



## An Analysis of Feminism in Gunpowder Milkshake Movie

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**Abstract:** In patriarchal societies, traditional stereotypes often restrict women's roles, portraying them as weak, emotional, and dependent on men. These stereotypes affect daily life and media representations, including film. This study analyzes how feminist values related to gender discrimination are represented in the action film *Gunpowder Milkshake*. The film was selected for its unique perspective on gender dynamics in a male-dominated genre. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research focuses on five forms of gender discrimination: marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and burden. The analysis shows that *Gunpowder Milkshake* features strong and independent female characters who challenge traditional stereotypes and fight against oppression. The film portrays the struggles of women to gain recognition in a male-dominated world (marginalization), the control and imposed roles they face (subordination), and how they defy gender stereotypes. It also uses violence to highlight power dynamics and explores the emotional burdens faced by the protagonist, Sam. In conclusion, the findings of this research as identified and analyzed various gender themes present in the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*, particularly those related to marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and the burdens faced by female characters.

**Keywords:** *action movie, feminism, gender discrimination*

### INTRODUCTION

In patriarchal societies, women are often confronted with role restrictions where traditional stereotypes dictate that women must appear as weak, emotional, and dependent on men. This view is deeply rooted in social and cultural structures that place men in dominant and powerful positions, while women are seen as beings who need protection and guidance (Eagly et al., 2020). These stereotypes not only shape how women are treated in daily life but also influence their representation in various forms of media, including film (Eagly et al., 2020). Film is a product of a creative process that involves the fusion of various elements such as ideas, value

systems, worldviews, aesthetics, norms, human behavior, and advanced technology. Therefore, films are not merely neutral entertainment devoid of specific values; they are collective works that convey messages through their narratives and visuals. Film serves as a medium that can reflect and shape societal views, as well as a means of conveying social, cultural, and political issues. In the modern context, there are various types of films, each with different approaches and styles. Although their methods of delivery differ, all films share the common goal of capturing the audience's attention and encouraging them to think more deeply about the issues raised in the story. Thus, films are not just entertainment; they

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are also a medium that can influence, inspire, and reflect the dynamics of society and the values it upholds (Connor et al., 2016).

Film, as one of the most powerful forms of media in shaping social perceptions, often reflects dominant cultural values. Over the past few decades, the representation of women in films has reinforced these stereotypes, where female characters are often portrayed as dependent on men or as sexual objects lacking power or autonomy. However, with the rise of the feminist movement and increasing awareness of the importance of gender equality, the representation of women in film has begun to undergo significant changes (Connor et al., 2016). There are many types of films, including action, adventure, animation, family, comedy, science fiction, and so on. In selecting a film, The researcher decided to choose an action film because it offers unique and deep insights into gender dynamics in a genre traditionally dominated by men. Action films are often seen as a masculine domain, but in recent years, many action films have started featuring strong female characters who play the role of the main hero. In the context of representing female feminism, choosing an action film as a research object becomes highly relevant because this genre offers opportunities to explore how women are depicted in roles that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. Research on action films can reveal how female characters are not only portrayed as objects or companions but also as main characters who possess strength, resilience, and leadership. Moreover, action films that address feminist themes often depict women's struggles against oppression or injustice, reflecting the issues faced by women in the real world. By analyzing the representation of feminism in action films, researchers can delve deeper into gender dynamics in popular culture and how these films contribute to shaping public perceptions of women's roles in society. Additionally, these action films also open up opportunities to explore how action films build and reflect social changes related to gender, as well as how the depiction of women in action roles can influence public perceptions and expectations regarding women's roles in real life. Therefore, choosing an action

film as a research object is important for understanding the evolution of gender representation and its impact on popular culture.

