

**Ain't no man: Female masculinity in Android game *Legend of the PHOENIX***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study performs content analysis on an Android game titled *Legend of the Phoenix*. *Legend of the Phoenix*, commonly known as *LoP*, is an *otome* (girl) game released by Modo Game in 2020. Like most *otome* games, *Legend of the Phoenix* revolves around the journey of a young woman who is given a second chance at life after her first ends tragically. The player takes the role of this young woman and has to complete various missions and storylines in order to complete the game. This study aims to find messages about gender presented in the game by analyzing its visual and narrative content. It focuses on identifying female masculinity in the special recruitment group of Female General or Heroine. The game characters being analyzed are the four Generals in *Legend of the Phoenix*—Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu. They are examined in terms of role, abilities, and appearance and their relation to the concept of female masculinity introduced by Halberstam. The result shows that the Female General belongs to *Femme Pretender* type. It means that the characters of Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu possess masculine traits (role and abilities) while also keeping their female appearance (physical and outfit).

**Keywords:** *Female masculinity, femme pretender, Legend of the Phoenix, game*

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**Article history**

*Submitted:*  
9 January 2024

*Accepted:*  
12 March 2024

*Published:*  
14 March 2024

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**Citation (APA Style):**

Adelia, S., Dirgantari, A., Hirano, S., Wedawati, M., Ridha, F., & Koiri, M. (2024). Ain't no man: Female masculinity in Android game *Legend of the PHOENIX*. *LITERA*, 23(1), 14-24. <https://doi.org/10.21831/ltr.v23i1.70536>

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**INTRODUCTION**

“Armed with my spear and riding on my blossom horse. Who dares say that women can't be an official?” is one of the quotes by Qin Liangyu in *Legend of the Phoenix*. The game *Legend of the Phoenix* was developed by Modo Game and was first released for Android and iOS in 2020. Commonly abbreviated as *LoP*, it can be categorized as *otome* games. In Japanese, *otome* means young girl. Tanikawa and Asahi (2013) state that *otome* games commonly refer to love simulation games for women. Meanwhile, Andlauer (2018) defines *otome* games that are specifically aimed at and played mainly by female players. Just like novels and movies, games also have their own genre, with *otome* being one of them. The *otome* genre originated in Japan and has been spreading to other countries in recent years. Games that belong to this genre will involve players being incarnated as the heroine who is surrounded by several potential love interests (Andlauer, 2018; Tanikawa & Asahi, 2013). Players then must cultivate their affection and develop a relationship with the chosen male lead in order to achieve a “happy ending.”

*Legend of the Phoenix* follows these characteristics of *otome* games perfectly. The game starts with a flashback of a crying young woman. She remembers, in her previous life, helping the Crown Prince to become the emperor. He then promised to cherish and make her his queen. Yet, after ascending to the throne, he doesn't keep his promise and even sentences her to death by drinking poisoned wine. The game follows her story—her second chance at life and getting revenge on those who have wronged her. Player takes the role of this young woman and begins their journey by joining the Imperial Place as

a lowly maid. By completing daily quests, participating in events, and following the storyline, player can gather allies and love interests and go against enemies.

What makes *LoP* interesting is not only the existence of the main female character itself but also the appearance of female allies that can be recruited throughout the game. There is no denying that gender stereotypes exist even in the world of video games. Male and female characters in games are portrayed differently (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2009; Burgess et al., 2007). Male has a higher rate of appearance and more significant roles in video games; whereas female appears less often and only possess minor roles (Burgess et al., 2007). In addition, males usually play the hero role and hold a special weapon or skill that can be used to complete a mission and/or save a damsel in distress. On the other hand, females are regulated into supporting or even submissive roles where they need the male hero to save them (Jansz & Martis, 2007). From old titles like *Super Mario Brothers* and *Donkey Kong* to recent ones like *Princess Zelda - The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, *My Kingdom for the Princess IV*, *Save the Princess* and even *Fishdom* have followed the trope of heroes (male) saving the princess (female). Therefore, the existence of female characters who are capable of standing for themselves and helping others is quite unique.

