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Feminism and Love

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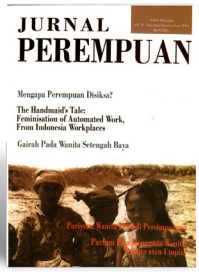

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Feminism and Love

Love is one of the most talked about topics and we are surrounded by various representations of love in our daily lives. Several works of art and literature as well as music, movies, soap operas and commercials have love as main theme. Love, as it is often narrated in romantic tales, is considered as indefinable, mysterious and beyond rational discourse. The meaning of love is held to be knowable only intuitively, at the level of feeling, and cannot be communicated in precise terms (Jackson 1999). Therefore, love is often seen as a unique personal need and a desire which is placed in the private realm. The idea of this kind of love is widely believed by society thus things that are part of social and cultural construction of love tend to be taken for granted. Meanwhile, social and cultural constructs are influencing and determining the meaning and definition of love. It can be said that there are two dominant readings of love (Grossi 2014). On the one hand love is seen in close relationship with patriarchy and heterosexuality. This is because the narrative of love is mostly associated with procreation, family, marriage and the household, as well as with monogamy and / or polygamy and loyalty. Thus for women, love is easily translated as being a wife or mother. On the other hand love is seen as not to be bound by social imperatives and constraints; on the contrary, it is related to the idea of freedom, equality and ones capability to act. In other words love is seen as a force capable of overcoming existing social barriers. Therefore for women love is considered to be liberating and empowering.

In feminist thought, the issue of love has been studied by early thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone and Ti-Grace Atkinson, feminists who criticize the role of love in perpetuating patriarchal relationships. In the 1980s, this was followed by feminists such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Audre Lodre and bell hooks who viewed love in more productive ways. According to Jackson (1999), feminist criticism of love is related to the notion that love is seen as an ideology that legitimizes women's oppression and which keeps them trapped in exploitative heterosexual relationships. In addition, love is also seen to make women vulnerable, *not only* to *exploitation, but also* to being *hurt* by *men.* Feminists also see romantic love critically. This is because romantic love is central to heterosexuality and contributes to gender inequality and violence against women.

On the other hand there are also a number of feminists who view love as a form of resistance and transformation which can give women the capability to act. Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey who study the narrative of romance, argue that love retains its ability to free women from the patriarchal grip because of its "narrative" power. According to them the fusion with the love narrative allows women to facilitate the "rewriting of other spheres of life" (Grossi 2014). Moreover, the idea of queer thinkers who try to move beyond a conventional understanding of love, is also important in the discourse of love. This idea, for example, is related to dismantle the definition of love that is often associated with heterosexual sex or associated with human nature. The same goes with the dismantling of the relationship between love with marriage, family and procreation. Also important to note is that love sometimes correlates with concepts such as work, care, desire, and romance. Although often associated with romantic romance, the meaning of love is actually very broad.

Today's society has a tendency to view love as a profit-generating commodity or as a means to obtain pleasure and even subjugation and domination. Here, it is important to study feminist views on love, to look at it as an important ethical, social and / or political power with an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, JP96 discusses love in homosexual relationships, feminist experiences in romantic relationships, existence of popular culture in introducing patriarchal love values, violence in dating relationships, philosophical meaning of love, and how women experience the meaning of love. This issue encourages the deconstruction of ideological work that subordinates women in love and hopes to sharpen the feminist theoretical framework on the issue of love while finding mechanisms for change. (**Anita Dhewy**)

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Abstracts Sheet

Hendri Yulius (Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, University of Sydney, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, New South Wales, Australia)

Rethinking and Queering Relationships in the Age of Same-sex Marriage: Multiplicities, Intensities, and New Potentialities

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 1-9, 1 image, 20 ref.

This essay presents a theoretical discussion, analysis, and formulation to reconfigure new meanings, potentialities and multiplicities of homosexual relationships. After a brief discussion on the rapid popularization of marriage equality as the primary goal of queer movements, an overview of queer critiques of marriage is provided. Special attention will be given to the discussion about homonormativity and the sharp criticism from queer negativity/anti-social queers. For these critiques, the subjects are encouraged to occupy an abject position, which I argue, only further depoliticize queer politics. After a critical overview of this political stance, I offer the accounts of Foucault and Deleuze to explore multiple forms of relationships beyond marital institution, focusing on the ways in which relationships are to be understood in terms of potentialities, intensities, and emergent forms and functions beyond the existing language capacities and formalized forms. This essay should, however, is not meant to be masterly or prescriptive, but rather is a modest effort to spur more critical concerns, discussions, and debates among queer Indonesians.

Keywords: queer, homosexual, marriage equality, Foucault, Deleuze, potentialities, multiplicities, relationship

Meike Lusye Karolus[1] & Laili Nur Anisah[2] ([1]Center for Southeast Asian Social Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia & [2]Jejer Wadon, Boyolali, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia)

When Female Feminists Falling in Love: Ideology, Media, and Practices

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 11-17, 20 ref.

Falling in love is a universal experience that cannot be limited by racial, religious, ethnic, or even ideologies. Female feminists also experience falling in love and being in a relationship. When falling in love, female feminists often face the tension between their consciousness holding on to feminist ideology, and their collective experience influenced by patriarchal culture. Therefore, female feminists often have to compromise and negotiate in their relationships. This paper examines the contemplative experiences of female feminists falling in love in the context of patriarchal culture by focusing on three main areas: feminist ideology, the influence of patriarchal media, and relationships in everyday lives. This research is a descriptive-qualitative paper which uses in-depth interviews with female feminists of different backgrounds in Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Jombang. Findings show that female feminists' concept about love cannot be separated from the existence of their partners, the experience and media reproduction towards the concept of love, and the practice of female feminists relations formed before a formal relationship.