Based on the above factors, The researcher is interested in researching the action film titled "Gunpowder Milkshake," which features a group of brave and strong women who unite to fight their enemies and seek justice. Sam, as the main protagonist, is not only depicted as a skilled assassin but also as a figure full of empathy, particularly in her efforts to protect a young girl from a great threat. This shows that a woman's strength in an action film does not always have to be related to violence, but also to emotional resilience and morality. In addition to Sam, other characters such as Scarlet, Anna May, Madeleine, and Florence all bring their unique qualities to the story. They are figures who have experienced tough lives but manage to maintain a sense of solidarity and loyalty to each other. Scarlet, for example, played by Lena Headey, is Sam's mother, who is also an assassin, returning to Sam's life to help her fight against a criminal organization. This not only strengthens the theme of female strength but also portrays the depth of the mother-daughter relationship that is often underexplored in this genre. Anna May (Angela Bassett), Madeleine (Carla Gugino), and Florence (Michelle Yeoh) complete the team by demonstrating that strength does not come in one form, but rather as a combination of intelligence, experience, and physical toughness. The film also provides space for these characters to develop, offering background stories that allow the audience to understand their motivations and struggles. Thus, "Gunpowder Milkshake" not only serves as an example of how action films can feature women as empowered central characters but also as a more realistic and rich representation of women's roles in a harsh world. The film invites the audience to see that women can and should take leading roles in action stories, not just as symbols or followers, but as leaders and agents of change.

Previous research has shown a significant correlation between the perpetuation of gender stereotypes by the media and public beliefs. An analysis of gender stereotype depictions in the

film "The Intern" through audience responses revealed that viewers were aware of the integration of gender stereotypes and their transformative changes (Trisnawati et al., 2021). Another study on the film "Enola Holmes" uncovered gender stereotypes encompassing both femininity and masculinity (Azis & Sunra, 2022). A study involving the first "Frozen" film highlighted the depiction of Elsa as an empowered and independent heroine (Streiff & Dundes, 2017). An analysis of Disney films such as "Sleeping Beauty," "Snow White," "Cinderella," "Tangled," "Aladdin," and "Beauty and the Beast" illustrated the construction of stereotypical gender roles through female imagery (Priya, 2022). The researcher aims to explore the same subject, but with a slight difference where this research will emphasize the feminist values specifically related to gender discrimination contained in the film: 1) Marginalization, 2) Subordination, 3) Stereotyping, 4) Violence, 5) Burden. The research approach used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach, along with an interpretation of the material. The purpose of this study is to examine how feminist values are portrayed in the film Gunpowder Milkshake.

there are seven branches of feminism that are adopted by feminists (Tong, 1998), including:

#### 1. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism focuses on discrimination against women who are treated unfairly. This type of feminism emphasizes that women should have the same opportunities as men to achieve success in society. Liberal feminists believe that gender justice can start with oneself. First, the rules that apply must be fair. Second, ensure that no party takes advantage of others and that the systems in place are used fairly without harming anyone.

#### 2. Radical Feminism

Radical feminism highlights the system formed by patriarchal power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition. According to radical feminists, this system cannot be reformed, and its very concepts need to be completely overhauled. The main focus of radical feminism is on sex,

gender, and reproduction as the areas for developing their feminist thought.

#### 3. Marxist and Socialist Feminism

Marxist and Socialist feminism states that it is impossible for anyone, especially women, to achieve true freedom in a class-based society where the wealth produced by many is controlled by a few who hold power.

#### 4. Existentialist Feminism

Existentialist feminism explores why women are associated with dependence, community, and relationships, while men are associated with dependence, independence, and autonomy. These thinkers argue that there is a societal difference between what is considered "feminine" and "masculine."

#### 5. Multicultural and Global Feminism

Multicultural and Global feminism focuses on the causes and explanations for the position of women being subordinate to men around the world. This branch of feminism is known for its strong commitment to emphasizing the differences among women and identifying various types of women to foster effective collaboration.

#### 6. Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism emphasizes that we are not only connected to other human beings but also to other living beings such as animals and even plants.

#### 7. Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern feminism seeks to eliminate the distinctions between masculine and feminine, gender, women, and men. They aim to dismantle the male-dominated concepts that prevent women from defining themselves independently and without adhering to male-centric thinking.

### Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is a term to describe an unequal which is based on gender. Many people misunderstand the concept of gender and they often relate it to sex. Gender and sex, though often seen related, are actually not synonymous or subtitle for each other. Sex is the state of being females and males meanwhile gender refr to

women and men. Each gender has its own identity and roles which are called as femininity and masculinity. Gender discrimination exists in most parts of the world in many different forms (Lober, 1991). Fakih divides in his book that gender discrimination into five kinds, namely marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence, and work hard (Fakih, 1996).

