

Self-Narratives, Postcoloniality, and Negotiation of Neoliberalism in Indonesian Films in the 2000s

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Abstract

This article deals with self-narratives, postcoloniality, and negotiation of neoliberalism as ideology in Indonesian films in the 2000s, particularly in some teen and children films. In this era, filmic self-narratives become more individual in which filmic characters get freedom in expressing desires, individual-skillful struggles, and self-identities. Such narratives represent a detaching and deconstructing process from local and national bounds, as represented in filmic narratives under the New Order regime. By exploring cultural ambivalences as the dominant condition of postcoloniality, the films still articulate some traditional/local values in filmic world structure, but rather than empower their roles, their appearances tend to support self-narratives of teenagers and children who want to get more freedom in modern life. From cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and political economy perspective, self-narratives of teenagers and children that seek freedom *from* traditional bounds, *for* celebrating individualism, and *for* creating skillful self as the ways to reach great achievements, represent discursive negotiation of neoliberalism as ideal orientation for postcolonial Indonesian. Those narratives do not explore neoliberalism as a free market system transparently, but as individuals-capacity ideology that will make them successful in social, economy, and cultural competitiveness.

Keywords: *self-narratives; postcoloniality; individualism; neoliberalism; teen and children; Indonesian films in the 2000s.*

Questioning the Older-National Bounds: Introduction

In the 2000s, Indonesian filmmakers have larger chance to make narratives in various genres, which, at glance, transform enlightening projects for criticizing and resisting the older-hegemonic-discourses of the state, nationalism, gender/ethnic relationship, religious orthodoxy, and traditional-strict rules. Such discursive constructions have different tendency to film narratives under the New Order regime as studied by some scholars, which negotiated and represented consensual-national identity and integrity based on familial, religious, and traditional-moral bounds in various narratives and genres, as a presence of state-controls in cultural/media spheres (Heider, 1991; Sen & Hill, 2000; Sen, 2003; Roberts, 2000). However, critical readings on some filmic narratives with *cultural studies*, *postcolonial studies*, and *political economy* perspective in my study find discursive negotiations of neoliberal ideology. The negotiations, through the shifting of self-narratives in films, narrate individuals' power, skill, and struggle to gain welfare, happiness, and freedom, as the first ways to live in the uneven world caused by economic-socio-cultural change. At the same time, they unbind individuals from the local/national bounds that restrict their desires and dreams.

This article deals with *self-narratives* in some Indonesian teen and children films in the 2000s in which filmic main character as the self gets more freedom in filmic world structures for expressing self-autonomy, self-struggle, and ideal achievement. Because films are not dogmatic stories, following Barthes (1983), they *ex-nominate* and negotiate neoliberal ideological meanings as celebration of individualism in narrative structures that consist of filmic events as if they happen in the real world. In the ex-nomination, self-narratives become more individual and plural but still incorporate and articulate local cultures, such as familial and gender norms, as the way to negotiate neoliberal consent in Indonesian setting normally. The appearances of local cultures in filmic narratives do not directly imply their power among Indonesian teenagers and children. In some films with metropolitan settings and teenager love themes, the appearances of familial norms are merely as marginalized discourses that need to follow or accompany the self in celebrating freedom. Eventually, in some other films with the same settings and themes, become not important entity to appear in the whole narratives. Although some films represent locality and its problem in the current context, the narratives tend to tell cultural tensions between the self/individual who wants to reach his/her enlightening dream and the social that wants to restrict it in the name of tradition. The power of individualism of self-narratives is constructive representations that negotiate filmic subjects' positions as ideal forms to live in postcolonial Indonesia today in which neoliberalism, as dominant ideology, frames socio-cultural life, from individual and communal practices in the metropolitan spaces to the rural spaces.