There are more than 40 partners available through various methods of recruitment in *LoP*. Among the large number of partners who can be recruited (Figure 1) in *Legend of the Phoenix*, there is a particular group known as the Heroine or the Female General through special recruitment (Figure 2). Qin Liangyu, whose quote is mentioned above, is actually one of the Female Generals that players can get through collecting specific recruitment tokens. In addition to Qin Liangyu, there are also three other characters in the category namely Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, and Liang Hongyu. In total, there are four Female Generals that players can obtain from ranking and other major events in the game.

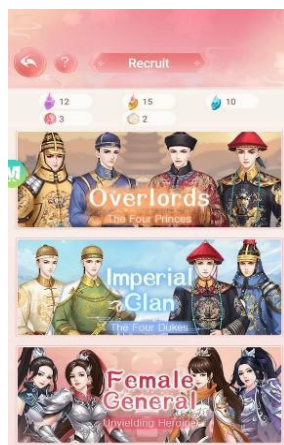


Figure 1. Recruitment Option



Figure 2. The Heroine/Female General

In the case of Female Generals in *LoP*, four of them are labeled as Partner who assist the player or main character in fighting enemies and completing quests. They also wear armor and carry weapons (Figure 2). The way the characters are illustrated makes the Female Generals look rather ‘manly.’ Being generals on their own, these characters can also be considered to harbor masculine traits despite being female. Generally, in *otome* games, male characters play the role of hero or potential love interest to their female counterparts. Their role as the dominant one does not derive far from the usual gender stereotypes even in the world of video games. In *LoP*, male characters are regulated mostly to the role of Confidant and Partner (Figure 3-5). Some of them may look manly by wearing armor or holding a sword (Figure 3); yet others may not look very manly as they are simply carrying a brush or teacup and dressed in lavish clothes (Figure 3 and 4). This brings to question what masculinity actually is and whether the quality of being masculine only belongs to men or not. Can women actually also be considered as masculine?



Figure 3. Confidant and Partner



Figure 4. Confidant



Figure 5. Partner

Masculinity is defined as traits or characteristics that are stereotypically related to males. It also refers to how society believes a man should act and look like. Wickman (2010) states that masculinity is related to males, specifically to the appearance of the muscular body and aspects of strength, endurance, and capability that males possess. However, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) believe that masculinity is flexible and dynamic. It is not something permanent that every male is born with. In *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, Connell (2003) states that “male body does not confer masculinity.” Rather than a natural affinity, masculinity is a concept related to specific traits and physical appearance that are constructed by society and culture. In short, masculinity does not belong solely to one gender; it can differ from one particular social setting to another.

Halberstam (1998) agrees with this view; she explains that masculinity is a social construct rather than a natural one. It is something that is done or practiced continuously and not something naturally associated with the body. It is possible therefore for female to be masculine. Halberstam (1998) calls this phenomenon as ‘female masculinity.’ The term refers to how masculine traits or characteristics such as aggressiveness, strength, courage, and so on are transposed on female. Female masculinity is not simply an attempt to imitate male masculinity, but rather it is a “glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity” (Halberstam, 1998). Some researchers like Gardiner (2012) disagrees and considers female masculinity as mere imitation of masculinity. Yet, Halberstam believes that female masculinity can be considered to be more superior to the male one as it does not put women in the position of ‘the other,’ the counterpart. She then introduces five categories of female masculinity—Butch Realness, Femme Pretender, Male Mimicry, Fag Drag, and Denaturalized Masculinity.