Keywords: love, feminism, media, female feminist, patriarchy

Aulia Rahmawati (Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social dan Political Sciences, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia)

Romance and Femininity in Indonesian Teenage Dramas: A Transnational Post-Feminist Analysis

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 19-27, 25 ref.

Even after the rise of Indonesian feminist film directors like Nia Dinata, Mira Lesmana, Mouly Surya, Nan T Achnas and Lola Amaria, Indonesian moviegoers still flock to the cinemas to watch teenage romance dramas, many of which are badly written. This paper examines the way romance and femininity have been shaped in cinematic representation in the movies London Love Story 2, Promise and Dear Nathan. This paper concludes that Indonesian romance teenage dramas are entrenched with masculine power and heavily dominated spectacles in which the feminine heroines are treated as passive objects of desire whose agency and subjectivity are being stripped away. Using feminist literature on post-feminist romance cinema, the heroines in these films have mostly been constructed as independent, smart and seemingly capable to act at first, but nevertheless pursue romantic, traditional, heterosexual relationships saturated with masculine control and dominance. This paper shows that the awareness of post-feminism has become transnational, crossing geographical borders between West and East, and has influenced the production and consumption process of the popular entertainment industry, including in Indonesia.

Keywords: love, romance, teenage dramas, post-feminism

Nike Nadia (Gender Studies Program, School of Strategic and Global Studies, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia)

In the Name of Love: Power Relation and Revictimization on Sexual Violence Case in Courtship (Case Study of Court Decision)

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 29-34, 1 table, 11 ref.

This paper aims to explain the dimensions of the imbalanced power relations and revictimization that occur in rape cases by the victim's partner. Using the case study of court decisions and radical feminist theory as a tool of analysis, the author argues that the narrative 'in the name of love' used by perpetrators of sexual violence in personal relationships is another manifestation of the inequality of power relations and becomes the site of subjugation of the female body. Therefore, forms of exploitation that use a 'proof of love' narrative in cases of forced sexual intercourse in personal relationships should be identified as part of sexual violence.

Keywords: sexual violence, rape, violence in relationships, seduction, partner by consent

Bagus Takwin (Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia)

Love, Existential Project, and Truth Seeking

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 35-42, 19 ref.

This paper explains what love is by referring to the philosophical thoughts of several philosophers and the results of empirical research that have been done on the phenomena of love. It also discusses the tendency to extend love on one side, as well as narrowing and even negating love on the other. This paper takes the position that love is an existential project. Philosophically, love is seen as the continuing search for truth. As the fruit of will and sincerity of human endeavor, love has real and concrete results. In its concrete form, love is the embodiment of a mutual promise in reality; a step-by-step process presents the concrete manifestation of the statements made in that promise. This philosophical thought is corroborated by empirical studies of love that love differs from sexual passion or lust. Love can a last long time, can be eternal and stay intense through a couple's efforts to care for, nurture and develop each other.

Keywords: love, existential project, commitment, influence of love

Naufaludin Ismail (Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, Indonesia)

Patriarchal Relationships, Subordination and Glorification of Marriage: The Dilemma of Women across Generations in Living and Interpreting Love

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 43-53, 1 table, 13 ref.

This paper focuses on the experience of women across generations living and interpreting love as part of their lives. Their experiences in living and interpreting love will be seen from two points of view, namely their romantic relationships and the institution of marriage or their family. Based on the data of six subjects of research with different backgrounds like age, marital status and sexual orientation, this paper shows that there are different perspectives on love and marriage or family institutions compared to mainstream society. The six people in question assume and believe that love or romantic relationships have a close relation with patriarchal cultural values, like men's domination, subordination and ownership if they'd agree with mainstream society's thoughts about love. They also believe that marriage is an institution that produces patriarchial cultural values that will disadvantage women if the marriage is not built on equality and fairness. These six subjects of research agree with the grand narrative of feminism that love shouldn't always be related to ownership, men's domination but instead must be liberating for women to become independent and autonomous.

Keywords: love, romantic, marriage, oppression, subordination

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Romance and Femininity in Indonesian Teenage Dramas: A Transnational Post-Feminist Analysis

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Abstract

Even after the rise of Indonesian feminist film directors like Nia Dinata, Mira Lesmana, Mouly Surya, Nan T Achnas and Lola Amaria, Indonesian moviegoers still flock to the cinemas to watch teenage romance dramas, many of which are badly written. This paper examines the way romance and femininity have been shaped in cinematic representation in the movies London Love Story 2, Promise and Dear Nathan. This paper concludes that Indonesian romance teenage dramas are entrenched with masculine power and heavily dominated spectacles in which the feminine heroines are treated as passive objects of desire whose agency and subjectivity are being stripped away. Using feminist literature on post-feminist romance cinema, the heroines in these films have mostly been constructed as independent, smart and seemingly capable to act at first, but nevertheless pursue romantic, traditional, heterosexual relationships saturated with masculine control and dominance. This paper shows that the awareness of post-feminism has become transnational, crossing geographical borders between West and East, and has influenced the production and consumption process of the popular entertainment industry, including in Indonesia.