#### 1. Marginalization

Gender differences have led to the economic marginalization of women, particularly in contexts like agriculture, where programs such as the Green Revolution focused primarily on male farmers. This bias resulted in the displacement and impoverishment of women farmers. Similarly, jobs traditionally seen as "female" (e.g., kindergarten teachers, secretaries) are often undervalued compared to "male" jobs, leading to wage disparities.

#### 2. Subordination

Women are often subordinated both in the household and in broader societal structures, where their contributions are undervalued or ignored. This subordination is reinforced by societal beliefs, such as the notion that women do not need higher education or that they are too emotional to hold leadership positions. Religious interpretations have also historically contributed to this subordination by restricting women's roles and rights.

#### 3. Stereotyping

Negative stereotypes about women lead to discrimination and further inequality. For instance, the stereotype that men are the primary breadwinners means that women's work is often undervalued and underpaid. This extends to other roles, such as domestic work, where tasks traditionally performed by women are deemed less valuable than male-dominated roles.

#### 4. Violence

Gender-based violence, including physical abuse, sexual harassment, and the imposition of dependency, is rooted in gender stereotypes that paint women as weaker and subordinate to men. These stereotypes legitimize the mistreatment of women, including rape, which is often a

manifestation of power dynamics rather than physical attraction.

#### 5. Burden

The gender role of women as caretakers and household managers leads to a disproportionate burden of domestic work on women. This burden is exacerbated for women who also work outside the home, as they are expected to manage both professional and domestic responsibilities. In wealthier households, this burden is often shifted to domestic workers, who are usually women, perpetuating the cycle of marginalization and subordination.

### **METHOD**

In this study, the researcher employs qualitative descriptive research techniques to analyze and interpret data by providing detailed descriptions. Qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2013).

Typically, qualitative research is suitable for studying history, behavior, social activities, organizational structures, people's lives, and more. After gathering data from the movie *Gunpowder Milkshake*, the researcher followed a systematic process to analyze it. First, the researcher identified and categorized scenes based on the theoretical framework used to address the research problem. Next, the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the data from each scene. Then, the researcher explained the rationale for selecting specific scenes and dialogues as evidence to support the research problem. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the research findings.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The researcher presents the findings and discussions to provide the answer to the research problems. The problem statements are how feminist values are portrayed in the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*?

#### **A. Findings**

The feminist values specifically related to gender discrimination contained in the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*

## 1. Marginalization

Scene 1: Library Guardians (00:18:42)

Dialogue

*Anna May: So, You're an idealist*

*Sam: Nope, maybe i don't have a type*

*Anna May: Everybody has a type*

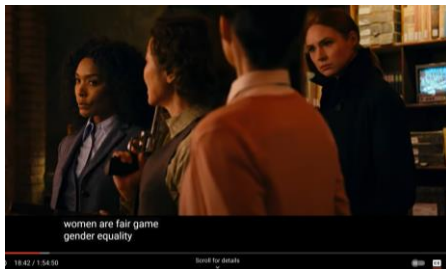
*Sam: Maybe, I'm the professional*

*Anna May: Old school. No women no children type*

*Sam: Women are fair game*

*Florence: Gender equality. Very progressive.*

*Madeleine: She's a feminist*



In this scene, the three female librarians reveal their hidden arsenal and prepare for battle, a denotative act showing women ready to fight and defend themselves. This moment challenges traditional gender roles by depicting women, often seen in nurturing or passive positions, as protectors and warriors. This subversion emphasizes the multifaceted nature of women's capabilities, aligning with contemporary feminist narratives that advocate for gender equality and the recognition of women's strength, independence, and resilience.

