

Traditions Contemporary Indonesian Productions - Women in Indonesian Popular Fiction- Romance, Beauty and Identity Politics in Metropop

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Traditions Redirecting Contemporary Indonesian Cultural Productions



Traditions Redirecting Contemporary Indonesian Cultural Productions

Edited by

Jan van der Putten, Monika Arnez,
Edwin P. Wieringa and Arndt Graf

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and Arndt Graf

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PREFACE

In 2015 the Republic of Indonesia celebrated the 70th anniversary of its independence, an event that understandably filled the hearts of many Indonesian citizens with joy and pride. 2015 also marked the 50th anniversary of an attempted coup d'état and a horrifying aftermath in the mass killings of people associated with the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) and other left-wing organisations. During the period after another regime change in 1998, a number of one-time victims and their children have come forward with their stories about the events of 1965, while commemorations of the victims have indicated that the wounds inflicted by the atrocities committed 50 years ago are deep and have yet to heal.

The year 2015 also witnessed the first time Indonesia presented itself prominently on the world literary stage by becoming the guest of honor at the annual Frankfurt Book Fair. Four scholars of Indonesian literature based in German universities took this opportunity to organise a conference about modern Indonesian cultural expressions since independence in direct connection with the book fair. This volume contains a selection of the papers that were presented during the conference, which focused on the topics of the Indonesian cultural production of the past 70 years and representations of the traumatic events of the mid-1960s.

Many parties have made this conference and this ensuing volume possible, for which we wish to express our sincere gratitude. First and foremost we thank all the presenters and other participants who made it a wonderful conference with critical discussions; the Goethe University of Frankfurt and its organising committee chaired by Holger Warnk, who hosted the event; the German Research Foundation (DFG) for providing the financial means for the conference; and the Departments of Southeast Asian Studies of the Universities of Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Cologne. The conference was opened with a speech by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture and vividly continued with a performance of the group Servants of the Words, featuring Elisabeth Inandiak, Endah Laras, Jennifer Lindsay, Landung Simatupang, Tommi Simatupang, and Christina Schott. In this performance different languages, genres, and media were used in a fascinating combination, showing how creativity was triggered

CHAPTER TEN

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WOMEN IN INDONESIAN POPULAR FICTION: ROMANCE, BEAUTY, AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN *METROPOP* NOVELS

DIAH ARIANI ARIMBI

Introduction

“Every culture lives inside its own dream”, says Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957, 208). Dreams are narratives, and in real life these dreams are often turned into fictional stories. Fiction appeals to faithful readers who believe in the dreams of their nation, which become ammunition for their lives. Dreams of sincerity, of love and, of course, dreams with a happy ending are the dreams that many readers love to pursue. Is there a more pleasant desire than projecting one’s own life onto an idyllic fantasy, a wishful thinking about life’s pleasures? Popular literature may just offer the dreams so many readers are craving for.

Popular literature is an important medium for people to indulge in dreaming about their lives. Indonesia is no exception to this general rule. This genre is the mainstay of the books on sale in the biggest book retail chain, in supermarkets, and also of the pirated book market. This popularity suggests to what extent Indonesian readers like to dream away into the fantasy this genre has to offer. One type of popular literature that in recent years has been particularly popular is often referred to as chick lit: an oversimplified term to describe narratives centring on a woman’s or a girl’s life and her efforts to juggle attention between her career and love life. Chick lit rose to fame in the 1990s and is still going strong these days. The term is quite derogatory, and many criticise its use because it creates a distinction between specific female and male literature.¹ More neutral terms to refer to the genre have been proposed. One term, introduced by

¹ Although the term “ladlit” does exist, the genre does not seem to be very well known or popular in Indonesia.

the Gramedia bookstore (the biggest retail bookstore in Indonesia), is *metropop*—an abbreviation of *metro popular*: a genre name that is gender-neutral, referring to stories exclusively set in metropolitan locations and focusing on the life of a girl or a woman in her daily activities. Career and romance are still primary themes, but certainly there is more than just this to capture the readers' attention, as this *metropop* genre manages to steal readers away from enjoying other subgenres in popular fiction. Publishers seem to target a rapidly increasing group of young, urban, middleclass Indonesians to buy the novels.

It is safe to argue that romance has been by far the dominant genre of fiction ever since the early formation of Indonesian modern literature in the 1920s (Teeuw 1967, 1). Stories such as Sarah Rusli's *Sitti Noerbaya* (first published 1922), Abdoel Moeis's *Salah Asuhan* (The Wrong Upbringing, first published in 1928) and Merari Siregar's *Azab dan Sengsara* (Torment and Misery, first published in 1927) clearly can be classified as popular romances. Love stories and the search for a perfect soul mate capture the imagination of the general reader, so that such stories will never be abandoned. Why are we craving such stories? Why do love, romance, and people's life stories entrap us, so that we expect that the heroine and hero in those stories will experience a happy ending? Hoggart reasoned that these stories are created by writers who are not only authors but, more importantly, "picture-makers for what is behind the readers' daydreams" (1957, 209). In Hoggart's opinion, authors of romance stories are able to make such daydreams come true by visualising them in their stories. Such narratives turn readers into the writers of their own fantasies and dreams. This means that readers find solace and may project their daydreams onto characters similar to themselves. Here lies the power of popular fiction or, in this case, *metropop*. Identification with the readers' world is pivotal in popular fiction. Once identification is created, the reader will be sucked into a world of daydream and make-believe.

Most *metropop* stories follow a similar structure; they revolve around a female protagonist in her search for everlasting love and her attempts to balance between her private and public affairs (love, life, and career). This formula is typical for contemporary romance fiction. Ilana Tan, Ika Natassa, aliaZalea, and Lusiwulan are among the most prominent Indonesian *metropop* authors. Unlike the so-called *sastra wangi* genre,² *metropop* is meant to provide easy reading: often hilarious stories of young metropolitan women in their 20s and 30s who have to manage both their

² This is another derogatory term widely used to refer to stories by Indonesian women authors, such as Ayu Utami, Jenar Mahesa Ayu, and others, who often display their feminist and critical views in the narratives.

job and love life. Issues such as beauty, fashion, and consumption in urban settings often take a prominent position in these narratives. In contrast, stories of the *sastra wangi* category are known to tackle controversial issues, which are avoided in the *metropop* writings. Issues such as sexual abuse, gendered discrimination, oppression, and sexual liberation are quite common in the former category but generally omitted in *metropop* writing. If *sastra wangi*'s writings often tackle political issues such as the sociopolitical turmoil of the mid-1960s or the 1998 political reformation, *metropop* writings focus only on romance, in the context of which the protagonists are searching for their ideal heterosexual relationship with their male counterparts.