Keywords: love, romance, teenage dramas, post-feminism

Introduction

The emergence of female directors with a feminist perspective like Nia Dinata, Mira Lesmana, Mouly Surya, Nan T Achnas and Lola Amaria has not necessarily helped to make the audience to take a critical look at films about women. The film industry in 2017 was still heavily dominated by horror films that are insulting to one's common sense as well as teenage dramas with story lines whose quality have to be seriously questioned. Teenage films like London Love Story 2, Dear Nathan, One Fine Day and Promise rank among the top 10 films in terms of audience numbers in the third quarter of 2017 (filmindonesia.or.id 2017)[1].

In *the crisis and paradox of Indonesian film (1900-2012)*, Garin Nugroho and Dyna Herlina (2015) add that the surge of post-reformation teenage dramas began with *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (Riri Riza 2002) whose audience numbers were phenomenal. After AADC, the market was flooded with teenage love dramas, like *Eiffel I'm in Love* (Nasry Cheppy 2003), *Virgin* (Hanny R Saputra 2004) and *Heart* (Hanny R Saputra 2004). The rise in the number of film productions in the genre teenage drama showed that such movies were favoured by teenagers, especially female teens aged 13 and above. Garin and Dyna say, "Films of the same genre are constantly being produced with the hope to attract a large number of audience despite the low quality of the story and weak direction". This statement is an interesting one to investigate further. Why can films with weak story lines and direction be still so popular with teenagers? What kind of characters do we see in the films, and how is the teenage love story woven into the film?

Research on Indonesian films tends to examine films with political nuances, filled with issues of religion and gender (Hariyadi 2013; Haryanti & Suwana 2014; Izharuddin 2017) as well as films that deal with nationalism and minorities (Sen & Heider 1992) that are also screened at world-class film festivals. This paper aims to take a look at popular texts as something significant to examine firstly teenage romance and secondly the femininity of female teenagers. Three teenage dramas that have been ranked among the top 10 in 2017 will be the object of this study: *London Love Story 2, Dear Nathan* and *Promise. London Love Story 2* and *Promise* were both directed by Asep Kusdinar, while the screenplays were written by the same team of writers (Sukhdev Sigh and

Tisa TS). The films attracted 862.847 and 655.805 viewers respectively (filmindonesia.or.id 2017)[1]. Meanwhile, *Dear Nathan,* directed by Indra Gunawan, had 700.165 viewers (filmindonesia.or.id 2017).

Feminist literature, especially the one related to women's cinematic studies and post-feminism, will be used to analyze how romance and femininity of female teenagers are constructed in contemporary Indonesian teenage films. This paper will begin by highlighting the story lines of the teenage films that are to be examined. Afterwards, it will discuss post-feminism in romantic cinema in the sub-section post-feminism and neo-liberalism. The spirit of post-feminism that seeks to "weaken" feminism through the demoralization of feminists has already been extensively reviewed by gender theorists. The connection between post-feminism and neo-liberalism will also be discussed in this sub-section.

The question of how feminine characters are constructed in popular texts such as films, TV shows and novels will be discussed extensively in the second sub-section. It will also observe post-feminism not only as a monopoly of Western countries, but also as a transnational flow of consciousness (crossing geographical boundaries). The third and fourth part will investigate how romance and femininity are constructed in the three aforementioned teenage dramas. Post-feminst literature will be used as sharp analysis to review cinematic construction towards teenage romance and the femininity of female teenagers. This paper will then end with a conclusion.

Teenage Dramas in 2017: *London Love Story* 2, *Dear Nathan* and *Promise*

London Love Story 2 (LLS 2) was made to repeat the success of *London Love Story* (2016), which was adapted by Tisa TS's novel. In the sequel, the relationship between Dave (Dimas Anggara) and Caramel (Michelle Ziudith) continues and they are shown studying in London. On Caramel's 19th birthday, Dave gives her a ticket to travel to Switzerland to meet their old friend Sam (Ramzi). While there, Sam invites Caramel and David for dinner at a popular restaurant with young and talented chef Gilang (Rizky Nazar) at the helm. A conflict arises when it turns out that Gilang is Caramel's friend from senior high school, who had once been in love with her but never officially declared his feelings. Gilang continuously tries to get close to Caramel, until Dave finds out about their past. When Dave wants to confront Gilang, he has disappeared. As it turns out, Gilang was involved in an accident on his way home from meeting Caramel in a café and eventually succumbs to his injuries. In his will, Gilang has given his blessing to Dave and Caramel's relationship and asks Dave to take good care of Caramel.

Promise also has an overseas setting (Milan) as romantic place besides Yogyakarta. It tells the story of two high school friends, Rahman and Aji (Dimas Anggara and Boy William) who have very different characters: Rahman, innocent and pious, is the son of a scholar who owns an Islamic boarding school, whereas Aji is a reckless teenager and a playboy. One day, Aji says that Salsabila (Mawar Eva De Jongh), one of the girls in the boarding school, secretly has a crush on Rahman. But Rahman, who is innocent and pious, doesn't realize. Aji then lends him DVDs with porno films, so Rahman can learn how to be a real man. Unexceptedly, Rahman's father finds out about the DVDs and decides to marry Rahman to his childhood friend Kanya (Amanda Rawles). Kanya and Rahman have been close friends since childhood and had even promised each other once to love one another for the rest of their lives. Two years later, Rahman studies architecture in Milan, Italy. As it turns out, Rahman's relocation to Italy is also to find his wife Kanya, who suddenly disappeared not long after their wedding. In Milan, Rahman meets Moza (Mikha Tambayong), a pretty girl who studies with him, is rich and secretly in love with him. Aji, on the other hand, is a photographer in Milan and as it turns out, Kanya has become a successful fashion model in the same city. Eventually, Kanya finds Rahman and asks him to separate. Aji has fallen in love with Kanya. Faced with this reality, Rahman quietly disappears and goes back to Yogyakarta, where he admits to his family that he is going to divorce Kanya. Rahman's father once again arranges his son's marriage, this time to Salsabila, the girl from boarding school who once was in love with Rahman. However, when Moza and Aji realize that Rahman and Kanya are still in love with each other, they cancel the wedding. Rahman and Kanya reunite. Moza and Aji give them their blessing, and the four of them become best friends.