## 2. Subordination

Scene : Sam takes orders from Nathan (00:10:44, 00:24:31, 00:49:25)

Dialogue:

*Nathan : Just do what you're told.*

*Remember who you're working for.*

*Sams : You called me here oh so urgently just to remind me of that*

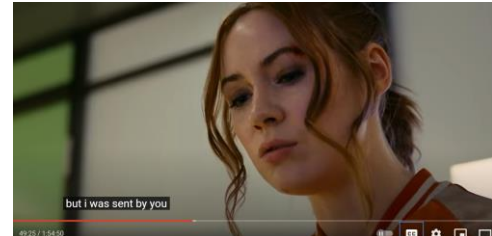


*Nathan : If i don't get to the gutter ball in 15 minutes they'll kill her sam you're not thinking straight just bring the money back now.*

*Sam : Okay i just need half an hour i'll release the girl and bring you back your money*



*Sam : but i was sent by you, by the firm*



In the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*, there are several scenes where Sam takes orders from Nathan, a male character who is her superior. These scenes can be seen as depicting subordination in the context of traditional power relationships in the workplace, where women are under the control or direction of men.

## 3. Stereotyping

Scene 1: Opening Fight Scene (00:01:29)

Dialogue :

*"Sam : There's a group of men called the firm. They've been running things for a long long time and when they need someone to clean up. Their mess. They send me"*





In the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*, the character Sam, who is an assassin, challenges stereotypical views about women. Traditional stereotypes often depict women as weak, emotional, or unsuitable for roles involving violence and high risk. However, Sam defies these stereotypes by being a strong, independent, and highly skilled character in her role as an assassin.

Scene 2 : The Bowling Alley Fight (00:30:15)

Dialogue:

*Sam: No guns today?*

*Yankee: Nathan doesn't want you hurt*

*Sam: That is so sweet. I'll try not to kill you too*



During the fight in the bowling alley, Sam uses a bowling ball and other improvised weapons to defeat her male opponents. This scene showcases Sam's resourcefulness and combat skills in a sport environment traditionally dominated by men. It emphasizes her adaptability and ingenuity, thus challenging the stereotype that women are less capable in physical confrontations.

#### **4. Violence**

Scene : A fight in the library (01:15:36, 01:16:14, 01:16:45, 01:31:11)

Dialogue:

*No dialogue during fights*



Dialogue:

*Scarlet: Is anything broken? you bleeding*

*Sam: i'm fine*

*Scarlet: Bleeding on the inside*

*Sam: I think the rest of them are coming*



*Madeleine: He took emily. I couldn't save her*

*Florence: It's okay. We'll get her back*



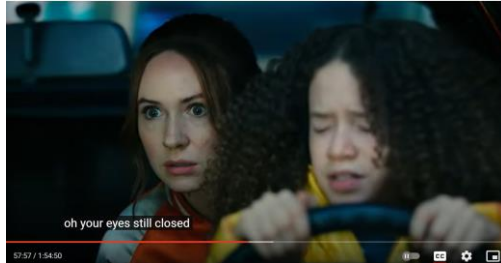
In the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*, there are many action scenes featuring female characters facing physical violence, and these scenes do indeed depict elements of violence. The violence in this film is not only used as an entertainment element but also as a tool to showcase the strength and resilience of female characters like Sam and others.

## 5. Burden

Scene 2 : Sam protects Emily (00:57:57, 01:09:38)

Dialogue:

*Sam: Okay. Put in drive. Close your eyes*



*Sam: Please. Her father was killed and she has nowhere else to go*



A scene where Sam has to manage her emotional burden and responsibilities, such as when she takes care of a young girl while facing threats from enemies.

## B. DISCUSSION

The result of the findings will be discussed in this part. The researcher found several scenes and the dialogue as proof of the analysis based on the movie by applying the theory and concepts. Here the researcher would like to discuss each part of the result.