Postcoloniality, Films, and Self-Narratives

Although many critical thinkers and students against neoliberal practices in state, educational, and economic system, nationally, the imposition of international financial institution, World Bank and IMF, after the resignation of Soeharto makes the Reformation regime continues and applies neoliberal political economy with some modifications. The state enlarges market role in wider economic life, while, at the same time, still regulates social responsibility programs in minimum standards. Media—televisions, newspapers, and films—transforms neoliberalism through many representations in various texts and narratives that construct enlightening projects of modernism and individualism to reach welfare in contemporary-competitive life. Postcolonial subjects that should play strategy in the third-space to empower themselves, local cultures, and local communities in encountering Western hegemony, unfortunately, cannot create suitable mechanism, except produce hybridity that articulates some local cultures and negotiate modern cultures, since in the daily media narratives show up the modern-capitalistic life as the dominant stories. In many regions, most of the villagers still perform local rituals and have commitment to familial engagements, but they also perceive modernism as dominant orientation in architecture, fashion, education, and economic practices. In the metropolitan cities, 'the ways to be Western' are very dominant for teenagers and youngsters in glamorous and consumptive activities in plazas, malls, or American fast food restaurants.

As strategy of subjectivity, in-betweenness, ambivalence, and hybridity as the dominant color of postcoloniality, actually, can be subversive power towards

Western knowledge. The capacity to mimic and mock may rupture binary opposition and power relation between the colonizer/the dominant and the colonized/the subordinate in hybrid cultural representations and practices (Bhabha 1994). By this strategy, the postcolonial subjects can *transform*—to take and use—dominant Western discourses in the service of their own self-empowerment (Aschroft, 2001a; 2001b) and create socio-cultural dynamics in newer localities and identities under globalization today (Schuersken, 2003; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007). Instead of becoming strategic deconstruction towards neoliberal ideology, the in-between space, hybridity, and ambivalence as the dominant colors of postcoloniality—socio-cultural conditions and subjectivity in postcolonial society—give valuable entry point for neoliberal capitalism’s presence as the late form of the Western discourses. In other words, the local cultures’ existence and revival is not offering alternative values to those of Euro-American origin but its articulation into a capitalist narrative (Dirlik, 1994), because postcoloniality still places the Western in the mind of the postcolonial subjects (Chakrabarty, 2000; Nandhy, 1998).

Film and other media become strategic sites to negotiate hegemonic socio-cultural orientation by exploring ambivalence of postcolonial condition and, then, normalizing mythical signs and discourses that transform ideal way to compromise and get advantages in neoliberal age. Fulton (2008) and Mühlbauer (2006) describe media narratives as “attractive sites” for persuading audiences to prepare themselves in the neoliberal capitalistic mode of life. As audio-visual art, which tells narrative on socio-cultural complexity through many events, characters, and significations (Cavell, 2006; Spharshott, 2006; Turner, 1988; Arnheim, 1957), film is integral part of dominant socio-cultural discourses and practices in particular historical context and society (Ponech, 2009), including the ambivalence of socio-cultural conditions. The ambivalence between practicing local cultures and the desires to experience the Western-modern cultures spreads as dominant discursive formation that drives postcolonial subjects’ position, particularly in re-understanding conceptions of gender roles, moral codes, children-parents relations, citizen-state relations, Eastern-Western opposition, and individual-communal integration, as modes, to reconfigure and redefine cultural identity as something “becoming” (Hall, 1990).

In the context of ambivalence of postcolonial subjects in transforming their subjectivity in local/national-global tensions and socio-cultural transformations, Indonesian films in the 2000s can function in two terms, ideally and critically. Following some thoughts, Indonesian films in the 2000s as national cinema, ideally, can contribute to a form of “politics of national agency” and “collective subjectivity” from which variety of individual, group, goal, and interest backgrounds become constructive entities in global tensions today (Berry cited in Zhang, 2004: 6). From this position, films for postcolonial countries can emphasize national commitment through representations of local cultures as ideological-collective power (Higson, 2000), support sustainability of cultures, national development, and authenticity of self-expression (Hallin, 1998), and talk national-cultural problems through dynamic and contesting context in the middle of various cultural impacts and filmic-discursive techniques from abroad (Berry & Farquhar, 2006). Instead of re-negotiate the presence of state in controlling cultural and media spheres, such

functions may narrate multicultural identity and its tension in reconfiguring contemporary Indonesian cultures as a basis for living in global-cultural traffic. Critically, as the Third World cinema, following Yearwood (1987), Indonesian films in the 2000s can narrate some constructive representations, both in political and cultural function. In political function, Indonesian films may question ideological basis of state-political system and its effects towards people, awaken people awareness towards progress and not merely make them 'sleeping' with escapist narratives, and criticize the establishment of society and its relations. In cultural function, they may help people to understand socio-cultural problems and difficulties of life in the post-independence periods, explore traditional romances, and help people in understanding and facing cultural changes with newer perspectives. Furthermore, Wayne (2001) enlarges political role of the Third cinema by modifying aesthetics and narrative strategies of the First cinema (*commercial films*) and the Second cinema (*art films*) as one of revolutionary tools to resist social contradictions and problems caused by capitalist practices or hegemony of dominant power.

