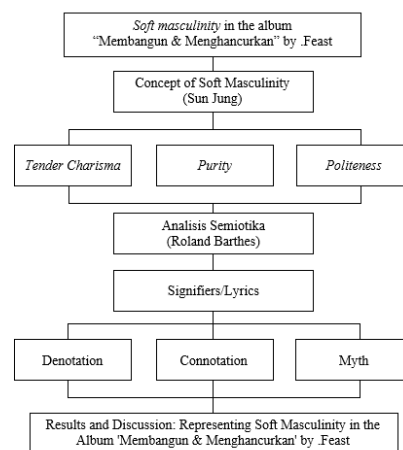
In the contemporary digital era, media serves as a primary platform for the dissemination of various social and cultural ideologies. It possesses the capacity to easily convey specific viewpoints to a global audience, thereby significantly influencing public perception and societal thought (Alamsyah, 2020).

This pervasive influence is fundamentally rooted in the concept of representation. Representation is inextricably linked to the communication process, as it encompasses the exchange of messages and the construction of meaning within media. It serves as a framework for understanding how meaning is formulated and delivered to the public through symbols and signs in various formats, including videos, images, and films (Sari & Wirawanda, 2019).

Essentially, representation is a critical process where meaning is produced and exchanged among cultural members using language, signs, and imagery to signify specific concepts (Stuart Hall in Ayuanda et al., 2024). In this context, language is defined as any system of signs used to produce meaning. Representation functions by linking language and meaning to the cultural conditions of a society, allowing individuals to reference both objective realities and imaginary worlds (Yulianti, 2021). While different academic approaches exist to explain how meaning is assigned, whether by reflecting reality, conveying a creator's intent, or through social construction, the core principle remains that meaning is a product of social and cultural interaction.

In popular music, representation operates through the synergy of verbal lyrics and non-verbal auditory elements. This combination allows messages to permeate the listener's emotions and cognition persuasively, making music an effective medium for shifting social norms regarding gender identity. The massive exposure provided by digital media facilitates the naturalization of concepts like soft masculinity, turning them into a new cultural standard (Fauzi, 2021). Thus, popular culture creates a space for the younger generation to redefine masculine identity in the modern age.

Analytical Framework



To systematically answer the research question, this study operationalizes Jung's (2011) dimensions through Barthes' semiotic layers. The analytical framework starts with the conceptualization of soft masculinity via its three core pillars: Tender Charisma, Purity, and Politeness. These dimensions act as the primary operational criteria to filter and categorize textual signs from the lyrics. The identified signs are then decoded through Barthes' two-order signification, exposing how objective descriptions (denotation) and cultural undertones (connotation) interact to dismantle patriarchal archetypes and naturalize alternative myths of masculinity.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore and explain the representation of soft masculinity within .Feast's album, "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*". The qualitative approach is utilized to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the meanings, symbols, and social constructions embedded in the lyrics, moving beyond numerical data to interpret the hidden cultural contexts within the text.

Grounded in a constructivist paradigm, this research views gender identity as a socially negotiated reality shaped through language and sign systems. Within this framework, .Feast is positioned as an agent that actively redefines masculinity in Indonesian popular culture by presenting a more reflective and gentle male identity. The primary analytical method employed is Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which examines signs through three stages of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth.

The analysis focuses on linguistic elements, such as diction and metaphors, across a corpus of six selected songs from the album. By mapping these semiotic layers, the study aims to reveal how the band contributes to the construction and naturalization of soft masculinity narratives, providing an alternative to rigid gender norms in the modern era.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study is conducted through a triangulation of documentation, literature review, and observation to ensure a comprehensive analysis of soft masculinity in .Feast's album, "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*".

1. Documentation

This technique serves to systematically gather primary textual and visual materials, including music videos, audio recordings, and lyrics. The process involves immersive listening and textual reading to identify significant signs, such as specific diction and metaphors that represent emotional vulnerability and self-reflection. These elements are then categorized as primary data for semiotic analysis.

2. Literature Review

To support the analytical process, a literature study is performed by synthesizing various academic sources, including journals, books, and relevant digital archives. These resources provide the theoretical foundation for Roland Barthes' semiotics, the social construction of reality, and gender representation in popular media. By reviewing these literatures, the research is firmly situated within relevant academic discourses, enabling a deeper understanding of how masculine identities are negotiated and reproduced through media portrayals.

Combined, these techniques facilitate a multi-layered interpretation of the ideological messages embedded within the selected songs.