Those categories can be explained as follows (Ginting, Thyrhay, and Perangin Angin, 2022; Halberstam, 1998). First, *butch realness* is centered on the concept of realness and places emphasis on the line that separates butch from transsexual identity. It seems that butch and its transsexual identity are different and could be one reality, however in this context butch realness might be a naturally occurring female who can become or change to be a man with ease. Women who have the will to be a butch realist is motivated to have a masculine image. Second, performative masculinity that aims to have no seriousness to being a man or showing its masculinity naturally is known as *femme pretense* or *female pretender* (a female who is pretending to be masculine). It leans more on deeds of masculinity or people will see it as masculine rather than manly looks. Third, *Men's Emulation* is when women have the same chance to imitate any, including how a man shows his masculinity. Men's emulation demonstrates how women attempt to emulate a recognizable aspect of masculine masculinity. The way women learn to be able to behave like men is the primary feature of masculine imitation. Fourth, some reality and social phenomena often picture the character and characterization of homosexual macho males, which is called *Drag a Fag*. Fag drag suggests that some women fetishize or have special attention to gay male culture. They often imitate the "Castro clone," a subset of homosexual metropolitan guys who are well-known for their leather or denim outfits. Last, *denaturalized masculinity* may refer to a woman who shows her

version of manliness than butch reality. Denaturalized manliness, on the other hand, explores optional masculinities, such as those represented by masculine imitation.

This study will investigate the characters of Female General in *Legend of the Phoenix* and see how they work with Halberstam's concept of female masculinity. Will they belong to one or more categories of female masculinity mentioned above? Or would they create an entirely new representation of female masculinity?

Studies on games have become quite popular recently, especially concerning gender issues. Jansz and Martis (2007), for one, have analyzed powerful female characters in video games that they dub 'Lara phenomenon.' Then, there are also Burgess et al. (2007) and Dill & Thill (2007) who explore the cover images of over 100 hundred video games to find out gender stereotypes applied to female and male characters. They conclude that gender stereotypes very much exist in the video game world. Male characters still dominate the screen and usually are the aggressive ones. Female characters are also limited in role and appearance; they are regulated to being hypersexualized and submissive. Additionally, there is also Tompkins and Martins (2022) who focus on character design in the video game industry and discover how masculine identities and technological limitations have contributed to gender stereotypes (white male heroes, voluptuous female characters). In the matter of female masculinity in game, particularly, Parvathi P K (2017) has previously analyzed female masculinity in *Hunger Games* series. Additionally, Ginting, Zein, and Perangin Angin (2022) also dab in the female masculinity issue in the *Last of Us Part II* game. While these existing studies have analyzed the gender issues in games; however, the object of their studies are mostly male-oriented games. They are different from this study which focuses on exploring gender issues in a *otome* (girl) game namely *Legend of the Phoenix*.

Compared to the large number of research on game studies in general, only a small number has focused specifically on girl games. Among those limited numbers, the existing studies on *otome* games are dominated by the analysis on players' themselves (Nouvanty, Suryanto & Faroqi, 2023; Shibuya, Okura, Shoun & Asou, 2019; Wang, 2023; Gong & Huang, 2023), social factor (Ganzon, 2019), and characterization (Huan, 2022; Pawlowski & da Mota, 2022; Chen, 2023). This study on female masculinity in *Legend of the Phoenix* game offers a new perspective on exploring gender representation within the specific context of *otome* (girl) game. Although previous studies have commonly analyzed the portrayal of female characters in games, they mostly focus on the stereotypical portrayal or even misinterpretation of females in gaming industry. This study delves deeper into the issue of gender portrayal, taking the case of Female General characters in *LoP*. Furthermore, rather than simply focusing only on one aspect of female masculinity (appearance or characteristics) like many studies did before, this study includes three aspects—role, abilities, and appearance—to identify the female masculinity of the chosen characters in *Legend of the Phoenix* game. This angle will give this study a fresh perspective and has the potential to discover new insights on gender representation in *otome* games, making it a valuable contribution to the field of game as well as gender studies.

## METHOD

This study performs content analysis on *Legend of the Phoenix* and aims to find out messages about gender presented in the game by analyzing its content. It focuses on identifying female masculinity in the special recruitment group of Female General characters (Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu). It explores three main aspects: role, abilities, and appearance in identifying the specific type of female masculinity they present based on the concept of female masculinity by Halberstam (1998).

