

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Pusat Pembinaan Profesi Keuangan Supervision of Cpas and Public Accounting Firms

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Abstract—The art of the comic book narrative combines pictures and words. Thus, the romance comics that began in Indonesia with the publication of Jan Mintaraga’s creations (1942-1999) in the first stages of the domination of the New Order from 1966 to 1971 reveal the signs of the hegemonic process that puts Jakarta as the representation of urban culture. The determination of power and the ideological struggle form the settings, plots, and life styles of an urban culture in the making. 38 titles of research material are used as sources for this study investigating the social, economic, and political aspects of the discourse. The examination yields the finding that the dialectics pertaining to the dreams and realities of the past are useful for the study of current urban life. The experimental culture conditions experienced in that period, along with the role played by niche-markets, are staging a come-back at the start of the digital age.

Keywords—urban culture, hegemonic process, ideological struggle

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Urban Rising

After the political disaster that occurred in 1965-1966 when, at the beginning of the New Order, the members of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) were hunted and massacred or imprisoned for a long time, the Soeharto regime invited foreign investors to assist in the development of an Indonesia that had already collapsed:

“... there were real reasons for special attention to economic development because right before the aborted coup of September 30, 1965 and in its wake, the economic situation was apparently beyond help. Inflation went up by more than 600 percent, and there was a pressing scarcity of goods for everyday living. Just to get some rice, sugar, or oil people had to stand in line for hours almost everyday, sometimes with much pain without gain. Eventually students went to the streets for continuous demonstrations.” (Kleden, 2017, para. 3)

The change in the political direction from socialism to capitalism at that juncture was mirrored in the transformed attitudes of the youth and was reflected in the new consumerism of life styles that were previously bound by restrictions. In “Reinventing Our Revolution” (<http://primbondonit.blogspot.com/2011/11/arsip-nasional-pidato-bung-karno-hut-ri.html>), even Soekarno connected the rights and wrongs of popular music with cultural

imperialism, which was very political with regard to the circumstances. Indonesian youth became widely open to Western popular culture.

Thus, the popular culture of the big cities may be asserted as belonging to the ever expanding urban culture which is itself, in some aspects, the consequence of the process of globalization as supported variably by all the determinant factors in the ideoscape, financescape, ethnoscape, technoscape, and mediascape (Appadurai, 1996). The phenomenal signs of urban culture will be examined in the media of comic books, especially through the most popular representations of the genre of romance comics created by the artist Jan Mintaraga (1943-1999). All the signifiers that construct an image or representation of the idea of an urban culture are theoretically supposed to exist as a commodity, and comic books also reflect the culture of their consumers in a manner of speaking (Storey, 1996: 10, 26-7).

The concepts of (1) popular culture, (2) urban culture, and (3) globalization discussed in this paper will first be defined in the sections that follow.

B. Popular Culture and Urban Culture: Concepts

1. Popular Culture as a New Form of Culture:

In an arena of hegemony, popular culture is the site where a socially subordinated group always resists the ethos of the dominant group that must, at the same time as it rules, negotiate the discourse of the subordinated group. Hegemony is hence a condition in process, and culture is always a circumstance of social consensus. Compromise equilibrium is a term that is never guaranteed a fixed meaning in the cultural site and it is this dynamism that makes culture ideological.

This process also creates political identities in culture, because personalities cannot be claimed as natural expression. Instead, they are more likely to be characterized as performance, always constituted by a contradictory series of identifications, subject positions, and forms of representation that are made, occupied, and located by individuals as they constitute and are constituted by performances that produce the narrative. As a characteristic of cosmopolitanism, popular culture is a fundamental part of this process.

At the same time, the concept of globalization has already transformed into the concept of glocalization.

According to this notion, trans local culture becomes the result of globalization as hybridism as opposed to territorial culture because the complex relations of globalization are transforming localities. Glocalization is the process that occurs when the fragments of globalization destroy previous modes of culture and supply new resources for new forms of culture. These complex relations characterize the 21st century world, but its indicators were already observed decades ago (Storey, 2007: 48-53, 91, 109-20).

2. *Identity Politics in Urban Culture:*

Urban culture emerges through citification, and the political economy of the metropolis as it is constructed by the struggle between globalization and glocalization represents a more contemporary interest in the study of the growth of cities. The term political economy signifies the manner in which social, economic, and cultural conditions generate metropolitan zones. This process includes the transformation of parts of the countryside into a cityscape as an impact of capitalist industrialization. Thus, urban life is a cultural process of production that becomes a symbol of modernity. At the same time, it exposes the ambiguity of the representation of modernity in everyday life (Barker, 2004: 204).