Indonesian filmmakers in the 2000s ideally can produce the Third or Third World films that articulate many socio-cultural problems caused by neoliberalism as ideology of political economy and negotiate newer subjectivity to live in ambivalent postcolonial conditions. Self-narratives, which structure "self"—the main character in films—as "discursive subject" with its complicated and dynamic problems in transformative life, may become narrative strategy to negotiate and empower newer subjectivity, which modify and transform various local identities, wisdoms, meanings, and problems as dominant signs and discourses in the context of transformation into modern life today. Unfortunately, most of Indonesian filmmakers work for major production houses with commercial motif and make them following capitalist formula: filming contemporary Indonesian socio-cultural problems by mimicking Hollywood style, themes, and genres. Some popular genres in Indonesian films that follow the formula are teenagers and children genre. Exploration of daily and dominant problems into metropolitan or local settings and interesting narratives that negotiate individual freedom intertwines with most of Indonesian people's socio-cultural desires and dreams towards economic progress and Western-modernity makes those themes and genres popular and marketable. Filmmakers, following Foucauldian thoughts (elaborated in Mills, 2003; Haujier, 1999; During, 1992), as discursive subjects produce filmic representation by considering political economy sense of producers and dominant knowledge in postcolonial Indonesia, called as neoliberalism, and transform it into narratives that place individualism and Western modernity as the ideological concepts of interpellation for children and teenagers.

In such context, self-narratives and subjectivities seem becoming "individual" and "plural"—because the state, in neoliberal political economy system, loses its dominant control towards individual choice as the result of market control over social, economic, political, and cultural life. The self as the subject has individual autonomy to live with his/her struggles and skills by less considering strict traditional and national norms because they only will throw them back into retreating past without freedom, equality, and opportunity (Stopford, 2009).

Family, community, religious institutions, local wisdoms, and nation are pseudo-existence of the past consensus that cannot determine a whole of individual future or, event, non-existence, which needs to forget in the narratives of youth love with metropolitan settings. Their appearances in filmic narratives, then, is only as marginalized signs and discourses, which cannot interfere to the self in reaching and realizing his/her ambitions as free human being, as much described in films with metropolitan settings. Event, in films with local settings and problems, the family, community, and traditional codes, appear as problematic discourses, from which the self tries to deconstruct, because they cannot restrict his/her needs to find his/her creative autonomy to experience some greater achievements: one of attractive values of neoliberalism as market ideology. Although posited in marginal discursive construction, filmic narratives still articulate some local/national discourses as the way, following thoughts of hegemony (Gramsci, 1981; Hall, 1997; Slack, 1997; Laclau & Mouffe, 1981; Boggs, 1984; Bennet, 1986; Williams, 2006; Howson & Smith, 2008; Boothman, 2008; Fontana, 2008), to create “a new consent” naturally by negotiating neoliberal meanings that emphasize individualism and freedom as the important need for children and teenagers to get a bright future. In other words, self-narratives in Indonesian teenager and children films in the 2000s play their discursive roles as sites of negotiation and socialization of neoliberalism in postcolonial Indonesia, not as free-market system transparently, but as individual values, which emphasize personal freedom to have autonomy in determining socio-cultural life and in deconstructing the past consensus.