As for the research procedures, they include several key steps. First, data collection, as the name suggests, involves collecting in-game content related to the Female General characters (Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu) such as narratives, dialogues, visuals, actions, and/or character descriptions. The data is collected through gameplay as well as gathering any available background information provided in or by the game. It may take in the form of screenshots, video, or texts. Next, the second step involves recording all collected data to ensure that relevant information about the Female General characters are properly stored. After the data have been recorded, it would be sorted and categorized based on three main aspects—role, abilities, and appearance. Some roles like knights, kings, soldiers are predominantly defined as masculine while roles like healers, princesses, and saintesses are feminine. Hence, the collected data is sorted and used to identify particular instances or

characteristics related to female masculinity theory explained in the beginning.

Lastly, the sorted data later is interpreted and analyzed through the lens of Halberstam's female masculinity theory. It sets out to find out whether the role, abilities, and appearance of the Female General group align with the theoretical framework or not. Tracking the traits or patterns in the portrayal of female masculinity within the *LoP* game context would allow us to discover whether Halberstam's concept still holds true or may require an update.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The group known as Female General or Heroine in *Legend of the Phoenix* consists of four characters: Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu. Those four are influential female figures in Chinese history (Edwards, 2011; Hung, 1989). Hua Mulan, from the Mullan Ballad or Song of Mulan (Tian & Xiong, 2013), is probably the most well-known among the four. She disguises herself as a man and joins the army in place of her father. Then, Liang Hongyu is based on a real Song female warrior who fights against the invading Jin army. On the other hand, Qin Liangyu is a Ming General best known for defending her country from Manchu invasion. Finally, Mu Guiying contributed in staging a resistance against Western Xia.

In *LoP*, the four characters can be recruited using 10 Female General tokens (Figure 6) or combining 100 Female General token shards (Figure 7). The Female General possesses stats higher than partners recruited through normal recruitment. They can also be upgraded using Female General token in order to raise their stats in the game.



Figure 6. Female General Token



Figure 7. Female General Token Shard

The Female General are illustrated as attractive female warriors who are “no inferior to men” in the game. Based on the concept of female masculinity by Halberstam (1998), the characters of Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu belong to the *Femme Pretender* category. It means that they do perform or adapt masculine traits, but in terms of appearance, they still retain their female appearance and do not resemble a man. The details of which are discussed in the following sections.

### Discussion

#### *Female Masculinity in Role*

In terms of role, characters from the Female General group all possess the same role of being Partner (allies) to the player. In terms of rank in society, as a General, they are all also quite influential. General is a position of high rank in the army. Historically speaking, this position has always been dominated by male. It is extremely rare even today for females to sit in such high-ranking positions.

The game setting of *Legend of the Phoenix* is based on ancient China, where females did not have favorable standing. Most usually stayed at home, taking lessons on how to be a good wife to their future husband. Although there have been some influential female figures (Hung, 1989), generally females are not allowed to join the army. Tian and Xiong (2013) states that in feudal China, females were confined to take care of household affairs including cooking and weaving. Therefore, it is interesting to see that the characters of the Heroine group all possess the title as a General, a position predominantly held by males.

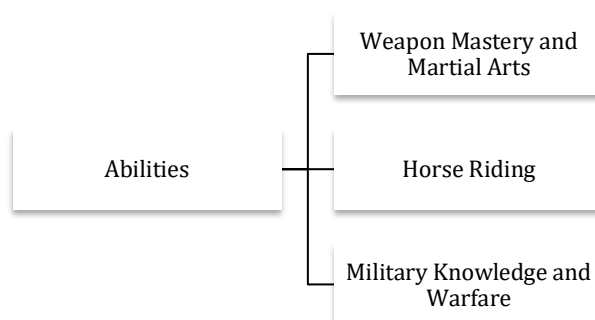
The position of army general can be achieved by anyone (both noble and commoner) with a considerable amount of accomplishment and merit. Those who are noble by birth are often considered to rank higher than the commoners who manage to rise through ranks by achievement. One of the heroines, Hua Mulan, for instance, manages to rise to the position of General after managing to protect her country. Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu also all accomplished similar deeds and

defended their country against the foreign invaders. For their achievements, these four are not rewarded the title of Empress or Princess, which is normally given to females, but they become a General. It shows that the group embodies a trait or rather a title that is quite masculine. As an army general, Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu also possess abilities befitting to their role.