The paragraph quoted below reveals the relevance of a survey of Jan Mintaraga's romance comics to the understanding of urban culture:

The city can also be understood in terms of representation, that is, it can be grasped as a text. Representing urban life involves the techniques of writing—metaphor, metonymy and other rhetorical devices—rather than a simple transparency from the 'real' city to the 'represented' city. Representations of cities—maps, statistics, photographs, films, documents etc.—summarize the complexity of the city and displace the physical level of the city onto signs that give meaning to places. Representations of the spatial divisions of cities are symbolic fault lines of social relations and a politic of representation needs to ask about the operations of power that are bought to bear to classify environments. By revealing only some aspects of the city, representations have the power to limit courses of action or frame 'problems' in certain ways (Barker, 2004: 205).

In the performance of a metacultural discourse in which culture is defined and speaks for itself (Mulhern, 2000: xiv), a survey of comic books could assist in gaining a better understanding of urban culture, especially as part of the cultural process through which locations become urban.

C. *Romance Comics as Urban Narratives*

1. *The Rise and Fall of Romance Comics*

The genre of romance comics is centered on depictions of young people falling in love in big cities. The first romance comic was published in the United States in 1947 and the genre went out of print with *Young Love* #126 in 1977 (Barson, 2011: 8). Simultaneously, comic books aimed at girls flourished in Great Britain from the 1950s, reflecting what was considered 'female interest' at that time. In fact, even though the format did not yet resemble a comic book, the term 'specific audiences' was often used between the 1920s and the 1950s to denote books meant especially for

female readers. Sequential narratives of the 'love stories' genre developed from strips to pages, and the category of romance comics in the style of the US was only established in Britain in 1964 with stories that were published in a magazine entitled *Jackie*, which appeared to be dedicated to the problems faced by young women in big cities (Sabin, 1996: p. 83–84).

The representation of a young woman as the main character was related to the socio-political situation of the times that involved this half of the gender divide as the subject of the market. The embryo of these romance comics, in this case in Britain, had already emerged in the 1920s, and dramatized romantic situations already dominated in the United States in the form of radio soap operas from the 1930s. The form became established as a genre only after World War II when the role of the women who remained on home soil at war time became a resonating factor. The political climate changed after the war: servicemen returned from overseas and there was a drive to push women back into the home (Sabin, 1996: 88).

The momentum of 1947 was the start of a boom for this romantic comic genre in the United States. Around 147 different romance titles were published in 1950, one of every four comic books that reached the newsstand at the time. At the height of their popularity, romance comics sold millions of copies monthly (Barson, 2011: 8). In Britain, the first of the boom comics were linked to the early newspaper stories, but as the popularity of romantic comics diminished by the mid-1960s, Britain had become the center of the 'hip' 1960s world and the publisher DC Thompson attempted to produce a publication in 1964 that combined comics, women's magazines, and the 'pop' papers. This new fashionable title for the swinging times was named *Jackie*.

In the United States, a sub-genre of romance comics intended for older readers began to be published. These narratives shared some of the same situations and characters as the romance stories published in *Jackie*, as well as other phenomena:

"... the characters in *Jackie* did not go to school: they were wage earners, enjoying their 'freedom', and commonly shared accommodation with other hip wage earners in some large metropolis. They were physically and mentally more mature than the intended readership, and this was undoubtedly a major attraction. The strips themselves tended to be romantic in an essentially traditional way, but with a 'sophisticated' veneer. 'Catching a man' was a top priority, and stories typically ended in the conventional final-panel snog. However, the artwork was more cinematic than most comics (...), and the plot usually had some measure of psychological depth" (Sabin, 1996: 84).

The narratives in the short history of romance comics in United States and Great Britain belonged to the same genre and only the time line was different. In the United States, the downturn after the explosion of the genre in the 1950s occurred as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s and love comics disappeared when *Young Love*, the most popular romance comic magazine, went out of business in 1977 (Barson, 2011: 13). However, even though the popularity of the genre diminished in Britain by the mid-1960s, *Jackie* became a publishing phenomenon in 1964, and reviews of

romance comics could still be observed in 1983 (Barker, 1989: 194).

The history and the narratives of romance comics validate that the genre is a representation of urban culture. Hence, an examination of romance comics may assist in the detection of the process of becoming urban.