Dear Nathan is the only one of the three films discussed in this paper that is not set abroad. This film tells the story of two high schoolers with very different characters, Salma (Amanda Rawles) and Nathan (Jeffri Nichols). Salma, a new student, is innocent, smart, nerdy and shy. She is also active in the student body council at her school. Nathan, on the other hand, is a naughty boy who likes to skip classes and often gets into trouble. In the beginning, Salma doesn't want to be close to Nathan, but eventually, she is taken by his persistence. It turns out

that Nathan comes from a complicated family with many problems. His mother is in a mental hospital because she couldn't accept that Daniel, Nathan's identical twin brother, was killed by a mob, mistaking him for Nathan. Nathan's father remarried, and his new wife is in the middle of a pregnancy, but doesn't get along with Nathan at all. When Nathan's real mother passes away, Salma is busy with her work at the student body council and finds out about the news too late. When she rushes to the graveyard, she sees Nathan – who is disappointed that Salma wasn't there for him – hugging his ex-girlfriend Seli to hurt Salma's feelings. Salma and Nathan break up, and Nathan runs away from home after having a fight with his father. At the end of the film, Nathan reunites with both his father and with Salma. The last scene shows Nathan and Salma holding Nathan's newborn brother, who is named Daniel.

Post-Feminism and Neo-Liberalism

In *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, Angela McRobbie (2004, 2009) explains post-feminism as a process of active consciousness, where feminism is regarded as ancient and outdated, and gender equality has already been achieved through the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. Feminism is seen as the struggle of the previous generation, which is considered to be over, and being a feminist is not an identity desired by the generation of young and modern women. In *Backlash*, Susan Faludi (1991) further argues that the media poorly constructs feminist identity, including popular cultural texts. Feminists depicted in films, novels and TV drama series are old, lonely, failing in love, unable to have children because they consider themselves too great to pursue heterosexual romance with men. Feminists are often described as ambitious smart women who actively pursue successful careers, but suffer and always experience 'regret' on the absence of romance in their lives. Furthermore, in films like *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *Basic Instinct* (1992), the female characters that have sexual capabilities and are financially rich are portrayed as *femme fatales* who destroy traditional values like marriage and good and honourable men.

Furthermore, post-feminism is positioned as a new wave of consciousness for a generation of young women who want to 'enjoy' the success achieved by the previous generations of feminism, but at the same time aim to avoid the 'bad effects' of feminism, such as failure in romance and personal life. Popular media like women's magazines cover many issues such as sexual violence, education and women's reproductive health, all of which have become important issues in the feminist movement, alongside topics revolving around 'how to get a man and have a perfect romantic relationship'. Susan Faludi (1991) calls this phenomenon *popular feminism*, meaning that central issues of second wave feminism (female body, family, sexuality, reproduction) are framed together with the liberalization of women's lives where they have the freedom of choice, autonomy in regards to their sexuality and capability to act. Traditional values such as marriage and family suddenly rise to the forefront and become the life goal of modern women with frills of liberalization embodied in the 'freedom of choice for women' (McRobbie 2004).

Feminist theorists also often link post-feminism to neo-liberalism (Arthurs 2003; McRobbie 2004; Lazar 2006; Gill & Herdieckerhoff 2006; Hollows 2007; McRobbie 2008; Zoonen 2008; Dosekun 2015; Gill 2016; Kennedy 2017). Neo-liberalism not only offers a new worldview of an increasingly free trade and economic world marked by the privatization of enterprise and trade without borders, but as an identity associated with individualism, the freedom of choice in which each individual has equal opportunity to succeed in global competition while ignoring structural inequality (Gill 2016). Modern women regard themselves as a problem that has to be 'fixed' constantly through self-development, career fulfillment, self-care and beauty in line with global consumerism (Lazar 2006). Gill and Scharff (2011) add that the world is a free market that helps modern women to shape their self-identity as free and autonomous while enjoying the project of consumerism.

Texts in popular culture often form the construct of an ideal image of a woman who looks free, independent and sexually autonomous, but has a life vision that tends to be conservative and usually ends in finding true love. Autonomy and self-subjectivity of modern women are only used as attributes to compete in a free market and fight for 'dream men'. A successful career coupled with beauty and with unlimited support of consumerism is instrumentalized to find the right life partner.

Lazar (2006) and Dosekun (2015) further explain that globalisation itself has brought popular cultural texts to non-Western countries, including Third World Countries. Ideas about the identity of post-feminism have become the identities of modern women not exclusively to the West. Beauty product advertisements, romantic Hollywood movies and novels that have been translated or adapted have become a post-feminism stream entering transnational awareness. Dosekun

(2015) describes the post-feminist identity of women in Lagos, Nigeria, as women who "may live their whole lives in Lagos, but feel that they are part of a global sisterhood, united by a culture of consumerism". Women who live in Third World Countries may not see the the remarkable economic and structural imbalance in their countries, but casually assume that they, like Western women with a post-feminist consciousness, believe and acknowledge that gender equality has been achieved. This paper uses the same argument as Lazar (2006) and Dosekun (2015), namely that popular cultural texts from the West with a post-feminist point of view are not only consumed in Indonesia, but also adapated and reproduced by novelists, directors and advertisers with a distinctive Indonesian touch. The following sub-section will focus more detailed on how romance and femininity are coveyed through these popular cultural texts.