The primary data for this research were selected using purposive sampling based on three stringent criteria: (1) tracks must belong to .Feast's studio album "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*" (2024), (2) the lyrical themes must distinctly present elements of vulnerability, domesticity, self-reflection, or active caregiving, and (3) the texts must conceptually align with the indicators of Tender Charisma, Purity, or Politeness. Out of the album's discography, six tracks perfectly met these standards: 'Membangun' and 'O, Tuan' (representing Tender Charisma); 'Arteri', 'Nina', and 'Tarot' (representing Purity); and 'Masimarah' (representing Politeness).

The semiotic analysis followed a structured four-step coding process: First, Data Familiarization through active listening and textual reading. Second, Sign Extraction, where specific dictions and metaphors denoting emotional openness were isolated. Third, Signification Mapping, where the isolated signifiers were processed into denotative and connotative matrices. Fourth, Mythical Synthesis, where the connotative meanings were cross-examined with societal gender codes to reveal the overarching myths being naturalized.

RESULT

This study investigates the representation of soft masculinity within popular music through the album "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*" by .Feast, utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis approach. The units of analysis comprise the narrative structure of the lyrics, diction, metaphors, and auditory elements that signify emotional vulnerability, humanist male characterization, and the ongoing redefinition of masculine identity within modern popular culture. By examining these signifiers, the research aims to uncover how .Feast deconstructs traditional gender norms and validates a more reflective male identity.

Representation in "Membangun"

In the song "*Membangun*", .Feast represents a humanist male figure characterized by profound existential contradictions and emotional transparency. The lyrical narrative illustrates a subject grappling with internal tensions, as evidenced by phrases such as "*membenci hidup, tapi takut mati*" (hating life but fearing death) and "*senang berkerumun, takut ditinggal sendiri*" (enjoying crowds but fearing solitude). This portrayal signifies a significant departure from traditional archetypes of unwavering male confidence, presenting instead a man who is intimately aware of his psychological vulnerabilities and the paradoxes of his own existence. A central motif in the song is the act of "*bercermin*" (mirroring), which serves as a metaphor for intense self-reflection and the courage to confront personal flaws and logical inconsistencies within one's own conscience.

On a mythical level, "*Membangun*" works to deconstruct the long-standing myth of the stoic and invulnerable man. Historically, traditional masculinity has been synonymous with the suppression of doubt and the maintenance of an unshakable, dominant exterior (Utomo & Maharani, 2021). However, through its narrative of self-evaluation, the song redefines male dignity as a product of introspection rather than aggression or control. By depicting the willingness to "mirror" one's sensitivity and embrace traits often categorized as feminine, such as humility and self-correction, the song challenges the rigid boundaries of gender performance (Ramli et al., 2021). Ultimately, "*Membangun*" functions as a cultural text that validates emotional honesty and internal sovereignty as the new standard for male integrity in a contemporary context.

Representation in the song "O, Tuan"

In the song "*O, Tuan*" .Feast represents a male figure characterized by profound spiritual submission and existential anxiety when facing the imminent loss of a loved one. Through the direct address and repetitive use of the word "*Tuan*" (Lord) to personify death and the divine, the lyrics depict a subordinate relationship, signaling a shift from traditional male dominance to a state of humble vulnerability. This representation is further emphasized by the subject's literal and transparent communication explicitly rejecting metaphors and asserting "*Aku takut*" (I am afraid) which reveals a deeply human fear of mortality and a desperate plea for more time. Unlike the conventional image of the fearless man, the subject is depicted as a servant who openly negotiates his fears, reflecting a high degree of emotional honesty and a willingness to surrender his ego.

On a mythical level, the track functions to profoundly deconstruct the "Stoic Myth" typically associated with hegemonic masculinity. Traditional patriarchal ideology dictates that men must remain unshakeable, devoid of fear, and emotionally detached, particularly when confronting life's end or familial crises (Pertwi et al., 2025). By presenting a man who openly expresses desperation, acknowledges his powerlessness in the face of death, and spends the night in tearful prayer, .Feast challenges the cultural expectation that male dignity is rooted in the suppression of vulnerability. This narrative reconstructs masculinity through the lens of tender charisma, positioning spiritual honesty, emotional attachment, and the admission of fear as valid markers of moral integrity and true strength, rather than signs of weakness. Ultimately, "*O, Tuan*" serves as a cultural text that naturalizes the expression of fragility, suggesting that a man's worth is found in his profound capacity to care and his courage to be truthful about his internal existential struggles.

Representation in "Arteri"

In the song "*Arteri*" .Feast represents a male figure who embraces vulnerability as a high form of internal transparency before his partner. This representation is clearly evidenced through the symbolic act of "*menangisku di pundakmu*" (crying on your shoulder), signaling a shift from the image of a stoic, solitary hero to a complete human being in need of emotional support. This act is not portrayed as a masculine failure, but rather as a manifestation of profound trust

and psychological security. By shedding the mask of toughness and choosing to communicate openly, the subject demonstrates that emotional honesty is the primary foundation of a man's integrity within a personal relationship.