D. Jan Mintaraga's Romance Comics: Jakarta as a Setting for Love

1. Jan Mintaraga

Jan Mintaraga's personality as one of the three major romance comic artists in Indonesia was described by the researcher Marcel Bonneff:

After some experiments, he chose to work on adolescent romance, and he was regarded as the most Western comic artist. His style was influenced by American comic artists and the themes of his stories were often inspired from the comics that were published in Western countries whose cultures attracted his interest. However, he wanted to depict the lives of young people in Jakarta, especially of those who enjoyed the progress of the economy. According to him, the recreation of the lives of ordinary persons did not match adolescent romance that should be "romantic" and "beautiful." Most probably, he was the comic artist most acquainted with Western comics, and the only one with the proper appreciation for comics and their potential of development in Indonesia (Bonneff, 1998: 202).

Bonneff's research culminated in his dissertation in 1972. When he interviewed Jan Mintaraga, the comic artist had already created and published more than 100 titles, averaging two comic books each month for a fee of Rp 60.000. The title that gave him renown was *The Black Stain* (Bonneff, 1998: 202).

It is unclear whether the decline of romance comics in Indonesia resulted from the same causes as in the West. As *Young Love* disappeared from the newsstands in 1977, and *Jackie* lasted until 1983, the popularity of Indonesian romance comics seemed to ebb and flow like the second wave that followed the rise and fall of the genre in Britain or the United States. It should be noted in advance, however, that the socio-political context for the rise and fall of the romance comic in Indonesia was entirely different.

If the pre and post World War II phenomena caused the appearance of the romance comic in the United States and in Britain, its existence was prolonged because of the hippy culture that began in the 1960s. In Indonesia, on the other hand, the romance comics emerged from the rise of pop culture as a whole after the New Order became open to foreign investment, especially from Western countries, in contrast to the Soekarno era. Romance comics emerged with the entire gamut of the youth cultural phenomena of the time that included pop music, fashion, cinema, and comic books.

After he made a name with *The Black Stain*, Mintaraga became an icon of the genre as he steadily created romance comics. In the heyday of Indonesian comic scene in the 1970s, Mintaraga's achievements peaked with his comics being exported to Malaysia. He became productive not just as an artist but also as an activist concerned with the sustainability and the future of the comic book culture in Indonesia.

Mintaraga still published *The Ballad of Love (Balada Sebuah Cinta)* in 1980, but before the creation of this short work he had also experimented on other genres such as superhero and martial arts comics, because the popularity of romance comics was already declining. With the downsizing of all genres of Indonesian comics in later years, Mintaraga was always engaged in the struggle to return the Indonesian comic book to the market. Mintaraga's work on the Ramayana series in 1985 and on the historical series of *Imperium Majapahit* in 1994 also evidence his active involvement in the struggle to keep the Indonesian comic alive.

2. The Urban Love Scene and Jakarta as an Icon

The plot of romance comics always poses a question: will the couple be united in the end? After the first introduction, when the promise of happiness seems very reasonable, the plot begins to provide as many obstacles as possible for couples to endure and overcome, successfully or not, before reaching the end of the story.

As the setting of Mintaraga's romance comics, urban Jakarta was still taking the first steps in the process of citification after 1965. Hence, its attempts to distance itself from the previous urban culture and also from the previous avatar of Jakarta were both predictable and visible. The urban environment of Mintaraga's creations is not a copy of the reality; it reflects the dream of an urban city that is the future of Jakarta through an inspiration generated by phenomena of popular culture.

The comics thus become independent textual representations of urban culture, or the urban space became a text that should be treated as a representation. Through this perspective, the Jakarta of the comics should be considered an independent world, a contestation of the present time Jakarta when the artist narrated the urban love stories of its youth. In other word, the Jakarta of the comics is an icon of the urban Jakarta.

If this is so, the urban face is a problem that should be examined beyond its representation. Mintaraga declared that he wanted to create comics about the contemporary lives of young people (Soelin, 1970); his romance comics hence formed a window to the process of urbanization. How can Mintaraga's creations be read as texts of the urban culture of his time?

II. FINDING THE PATTERNS: THE CONCEPTS

Martin Barker first used the method used in this study for his 1983 research on *Jackie*, the popular magazine that incorporated the romance comic within its folds. The practicality and effectiveness of the methodology to discern patterns from research material similar to Barker's makes it ideal for the present investigation. This survey of romance comics marks the following distinctions:

A. Sets

Typical places such as parks, coffee bars, and discotheques where encounters occur, and where new relationships can begin. The open countryside is a less common venue for accidental encounters, and if a serendipitous meeting does occur outside the urban setting, it is likely to be in a wilderness location, and the encounter will also somehow be wild. Places come coded with the possibilities of the relationships that occur within them.