The Construct of Femininity in Popular Cultural Texts: From TV Dramas to Romance Novels

In her monumental work, *Reading the Romance*, which discusses how women read romantic novels, Janice Radway (1991) discusses how the identity of female characters is depicted in romance novels published by Mills and Boon. Female characters are portrayed as modern women who are independent, stubborn and sexually attractive, but are not aware of their beauty (and don't care too much about their looks). The story almost certainly follows the following formula: "ordinary" young women, who are innocent and inexperienced in love, meet handsome and worldly men who are much older, wealthy and cynical, rude, sometimes even aggressive or brutal at the beginning and have too much of an ego to admit they have feelings for the girl (Gill & Herdieckerhoff 2006). Furthermore, they add (2006) that the location of the romance is usually in a place away from home, like a vacation spot, where female characters are in a strange place (sometimes even newly awakened from a coma) and meet a handsome but arrogant stranger. Conflict arises because the love is forbidden by social class, racial differences or sometimes only because of an ego problem – but in the end, the problems are finally resolved, and the female and male character are reunited (Gill & Herdieckerhoff 2006).

Chicklit novels that have been widely translated in countries around the world also generally have the same plot and characters. Arvanitaki (2017) adds that often in such novels, the feminine identity of the independent female character is in the end abandoned in favour of a romantic, heterosexual relationship. The feminist identity, which at the beginning is often characterized by a successful career, financial independence and freedom of sexual expression, is often used as a tool to search for 'the right one' – someone who has the same specifications. Radway's research (1991) on why women like to read romance novels concluded with an ambivalent position of the female reader. The activity of reading the novel itself, according to Radway's (1991) argument, has the potential as resistence of women to patriarchy, because the activity of reading a novel is done to overcome boredom of domestic life and tasks, but the content of the book is filled with traditional femininity.

Popular TV shows that have been screened all over the world like *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002) and *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) and were also popular in Indonesia also conveys an ambivalent position of the female characters in regards to their feminist and feminine identities. The character of Ally McBealis portrayed as a smart and ambitious lawyer, but at the same time, she is neurotic and insecure because she doesn't have a life partner (Moseley & Read 2002). The TV show *Ally McBeal* itself is a drama that, according to Moseley & Read (2002) continuously plays with the notion of feminism and post-feminism. Ally McBeal resigns from a law firm because of sexual harassment, but is constantly portrayed as being obsessed with her old boyfriend Billy. Sexual harassment in the workplace, high education and career opportunities as a lawyer in a field dominated by men are all topics heavily related with nuances of feminism (Horbury 2014), but the script of Ally McBeal nonetheless constructs a female character that is constantly threatened to live alone and childless, which is still considered a failure in the traditional sense of femininity.

In her analysis of the popular TV show *Sex and the City* (HBO), Jane Arthurs (2003) explains the connection between post-feminism and neo-liberalism in regards to the main protagonist, Carrie Bradshaw. Carrie is portrayed as a popular columnist who seems to have everything a woman could wish for, a great career, an attractive physique, an apartment in the middle of the city, and a balanced sexual relationship with her partners. Carrie is also shown as a modern woman who blatantly enjoys fine luxury products (she is a fan of Manolo Blahnik shoes) and doesn't have to feel guilty about her consumptive lifestyle. Consumerism is regarded as pleasure, which is her right as a modern woman. The signs of independence and autononmy in the female characters then become a contradiction on how over the course of the TV show they try to find true love in a city as a big and complex as New York. Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda are always

portrayed as ambivalent regarding their independence, despite their different characters and jobs. Miranda, the lawyer who is at the beginning depicted as very ambitious and individualistic, in the end marries the father of her child. Likewise, Samantha is portrayed as sexually free and independent (often having multiple sex partners without commitment), but in the end falls in love after being 'punished' with breast cancer. The main characters that initially were so independent have a very traditional ending to their stories, as all of them find true love. The newer TV show *Girls* (HBO), which contains the narratives of young women living in Brooklyn, is considered more complex in regards to love, sexual relationships, professional life and the female body and therefore more realistic when compared to *Sex and the City* (Fuller & Driscoll 2015).

Films that target teenagers and young adults also construct a femininity that is more or less the same as a romantic drama intended for an adult audience. As researched by Kennedy (2017), films that revolve around 'becoming a princess' are sometimes modern adaptations of classical fairy tales, such as *Ever After* (1998), *A Cinderella Story* (2004), *Princess Diaries* (2001), and *Ella Enchanted* (2004) that construct the femininity of young women who are full of neo-liberalist and post-feminist identities. The process of change is from the 'ordinary' girl who tends to be a tomboy, is lazy to put on make-up, a bookworm and shy to a crowned princess who gets her prince charming in the end. The process of change from a cocoon to a butterfly shows that a teenage girl is an artificial self-finishing project, something that needs to be 'fixed' through a series of painful processes (plucking eyebrows, wearing high heels and a pretty ball gown) until in the end she is good enough to be a true princess. The feminist identity of the teenager built at the beginning of the story – a diligent student, hard-working and bookish – is all for nothing if the girl in the end doesn't turn into a princess with a feminine identity with traditional values (beautiful and getting her prince).