Another striking characteristic of *metropop* writings is the use of language in their story titles. Unlike many other Indonesian authors, *metropop* writers often use English words in the titles of their novels. The following titles of books authored by aliaZalea provide examples of how the upcoming generation of writers distinguish their books from other Indonesian works: *Blind Date* (2010), *Crash into You* (2011), *Celebrity Wedding* (2013), *The Devil in Black Jeans* (2013), and *Dirty Little Secret* (2014). Other striking examples are found in Ilana Tan's tetralogy *Summer in Seoul* (2006), *Autumn in Paris* (2007), *Winter in Tokyo* (2008), *Spring in London* (2010), and her other works *Sunshine Becomes You* (2012) and *Autumn Once More* (2013).

Metropop titles make clear that the readers will be introduced to a setting of the novels that can no longer be identified as "purely" Indonesian. By using English in the titles of the novels these writers present themselves as individuals who have no difficulty in using English as the global language of modern discourse. Thus, the English titles are their entry into a multi-lingual, cosmopolitan society, not only by way of Indonesian as their local identity but also by way of English as a means of a global identification. Often, too, the *metropop* stories are situated overseas, as exemplified by the titles of Ilana Tan's tetralogy. In recent decades, many younger-generation Indonesians have become more affluent and started to travel around the world; the *metropop* writers seem to portray this entrance of Indonesian readers into a global, urbanised life style. Their stories have become part of Indonesia's new wave of cosmopolitan imagination. The English titles suggest that this generation of writers wants their stories to be more cosmopolitan than the earlier generations. By suggesting that English language skills make them cosmopolites, they want to show that Indonesian young people, too, can become citizens of the world. Globalisation takes up a more important part in the lives of the characters portrayed by *metropop* writers, compared to

those in most of the other Indonesian stories. The rapid development of the Internet contributes profoundly to the popularisation of *metropop* writings. Many *metropop* stories are distributed and discussed on the Internet. Personal blogs and other social media help create wider networks for this genre.

Even though these stories are meant to be very easy reading, this does not mean that their protagonists do not reflect on and perform any complicated issues, such as identity formation. These narratives will also disseminate a certain ideology operating in the society in which the *metropop* genre appears. Stories are never created in an historical, social, and cultural vacuum. Having this in mind, I argue that Indonesian *metropop* is not just another female romance. To a certain degree, this genre presents an ideological projection about how a certain group of Indonesian girls and women perceive themselves. It is therefore imperative to critically assess such stories because they depict how women and girls deal with conflicts in their lives and how they make them entertaining and redeeming.

Exploring a variety of women's issues, the stories predominantly display female life stories. Fiction may function as a microcosm where female characters are portrayed as dynamic, rich, and complex. Dealing with women's issues in fiction, this chapter primarily uses feminist literary criticism to analyse the writings of the *metropop* authors. Being a feminist reader, I will position myself in ³the way pointed out by Belsey and Moore (1989, 1) when it comes to the role of feminist readers

[...] a feminist does not necessarily read in order to praise or to blame, to judge or to censor. More commonly she sets out to assess how the text invites its readers, as members of a specific culture, to understand what it means to be a woman or man, and so encourages them to reaffirm or to challenge existing cultural norms.

Based on this insight, the following discussion of *metropop* writings assesses and interprets what it means to be a woman in the *metropop* stories. Using feminist literary criticism, I highlight Adrienne Rich's monumental claim that this literary critique functions as

³a radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse. [that] would take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us; and how we can begin to see—and therefore live—afresh. (Quoted from Fetterley 1978, 568–9)

The following discussion revolves around the construction of romance, beauty, and identity politics of girls and women in contemporary Indonesian popular novels. It is necessary to scrutinise how such portrayals of morals and sensitivities are represented in popular novels by contemporary Indonesian popular authors, as this will in return demonstrate how these writers depict the contemporary identity of Indonesian women and girls in relation to social and cultural settings.

Place, space, and romance

Place determines space, and space builds romance; this means that every romantic story is linked to a specific setting. The romance genre requires a space that is close to a real-life situation, rather than a utopian or dystopian setting. This notion is emphatically presented by many *metropop* novels. The term *metropop* itself suggests urbanised, metropolitan settings in which the stories take place. The stories of romance of this *metropop* category tend to present a hermetically sealed world in which locations outside urban settings are largely ignored. The most popular setting forms the city of Jakarta as the site for a fairy tale existence of wealthy characters in novels, such as in Ika Natassa's novels *Divortiare* (first published 2008) and *Twivortiare* (2012). In 2008 Ika Natassa was nominated for the Talented Young Writer Award by the jury of the prestigious Khatulistiwa Literary Award. She also made it to the finals of the Fun Fearless Female contest organised by *Cosmopolitan Indonesia* magazine in 2004, and in 2010 she was awarded the title "Women Icon" by The Marketeers, an Indonesian marketing company.

As suggested in the title, *Divortiare* revolves around the life of Alexandra Rhea after her divorce from her husband, Beno Wicaksono. The main protagonist, Alex, is a banker who was married to Beno, a famous heart surgeon. An 8-year age gap between Alex and Beno (25 and 33 years old respectively) did not stop them from getting married. However, only in their first year did the couple experience the happiness of married life. Their happy marital life changed into a nightmare after their second year together, because they considered their careers more important than their life together. As a relation manager at Borderbank, Alex worked long hours and travelled a lot. Being a successful surgeon, Beno often came home late due to emergency calls and numerous patient visits and surgeries. These circumstances gradually estranged them from each other, until finally they ended up divorcing.

Alex was still much in love with Beno but always managed to find ways to deny her feelings. Her close friend, Denny, started to court her and

proposed to her, but after first accepting the proposal she realised how much she still loved Beno and rejected Denny's proposal. Alex and Beno reunited when Beno treated Alex's ill mother who had been hospitalised. The novel ends with Beno inviting Alex to have dinner together.

If the novel's title *Divortiare* suggests a certain cosmopolitan worldview by using the Latin term for "divorce", the title of the sequel, *Twivortiare*, dealing with the next episode of Alex and Beno's love life, firmly establishes a connection with the global social media. The story is written in Twitter format. Using a Twitter account @alexandarheaw, Alex tells the readers everything about her second marriage to Beno. Her tweets are mostly about her job and her love life, including her occasional quarrels with Beno. As the continuation of *Divortiare*, *Twivortiare* starts where the previous book ended, telling the readers how Alex and Beno started to date again, and finally decided to remarry.