B. Story-Enablers

One of these techniques is flash-back, which enables the reader to visualize a problem, and work back to its cause and outcome. A story-enabler is a procedure in story-form whereby the romance-agenda is helped.

C. Theme-Markers

These are motifs that provide points of tension which also incline the story to resolve itself in particular direction. Example: the separation of a couple often sets off a series of events through the narrative.

D. Emotional Foci

Moments of high drama that mobilize the energy of the stories. Emotional foci provide a rhythm of high and low tension movement through a story (Barker, 1989: 190-1).

It has been asserted before that the signs of the process of becoming urban form the target of the present survey. The concept of signs borrowed from semiotics may be described thus:

A sign has three essential characteristics: it must have a physical form, it must refer to something other than itself, and it must be used and recognized by people as a sign. Barthes gives the example of a rose: a rose is normally just a flower, but if a young man presents it to his girlfriend it becomes a sign, for it refers to his romantic passion, and she recognizes that it does. Signs, and the ways they are organized into codes or languages, are the basis of any study of communication. They can have a variety of forms, such as words, gestures, photograph or architectural features. Semiotics, which is the study of signs, codes and culture, is concerned to establish the essential features of signs, and the ways they work in social life (Tim O'Sullivan, *et.al*, 1994: 284-5).

These concepts would be useful as tools for the investigation and examination of Mintaraga's romance comics as the representation of the growth of an urban culture.

III. TWO STEPS OF READING: THE METHOD

38 titles of romance comics by Mintaraga comprise the materials of this survey. Only two titles fall outside the purview of the 1966-1971 period which forms the focus of the survey. While one title from 1972 may still be included within the stipulated time frame, the titles from 1980 and 1994 are useful for a comparative examination with regard to the age.

The methods of this survey consist of two steps: (1) describing the comics through the four distinctions described above to find a general signification; and (2) evaluating and analyzing the meaning until the survey can determine the findings and formulate the results.

IV. INTO THE WORDS AND PICTURES: THE VIEWING AND INVESTIGATION

A. Romance Comics, Urban Culture: The Investigation of 38 Titles (Some Samples)

1. The Teenagers Incident (Insiden Remadja /61/1966)

a) Sets

Music bands of the time played for birthday parties at private houses, and the interior design in such houses, was

always illustrated as modern. Offices, restaurants, and the outdoors are also depicted as the action takes place both in the city and in the mountainous wilderness.

b) Story-Enablers

Hamdan's interest in Tatie becomes a problem for Boy and Tatie, as the tensions between Boy and Jopie still continue. The actual story enabler, however, is the information that Hamdan smuggled arms for insurgents in the mountain and that he also part of the insurrectionary group.

c) Theme-Markers

Ribut, the marginalized ex-military man, is first characterized as an antihero, who only works for money. Later, it transpires that he is not just a mercenary so that the plot could accord Boy the opportunity to establish himself as the hero. In the end, it appears as if Boy and Tatie's relationship is just beginning.

d) Emotional-Foci

The conflict between Boy and Jopie initially escalates the narrative tension, but Ribut's rebelliousness appears to steal the show. Further, earlier scenes depicting the smuggling business direct the romance plot toward the domain of action comics.

e) Signification

Urban icons like music bands and private parties involving the young generation begin to blossom in this genre. However, the shadow of past political problems still haunts the narrative effectively to make this story very different from all the others. The transformation that is represented in pictures and words is a clear sign of the discourse of the first years of the New Order.

2. The Black Stain (Sebuah Noda Hitam /319/1968)

This title is about one person who appears in two plots, like two unrelated stories joined only by the protagonist Indra's personal background. Indra's past haunts him because he has been erroneously perceived as a convict and as a murderer, while in actuality he was accused as a helper because he was set up by a gang of robbers to drive a vehicle to catch a speeding luxury car. One of the robbers shot the other car's driver, and this action angered Indra, who hit the shooter. The police arrived as he still held the pistol, and the shooter escaped. The court case proved that he was not the killer, but Indra was sent to prison anyway. This incident became the black stain on the rest of his life. The first part of the story occurs between Indra and his family. He returns home after being released from prison, and the family is split about accepting him back. His mother has passed away and his girlfriend Miranda is now his step-brother Rudy's girlfriend. Only his step-sister Lily empathizes with him. So Indra moves to another city. In the second part of the narrative, Indra becomes quite famous as Kamajaya, an author of romance novels who is also a painter. He meets one of his fans, Greta, and the two young people fall in love. It transpires that Greta is the daughter of the victim who was shot by the gang that trapped Indra to drive the car in pursuit. Indra comes to know of this truth because of Greta recounts the incident of her father's death to him. Greta knew she should tell her mother, but the words never come out, until her mother realizes much later that Indra's unbearded face is the same visage that she had seen