The texts and scripts of popular culture as described above are a consciousness of transnational post-feminism. It is not in a vacuum, but is instead exhibited, traded and eventually adapted to local taste. Romantic novels by Indonesian authors that belong to the genre chicklit and metropop (an abbreviation for metropolitan popular that describes a romance novel genre where the story is set in modern, metropolitan cities) include characters that are more or less the same like in popular Western culture. Similarly, in TV shows and movies, femininity is formed through the close ties between post-feminism and neo-liberalism. In the following sub-section, the construct of romance and femininity of female teenagers in Indonesian films (in the films *London Love Story 2, Promise* and *Dear Nathan*) is discussed in more details.

The Power of Patriarchy and Aggressive Masculinity: Romance in Indonesian Teenage Films

The idea of romantic love is nothing new–it is as old as human civilization itself. But Giddens (1992 as quoted in Tukachinsky 2008) states that the Western culture that tends to be capitalistic constructs romantic love based on consumerism. The idea of love is eternal, as used as tagline of diamond company de Beers, for instance, an attempt to capitalize on the concept of romantic love. The celebration of romantic love was also made popular through TV shows and Hollywood movies, in line with the development of capitalism around the world.

Teenage drama films that were on the best-selling list in 2017 almost all had the same characteristic, namely a title in English. Not only is the story set at a location abroad (as described further below), but also the film title itself already shows that the film was made for the urban, educated and cosmopolitan youth. Taking a closer look at the romance in *London Love Story 2, Dear Nathan* and *Promise* shows a couple of characteristics the three films have in common. The first one is not only the English title, but also the setting of the story outside of Indonesia, abroad. In line with the analysis of Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006), the place is usually far away from home where all fantasies of a romance can become reality. *London Love Story 2* is set in London and Switzerland, while *Promise* takes viewers to Milan and Yogyakarta. Only *Dear Nathan* is set in Jakarta. In *London Love Story 2,* both main characters, Dave and Caramel, study in London and travel to Switzerland to experience snow. As the story unfolds, the location of the film remains in London and Switzerland. Meanwhile, the film *Promise* divides its setting between Milan and Yogyakarta equally. The main character Rahman is shown studying architecture in Milan.

Apparently, film titles and locations that have Western nuances have become a characteristic of Indonesian romantic films since the reformation. Ariel Heryanto (2014) said that the characteristic of Indonesian cinema after the New Order mostly focus on the identity and lifestyle of young urbanites who are already familiar with international tourist destinations such as Europe. One of the attractions of a teenage romance film is the overseas location that is considered romantic and 'worthy' as a place

for love between male and female characters. Heryanto (2014) adds that in addition to the popular scripts from Hollywood, Korean pop culture (most of which was copied or adapted from Western entertainment), which is dominated by pop music, TV shows and films, also flood the Indonesian market. Heryanto (2014) concludes that the absorption of popular culture by Indonesia's young and urban generation reflects their need to find new patterns of consumption and pleasure that have been repressed during the New Order, including the sweeping of popular media, and censoring of music, films and more.

The second characteristic is conspicuous consumption. In line with literature about the connection between post-feminism and neo-liberalism that suggests that popular romance films are loaded with consumerism, the three films examined here are filled with these markers. *London Love Story 2* shows Dave and Caramel studying in London. Dave is portrayed as someone wealthy, who has a Mercedes Benz to pick up Caramel, while on their dates they have dinner at fancy restaurants in London. Dave's present for Caramel's 19th birthday is a trip to Switzerland, so Caramel can fulfil her dream of experiencing snow in the Alps. They also dine at a fancy restaurant in Switzerland when they meet Gilang, someone from Caramel's past. In Switzerland, they are shown staying at a luxurious, spacious and comfortable holiday cabin, complete with a modern fireplace and kitchen (which Caramel only uses to boil eggs). In addition to insulting logic and common sense about what kind of wealth enables a 19-year-old like Dave to drive a Mercedes Benz in London and is able to finance a romantic vacation in Switzerland, *London Love Story 2* is full of consumerist markers that are vulgar and over the top. The same goes for the film *Promise*. In addition to being located in Milan, the film is flooded with conspicuous consumption. Moza is shown as a rich girl who explores Milan in her fancy Ferrari. Aji, an old friend of main character Rahman, is portrayed as a successful photographer who likes to party on fancy yachts and exclusive pubs. All characters in the film are 19 to 20 years old and the same question arises, what makes these characters suddenly so rich? Two years earlier, Rahman and Aji were ordinary high school students in Yogyakarta who rode their bicycles to school. Rahman is the son of the head of an Islamic boarding school but suddenly can afford to go to Milan to study architecture and look for his wife Kanya who has disappeared. There is no explanation whatsoever that would answer the question on why 'ordinary' characters from Yogyakarta can suddenly become 'extraordinary' in Milan. However, the depiction of rich male characters has become standard in popular texts and scripts. Almost all male characters are rich (Gill & Herdieckerhoff 2006), at least richer than their female counterparts.