At the mythical level, "Arteri" deconstructs traditional ideologies that forbid men from showing sadness in order to maintain authority and pride (Pertiwi et al., 2025). The song constructs a new myth stating that male vulnerability is the purest form of love (*purity*). This myth naturalizes the idea that a man's dignity is not diminished simply because he leans on someone or sheds tears; instead, such emotional depth strengthens a powerful *soft masculinity* identity. Through this narrative, .Feast offers an ideological alternative where a man's true strength emanates from his courage to release rigid masculine egos and choose to remain faithful to the purity of an inner bond, even when it involves the risk of pain or emotional wounds.

Representation in "Nina"

In the song "Nina" .Feast represents a transformative father figure whose identity is defined by emotional presence and nurturing rather than traditional indicators of male authority. The lyrical narrative depicts the internal tension of a man navigating the boundary between his professional life as a musician that symbolized by the act of "*menghibur*" (entertaining) and his domestic commitment to his child. This representation highlights a shift from material provision to emotional investment, where the father is portrayed as an active participant in early childhood development. By prioritizing the creation of lasting memories over professional ego, the song presents a model of masculinity that finds dignity in vulnerability and the humility required for active caregiving.

On a mythical level, "Nina" works to deconstruct the Absent Provider myth that has historically characterized patriarchal fatherhood. Traditional ideologies often distance men from the domestic sphere, framing emotional involvement as a sign of weakness (Utomo & Maharani, 2021). However, through the lens of the *purity* dimension, .Feast constructs a new myth where a man's true strength is measured by the sincerity of his love and his ability to be mentally present despite professional exhaustion. This narrative naturalizes the image of the "nurturing father," positioning selfless, non-possessive love as

the peak of masculine integrity (Ramli et al., 2021). Ultimately, "Nina" serves as a cultural text that validates a modern form of fatherhood where protection is offered through a gentle filter of care rather than rigid, authoritarian control.

Representation in "Tarot"

In the song "Tarot" .Feast represents a male figure as a nurturing protector who exercises strength through preventive care and emotional guidance. This representation signifies a shift from traditional protective roles that rely on physical dominance to a more sophisticated form of protection rooted in strategic empathy and long-term well-being. Through expressions of hope for "character development" and the acknowledgment of personal growth, the song portrays a man who values internal integrity and the flexibility to change over rigid, static authority.

On a mythical level, "Tarot" constructs a new myth of masculinity centered on the dimension of purity. It deconstructs the conventional Protector Myth, which historically associates male worth with muscle, intimidation, and reactive aggression (Utomo & Maharani, 2021). Instead, .Feast naturalizes the idea that true masculine power emanates from gentleness and a sincere commitment to the spiritual and emotional safety of others (Ramli et al., 2021). By positioning the subject as a partner in growth rather than a demanding judge, the song validates a modern ideological shift. Ultimately, "Tarot" serves as a cultural text asserting that the highest form of masculine integrity lies in keeping one's inner conscience pure while acting as a steadfast, yet tender, shield for the others.

Representation in the song "Masimarah"

In the song "Masimarah" .Feast represents a male figure characterized by intellectual humility and a conscious rejection of aggressive dominance. The lyrical narrative depicts a subject who engages in rigorous self-criticism, as evidenced by the willingness to admit naivety and silence the urge to act as an all-knowing authority (*sok tahu*). This representation marks a significant shift from conventional masculinity, which often values "mansplaining" and intellectual posturing, toward a model of soft masculinity that prioritizes being a learner rather than a dictator. By positioning the male subject as an "*murid baru*" who respects the boundaries of personal history and social interaction,

the song portrays a man who has reached a state of emotional sovereignty and self-actualization.

On a mythical level, "*Masimarah*" deconstructs the myth of Vertical Masculinity, where male dignity is traditionally rooted in the power to control or overshadow others through volume and intellectual aggression. Instead, the song constructs a new myth of Horizontal Masculinity, which naturalizes politeness, self-control, and horizontal equality as the true hallmarks of a superior man. Through this lens, .Feast redefines masculine integrity not as the ability to instill fear or assert dominance, but as the courage to embrace vulnerability and intellectual honesty. Ultimately, "*Masimarah*" serves as a cultural text that establishes a new standard for modern masculinity, where true strength is found in the capacity for empathy and the refinement of character in a reflective society.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that .Feast's "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*" acts as a critical cultural text that systematically deconstructs hegemonic masculinity. Utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, this research reveals a structural replacement of the traditional "myth of the stoic man" with an alternative ideological construction: soft masculinity. Crucially, this shift represents more than a superficial lifestyle or cosmetic trend often observed in modern visual media like K-pop. Instead, it offers a radical subversion within the Indonesian rock landscape a space historically anchored in hyper-masculine aggression and socio-political anger transforming rigid vertical dominance into horizontal equality and profound emotional transparency.