Self-Narratives 1: when Teenagers Celebrates Individualism

Ada Apa Dengan Cinta (*What's Up with Cinta*, 2002, hereafter AADC) was a teen film, produced by a young director, Rudy Soedjarwo, that signified the awakening of Indonesian films in the 2000s. The formulaic genre and love theme that follow Hollywood trend made this film as the blockbuster in Indonesian film's history—1.3 millions audiences in the tree weeks (Kristanto, 2007). Some young directors, then, followed this formula and produced many films that explore teenager's love problem with metropolitan setting, Jakarta. One of dominant and interesting characteristics of AADC is its bravery to compose a narrative that represents a female teenager out of common stereotype in Indonesian films under the New Order regime—posited female characters as a complementary in the circle of men's world. *Cinta* and her friends celebrate *girl culture* and *power* in a milieu where patriarchy still dominant (Setiawan, 2008). The ideological spirit of gender equality between man and woman in public space and socio-cultural contestation—at school for example—seems appearing, at glance, as deconstructive project that ruptures and defers patriarchal hegemony. However, the presence of Rangga that can change *Cinta* as a powerful woman into a weak one signifies the backward of patriarchy into female self-narrative—a common narrative tendency in Indonesian film in the 2000's with the similar theme and genre, such as *Eiffel I'm in Love* (Nasri Cheppy, 2003, hereafter EIL).

EIL is one of Indonesian films in the 2000s that has similar plot and theme with AADC, although has some different accentuations. In AADC, the appearance of family is only at glance as the signifier of the smallest unit of socio-cultural

institution that still exist in Indonesian societies, while in EIL the family appears in some narrative events, although not dominant. In EIL, Tita, the female main character, a senior high school student, enjoys kissing in the airport with his boyfriend, Adit, by wearing up to date fashion, while Cinta is still wearing her uniform. Tita and Adit continue to celebrate their beautiful romantic moment in Paris, while Cinta and Rangga only celebrate it in the airport. Such differences make individualism as ideological knowledge spreads over discursive formation with many film narratives as many as television programs that produces various discourses and mythical significations to attract as many as possible cinemagoers.

Cinta's smartness in AADC as student at her school and patron in her group creates a newer myth of young woman who has a great capacity and skill as man in public life, but tensions with her friends caused by her love to Rangga signify a socio-cultural conflict with communal and consensual norms in the group. Cinta begins individual adventures and struggles to find her love; reading seriously Rangga's poem, coming to a café, buying some books in a used-books market, and cooking in Rangga's home. Although the group questions her commitment, she, as subject, continues to make self-narratives by ignoring the consensual norms, because she finds "capitalist institutions"—the café and the used-books market—that can accommodate and facilitate her desire. The self bravely ruptures the communal norm—not to have a boy friend—and the communal cannot restrict. Finally, the conflict finished when the group as the communal support Cinta's choice to love Rangga. Her friends accompany her to go to the Soekarno-Hatta international airport to meet Rangga that will go to USA because his father gets an academic job in a university there. In this narrative, neoliberal ideology ex-nominates the discourses of individual freedom, the lost of communal engagement, and the communal support for individual desire, as the popular discursive formation that interpellate postcolonial subjects, into the myths of Cinta's struggle, skills, autonomy, and sovereignty to love that lead to self-regulating mechanism. The return of the group into Cinta's personal life as the re-presence of the communal into the individual describes a cultural hybridity that does not articulate the traditional discourse of communalism purely, but in the direction of neoliberalism; supporting individual autonomy as the foundation of an ideal society (Stopford, 2009).

The scene in the airport, when Cinta and Rangga are kissing each other, deploys other tension between the individual and the traditional discourses. AADC smartly visualizes 'the romantic moment' in the airport as individuals' bravery to repudiate the traditional taboo that blocks transformative subjectivity in realizing personal importance. The transitional shooting—from *long shot*, *medium shot*, *close up*, to *extra close up*—mythically signify individual freedom to enjoy cultural freedom as human being that can realize her/his ambition regardless all socio-cultural dogmatic norms in Indonesian society. Although, Cinta is still wearing uniform of high school as the presence of the state role and still being Indonesian teenager, the energy of love defers all the norms for the sake of individual freedom. The airport as 'in-between space' that symbolizes a departure from the mother country/local cultures, Indonesia, to the host country/Western cultures, USA, gives more celebratory moment for Cinta and Rangga to negotiate their subjectivity. Cinta, as

the self who needs to narrate, disrupts the traditional norms on woman—polite and not wild—by celebrating her love with kissing in the public space. With the same condition, the presence of the state is no more than the uniform that cannot control over the citizen.