In the context of *LoP*, the Female General characters are the epitome of Female Masculinity, a phenomenon in which females possess masculine traits or characteristics (Halberstam, 1998). However, Bem (in Taylor & Hall, 1982) may dub them as ‘androgynous’. Like Halberstam, Bem also challenged the long-held view that an individual can only be either feminine or masculine, but cannot be both. Being androgynous means that one possesses both masculine and feminine traits, which allows them to exhibit a broad(er) range of traits that are not confined to specific gender (Woodhill & Samuels, 2023; Morgan, 1982; Taylor & Hall, 1982). The Female General in *LoP* is portrayed as the leader of an army, a masculine title, even though they are female. There is no mention of other roles they hold in the game, so the group can be considered as androgynous as they embody traditionally masculine roles of being a General or leader of an army, while also being a woman. Traditionally being a General as well as exhibiting its related traits—leadership, strength, warfare—are something possessed by male characters in game. But in *LoP*, Hua Mulan and the other three female characters are the ones representing such traits. This characterization reflects an androgynous representation in the game, which allows characters, regardless of their biological sexes, to embody a combination of masculine and feminine traits. In short, based on the roles they are assigned in the game, it can be concluded that the Female General characters hold masculine traits (being army general) despite being female.

### ***Female Masculinity in Abilities***

In relation to the previous section, as Female Generals, Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu are undoubtedly skilled in several areas just like their male counterparts do. Their abilities in *LoP* can be categorized as follows:



**Figure 8. Female General’s abilities**

First, weapon mastery and martial arts, each Heroine is shown to be holding a specific type of weapon in their character illustration. Hua Mulan is holding a large broadsword resembling a buster sword (Figure 9). Then, Mu Guiying looks battle ready with her dagger (Figure 10), Liang Hongyu with her bow (Figure 11), and Qin Liangyu with her spear (Figure 12).



**Figure 9. Hua Mulan**



**Figure 10. Mu Guiying**



Figure 11 Liang Hongyu



Figure 12. Qin Liangyu

On separate occasions in *LoP*, each General has made a statement regarding their skills with the chosen weapon. Mu Guiying explains that her sword can take on millions in addition to being able to drive away the “foreign clowns.” Liang Hongyu also shows how she used her “trusty bow” to defend her country. All of these imply that the Female General can fight, using martial arts with or without a weapon.

In addition to weapon mastery, the Heroines are capable of riding horses on their own. In the beginning, Qin Liangyu already states, “[a]rmed with my spear and riding on my blossom horse...” which shows her ability in horse riding. Furthermore, during her first meeting with Hua Mulan, the player (main character) comments on Mulan’s riding ability “[d]ashing through the mountains to reach the battlefield.” Similarly, Liang Hongyu also says that she is capable of “[d]efending my country valiantly with my trusty bow and horse.” The rest of the Female General also shows similar ability in horse riding as it benefited their position.

Lastly, a general must possess knowledge about warfare and military. In *LoP*, Hua Mulan has said to the player (Figure 13), “If you ever get interested in the way of the army, come find me.”

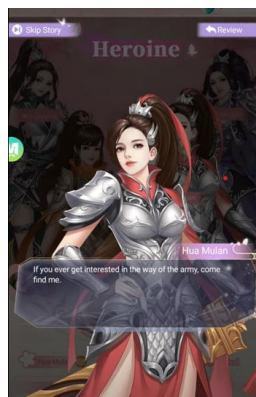


Figure 13. Hua Mulan’s dialogue

It implies that Mulan understands how the army works in and out of a battle. Having been part of the army to replace his father in the beginning, Mulan climbed her way up from a foot soldier to an army General due to her excellent achievement. Similar to her, Mu Guiying is also said to be a female General with many achievements. Her command of the imperial army is pretty famous as well as her feats in battle and diplomatic missions. In one of her dialogues, Liang Hongyu also explains how she manages to defend her country and drum up the “soldiers’ morale to halt the progress of the Tartar’s army.” They would not be able to achieve such a feat if they know nothing about the army or war.