The stories in both *Divortiare* and *Twivortiare* take place in Alex's office and her apartment in Jakarta. However, the Jakarta featured in this romance is a world away from the real Jakarta, the most densely populated city in Indonesia characterised by common urban problems, such as traffic jams, high crime rates, and other social problems. The Jakarta setting is highly romanticised, as if Jakarta was, as Bhabha (1994, 34) puts it, a city representing "a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalised cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity". In these *metropop* writings, the city of Jakarta represents numerous and multicultural identities, but here it is the only place where everything seems beautiful, perfect, and magical, where the memory it carries only signifies attainment of romantic desire. Jakarta, in the novels, is a mythical city, a contemporary privilege represented by nothing other than high-rise office buildings and apartments. In the novels Jakarta does not know the typical problems of a metropolitan city in Indonesia such as poverty, transportation woes, overcrowding, pollution, waste management issues, and so forth. Jakarta in this novel misses the complex reality of urban life. In *Twivortiare* the readers are tweeted about how Alex accompanied Beno on a short visit to New York, another city evoking illusionary romantic feelings for those who are in love.

Urban space as presented in the novels is a space that only depicts that of the upper middle and upper classes of society. Alex's office in a leading bank and her apartment provide her with a social space only upper middle and upper-class people can afford. Alex's life is thus told only in a story where the pace and space of contemporary city life takes place. Alex's world only revolves around her job, her apartment, and eating out in fine

restaurants. Alex's milieu of an upper middle-class life (the life of a young urban professional, a yuppie) is easily identified. She consumes many high-end products indicating her social space where money is never a problem; she and Beno are extremely well paid in their jobs. As part of the newly rich generation, Alex and Beno [23] what McNerney (2008) describes as a generation that has "the ideal of connoisseurship, the worship of brand names and designer labels, the pursuit of physical perfection through exercise and surgery". McNerney's characterisation sounds true; in the two novels, both Alex and Beno are portrayed as attractive young people, charming with perfect bodies. Alex is beautiful, slim and professional, while Beno is tall, handsome, and very masculine, and both have their dream jobs.

One issue that makes Natassa's stories particularly noteworthy is her writing style in *Twivortiare*. This novel is written in the format of tweets in Alex [51] witter account, @alexandrarheaw. The author classifies her novel as twitterature (a combination of Twitter and literature). Twitterature is a recent mode of storytelling by [39] bining tweets. One of the first books in the twitterature category is Aciman and Rensin's *Twitterature: The World's Greatest Books Retold through Twitter* (2009). Using tweets, Aciman and Rensin retell classic stories in no more than 140 characters. Since then twitterature has become more diverse in presenting a variety of genres from poetry to drama to philosophy. As part of the digital media, Twitter has become one of the most popularly used social media platforms in Indonesia. The rise of twitterature is a contemporary phenomenon that is facilitated by the rapid advance of the digital media. This unconventional way of telling a story with only 140 characters per tweet requires special creativity of an author to captivate the twitter followers in a long series of tweets.

In Natassa's novel *Twivortiare*, through her tweets, occasionally responded to by her best friend Wina Soedarjo, @winasoedarjo, Alex unfolds the story about her second marriage to Beno. The language style of the tweets is an urban colloquial kind of Indonesian, as if Alex was chatting with Wina. In terms of language, this novel uses a specific register different from the one used in conventional storytelling, and it may be argued that this colloquial style presents a more poignant and intimate life story to the readers.

Learning from their mistakes in the previous marriage as depicted in the novel *Divortiare*, Alex and Beno mutually reinforce their efforts to keep their marriage alive. Readers of this sequel will encounter Alex's tweets about, again, her career and romance. Although the novel is a typical romance story with a lot of colourful suggestions about love and

relationships, the use of tweets to convey the story provides the novel with a distinctly modern touch. This new way of story writing suggests contemporariness that makes *metropop* writing connect to its readers in real life, but also emphasises the genre's evanescence. Using this format of Twitter writing, Natassa sends the message that a new generation of writers is born, whose births mark the power of social media and the Internet for the millennial readers, creating a strong bond between writer and readers. Natassa belongs to those millennial writers who frequently use digital media in their works. The term millennials here refers to those born between 1982 and 2004, most of whom know how to use digital technology (Howe and Strauss 2000, 3–29). This again corresponds to the reality of the lives of young Indonesians who are extremely fond of representing their existences in social media. Indonesian millennials are very much influenced by digital life. For these millennials, technology, to borrow Heryanto's term, is "empowering" (Heryanto 2012, 42), resulting in a hyper reality in which media technology produces an abundance of sounds, images, and other sensations. Moreover, this hyper reality creates shadows of the image that people find more credible than the image itself (Jurriëns 2012, 221). Alex's Twitter account still exists and has more than three thousand followers who may blur the boundaries between reality, fiction, and hyper-reality.

Changing language, changing identity

For millennial readers, gone is the era when proper stories were written in standard Indonesian. There are new language trends, just as there are new trends of fashion, music, architecture, and taste. In many of the *metropop* writings, this new trend is to combine English and Indonesian (in its urban colloquial form). Interestingly, local languages hardly appear in *metropop* stories. This omission seems mainly due to the setting of these novels. As Jakarta is the most common setting, highly globalised and very much cosmopolitan, the megacity marks young Indonesians' association with the international world. English phrases are mixed with Indonesian and Jakartan vernaculars, making the characters in these *metropop* stories hybrid mixtures of Indonesian (Jakarta and its outskirts) and international identities. Unlike the love stories from the 1970s and 1980s by authors such as Marga T., La Rose, Iskasiah Sumarto, NH Dini, and many others (Sumardjo 1995, 142), which mainly use standard Indonesian in combination with some expressions in vernacular languages such as Javanese, *metropop* narratives abound with cosmopolitan and global exposures indicated by the use of English. This new trend undeniably

ventures towards new ways of constructing identity, showing more hybridised life-worlds, and signalling local and global exchanges of identities often referred to as globalisation. In a chapter entitled “Cacoethes Scribendi” (Latin, “an insatiable urge to write”) Natassa wrote about the reason of being both a banker and a writer:

People ask me when do I do have the time to write with my impossible working schedule. Dan jawaban saya biasanya adalah [and my answer is usually, translation DAA]: Business trips are the greatest perks of my job... Those trips also provide me with the quintessential opportunity to learn about the people who have actually made it for themselves... And what's even more fascinating is the fact that you will learn a whole lot about yourself by analyzing how you respond to what they say. (Natassa 2012a, 5-6, italics in the original)

In the above quote, Natassa moves easily between English and Indonesian, while all the chapter titles in *Divortiare* are in Latin. Switching between standard Indonesian, Indonesian mixed with Jakarta vernacular, and English marks the shifting identities these young people ³¹ have forged. They embody the fusion of global and local identities, “blending, mixing, adapting of two or more processes one of which must be local” (Khondker 2004, 6). Such globalisation and hybridisation are indeed typical of the millennials, and different from earlier generations from the 1970s or 1980s whose members displayed a more national and local focus instead of a global outlook. This may seem to overgeneralise the writers from the 1970s and 1980s, but compared to millennial writers they are much more localised in terms of language use and cultural expressions. Technological progress has facilitated these young people to become creators within global networks with a local taste.