in court. At the opening of his first art exhibition, Greta's mother abruptly reveal this—still erroneous—story about Indra's past in front of all the guest and the situation becomes really hostile for Indra. So, once again, Indra moves to another city and tries to make himself disappear. Meanwhile, unable to build a relationship with any other man, Greta becomes renowned as a model, and then becomes a fashion designer. When asked by her mother when she would marry, Greta says that her love belongs only to Indra, and after sometime she is able to convince her mother that Indra is not her father's the killer. One day, in one of her tours, she meets Indra, who is now a worker of no importance in a theater building. When the theater owner and producer asks for Greta's cooperation for artistic design, Greta asks him to let Indra help her. Indra still keeps pretending he is someone else until he finally accepts his fate, especially when Greta lets him know that her mother is ready for Indra to become her son-in-law. Indra and Greta thus reunite and will marry as soon as possible. (Happy ending)

a) Sets

The urban environment is represented by houses with Jengki architecture, with modern and luxurious interior design. Big glass doors were not yet trending at the time; they indicated an urban dream that was, perhaps, later copied in reality. The same can be said of the fashion and styling of the clothes. The urban setting can also be seen in a glimpse of the business district with the store's name plate, and in the street environment that is depicted without the crowds. This narrative shows sparkling urban spaces that stand in opposition to the dark places that reflect the circumstances of the social outcast: the garage that functions as Indra's room, or the dark alleys. This 'other' society is also reflected in the dark stall where the frustrated Indra happens to meet the gang leader in his past.

b) Story-Enablers

Both plots result from the robbery / murder which is narrated as a flash back. It is also significant that Indra becomes involved with the gang only because he feels like an outcast at home.

c) Theme-Markers

As a totality, the first plot including the flash back functions as the enabler and forms the context for Indra and Greta's relationship. The theme marker thus becomes the moment Greta reveals the story about her father, followed by Indra's confession of what really transpired.

d) Emotional-Foci

Everything seems under controlled until Usman, who is interested in Greta, reminds her mother that Indra was the defendant in the case of Greta's father murder, and they think he is the killer. After the incident at the inauguration of Indra's painting exhibition, the third part of Indra's life and the second part of Greta's story seem anticlimactic. However, emotions are escalated again as Indra remains pessimistic about his future with Greta.

e) Signification

The distinctions described above evince the domination of certain values. The settings show class differences with the mood shifting between the dark and light places that signify the lower and higher socio-

economic strata. The dark hues signify the nuances of frustration and sorrow with which the low class live; the light does not really indicate the opposite, because the people in the higher class cannot avoid all their troubles. The story-enablers illustrate the fate no one can deny: Indra must face social stigma as a convict. The theme-markers describe the same values as the story-enablers and reach emotional escalation when the mistaken perception of Greta's mother generates her wrath at the opening of Indra's exhibition. Every aspect of the story is determined by the prejudices that emerge from classical values of right and wrong or good and bad, including the stereotype of the stepson in a family.

3. The Wild (Si Djalang/165/1969)

Djufri hails from a low-class family and is accused of stealing at school. He is actually is a set up, but is expelled. Tiwi, the schoolmaster's daughter, is his girlfriend. One day, she disappears and it is rumored that she is married and that her rich husband is her father's age. Without work, Djufri often stares at his former high school for five years. Finally, he is offered a job as a driver and accepts it, only to find that he is employed by Tiwi's family. He later discovers that she is not happy, and that her only son named Tony is housed in a foster house. In fact, Tony is Djufri's son. Djufri's younger brother, Topo, has a girlfriend called Dorris, who is found to be a call-girl who stays in a cheap hotel. Djufri asks Dorris to leave Topo alone, but now Topo disappears with Dorris and nobody knows their whereabouts. Djufri's angry parents eject from the house. Meanwhile, Euis, his neighbor, is also asked by her parents to marry an old man and she shares her frustrations with Djufri. Around this time, Djufri and Tiwi's relationships results in their expulsion. They move with Tony to Djupri's aunt's house in a slum area. When Djufri cannot find any work, Tiwi thinks of trying her luck as a secretary. Djufri and Tiwi are still arguing about this when Euis comes to them asking for help as her step-father hit her after she said that she did not want to marry the old husband who was chosen for her. Djufri goes to Euis's father and they argue until the father uses a knife to apparently kill himself. Behind iron bars, waiting for the court process, Djufri listens to Tiwi who once again asks for his approval to seek work. (Unhappy ending)

a) Sets

As the characters are rooted in poor families, the sets of what intended to be a slum area, exterior and interior, dominate the illustrations for a while before the opposite side is depicted: a luxurious house with well dressed interiors and destinations for youths in the countryside outside the city.