In the same setting with more romantic and brave kissing, the very romantic kissing in the airport between Tita and Adit EIL becomes mythical signification of their in-betweenness and hybridity as Indonesian young generation in, some cases, obeying the traditional rules of woman-men relationship, but when get a chance they will rupture them for experiencing ‘Western taste of love’. The airport, mythically, as setting seems giving “point of exit” for metropolitan young generation to go to the world out of their country, called European world, which may give them progress of individual rights and achievements, although, at the same time, this desire arises cultural tension because they still live in Indonesia. Therefore, the airport and the kissing, also for the kissing of Cinta and Rangga in AADC, represent ideological knowledge of individual freedom and autonomy that recalls and consolidates the self into filmic narratives that destabilize moral taboo on romantic woman-men relation in public space as ideally constructed cultures and offer in-between subjectivity. The in-betweenness results continuing ambivalence that construct *tragic duality*, in which postcolonial subjects have more change to make enlightening-individual self-narratives as the process of becoming the Western or the modern, but at the same time, society as the communal still fantasies to incorporate them into local mode of being (Mbembe, 2001; Quayson, 2000).

Instead of controlling the self, Tita, in constructing her narratives of life, the appearance of family in EIL is merely as pseudo-existence. Indeed her mother takes a conservative position when Tita asks permission to hang out in mall, because for her mall is “not secure place”, “many thieves there”, “not making her cleverer”, and “not making her more beautiful”. These conservative discourses, at glance, posit her mother as an over protective parent who never gives freedom to her fifteen years daughter to experience ‘another world’ with her friends and as a traditional woman who looks mall as dangerous place for female teenagers. However, when Tita wants to go to mall with Adit, her mother immediately gives permission, because she believes he can protect her finely. The moment of giving permission shows ambivalence of mother as older generation in viewing modern-capitalist condition that cause human demoralization, especially for young generation, and increase poverty in societies that results criminality everywhere. When the suitable young man can accompany her daughter, mall and other capitalist institutions can be secure zones. Moreover, the mother never forbids her loving a man and its celebration, although she is still fifteen, if the man is the right and responsible man, like as Adit. Although seems like a limitation of woman freedom in traditional codes, the requirement is articulation of the in-betweenness position of the older generation in understanding and accommodating the popular-modern trend; they need to direct the young generation on the right track with some moral discourses, but they cannot determine their desire to love in modern context.

The narrative moments in Paris when Adit and Tita express their love each other, become mythical signification of cosmopolitan desire of postcolonial subjects

for becoming and experiencing the Western and its modernity; *Occidentalism* (Venn, 2000). Although in Indonesia, there are many romantic and exotic places, most of them have Indonesian dream to experience and taste signs of the Occidental, since they want to find distinct atmospheres of Western countries that offer promise of progress, welfare, and freedom. It has happened since colonial period, when colonized well-known artist, like as Raden Saleh, or students who got a chance to live and learn Western perspectives in some European countries experienced cosmopolitan journey and has transformed into postcolonial period (Lombard, 2000). In the Paris narrative, EIL actually brings traditional code of woman-man relationship—*heterosexuality*—back as the dominant discourses with some romantic visualization in an expensive restaurant and in a field near to Eiffel Tower. Following Williams (2006), EIL successfully incorporates this heterosexuality, the *residual-dominant culture* in Indonesian societies that functions as ideological knowledge, and Western taste of love, the emergent culture that attracts Indonesian people, as narrative strategy, both to gain financial advantage and negotiate Occidental meanings. Tita, as the self, really cannot detach fully from traditional bound in understanding love that must require the presence of a man, but she can write her own story distinctively, especially she as teen woman enjoys some love adventures in the glamorous Paris. Her mother, who in the early of narratives becomes a symbol of traditional conservatism, supports Tita's love by accompanying her to Paris to meet Adit and never threatens their night journey in some impressive places. The historical-politico-cultural tensions between the Oriental and the Occidental caused by colonialism disappear naturally, when the postcolonial subjects can play themselves and their cultural orientation in the hybrid mode of being, because the Western will give valuable and enlightening self-history and self-narrative than preserving the dogmatic-traditional norms.