### 1. Marginalization

The film does touch on broader themes of gender inequality and the struggle for empowerment in a male-dominated world. The female characters in *Gunpowder Milkshake* operate in a world dominated by male criminal organizations, where they are often marginalized or underestimated because of their gender. The fact that these women have to band together and fight against a powerful male-dominated

organization reflects the broader societal challenges that women face in gaining recognition and equal footing in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

### 2. Subordination

In the film, subordination is portrayed through the ways in which the female characters are often controlled, undermined, or forced into roles dictated by a male-dominated society. The main character, Sam, and the other women in the film operate in a violent, male-controlled underworld where they are expected to follow orders and conform to certain roles. The criminal organization they confront is emblematic of a patriarchal system that subordinates women, either by restricting their autonomy or by reducing them to mere tools or expendable assets within the organization. However, the film also subverts these dynamics by showing how these women resist and fight back against their subordination. Sam, along with other female characters like Scarlet, Anna May, Madeleine, and Florence, challenges the roles imposed on them, asserting their strength, independence, and solidarity. The story illustrates their struggle to break free from the control of the male-dominated power structure and reclaim their agency. Through these portrayals, *Gunpowder Milkshake* addresses the theme of subordination and highlights the efforts of women to overcome it, making it a central element of the narrative.

### 3. Stereotyping

The film subverts traditional gender roles by placing women in positions of power and authority typically reserved for men. Sam, the main character, is a highly skilled assassin, a role often associated with male protagonists in action genres. This portrayal directly challenges the stereotype that women are less capable of handling intense, action-packed roles. By showcasing Sam as a competent and fierce fighter, the film redefines the narrative around female strength and independence. *Gunpowder Milkshake* critiques male-dominated systems by highlighting how

women are often undervalued and underestimated in male-centric environments. The film depicts criminal organizations and power structures where men hold the majority of leadership positions and make critical decisions. In these settings, female characters like Sam face skepticism and obstacles despite their proven skills and abilities. This dynamic emphasizes the systemic barriers women encounter in male-dominated fields and questions the legitimacy of these power structures.

#### **4. Violence**

The film features many scenes of physical violence that are an integral part of the storyline. Sam, the main character, engages in various fights and acts of violence to achieve her goals and confront her enemies. The violence in this film serves not only as entertainment but also reflects the strength and skills of the female characters, directly challenging the stereotype that women cannot be involved in violent action. In *Gunpowder Milkshake*, violence often functions as a manifestation of power dynamics. The conflicts and fights in the film are often not just about physicality but also about control and dominance. This reflects how violence, including gender-based violence, is often related to power issues rather than just physical attraction. Overall, *Gunpowder Milkshake* presents violence in various forms, and although its primary focus is not on gender-based violence such as rape, the film explores themes of violence and power within a broader narrative context. The depiction of violence in this film is used to challenge gender stereotypes and show how female characters can empower themselves in the face of oppression.

#### **5. Burden**

In this film, the female characters who work in the criminal world also demonstrate the burden of the roles they play. They must operate in a male-dominated environment, often facing greater challenges than their male counterparts. This burden includes constantly having to prove their abilities and

fight against neglect and unfair judgment. Sam also faces a significant emotional burden, especially related to her past, the loss of her mother, and when she takes care of a young girl while facing threats from enemies.. Although the film focuses more on action, the emotional burden that Sam faces is an important part of her character and adds complexity to how she manages various aspects of her life.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This research has identified and analyzed various gender themes present in the film *Gunpowder Milkshake*, particularly those related to marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and the burdens faced by female characters. The film portrays how women often encounter challenges in male-dominated environments, such as the criminal world that serves as the backdrop of the story. Marginalization is depicted through the struggles of the female characters to gain recognition and equal footing in a world dominated by male criminal organizations. Subordination is reflected in the way female characters are controlled and forced into roles dictated by patriarchal structures, even though they ultimately resist and strive to reclaim their independence. Gender stereotypes are also challenged through the depiction of strong female characters who defy traditional roles typically associated with men, particularly in the action genre. The film highlights how male-dominated systems often undervalue women's capabilities, despite their proven skills and resilience. Violence in this film is not merely an element of entertainment but also a reflection of power dynamics, where women must use violence to defend themselves and fight back. It also illustrates how violence is often tied to issues of power and control, rather than merely physicality. Finally, the emotional burden faced by the main character, Sam, adds layers of complexity to the film's narrative. This burden includes not only the duties related to her role as an assassin but also the personal and emotional responsibilities that challenge her in various aspects of life. Overall, *Gunpowder Milkshake* uses these elements to highlight the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society while





showcasing how they can overcome and resist the oppression they encounter. The film offers a rich perspective on gender issues while celebrating the strength, independence, and solidarity among its female characters.

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