b) Story-Enablers

The main character, Djufri, enters the main plot later, when he meets Tiwi again as the wife of his employer. From this point, his past is given meaning. The subplots including the Topo-Dorris plot, and Euis's problem with her step-father's matchmaking provide their own enablers—Topo's reality, and the Euis' confession.

c) Theme-Markers

The moment when Tiwi reveals that Tony is Djufri's son delivers the irony of his position as the family driver. For the subplots, the theme marker is Djufri's discovery that Dorris is a call-girl.

d) *Emotional-Foci*

The expulsion of Tiwi, Djufri, and Tony altogether forms the emotional focus of the main plot while Topo's running away to be with Doris provides emotional stimulus for one of the subplots. The emotional focus of the subplot of the Euis family drama ends the main storyline as well.

e) *Signification*

The direction of the main plot and subplots are determined by the values and beliefs of the characters. In short, the ideologies create the dramatic friction. The first impression of the world of poverty seems to be that survival justifies all means, while this is not really true. The ideology of poverty is not survival, but happiness in love; however, the means are still in conflict: unlike the other characters, Topo chooses to be with Doris whatever she is. This title depicts the urban space realistically, showing people in slum areas, instead of illustrating an idealistic-modernistic dream-like cityscape.

B. *Findings And General Analysis: The Characteristics of Jan Mintaraga's Romance Comics*

1. *The Political Space: How the Settings Speak*

a) *Exteriors in the City*

- The most recognized are the panoramic metropolitan vistas representing a glamorous neon jungle through the name banner of a store or an advertisement billboard indicating the business district, often with clean and properly paved streets with luxurious cars passing by.
- The outdoors of the housing complex where the couples walk together under the moon to share and to enjoy their emotions with houses with modern architecture intended for middle-income and high-class society forming the background.
- Clean parks with designated chairs, gardens, and narrow trails form the ideal destinations for romantic couples, as the counterparts of cinemas and restaurants to create the image of a place of happiness that is never a reality.
- Dark alleys, slums, and urban no man's lands of underworld life are the places where the broken-hearted male lover walks and wanders around and experiences the height of his suffering, with the setting adding its own drama. As another alternative, a broken-hearted man or a character in doubt might go to a place of serenity, inside or outside town, and meditate under the moon.

b) *Exteriors in the Countryside*

The rural outdoors are still conceived as settings for city people, making the countryside a part of the urban space, at least as part of the outdoors that form the stage for the extension of problems that occur 'indoors' or within the cityscape. Thus, the mountains, beaches, or the exteriors of country villas are sometimes pictured only as alternatives to the open-air destinations of the city. At other times, however, the entire drama is set al fresco from the beginning to the end.

c) *Interior Design: The Representation of the Social Class Structure*

The romance activity conducted indoors is generally located inside private houses. A common sample situation may be the depiction of the lover boy entering the girl's house as the girl is thinking about him in her room. The interior decor demonstrates the social class of the actors of the scene. Overall, the targeted classes are the middle-income and high social strata, and the comic book illustrations attempt to represent their aspirational environment in the interior design.

2. *In a Room of Her Own: The Female Protagonist*

The heroine of the romance comics is always fashionable and is illustrated in poses resembling the actions of a model for the fashion photographer. She is depicted wearing the latest, most up-to-date fashion designs that can be referenced from either reality or the media at the time of the creation of the comic's visuals.

3. *Jacket, Jeans, T-Shirt, Sneakers, Cigarettes, and a Somber Mood: The Male Protagonist*

The romance comic hero is always athletic in his physique. When he is drowning in depression, he is depicted sporting a somber expression as he broods alone. He is never out of the current popular style of clothes and accessories even in scenes intended to illustrate his frustration or when the character's self-confidence is supposed to be in the doldrums.

4. *The Fashionable Lifestyle of the Seventies*

The lifestyle described in the romance comics supports the drama that forms the subject of the narrative. The representation of what is "modern" for instance, concerns how people behave and not how they think. Modernity is expressed through the clothes and vehicles of the characters, through their places of residence, through the places they frequent, and through their manner of speech. For the comic books, modernity becomes a series of symbols and not an attitude.