All abilities as mentioned above (weapon mastery, martial arts, horse riding, military knowledge, and warfare) are abilities that males commonly possess, especially for those who are part of the army. By having those abilities, the Female General has embodied masculine traits despite being female. The group does not only hold the position of General in name only, but they also show impressive abilities (that their male colleagues may or may not have) befitting of their position.

### ***Female Masculinity in Appearance***

Both females and males are expected to adhere to socially constructed gender norms even in games. From the way one dresses to the way one behaves should be in line to the expected gender role

and norm. Traditionally, female is expected to show feminine traits such as submissive, gentle, weak, nurturing, sensitive, dependent, and the like; whereas male is expected to show masculine traits such as strong, brave, intelligent, independent, assertive, and unemotional (Ab Rashid et al., 2016; Andalas & Budi Qur'ani, 2019; England et al., 2011; K, 2017; Louie, 2012; Miller et al., 2016; Nakamura & Matsuo, 2005). They are also expected to dress as such; female is identical with dresses, skirts, and slips whereas male with pants, shirts, and suits. Femininity and masculinity refer to the way society's perspective in how a man be a man and how woman be a woman. This section discusses how the Female General presents themselves in matters of appearance—are they going to be masculine and dress like a man?

Physically speaking, the Female General characters are shown to be a young female with long hair and slim figure. They are illustrated as a group of attractive females wearing armor and carrying a weapon, although their armor is vastly different from their male counterparts in the game as well as the ancient Chinese armor (Adams et al., 2003; Dien, 1981; Ding, 2005; Garrett, 2007). Duke Jing (Figure 14) and Prince Liang (Figure 15), male characters from the special recruitment option in *LoP*, are also shown wearing armor in their character illustrations. The armor they use is called brigandines, which was commonly used during the Qing dynasty (Adams et al., 2003; Garrett, 2007; Lai & Su, 2017). The full-body armor covers its user from head to toe and protects him from attacks.

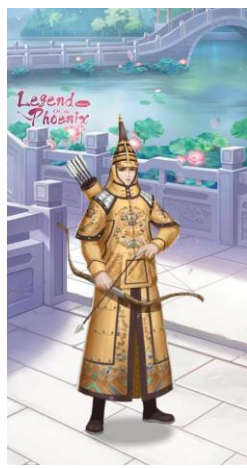


Figure 14. Duke Jing



Figure 15. Prince Lian

In games, female characters are often hypersexualized and associated with sexiness (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2009; Burgess et al., 2007; Dill & Thill, 2007; Fisher, 2015). They are usually scantily clad or shown wearing revealing clothes that show their body shape and emphasize sexiness. Unlike Duke Jing and Prince Lian who wear full-body armor, Female General's armor seems to leave many areas uncovered. Their armor is pretty tight and form-fitting as shown below (Figure 16-19).



Figure 16. Hua Mulan's appearance



Figure 17. Mu Guiying's appearance





Figure 18. Liang Hongyu's appearance



Figure 19. Qin Liangyu's appearance

Hua Mulan (Figure 16) is dressed in a combination of silver and red. She wears form-fitting silver armor that covers the upper part of her body and arms as well as a long red dress with four (two front and two back) slits that go from her upper thigh to her knee. Next is Mu Guiying. Armed with a short dagger, General Mu (Figure 17) dons white and dark green robe with black inner clothes. Her robe is loosely held by silver hip armor and black belt, leaving her milky white tights exposed. She only has some pieces of armor on her body—right arm, right hip, and left shoulder. Hongyu's outfit is almost similar to Mulan, except she is dressed mainly in orange and gold (Figure 18). In addition, her long dress only has two front slits instead of four. Last, Liangyu's upper body is completely encased in purple and silver armor (Figure 19). Her armor looks the most complete as it covers her arms and front entirely. Like Mulan and Hongyu, she also wears a long purple dress with two front slits.