The third and most significant characteristic is the power charge and dominance of patriarchy throughout the films *London Love Story 2, Promise* and *Dear Nathan*. The male characters are portrayed as dominating the relationship, even antagonists like Gilang (*London Love Story 2)*, and Aji *(Promise)* is also shown as being very aggressive, even abusive. The male characters in popular texts and scripts are usually arrogant, have a big ego and are rude; while in the end they acknowledge their love for the girl (Gill & Herdieckerhoff 2006). The films examined here also show the same traits in their male characters. Gilang in LLS2 as someone from Caramel's past shows abusive tendencies in several scenes. Firstly, as they are in the elevator to the ski slope, Gilang approaches Caramel intimately without Dave's knowledge. It is obvious that Caramel feels uncomfortable when their bodies touch. Gilang is seen disrespecting Caramel's personal space in several scenes while ignoring her disapproval. Similarly, when Gilang threatens to reveal his past connection with Caramel to David, his manipulative side can clearly be seen. He only withdraws his threat when Caramel agrees to meet alone with him in a café. When Caramel wants to leave the café, Gilang asks her to hug him. Whenever Caramel and Gilang are in the same space, there is an expression of fear. And even though he is portrayed as a tender boyfriend, Dave looks dominant and powerful in his relationship with Caramel. When Caramel explains that she doesn't have any relationship with Gilang, Dave chooses to ignore her and to instead find Gilang and confront him.

The female character (Caramel) is portrayed as object of desire contested by two men, like a transferable property. Similarly, when Aji asks Rahman to divorce Kanya (in *Promise*), Aji says, "Friends have to give in for each other. Give Kanya to me ya, Man," (Aji, *Promise*). Once again, the female character is regarded as property of two men that can be passed around. Nathan's character in *Dear Nathan* also shows typical signs of masculine patriarchy, if not hyper-masculine patriarchy. At the beginning of the story, Nathan is described as someone naughty who likes to get into fights and plays hooky, a troublemaker. He pursues Salma aggressively, insists on driving her home and even gives Salma money to buy credits for her mobile phone online (because Salma never replies to his chat messages). In one scene, Nathan's friends cheer as Salma shyly approaches Nathan. "Hajar… sikat!" (Nathan's friends, *Dear Nathan)*. Like the other films discussed in this paper, the girl is regarded as property

to possess, which can ultimately be conquered through male aggression. There is a very masculine scene in *Dear Nathan*, when Nathan gets into a fight with another man who harasses Salma on the road. In the end, Salma herself 'tolerates' Nathan's aggressiveness, because Nathan only fights with people that deserve to be 'attacked', people whom Salma calls arrogant and conceited. In one scene, she defends Nathan in front of his father, saying, "Uncle, so far Nathan has only fought with arrogant people," (Salma, *Dear Nathan*).

The signs of aggressive masculinity found in the three movies are the main research topic of this paper. The main characters are not only portrayed as dominant in their romantic relationships with the girls, but are actually borderline abusive. There are signs of potential violence in the heterosexual relationships that should actually be balanced. Aggressiveness is romanticized as a sign of love, where real men are ready to 'fight' to get their true love. Rahman (in the film *Promise*) is not shown as aggressive in the movie, but the power he get as a husband through his marriage makes the female character Kanya suffer from the uncertainty of the separation and divorce (more about the femininity of the female characters in the next sub-section).

Young, Beautiful and Powerless: The Construct of Femininity in Indonesian Teenage Films

The female characters in the films LLS2, *Promise* and *Dear Nathan* are mostly portrayed as pretty, innocent, dependent and virtous girls who need the protection of men (even protection through male aggressiveness). At the beginning of the film *London Love Story 2*, there is a scene in which Caramel's mother talks to Dave. "Dave, please take good care of Caramel. She still needs a lot of guidance," (Caramel's mother, *London Love Story 2*). What kind of guidance can a young boy – the same age as Caramel – possibly offer? But the request of Caramel's mother only emphasizes that Dave has more power in their relationship, even though both of them are more or less the same age. As discussed in the previous sub-section, the female characters become the men's property that needs to be defended from other men. Similarly, Gilang's will, read by Dave and Caramel after Gilang has passed away, says, "Dave, thank you for bringing Caramel to Switzerland. Since she was little, she always wanted to experience snow. Take good care of her," (Gilang, *London Love Story 2*). Caramel is portrayed as an object of desire for two men who always obeys the wishes of the male characters. She obeys when she is manipulated by Gilang to meet him secretly without Dave knowing about it. She also obeys when Gilang asks her to hug him one last time. Caramel is also portrayed as an ingénue, beautiful and innocent young girl who naturally isn't aware of her beauty. At the beginning of the film, Dave teases her, "Have you looked into the mirror this morning?" Caramel is startled and assumes she looks different because she only wore a little bit of make up. But Dave then laughs and says, "No, I mean, you are more beautiful."

The female characters in *Promise* and *Dear Nathan* are what many theorists describe as post-feminist identities, combining elements of feminism such as autonomy and capability but abandoning those traits to pursue romantic love (Arvanitaki 2017). Kanya lives in Milan and has a (successful) career as a model, but is stuck in a marriage that seems to destroy her. Kanya, who is supposed to be financially independent, whines for Rahman to release her so that she can be free. Kanya also seems powerless when she simply agrees to be married to Rahman, for a very absurd reason: that Rahman was caught watching porn movies. Kanya's ability to act and subjectivity are deprived in the moment she becomes Rahman's wife. Similarities can be seen with Moza, the beautiful girl who falls in love with Rahman in Milan. She is seen driving around in her red Ferrari and is portrayed as an independent girl who is free and bluntly expresses her feelings. But Moza also seems to be taken aback because Rahman doesn't want to reveal what is in his heart. Moza's autonomy falls apart in front of the man she loves. In the end, she succumbs and sacrifices her own happiness so Rahman and Kanya can reunite.