Apart from Ika Natassa’s novels, also *Celebrity Wedding* (AliaZalea 2011), *Sunshine Becomes You* (Ilana Tan 2012), *Autumn Once More* (2013, a collection of *metropop* short stories), *Kartini Nggak Sampai Eropa* (Sammaria 2008), and *Pagi Ini Di Seberang Jalan* (2014, another collection of short stories) all have the mixed usage of Indonesian (both standard and vernacular) and English in common. These novels carry numerous English expressions but revolve around local characters, ethics and values, demonstrated by the use of local Indonesian names, the proscription of pre-marital sex, heterosexual relationships according to Indonesian norms that prohibit kissing or sex only to allow holding hands, and many other characteristics that follow present-day Indonesian societal norms.

Identity politics shown by the characters of the *metropop* novels, whose language is a mixture of Indonesian and English, suggest that

young Indonesians live their lives within symbolic functions that are part of global and local identities. The use of hybrid multilingual expressions may be understood as a metaphor for a language of materiality: mixtures of languages draw attention to their identity politics rather than just engrave an easy, translucent relationship between words and the world. The term linguistic hybridisation alludes to a multitude of languages the *metropop* novels celebrate. It produces a diversity of the linguistic situations of the speaker. A young Indonesian moving easily between Indonesian and English indicates that s/he situates herself/himself in situations that are signifying the local identification of the self as well as the global, which are considered not in contradiction with but complementary to each other, as is suggested by the *metropop* authors.

Metropop authors do foreground linguistic hybridisation. Following Kristeva, language is not only a matter of expression, but it potentially relates to the ways in which an individual looks at, and identifies herself/himself with the world. Two modalities in language, the Symbolic and the Semiotic, enable an individual to signify herself/himself. The symbolic content of language relies much on the use of symbols in the ways an individual communicates with her/his world, which is one of many ways in which subjectivity is constructed. The Semiotic content of language signals the ways in which meaning is created by an individual in relation to her/his culture and how social and political positioning is constructed. In her *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva expounds:

We shall call the first 'the semiotic' and the second 'the symbolic.' These two modalities are inseparable within the *signifying process* that constitutes language, and the dialectic between them determines the type of discourse (narrative, metalanguage, theory, poetry, etc.) involved; in other words, so-called "natural" language allows for different modes of articulation of the semiotic and the symbolic. On the other hand, there are nonverbal signifying systems that are constituted exclusively on the basis of the semiotic (music, for example). But, as we shall see, this exclusivity is relative, precisely because of the necessary dialectic between the two modalities of the signifying process, which is constitutive of the subject. Because the subject is always *both semiotic and symbolic*, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both. (Kristeva 1984, 24)

The above quote underlines that the language an individual or a subject speaks is never fixed, and being constituted by language, the speaking subject remains unstable. The speaking subject is always in a process of mutually constructing meaning out of the symbolic and the semiotic.

Identity is never fixed once and for all but always in a process of becoming.

Language dictates and reflects the ways in which its speaker perceives her/his world. In the case of *metropop* authors, who freely switch between languages, this may mean that linguistic differences between Indonesian and English create and mark an identity that is more cross-cultural, multiple, and hybrid. It seems inevitable that for these authors such hybridisation establishes a coherent cultural identity that is dynamic. Cross-cultural wordplay may be understood as part of a hybrid identity in the context of which these authors attempt to translate their Indonesian cultural identity into contemporary English (global) terms. Language hybridisation is the bridge that closes the gap supposedly separating global culture and Indonesian culture.

English has long been used in Indonesian works by writers in earlier periods of the Indonesian literary tradition, and is not the only foreign language used in Indonesian literature. Pramoedya Ananta Toer opines that in the 19th and early 20th centuries quite a number of Malay works were written in mixed registers of Dutch-Malay and Malay-Chinese. Moreover, Malay itself at that time, Maier (1993) argues, was developed from a heteroglossia (a hybrid collection of utterances) into a polyglossia (when multiple languages are separated and coexist in the same area and at the same time). If language varieties are taken into account, Indonesian literature, with Malay writings as the pioneer, has always been linguistically hybrid. The difference between then and now lies in the languages used and the former lack of a standard register. Dutch (the colonial language), Malay (regional variant), or Chinese words hardly, if ever, appear in Indonesian popular fiction anymore; their positions are replaced by English (the foreign language) and *Bahasa Indonesia* (the national language).³ Young Indonesians today no longer see themselves as colonial subjects affected by the usage of Dutch as the colonial language but as global individuals using global English. To put it simply, Indonesians have now gone global. Although this may seem very simplistic, as the linguistic situation in Indonesia is very complex with an enormous variety of languages, the mixture of Indonesian and English is more common than any other foreign language and is considered a typical feature of an individual going beyond the confinements of locality.

³ Of course, this does not mean that there are no words of Chinese, Malay, or Dutch origin in the language used in the popular novels, as some of the words have been absorbed in the everyday speech of young Indonesians. For instance, the pair *gue* and *lu*, used as first and second person singular personal pronouns, originate from Hokkien.

Young Indonesians today, whose linguistic registers may include a mother tongue and one or more other languages (mainly Indonesian and English), show that the identity politics they create are always fluid and enact both local and global formations. Although globalisation has replaced a singular, local Indonesian identity for these young people, this does not mean that they oppose the global in favour of the local. Globalisation, they believe, can coexist with localisation, and they are proud of being both global and local, not either or. Heryanto (2012, 29) remarks that Indonesian millennials have embraced fluid identity politics that are highly different from their predecessors: “contemporary Indonesian society is marked by plurality, centred-peripheral politics and ideological contestations.” Post-New Order politics tend to be lenient and create more open spaces that spur the birth of new identity politics.

Beauty, fashion, and patriarchy

Beauty fascinates us all, regardless of race, social and cultural standing, or religion. Still, it seems to be ascribed to women in particular. Not only is beauty used to evaluate women, but it has ⁵⁰ become an identity marker for them. In line with feminist theory, Naomi Wolf, in her book *The Beauty Myth* (first published in 1991), discusses the concept of beauty as a means of social control to define women as wives and child bearers. According to Wolf, this concept reduces women to being viewed as creatures having primarily nurturing abilities. She argues further how the concept of female beauty has obsessed women and eventually entrapped them in the grip of patriarchy. The media are instrumental in this, by propagating a one-sided representation of beauty for women and girls. Through mass media, popular culture has flooded us with images of beautiful women and girls, which are not only utopian but also still trapped in old stereotypes. Women have been taught to become obsessed with their beauty and body. What is hip and trendy, what is not, what women should follow, what they should not, and the dos and don'ts, are frequently stereotyped by the media.