The Female General group shares similar characteristics regarding their attire. First, their dress or robe has strategically placed strips, either on the side, front, or back, displaying milky white legs. Second, all their outfits are form-fitting and clearly show their body's shape. Third, they only use small pieces of armor rather than full-body ones like their male counterparts do. Fourth, all of them wear knee-high stiletto boots with their armor.

Given their position as an army general, the outfit they wear may not be functional in a real battle. It does not fully cover them. Also, compared to the ancient Chinese armor or even the armor worn by male characters (Figure 14 and 15), the Female General's armor is severely lacking. Of course, it will be different if the purpose of their armor is not to protect them against their enemies but to seduce them. The outfit worn by Hua Mulan and other generals shows a perfect balance of elegance, sexiness, and danger. The exposed leg created by the slits especially allows these female warriors a wide range of movement in battles. It, however, also shows the player (and audience) eye candy during the game. This presents the Female General as a group of sexy and alluring female characters but very dangerous given their abilities.

Even though in the previous sections (role and abilities) the Female General are depicted as characters who possess male traits, this section shows that Hua Mulan and the other three show an interesting mix of masculinity and femininity in terms of appearance. First, physically, they appear as a group of young females with long dark hair, fair skin, slim and sexy figure. Second, costume, the Female General all wear armor. Normally, armor would be something that only males wear; hence it is considered as masculine clothes. However, rather than a protective armor that covers the body from head to toe, which is the standard of Chinese armor during the Qing dynasty, the Female General's armor are pretty form-fitting, showing the curve of their figure, and equipped with knee-high stiletto boots. Their costume actually is stereotypical of female game characters to accentuate allure and sexiness. There is an intersection between masculinity and femininity in terms of their appearance. On one hand, their physical appearance suggests femininity; while, on the other hand, their costume presents a combination of femininity and masculinity. This conclusion differs from the previous sections, which mostly lean towards masculine side.

## CONCLUSION

The Female General—Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying, Liang Hongyu, and Qin Liangyu—are the epitome of female masculinity. They can be categorized as *Femme Pretender*, according to Halberstam's

female masculinity concept. Femme Pretender means that an individual embodies masculine traits while their appearance remains feminine. In the case of Female General characters in *LoP*, their masculine traits are apparent in terms of their role and abilities. As above-mentioned, the group holds the role of being an army general—a role that is predominantly held by males, especially in ancient Chinese where this game takes place. They also possess the abilities befitting of an army general such as weapon mastery, martial arts, horse riding, military knowledge, and warfare. Those abilities are traditionally categorized as masculine. Therefore, despite being female, Hua Mulan and the other three characters exhibit masculine traits through their role as an army general and possessing its related abilities.

On the other hand, even with the masculine traits, the Female General still retains their femininity through their appearance. Physically, they appear as a group of attractive young females with long hair, fair skin, slim and sexy figure. In terms of outfit, they may wear armor which is traditionally worn by male in the army. However, their outfit has been modified to accentuate their feminine figure with its tight-fitting form, low cut, and also high-heeled shoes. Such portrayals are almost stereotypical for female game characters. The Female General group does not change their appearance to resemble that of a man. Nevertheless, in maintaining this female appearance, they still fall victim to gender stereotypes in terms of female characters' appearance in video games. The outfit they wear emphasizes their attractive figure and may not be very practical in battles. Unlike the other two aspects (role and abilities) which can be classified as masculine, Female General's appearance shows an unique mix of femininity and masculinity. Still, it can be said that the feminine traits are more dominant as they appear as a female either physically or costume-wise.

The findings of this study shows that Halberstam's concept of female masculinity can be used to analyze audio-visual media like games. Games initially started as a male-oriented industry. While things have slowly changed, there remains a need for future research in the area, especially on the complexities of gender issues in games. This study contributes to the broader understanding of gender representation in games, particularly in *otome* games genre. Possible future research in this area can explore gender representation in other genres as well as addressing the players' perceptions of such notions. Furthermore, going behind the scenes and investigating the development process and the studio's motive for certain game designs would be another topic of interest, which can provide valuable insights of the evolving dynamics within the game industry.

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