The position of Salsabila in *Promise* is even more peculiar. From the beginning of the story, Salsabila shows almost no signs of autonomy and capability to act on her own. She is also shown as having feelings for Rahman and writing him a letter to confess her love. She remains powerless when in the end she is supposed to marry Rahman but tragically, the wedding is canceled becacuse Rahman is still bound to Kanya. Salsabila only has a few lines in the film, even during the scene where she is getting ready for the wedding; it is mostly her father and mother who do all the talking. Salsabila doesn't have the right to decide her own fate; even when she is pursuing a romantic love, she depends on the status of someone else's marriage (Rahman and Kanya).

The identity of Salma in *Dear Nathan* is what Susan Faludi (1991) calls backlash, or a counterattack on feminism. The feminine identity of Salma (diligent, ambitious and not interested in boys) in the end turns into a post-feminist identity (pursuing a romantic love with Nathan). More than that, she is also 'punished' in

the middle of the story because she 'abandons' Nathan when she is busy with the student body council and unaware that Nathan's biological mother has died. Salma, who in the beginning is a diligent and ambitious student, becomes an object that needs to be 'punished' by breaking up with Nathan (although in the end, they are reunited). Salma also witnesses firsthand how Nathan betrays her by hugging his old girlfriend (Seli), but despite that, she still begs Nathan to meet her. Salma, who focuses on her tasks at the student body council and therefore neglects boys, is punished twice for it, through Nathan's betrayal and the break up.

Susan Faludi (1991) revealed how in many popular scripts of Hollywood films and TV shows the identity of feminist female characters gets sanctioned and rewarded for the decision to become autonomous. The narrative of many films punish feminist characters with loneliness, regret of not having a family, or in the most extreme cases, death when trying to fulfil their personal ambitions. Salma's character seems to follow the narrative of punishment of feminists in films. At the beginning of the story, Salma *(Promise)* says, "Only people without education try to make fun of and belittle girls." Salma knows that Nathan is belittling her, but she still can't escape his aggressive domination in his pursuit of her. A similarity can be seen when Aji confronts Rahman about his marriage to Kanya. "She [Kanya] is not a weak woman. She is strong because she can change two men like us," (Aji, *Promise*). This dialogue is very ironic because what actually happens is the opposite. Kanya can't accept Aji's marriage proposal because she is still tied to Rahman. Even though she asks him several times to let her go, he still won't set her free.

Overall, the femininity of female characters in the teenage films that have been examined in this paper is what can be called a post-feminist identity: someone who appears to have autonomy and the capability to act at the beginning of the story, but then gets caught in a heterosexual romance that ultimately deprives them of their independence. The films often play with feminist and feminine issues simultaneously; female characters like Moza, Kanya and Salma are portrayed as feminists but also feminine. They are independent in the beginning, but eventually pursue a romantic love that provides an unbalanced relation between the man and the woman. The femininity in these films are 'lost' in the powerful patriarchy that is dominated by masculinity that tends to be aggressive, in some cases even abusive.

Conclusion

This paper shows that the romance built in teenage dramas has at least three characteristics. The first one is a Western film title and location. It is not only the English titles of the movies that convey a cosmopolitan impression, but also the location of the story set abroad; places that are deemed 'worthy' of romance and love, such as London, Switzerland and Milan. The second characteristic is the conspicuous consumerism. The teenagers in these films are rich and build their romance on over-the-top, excessive consumerism. The third characteristic is the highly masculine and patriarchal dominance. Male characters dominate the relationships, while the female characters are seen as objects of desire, property of men. In some scenes, this masculinity is even constructed as borderline abusive.

The femininity of female characters is reduced to passivity in the face of the male characters' masculinity. Some characters maintain a feminist identity even though eventually, they will delve in traditional femininity for the sake of achieving their romantic goals. This transnational, post-feminist narrative crosses geographical borders of different countries, from West to East, and this paper shows that even Indonesia is no exception. Many in the entertainment industry, from Hollywood to Korea, with a formulated storyline and characters that are more or less the same, adapt the production of popular cultural texts and scripts for film and TV.

Pop culture like films are often considered 'empty' entertainment without any ideological content. This paper argues that popular culture is capable of spreading ideas on gender equality in a subtle way. Thus, the struggle for gender equality in Indonesia can't deny the influence of pop culture on the masses. Other narratives, such as feminist films, are needed to provide an alternative to the viewers, especially teenagers. Based on the author's observations, there are hardly any films with feminist notions that are targeted at teenagers, and therefore they are flooded with films that are filled with patriarchal power like the ones discussed in this paper.

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End Note

1 The films are among the top 10 best-selling movies of 2017 during the third quarter. In the latest release, which was accessed on filmindonesia.or.id on January 15, 2018, *the London Love Story 2* movie was on the list of 15 best-selling films throughout 2017 while two other film titles dropped out of this list.

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The journal encourages practical, theoretically sound, and (when relevant) empirically rigorous manuscripts that address real-world implications of the gender gap in Indonesian contexts. Topics related to feminism can include (but are not limited to): sexuality, queer, trafficking, ecology, public policy, sustainability and environment, human and labor rights/ issues, governance, accountability and transparency, globalization, as well as ethics, and specific issues related to gender study, such as diversity, poverty, and education.

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To discuss ideas for contributions, please contact the Chief Editor: Anita Dhewy via anitadhewy@jurnalperempuan.com. Research papers should be between 5000-10000 words. Please make sure to include in your submission pack an **abstract outlining the title, purpose, methodology and main findings.** It is worth considering that, as your paper will be located and read online, the quality of your abstract will determine whether readers go on to access your full paper. We recommend you place particular focus on the impact of your research on further research, practice or society. What does your paper contribute? In addition, please provide up to **six descriptive keywords.**

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