Being a mass-mediated genre, popular novels by Indonesian *metropop* writers carry similar notions when depicting female beauty and body. “Hidupnya Tina(h)” (Tina(h)'s Life, 2014), a short story by Lusiwulan, depicts the life of a girl named Tinah who was born poor and unattractive. Later in her life, she is abandoned by her boyfriend because of her dire circumstances. Tired of her unfortunate condition, Tinah moves to the big city, works as a call girl, and transforms herself into Tina (which is supposed as a more sophisticated urban variant of the name Tinah) who is

physically attractive and fashionable. Due to her new look, Tina marries a rich, much-older man who provides her with financial security. Tina's story perhaps reminds the readers of a modern Cinderella story. However, Tina is not as naive and sweet as Cinderella but rather a resentful girl, full of revenge. She is determined to take revenge on those who have done her wrong. Changing her physical appearance from plain to pretty, she finally manages to have the world at her command. She becomes a famous, rich, and respected socialite. Tina's wealthy husband is, in fact, the father-in-law of her ex-boyfriend who dumped her after she gave up her virginity to him. Unlike Cinderella, who is the proverbial angel, Tina is a monster. As indicated in feminist literary criticism, female characters are often divided into two opposite categories: if not an angel, they are monsters, and Tina represents the latter. She is pretty and smart but also lethal and disastrous in addition to being promiscuous. When a woman has power she becomes dangerous; this seems to be the message the story delivers.

The story of Tina(h) reflects the common idea that beautiful looks can work as a ladder to reach a higher social position and gain economic wealth. This story centres on the way a girl's body is used in relation to social stratification. A female body is not merely a corporeal body; it is also a social body that signifies social position. Being an ordinary-looking girl is highly undesirable because such girls are stereotyped as being low class, and they are associated with a poor, unstable standard of life. The myth prevails that poor girls are physically unattractive. This is not to say that all poor girls are represented as unappealing, for there is also a common stereotype of poor girls who are beautiful and pious, but the latter stereotypical characterisation is usually related to more religious contexts. A female body becomes a mark of economic and social differences. When Tina first moved to the big city, despite her intelligence, she was humiliated and discriminated against because of her ordinary looks (Lusiwulan 2014, 44). But soon after she had transformed into Tina, she became a *nouveau riche*, a socialite and highly respected member of the upper class (Lusiwulan 2014, 50). Physical attractiveness or beauty for women functions as a ground that allows for distinguishing between classes, status, and wealth. Differences in intelligence, culture, talent, creativity, usefulness, and even morality are simply reduced to female beauty. Beauty is powerful, this story tells us, and beauty defines class. Tina(h) reinforces stereotypes according to which a girl or a woman cannot be high class if she looks unattractive, although she attends a college, is intelligent, cares about larger issues, or has a good personality. Beauty dictates women, and men dictate women to have it:

6

The quality called “beauty” objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it. This embodiment is imperative for women and not for men, which situation is necessary and natural because it is biological, sexual, and evolutionary. (Wolf 2002, 12)

9

Wolf (2002, 13) further contends that beauty is merely a myth that “is not about women at all. It is about men’s institutions and institutional power”. To prevent women from challenging men’s power, this myth has ideologically obsessed many women, old and young. Little wonder that beauty pageants and cosmetic/aesthetic surgery have become a flourishing business over the past decades. Who is beautiful and who is ugly becomes the only foreseeable identification for women like in the story of Tina(h) who is assigned her social status due to her looks and nothing else. The terms “beautiful” and “ugly” themselves serve for trapping a woman v15 in the shackles of others’ constructions: the confinement of patriarchy. “By using ideas of ‘beauty’, it reconstructed an alternative female world with its own laws, economy, religion, sexuality, education, and culture, each element as repressive as any that had gone before” (Wolf 2002, 22). Wolf also argues that female beauty has become an unconscious hallucination that is “more influential and pervasive” (17), inspiring a multibillion-dollar industry mostly owned and controlled by men. It is this very hallucination or dreamlike beauty that many popular novelists offer their readers. The characters of Alex in Natassa’s novels and Tina(h) in Lusiwulan’s story are beautiful, fashion conscious, and sexually attractive. They draw attention only to the imagery of female beauty and neglect the conditions of real women’s bodies and looks.

Hair-Quake (2014, first published 2008) by Mariskova echoes the female body discourse similar to what we have encountered in Lusiwulan’s story. Mariskova tells the story of an English teacher named Andita Soekardi, aged 25 and still single, who is obsessed with having long, straight hair. Andita47 was born with curly hair, and she hates it. Andita’s motto is that “*better hair brings better luck, better love, and better life*” (Mariskova 2012, 12, italics in the original). Andita finds it increasingly awkward to deal with her hair. She believes that her curly hair puts her in many unpleasant situations. Andita even becomes a national laughingstock when photographs of her appear in *MC* (a prestigious woman’s magazine) with the caption HAIRSTYLES: WHAT’S SO DECADE AGO. The magazine also qualifies her hairstyle as *hairosaurus* (a combination of hair and dinosaur). Andita considers her hair to be more than just a mess, it is a disaster, which makes her straighten and change the colour of her hair from reddish into black at the hairdresser.

Now her hair resembles the supposedly beautiful style portrayed in the ubiquitous shampoo commercials. However, straightening her hair turns into another disaster, and the story ends with Andita cutting her hair very short into a crew cut hairstyle. Interestingly, Andita's masculine haircut receives praise from two friends who are competing for her heart, saying that the crew cut looks cute on her.

Andita's story may suggest two things. On the one hand, Andita's self-esteem seems to parallel her feminine and masculine self. Feminine Andita with the disastrous hairstyle equals failure, while Andita with the masculine haircut is a success. Somehow, her more masculine appearance awards her with some form of achievement. Here again we see the patriarchal ideology at work. On the other hand, it is quite typical in Indonesia that a woman is valued on the basis of her hair. There is an Indonesian saying that a woman's hair is her *mahkota* (crown). This implies that female identity is centralised in a part of a woman's body. Women's subjectivity is policed and vested in a certain part of the female body that in the end will determine the place or condition considered "normal". For Andita, hair represents beauty, identity, and self-esteem. The *hairosaurus* Andita is considered ugly and has low self-esteem, as she is not feminine enough with proper, long, straight hair. But a masculinised Andita with short hair suddenly gains momentum, achieves success and receives compliments from her suitors. The story of Andita indicates how masculinisation works to revise failure to success.