Rather than merely shifting musical styles, the album overthrows established patriarchal archetypes by blending Jung's dimensions of *Tender Charisma*, *Purity*, and *Politeness* into a unified critique. The tracks collectively dismantle "The Stoic Mask" by reframing vulnerability, such as open crying, deep self-critique, and existential fear not as masculine failure, but as a resilient form of moral courage and self-actualization. Furthermore, the traditional "Protector Myth" and the "Absent Provider" model are re-imagined. Through narratives of domestic emotional investment and intuitive nurturing, protection ceases to be an act of physical control or authoritarian judgment. Instead, strength is measured

by a man's sincere ability to be mentally present and securely lean on a partner. This emotional decentralization is finalized by substituting "Vertical Masculinity" the urge to dominate social spaces through intellectual posturing or mansplaining with a horizontal framework that mythologizes self-regulation and intellectual humility. True sovereignty is thus attained through the mastery of one's own ego rather than the intimidation of others.

This structural reconstruction carries profound socio-cultural and educational implications. Socially, embedding soft masculinity within mainstream rock helps normalize emotional openness and mental health transparency among contemporary Indonesian men, offering a critical counter-narrative to toxic, systemic stoic mandates. In a wider media context, it demonstrates that cultural products can achieve immense commercial viability without relying on aggressive gender tropes. Educationally, this text serves as an informal medium for character development among the youth, actively socializing alternative gender values such as empathy, active caregiving, and horizontal equality within daily social interactions.

However, certain limitations must be addressed regarding generalization. As a qualitative, text-based semiotic analysis of lyrical signifiers, these findings cannot empirically map how diverse groups of actual listeners negotiate, accept, or resist these values in real life. Cultural reception remains highly contingent upon regional patriarchies, socioeconomic backgrounds, and generational divides across Indonesia. In conclusion, the soft masculinity modeled here provides a fresh blueprint for the modern man. By breaking the static power center, it establishes a healthy standard for contemporary human relationships, proving that true masculine dignity lies in being brave enough to be fragile, wise enough to be polite, and strong enough to be pure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Roland Barthes semiotic analysis conducted on the songs within the album "*Membangun & Menghancurkan*" by .Feast, the researcher concludes that this album consistently performs a radical deconstruction of rigid traditional masculinity narratives. Through the tracks "*Membangun*", "*O, Tuan*", "*Masimarah*", "*Tarot*", "*Nina*", and "*Arteri*", .Feast constructs a new ideology

termed soft masculinity. This ideology shifts the parameters of male strength from physical dominance and stoicism toward self-regulatory abilities, empathy, and the courage to exhibit internal vulnerability.

Overall, the primary representation in this album is that of a humanist, vulnerable, and multidimensional male figure. .Feast successfully redefines the meaning of "strength," where true power is no longer built through the oppression of others but through the mastery of one's own ego. Ultimately, the soft masculinity offered is not merely a lifestyle trend but a transformation of values that prioritizes humanity over dominance. This album affirms that superior masculinity in the modern era is horizontal, empathetic, and reflective a man who is sovereign over himself and capable of being a safe space for those around him without needing to be a threat.

The findings of this study successfully expand the discourse surrounding the future construction of male identity by bridging gender studies and counter-cultural spaces. This research offers a new paradigm, demonstrating that heavy musical landscapes such as rock can serve as an effective vessel to naturalize the values of soft masculinity. For future researchers, the developmental direction of this study becomes highly compelling if it moves beyond the constraints of purely textual analysis. Future scholars are encouraged to engage with more empirical sociological aspects through audience reception studies. This sociological approach is crucial to deeply dissect how the deconstructive messages and narratives of vulnerability within the album *"Membangun & Menghancurkan"* are interpreted, negotiated, and implemented by male listeners within the reality of their everyday lives.

Practically, this research provides a blueprint for creative industry stakeholders—ranging from songwriters and content producers to media strategists—to view artwork not merely as a commercial product driven solely by market profits. The creative industry must begin to position art as an instrument of representation that carries profound social responsibility. Industry practitioners are expected to consistently produce media embedded with humanistic messages and utilize art as a platform to convey meaningful narratives. This can be achieved by more boldly showcasing authentic emotional honesty and male vulnerability in a well-targeted manner. By presenting healthier, more inclusive, and reflective representations, popular music can function

as an effective informal educational medium to dismantle rigid gender stereotypes. Through this practical contribution, the media industry will not only produce works relevant to the anxieties of modern society but also tangibly contribute to building a smarter, more humanizing gender discourse in the public sphere.

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