5. *Notes on the Plots*

From the 38 romance comic titles that were surveyed, 23 titles end happily, 11 narratives depict unhappy endings, 1 story ends indeterminately, 2 romances are left with an open ending, and 1 story may be described as having a denouement that lies between an unhappy and an open ending. Considering the type of values that would reveal the power and ideology of the discourse of the times, the choice of endings was primarily used to determine the values instead of the narrative structure, even though the plots were also minutely scrutinized.

a) *The Road to Happiness*

Numerous obstacles make it difficult for the young protagonist couple to unite. The hurdles may emanate from a rival or from the authority or ideologies of the older generation, such as the parents of the young lovers. What matters is that happiness prevails in the end, which celebrates the victory of one group over the other in the ideological struggle for social power.

b) *The Socially Constructed Fates of Unhappy Endings*

In terms of referencing values, it is sometimes more interesting to examine who loses in the struggle for love and

why. In some instances in the romance comics, the losers are depicted as already standing on the wrong side and can easily be blamed.

c) Ambiguity and Open Endings

The ambiguous ending is like an open ending, but an open ending should offer possibilities instead of uncertainty, just as life also should when a prediction does not come true.

6. Discourses on Values

Although they are always important as representations of authority, parents are not always given names in the romance comics. Even when the father is named, the mother is only depicted using her husband's name. A mother is shown using her own name only very rarely.

Success or failure is a significant factor for the male characters, whatever their arena of activity: student, artist, or businessman. The plots tended to play with these standings: to underline a tragedy, for example, as a career setback occurs for the protagonist at the same time as his failure in love; or to offer an ironic twist as the protagonist becomes very successful at the same time as he loses in the game of love.

True love requires a proper place and time to come to fruition. Characters who love and are loved at the wrong time and in the wrong context, such as belonging to different social classes, generally never accomplish their desire to obtain happiness and togetherness.

All the female protagonists are feminine but they are also always depicted in active roles of students or working women. However, the male viewpoints of the women's activities vary. In *Melody at the End of the Year* (1967) the male character rejects his girlfriend's offers to help because she is a woman. In *After the Storm* (1971) the working women rely on their looks and the good wife-in-waiting remains at home. Also the field of work undertaken by a woman classifies her character as good or bad, and such values influence the narrative structures. Sometimes, for instance, a good woman may be forced to work in a bad woman's domain of work, as in *I'm Not for You* (1967) or in *A Tyranny Shattered* (1969; 2nd edition, 1979).

Relationships cause political drama. The term 'political' implies that the relationships between the characters within a plot are not always merely about romantic feelings but also about 'who owns whom.' The competition between lovers could involve other people in interests outside the romantic relationship. The conflict of values creates the drama, as does the conflict of ideologies, and these build a discourse that positions problems in relationships as being political in nature.

C. The Types of the Romance Comics

1) True romance

Existing as a genre that is usually called romance comics, true romance, categorized as the romance comic genre, comprises a theme and plot that deals only with the success or failure of a romantic relationship between a male and female protagonist and includes obstacles such as the existence of a rival, the authority of parents, sickness, or accidental bad luck. Differences in social class form one of the most popular issues contribute to the narrative drama. 35 of the titles surveyed could thematically be classified within

the genre of true romance with endings that are happy, unhappy, or open.

2) Hybrid Romance

Even if the distinction is only slight, it is very important for a title within a genre to be different from the general type because it reflects the hegemonic process whereby negotiation and resistance assist in the revival of the culture. Some of the titles in the romance comics genre may share certain elements of another genre, or may even transform into an entirely new type. The *Teenagers Incident* (1966) appears to be very different in comparison to Mintaraga's other creations. At the beginning, the romance is hybridized with the genre of the crime story, but shifts again to a narrative of heroism related to the contemporary political situation of the time. The other two hybrid titles, *Among the Wolves* (1971) and *A Tyranny Shattered* (1969; 2nd edition, 1979) also clearly demonstrate the combination of the genre of romance comics with the elements of a crime story.

D. The Urban Representation of the Ideological Struggle

1) The Visual Atmosphere as the Site of Urban Culture

Urban development began in the 1960s and continued into the 1970s. The face of Jakarta was transformed as the center of the government's administration and business activity. Although it was always called as a metropolitan city, Jakarta was actually only a big village at the time. In 1969, the Indonesian pioneer of cinema, Usmar Ismail, created a film called *Big Village* that functioned as a satire of the contemporary cultural phase and narrated a story that revealed the provincial attitudes of the inhabitants of the big city.