Andita's obsession with hair mirrors Tina(h)'s obsession with beauty. Despite her intelligence⁴⁹ Andita, like Tinah, is ridiculed and bullied simply because of her hair. At the end of the story, the language institute where she works awards Andita a scholarship to continue her studies in the United States. Although *Hair-Quake* concludes with a positive ending depicting Andita's pride and high self-esteem with her short hair, thus seemingly ending her obsession, the hair issue clearly shows that women are still not considered free to choose and exercise the notion of *women's bodies, women's rights*. Andita's decision to cut her hair short is simply not because she wants to but because she has been *forced to*. Andita's obsession to have long straight black hair was prompted by the beauty construction in women's magazines that have bombarded women with exactly the same standard for beautiful hair. It is indicative of the notion that magazines ideologically dictate the identity of women. As Wolf (2002, 64 and 70) argues:

⁹ Women's magazines for over a century have been one of the most powerful agents in changing¹⁴ men's roles, and throughout that time—today more than ever [...] Women are deeply affected by what their

magazines tell them (or what they believe they tell them) because they are all most women have as a window on their own mass sensibility.

Women need to be tall, slim, pretty, and have long, straight hair to fall into the category of being “beautiful”, so these magazines propagate. But, of course, women’s magazines are not alone in creating standards of female beauty; film and television also play a significant role in forming a standard imagery. Media function as a means of institutionalising this “mass sensibility” that states that women can only be defined by forces outside themselves and never by themselves. Although Wolf mainly refers to white middle-class women, this trend is evidently global, affecting women around the world. Female characters like Andita and Tina(h), for example, who grew up during the new media age, forge their identities in close connection with representations and constructions found in the new media. Indonesian women are not much different from their sisters in other parts of this world. This is perhaps what we might call the price of globalisation. The flood of representations in the media inspires women to construct their identities on the basis of their appearance.

Women’s identity politics, especially in relation to their physical appearance, may remind us of Virginia Woolf’s narrative “The Lady in the Looking Glass: A Reflection”. Women need a looking glass (a mirror) to see the truth about themselves. In much of the patriarchal world today, this mirror constitutes men and their attitude towards women. Women see themselves through men’s eyes, hardly if e¹³ with their own eyes, especially when it comes to their appearance: “woman is made especially to please man [...] If a woman is made to please and to be subjugated, she ought to make herself agreeable to man” (Rousseau 1991, 358). Women’s natural position is merely a complement to men. That beauty is just a myth, as Wolf so strongly posits, is represented in many Indonesian contemporary popular novels where female characters are, or strive to become, beautiful. Beauty is not only considered a myth; it has been turned into a dream in accordance with the earlier reference to Hoggart’s work at the start of this essay. Indonesian women and girls fantasise about being beautiful, slim, and tall. A Cinderella discourse is at work throughout much of popular fiction, which in this respect does indeed reflect reality. Teen and women’s magazines, television, and advertisements make sure that women will tend to identify themselves as bodily creatures agreeable to men. Unlike men, who are associated with more intellectual beings, women are trapped within this disco³⁸ around the face and the sexualised body. They are victimised by “the structure of fashion and beauty system which acts as an authoritative regime” (McRobbie 2009, 68) only to win men’s attention. Fashion and beauty

indeed are patriarchal conceptions aimed to construct women within the purview of patriarchy.

Fashion and beauty, too, work as—to borrow Kristeva’s term—the symbolic, in which women are simultaneously inscribed into the dominant language of patriarchy:

8

The fashion-beauty complex, standing in for the Symbolic, is charged with the role of imposing new time frames on women’s lives. As a result there is a proliferation of activities which impose new temporalities through 25 for example, beauty products routinely recommended to very young girls as well as so-called age defying treatments for young women who are barely in their twenties. (McRobbie 2009, 63)

10

The fashion-beauty complex functions on behalf of patriarchal authority so as to ensure the stability of the heterosexual matrix especially when it is threatened by social changes brought about 37 women coming forward into the world of work and employment. It is also a key mechanism in the active production and reproduction of racialising differences. And likewise the various forms of feminine popular culture whose focus of attention is sexuality, desire, and the conduct of love and intimacy [...] are so deeply inscribed within the dominant language of love, and what young women now need to do to secure a partner or husband (the so-called rules). (McRobbie 2009, 71)

The extended quotes from McRobbie’s book here indicate several things. Most importantly is that fashion and beauty indeed are the core of women’s identity politics. Second is that such politics lead and reinstate typical formula about love relationships between men and women 46 boys and girls, allowing only for heteronormativity in women’s lives. With the help of the fashion and beauty industries, patriarchy maintains the institution by which the female is controlled and shaped.

Marriage and domesticity

Romance plots that end in marriage are exceedingly common in contemporary Indonesian popular narratives. Marriage, followed suit by domesticity, is a formula that seems to have undergone no change from the birth of Indonesian modern literature in the 1920s until today. A normative life cycle model for women—following love affairs, marriage, bearing children, growing old together with their spouses, and all the trials and tribulations of domestic life—has become common practice in many societies. The normative model reinforces feminine subjectivity that has long been ingrained in female identity politics. In Natassa’s *Twivortaire*,

Alex longs for such a norm: “The simplest things in life are what makes us happy eventually. A warm and comfy home, being loved, and knowing that somebody can’t live without you” (Natassa 2012b, 218). Although Alex is a very successful banker, her professional life means nothing without a happy and comfortable home (domesticity). Fantasising about home is primary for Alex. Home h³⁶ is used not without significance: “Home also symbolises part of that complex knot of feelings, ideas, and activities which have structured a sense of feminine self” (Light 1991, 219, quoted in Dixon 1999, 175). Like other popular fictions, romances published by Mills & Boon portray a similar meaning of home. It is “that ultimate female space—to express not only a physical space, but an ideology that encompasses a re-ordering of society, with women at its centre. It is an ideal to be attained by both sexes, a symbol of society, of female civilization” (Dixon 1999, 175). Alex believed that home was where she could find happiness and comfort. As home is Alex’s source of happiness, having a child and motherhood will bring her to the centre of female identity, a bearer of civilisation. After several years of married life, Alex and Beno had yet to bear a child. Often asked by their relatives, they simply answered that they needed to balance career and marriage before having a child. The story ends with a hopeful future of having a child after several attempts have failed (several times Alex experienced a false alarm of being pregnant). In this perspective, for Alex motherhood is highly important in domestic life. As a wife, Alex was required to do domestic chores just like any other wife in Indonesia. Despite her inexperience in cooking, for example, Alex tried to provide home cooking for Beno’s birthday. The feminine subjectivity of marriage and domesticity is forced and reinforced in this story.

Women’s dependency on men in the form of marriage recalls the patriarchal power upon women and how women must pay for this control with their freedom; “upon marriage, the woman was subsumed into the man’s identity in terms of name and legal status, to become his possession” (Chance 1994, 60). In this *metropop* fiction, a female character is delighted to enter or even passionately awaits the moment of married life. The final “w” in Alexandra’s Twitter account, @alexandarheaw, which refers to her husband’s last name, serves as a confirmation of her ideal status.