In AADC and EIL, the commitment of individualism for teenagers to experience Western love style that defers and ruptures the traditional codes and the condition of cultural ambivalences opens the door for neoliberal values into filmic narratives. For teenagers, love is something needed to celebrate with individual freedom and self-autonomy regardless traditional codes, because they find Western values more interesting. Individual freedom and self-autonomy are valuable concepts that make neoliberalism, in Foucault's words, as discursive formation in the contemporary world (quoted in Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) that will drive individual to become skillful self and to get struggle over achievement and welfare in free-market world, without dependency to the state (Clarke, 2005; Lapavistas, 2005; Harvey, 2007). Desire to love is one of the most basic instinct of human being, especially for teenager, that needs to realize and to achieve through individual struggles and deconstruction of some traditional obstacles. In such conception, struggles over love signify the simplest neoliberal meaning that emphasizes individualism and freedom. In appreciating the function of the family or in broader sense the state, filmic narratives do not explore its limitation toward individual rights to love, but idealize it as communal entity that should transform its values into more modern sense and support teenager's individualism. Teenager films, then, plays its role as cultural/media hegemonic apparatus that normalizes neoliberal ideology as the ideal discourse for Indonesian next generation.

Self-Narratives 2: *when Children Dream the Enlightening Life*

Truly, the self as an individual cannot live without the existence of the state, society, or community with its ideal sharing cultural values, meanings, norms, and practices. These cultures will construct sense of belonging in each individual's mind that discursively renders him/her as a member of the societies in one state collectively, as a basis of nationalism. These communal-bounds in neoliberal sense will limit individuals' freedom to improve their skills and capacities as the ways to get optimal achievement and welfare. In Indonesian context, the communal-bounds still function well, especially in local societies, although individual value of modernity now shift common understanding of them. While in metropolitan societies, the communal-bounds are decreased. Filmmakers, smartly, portray this shifting into narratives that support neoliberal ideological values by filming tensions between a local society and its communal norms with individual interests. Interestingly, Indonesian films in the 2000s popularize children narratives to negotiate individual struggles and Western modernity as a fundament to get achievement.

Denias: Senandung Di Atas Awan (*Denias: Singing on the Cloud*, John De Rantau, 2006, hereafter DSDAA) is a children film that exploits West Papua exotic settings as local spaces with individuals' cultural-orientation shifting, dreaming modernity. Denias, the main character in the film, a Papuan child wants to make a progress in his life by attending elementary school. His mother's advices and stories on the importance of schooling as the way to be clever and as the gate to reach wide world, make him believes on the importance of becoming a pupil. These advices and stories, following Foucault (1981), become early discursive order for the film in narrating modernity through schooling. Although Papuan societies still practice tribal rituals and norms in their daily life that make the power of the village chief dominant, some individuals, including Denias's mother, still have a great desire to experience modernity. Transferring desire to their children are the best way for Papuan parents since they still have wider opportunity to realize modern and welfare life. Denias accepts this regime of truth and posits himself as a subject of modernity in the tribal life.

For realizing his dream, he must face natural obstacles and traditional conservatism. For attending school, Denias must walk for some days, crossing mountains, forests, and rivers. However, his mother's words, "the mountain will eat you, but if you study and you are smart in school, the mountain is afraid of you", give him spirit to handle the obstacles. At the school, he finds difficult condition when Noel, the son of the village chief, who constantly provokes him to fighting each other. For Denias, Noel has given traditional power, because as the chief, his father has power to curse of death on the whole village. Noel's father also opposes to building of a new school closer to the village, yet he sends his son to the town to get an education—a portrait of cultural ambivalence. Afraid of losing traditional power as the coming of modern education for the whole remote people in the village leads Noel's father decides this opposition. Noel's father position in viewing modernity represents a latent ambivalence in local-elite. Furthermore, his father as the dominant figure in the family also does not support Denias ambition for education and wants him to stay home to help him with chores. Fortunately, his

teacher and a soldier—two modern individuals—always give him support to get education.