This kind of antithesis is also present in Mintaraga's romance comics. His settings do not merely reveal idealized forms of the progressive atmosphere but also the other side: the dark urban spaces that seem untouched by modernization. Of course, these spaces expose the truth about the structural unjustness of development organizations everywhere: they create marginalized communities along with their own contemporary social spaces.

An unbalanced economy creates class differences with all their attendant socio-political consequences in the name of modernization. It also serves to subordinate the signs of traditional culture in the representations of the big city via the urban media.

2) Love in Urban Times: The Written Language

A chronological reading of all the titles along with a scrutiny of the language would yield that in the beginning of Mintaraga's career, the idea of love is a singular entity that is holy and is absolutely exclusive to the romantic couple who seem to exist in a world of their own making. After some time, the plots begin to involve a wider context, such as a social aspect like class differentiation, and the romance drama becomes more meaningful than a mere love triangle. A family that places a high premium on blood legacy or wealth is usually the source of the problems pertaining to class differences in most of the later plots.

In most of Mintaraga's romance comics the two aspects of love and social acceptance are combined. These factors matter more in reality than love and create the conflict that emanates from the source of the drama: the ideological struggle between two competitors, and idealistic love versus realistic life. The happy or unhappy ending results mostly from the choice of idealistic love, but more importantly for the theme of urbanization, the realistic life which is opposed

to idealistic love itself emerges from the expansion of the urban sprawl.

E. The Urban Culture as Experimental: The Rise of the Life-Aesthetes

The above evaluation evidences that the city as a text reveals the contestation of ideologies and displays the manner in which the discourses develop and change values with regard to love or wealth. Thus, the city as text also writes the change in the people who inhabit its spaces. This shift is not an elimination of the old and the substitution of the new because the hegemonic process encompasses a negotiation, which implies the holding together of opposite sides in an ongoing course of giving-and-taking. As a model of meaning production, negotiation conceives cultural exchange as the intersection of the processes of production and reception, in which overlapping but non-matching determinations operate (Gledhill in Storey, 1996: 68).

This negotiation of the cityscape means that sometime after the New Order took over the power from Soekarno, the political economies of the development did not just change the financial opportunities of the people in terms of prosperity, but also in their orientation toward life. Sukarno had refused the help of Western capitalist countries. The New Order opened the country to foreign investment. The change in the political economy brought society to the position of an experimental culture, where values become more differentiated, and personal autonomy became more self-evident and inescapable. Cultural sources emerged for the joyful and creative taking of risks and individuals in the urban society become the only seemingly egoistic 'life-aesthetes' (Beck, 2000: 147-8).

The concept of life-aesthetes emanates from a perception of the 1989 generation in Germany after the collapse of Berlin Wall. As this generation went through the 1990s it experienced what could be described as the virtues of disorientation that in some way help to define the experimental culture of urban Jakarta between 1966 and 1971. Conceptually,

For the life-aesthete economics actually no longer has anything to do with the earning of money, because would sees? It is a much more inclusive model of processes of calculation and negotiation, which are always necessary when he comes into contact with other aristocrats, while the aristocratic existence is pre-economic. The new morality of the life-aesthete is uncomprehendingly confused with a collapse of values and egoistic opportunism (Goebel & Clermont in Beck, 2000: 148-9).

Thus, as the civilization laboratory of everyday life, the social intercourse of life-aesthetes could establish the direction of next generation's style. Life-aesthetes also constantly construct autonomous lifestyle arrangements, shaped and staged both for themselves and for their own life as an aesthetic product. Whenever they live, think, and produce, they are engaged in a direct relationship of working for themselves and working for another person: as the result, the market cannot take on a mass character; instead, it is divided into niches or mini markets.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The niche-markets phenomenon is one of the main responses to two important features of modernity: mass production and full employment. Niche production options

(a) make a cultural laboratory and a means of production with the power to create the future; (b) allow low cost production and rely on independent initiatives; and (c) set as a condition and reinforce regional specifications and self-manage trans-national civil society (Beck, 2000: 149-50).

The crucial epoch of 1966-1971, as represented by Mintaraga's romance comics in the urban Jakarta, accorded ways of realizing the existence of an experimental culture. It is useful to contemplate that culture now, at a similar juncture of entering an everchanging digital age of the future. The role of the niche comic-book market opened possibilities of not merely an alternative market, but also an alternative culture.

Romance comics, which exemplified the combination of both a commodity and the creation of art, functioned as a cultural laboratory for a crucial period of urban Jakarta. This experimental space should be revisited to effect a comparison to the major transformations occurring in the present.

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