Marriage and domesticity form the most consistent plot elements in any popular romance and Indonesian romance fiction is no exception to this general rule. As women seem to have gained better access to employment, female domestic life is more often combined with a career outside the home. The combination of home and work may have a

different significance compared to earlier Indonesian popular romance from the 1920s up to the 1970s. In the past, female characters were mostly depicted as housewives and mothers, exemplified by Sitti Nurbaya in Marah Rusli's *Sitti Noerbaya* (1922) or Miranti in Ike Soepomo's *Kabut Sutera Ungu* (1978). Contemporary Indonesian popular fiction no longer ostracises female characters from the world of work. Millennial women have a career or a job combined with domestic life (including love and romance).

aliaZalea's *Celebrity Wedding* (first published 2011) tells the story of a simple yet very smart singleton named Inara Hanindita who works as a public accountant in an accounting firm. In the story Inara is forced to marry Revelino Darby, a famous musician, a celebrity, "the most eligible bachelor in town and Mr. Playboy of the Year" (aliaZalia 2013, 9). Inara refuses at first but then accepts the contracted marriage to save Revel's (Revelino's nickname) career, as he has been gossiped to have impregnated his former girlfriend Luna. Revel's reputation was cleared when Luna made a statement to the press, saying that Revel was not the father of her child. Inara's arranged marriage was rocky at first, two strangers coming together and learning to live in harmony, but they fell in love in the process. This kind of plot is archetypical in romance fiction. According to Dixon, marriage in romance stories such as those published by Mills & Boon usually falls into two categories: marriage of convenience and forced marriage (Dixon 1999, 155).

As the title implies, *Celebrity Wedding* tells a Cinderella-like story, of fantasy, of the dream that a simple, ordinary girl is able to tame a Prince Charming who is also a rebel. But unlike Cinderella, Inara is a working girl, a successful accountant with many clients who are pleased with her professionalism in accounting services. Unlike their predecessors, millennial girls are not just housewives but also career professionals who enjoy top jobs with high salaries. Income from employment (outside the home) for these working girls is important and gives them a certain degree of independence. All working female characters, like Inara in *Celebrity Wedding*, Alex in *Divortiare* and *Twivortiare*, and Tina in "Hidupnya Tina(h)", are economically independent from men. Their decision to marry rich men has nothing to do with a supposed economic incapability: it is a desire for romance and home (domesticity). The romantic novels published by Mills & Boon, the world-famous publisher of romance, display similar characteristics as found in abundance in Indonesian popular stories:

Mills & Boon romances combine the cult of domesticity with women's need to work by joining the home and the workplace in various ways [...]

although not ignoring those women who preferred to stay at home, Mills & Boon novels have argued throughout this century for women's rights to work, before and during marriage, and after having children. (Dixon 1999, 124 and 132)

In the lives of female characters depicted in this discussion it is evident that these women are working women who choose to keep their jobs even after their marriage. Having a job provides a woman with an opportunity to become independent. However, Indonesian society today still expects a working woman to trade her economic independence from men for dependence in marriage in order to gain happiness and security.

"Thirty Something" (2013), a short story by Anastasia Aemila, clearly portrays the duality of a woman's independence from/dependence on men. The story revolves around the uneasy life of Rachel, who is in her thirties and still single. Rachel has befriended Erik for a long time. They both love each other as best friends, but their friendship gradually turns into love, especially on the part of Erik. He accepts a job offer in Japan for three years and promises to return to Jakarta to marry Rachel. At first Erik has high hopes that Rachel will accept his love. He kisses her on the night before his departure, wishing that she would no longer consider him a best friend but a potential lover. Erik thought that he may be successful in wooing her, only to realise that she is already engaged with a man named Artha when he finds Rachel's engagement ring that accidentally dropped out of her purse that night. The story ends with Rachel's dismay. She sighed, "*Being thirty-something and single is not that easy in my family, Erik. You know that*" (Aemilia 2013, 35, italics in the original). It turns out that just before Erik had an opportunity to declare his love to her, the grandmother forced Rachel to become engaged with Artha. This story underlines the importance of a woman's marital status in Indonesia when she has reached a certain age. Inevitably, Rachel's independence must change into dependence through marriage, and she has no way to reject her family's power. This is typical of certain Indonesian settings. The idea of letting an independent woman live the life she wants while still being single would violate the norm that only through marriage (including domesticity) a woman can be regarded as a full member of society. Her full status only applies when her status as a married wife is added. Virginity is highly valued, but marriage is socially preferred. It is not surprising that an Indonesian term for old spinster is *perawan tua* (old virgin).

Rachel's coerced engagement with Artha signifies how a woman's sexual desire must immediately be controlled by the institution of marriage. Being unmarried, there is a danger that a girl or a woman will let loose her sexual desire. This is considered a challenge to patriarchy, as

sexually liberal women signify their independence from men. Bates et al. succinctly explain Rachel's unease as a *perawan tua* and how women in her position may experience similar problems:

For many women, the quest for freedom of choice in making a marriage may well lead us back into the maze of cultural demands and social pressures from which we had sought escape. As young women, we have often spent our times grooming ourselves to fit the description of the "ideal" wife. We study what men want and like and try to conform as closely as possible to the conflicting images which guide us—in modern times, in the pages of magazines, in motion pictures, or in television advertising. For some women, wifehood is a career. Even if we consider it only a possibility, we may think twice before undertaking work or studies which we imagine will interfere with marriage. Women today are often not much freer than our predecessors and our contemporaries elsewhere in the world from the informal social and familiar pressures that drive many of us into marriage that benefit others far more than ourselves. (Bates et al. 1983, 257)

Women can never have a choice of their own; this Rachel understood. Pressure by family and society exerts too much of an influence in controlling the destiny of women.