These mythical significations of personal struggle to conquer the nature and traditional obstacles represent discourses of modernity projects that, according to Venn (2006), will bring individual into enlightening conditions. For Canclini (1995), the modernity projects require some ideal and progressive conceptions. *Emancipation* is the first conception that requires cultural secularization, self-expression and self-regulation in symbolic practices, rationalization of social life, and increasing individualism. The second is *expansion* as modernity tendency to enlarge knowledge and occupation towards nature and production, circulation, and consumption of goods. The third is *renovation* that combines the two former concepts for fulfilling continuing progress and creating innovation, which are matched to natural relation and society that are freed from sacred dogmas. *Democratization* is the fourth conception promoted through education, arts, knowledge to realize rational and moral evolution. For the West Papuans, these conceptions may become the way to enter modernity with various natural sources. Unfortunately, most of the West Papuans still live in the tribal life with poor conditions. The individuals' desire to experience modernity will contradict to the traditional laws, because they, as the tribal members, still need to follow and practice the laws. Such cultural ambivalence places the West Papuans in the in-between space, from which they, ideally, can find strategy of subjectivity that empowers and transforms traditional collectiveness into modernism, although they should change some strict-conservative dogmas. However, DSDAA does not represent such kind of subjectivity, but it at once constructs Denias's self-narratives as a form of negotiation of individualism in the middle of local-tribal life through modern education and the traditional life as the major inhibiting factor for individual enlightenment.

In more critical reading, DSDAA narrative constructs power relation that places the tribal West Papuan as the uncivilized and uneducated Orient—the subordinate—firstly, from which it finds rational filmic arguments to negotiate the importance of education for them. These stereotypes of the tribal natives, actually, follow the older mechanism of imperialism that judge its power through civilizing projects that would make the Other more rational, religious, educated, and civilized, but, at the same time, posited the Western or the modern superior and made legality to conquer (Said, 1978, 1994; Slemon, 1995; Bishop, 1995; Kachru, 1995; Célestin, 1996; Lidchi, 1997; Loomba, 2000; Weaver-Hightower, 2007; Mrázek, 2006; Brantlinger, 2009; Pennycook, 1998). Since DSDAA are not colonizer film, it creates cultural internal conflicts in the West Papuan tribe—between the local consensus and the individual freedom—caused by Denias desire to experience education and modernity as the enlightening achievement in his life. The appearances of two wise individuals, the teacher and the soldier, bring civilizing mission to help the individual native, Denias, projects his future through education, although he must challenge the tribal power. Their non-coercive appearances in Denias's world ex-nominate not only the importance of Javanese and the soldier for the native, but also individualism, education, and modernity that will change the backward conditions of the West Papuan.

With different settings and thematic accentuation to DSDAA, especially in understanding relation between the local and the individual, *King* (Sihasale, 2009) narrates individual struggle and achievement in sport, badminton. Exotic settings around Mount Ijen, Banyuwangi, East Java, with its remote society are local spaces in which an elementary student, Guntur, negotiates his dream and aspiration to be well-known badminton player. This individual aspiration is in line with his father's ideal story about Lim Swie King, one of the legends in Indonesian badminton. The poverty of his father as a single parent becomes the main obstacle for Guntur in realizing his dream. Fortunately, same with Denias, he has a wise and inspired teacher who support and convince him to have daily practices. His rural community also supports him because badminton is the uniting sport for the people in this film. Guntur's aspiration as individual dream, according to Sacsono, massively becomes communal aspiration, because the rural people have collective consciousness to see one of their social members to be world-wide badminton player (http://old.rumahfilm.org/artikel/artikel_filmnasionisme_1.htm, 06th January 2010). Of course, this ideal representation of community in supporting individual achievement is intertwining with neoliberal ideology that places the state or the societies not as conservative obstacles, but as supporting apparatuses for the achievement. If the state or the societies want to make laws or norms, they should pay attention on individual desire to practice maximum struggle because the market needs competitive people that can play strategic roles in free market civilization.