Conclusion

1 'A man's self,' William James wrote in 1890, 'is the sum total of what he can call his; not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife, his children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account' (quoted in Hobsbawm 1989, 165). The qualities of the individual's life can be measured in material terms: wealth and the status it brings, a privileged relationship with the law, education and even religious establishments, and power over others such as wives, children and employees. Material things 1ve therefore both practical and psychic consequences; they bolster the sense of valuable personhood for the individual who does the 'owning', producing and reinforcing a measurable estimate of his worth. Provided the individual remains within certain limits of action—primarily that he does not infringe the rights/privileges of others who share his status—he is very free in action he is permitted. (Robbins 2000, 22)

The above quote indicates the definition of personhood, unfortunately, only for men. A woman's personhood seems to be the opposite, or complementary to that, of a man. Contemporary Indonesian popular fiction depicts how women see their personhood from the view of female authors. Indonesian popular authors like Ika Natassa, Lusiwulan,

aliaZalea, Mariskova, and Anastasia Aemilia still, like authors from earlier generations, create images of women in their stories that are potentially limited. These are images that reduce “the female subject to the status of object, mak[ing] ideal images that are not often congruent with reality, into powerful ideological tools for the control of women who have been devalued if they do not have ‘good’ looks . . . woman is damned if she does, and damned if she doesn’t pay attention to her looks, to her image, to how she looks and how she is seen” (Robbins 2000, 51). Images of women in popular fiction (novels and short stories) are never quite liberating. Female characters in the stories, like Alex, Tina(h), Rachel, Inara, and Andita are never free from the patriarchal forces that have formed them. Beauty, fashion, romance, marriage, and domesticity commonly render women into a delimitation of their identity politics. The control of feminine sexuality, like in the story of Rachel, indicates an ideology of domesticity that sets woman apart from the centre of power. These stories also reestablish the norm of our society, according to which the ultimate goal of a woman’s life is marriage: the only place where she can find true happiness. Contemporary Indonesian *metropop* stories confirm that an absolutely free woman is utopian, as imaginary women in literary texts (including popular fiction) and women in reality are not that much different. To a large extent women are still controlled by an objectification of women in the context of which their bodies and ideologies are not their own property.

One should notice that millennial authors, though sharing imageries of women being controlled by patriarchal forces like earlier generations of authors, depart in many ways in their use of language. The use of English, standard Indonesian, and Indonesian mixed with the Jakartan vernacular mark the difference these authors connote compared to previous authors. The digital world and the easy access to the Internet leave the choice of identification for the women in the stories, in the perspective of the multiple languages used, ambivalent; these women show that they are capable of being global and local at the same time. Because language is the most generally acknowledged of all signifying practices, the multiple languages suggest a freer construction of women’s identity. In that case, women become speaking subjects who could go far from a unitary concept, making them hybrid and multi-dimensional.

The women or girls in *metropop* writings are somehow mixed in between. On the one hand, due to their multiplicity of language use, they are capable of forging their own multifarious identities. On the other hand, they are still trapped within power relations that privilege men over women. However, what is most important is that these writings have

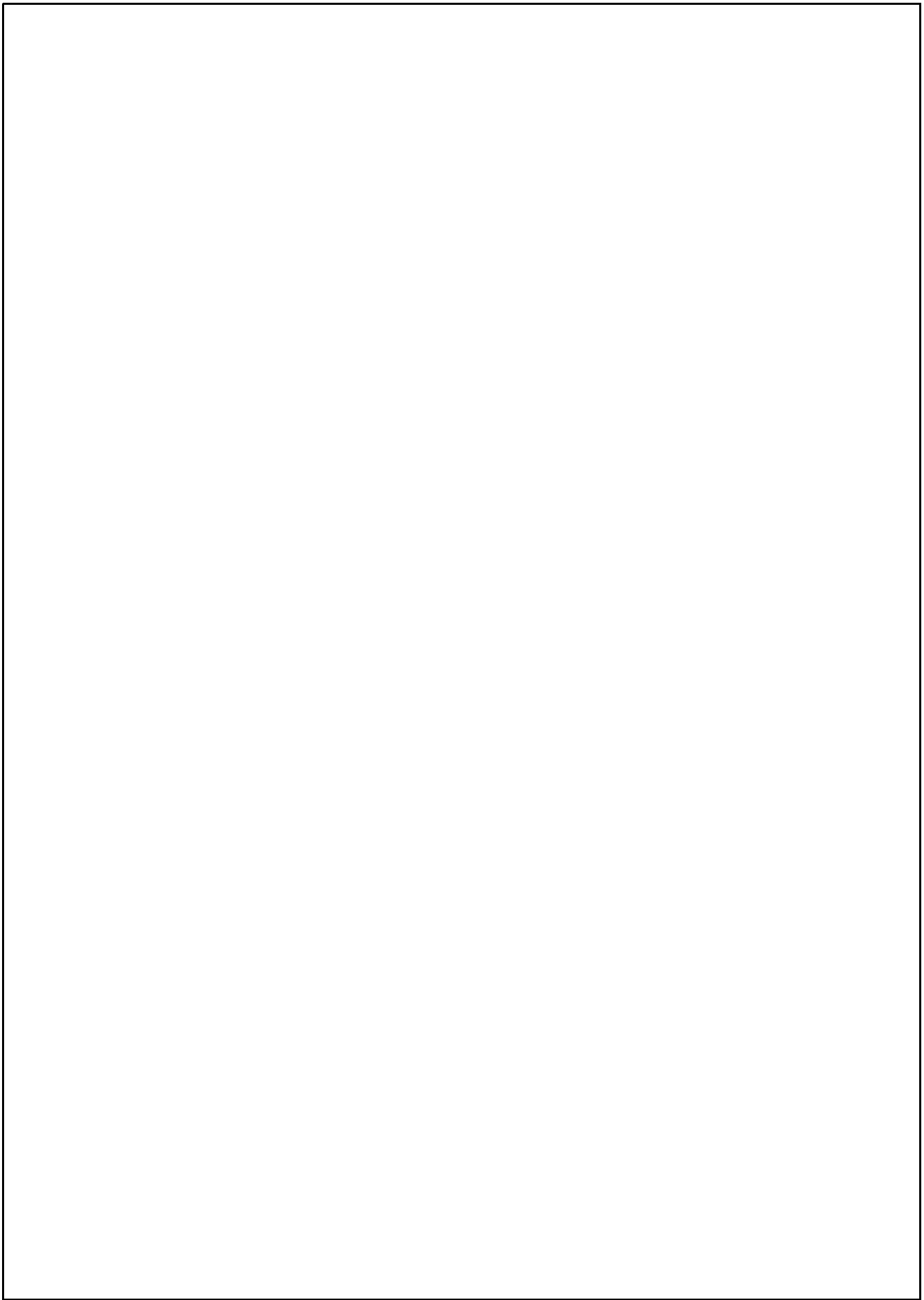
contributed significantly to advancing the notion that there could and should be ways for women to look at and define themselves on their own terms. Despite the patriarchal projection contained in these writings, the authors have achieved success in making women see how they are locked within social and cultural factors contextualising them. Although patriarchal shackles on women are still clearly visible in these writings, they also challenge them by speaking out with their own voice. These women authors are feminists in a sense that they subvert patriarchal control by assessing their own life, using their own perspectives. Moreover, by using colloquial Indonesian and English they challenge the very idea that women's place is only at home. By using a mixture of local and global registers they show the world that they have moved beyond the confinement of their homes, in opposition to a Javanese proverb saying that women should never step out of their homes. These millennial authors seem to turn against this saying: women, do step out of your homes by using this type of language. Let women speak what they want! And through these writings at least this wish is fulfilled.

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