However, the communal supports are not enough for Guntur. He should work hard as a child to practice and participate in regional badminton selection in Banyuwangi in order to get a scholarship at PB Djarum (Center for Badminton Training funded by PT Djarum, one of the biggest cigarette industries in Kudus, Middle Java). He follows step by step selection enthusiastically. Finally, he can pass the regional selection and get the scholarship. The existence of PB Djarum does not only describe the appearance of sponsor. Furthermore, it represents the importance of capitalism as hegemonic power with polite human face and liquid ideology that can help individuals and societies through its philanthropy practices. Of course, it still requires skillful and competitive individuals who can fulfill capitalist formula in market world. For neoliberal capitalist, there is no individual poverty as long as he/she can perform a good skillful self because the market always opens itself for such individual, not poor quality one that has nothing unless his/her body. Although financially Guntur is poor, he can perform his skillful self, a great capacity in badminton, which can replace his poverty and help him to realize his dream to get welfare through sport. By articulating communalism of the rural society and negotiating individual aspiration and the existence of capitalist apparatus, *King* naturally represents ex-nomination of neoliberalism that can bring individual welfare in the local, national, and international context.

The choice for filming children narratives in the 2000s is not neutral choice or merely as filmic strategy to reach popularity. In more critical sense, I read this choice as a discursive construction for negotiating neoliberal meaning in filmic narratives that target children and their families. Because film producers and filmmakers have financial motivations, they need to follow commercial formulas that will make their films popular and marketable. Understanding the dominant

discourse and problems in societies is one of the formulas. Neoliberalism as ideology and political economy system is the most dominant discourse in Indonesian context after the Reformation movement. As parts of capitalist cultural industries, they need to film this discourse in their narratives, not as the Third cinemas that criticize neoliberalism, but as commercial cinemas that tend to negotiate neoliberal meanings through popular genres. Genre always plays its political and ideological function by narrating social problems in societies and giving them discursive solutions that follow particular dominant discourse (Moine, 2008; Wright, 2003). Children genre as one of the popular discourses becomes strategic sites to negotiate the importance of individualism, modernity, struggle, and achievement in children mind because this earlier understanding will make neoliberalism keeps its ideological values on in the future. Taking neoliberal values as the late-capitalist norms is a suitable way for Indonesian people, both in the local and national context, who wants to see brighter future for their children.

Conclusion

Taking Indonesian teen and children films Indonesian in the 2000s as discussion materials may be not enough for discussing and criticizing a complicated postcoloniality and its transformation in local and national context influenced by Western contemporary ideological values, called as neoliberalism. At least, this article can be an entry point to analyze more films in different genres and themes that still have correlation to negotiation of neoliberal meanings. Furthermore, some critical findings in my study show that postcoloniality is not merely socio-cultural conditions experienced by postcolonial subjects after getting political independence. It is a complicated structures, systems, and practices in which Western or colonial values continue to transform themselves into socio-cultural practices and orientations among postcolonial societies. Teenager and children filmic narratives interestingly negotiate ideal discursive constructions of living under neoliberal condition, from which individuals may express their freedom to experience the promised enlightening human projects. Truly, education, modernity, freedom, struggle, and skillful self are important terms for individuals who want to get optimal achievements in their life, but filmic narratives do not have ethical awareness to narrate those terms for empowering local cultural values in facing modern cultures.

In teenager and children films, cultural ambivalence and hybridity that become dominant discursive practices in postcolonial Indonesia do not appear as strategic way to find suitable subjectivity. Self-narratives that place individuals in the tension between local and modern cultures are strategic for transferring neoliberal values and marginalizing the local cultures as peripheral discourses that need to support the popularity of individualism. Cultural hybridity, then, do not become alternative strategy in neoliberal era, but becomes liquid mechanism for neoliberal capitalist to consolidate power (Dirlik, 2002; Stam, 2003) in more plural cultural tendency. In the real socio-cultural practices, the government and Indonesian societies cannot create newer cultural consensus to empower local cultures as the base for national culture in reformative meanings—not only Javanese culture as national icon. The newer consensus tends to place the government and societies

merely as supporter of individual struggles in finding modern life. Although some local practices still exist, their values and meanings are merely as formal guidance in some rituals, not as dominant substance and orientation. So, is it important to hope films as sites that show up local or national cultures, as stated by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2006) in PARFI (The Union of Indonesian Film Artists) Congress, if film producers and filmmakers are actually more interested in negotiating neoliberalism for their audiences? Perhaps this nation needs to re-imagine, re-understand, and re-conceptualize a newer subjectivity and newer cultural conception as a strategic mechanism to live in the in-between space, without losing local wisdoms under the influences of Western and neoliberal values.

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