

The Inequality in “Cewek!!!” and “Still...”

Anastacya, R.

English Department, Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University, Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya 60236, East Java, INDONESIA

Emails: m11414018@john.petra.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study is about the main characters', Langen, Febi, and Fani, effort in achieving equality in teen lit novels *Cewek!!!* and *Still...*. However, despite the girls' effort, they fail in achieving equality. To find the effort and failure of girls in achieving equality, I use the theory of gender stereotype. From the theory, I find that the girls show their effort in achieving equality from their strength, independence, logic, and intelligence. Although the girls show their effort, these novels still show the girls' failure in achieving equality. It can be seen by the girls are pictured as weak, emotional, unintelligent, and submissive; while the boys (Rei, Bima, and Rangga) are pictured as strong, rational, and intelligent. In conclusion, I find that despite showing the girls' effort, these novels also shows that the girls fail in achieving equality. Therefore, I hope that teen lit will have stories that do not judge girls, but shows real equality.

Key words:

traditional stereotype, Gender stereotype, equality

Teen lit, or teen literature, is a genre that consists of stories that centres on teenagers' life. It is targeted for teenagers from the age of thirteen until seventeen who are commonly junior high school until early college students (Orionara, 2012). Teen lit is very popular among teenage readers because it often tells stories that centre on their problems as teenagers such as school problems, friendship, family, dream, love, competition, and search for identity. I choose to analyse teen lit genre because of its ability to create stories that are often relatable to teenage lives in a light and easy way through their informal languages.

Teen lit starts its debut in 2000 when Meg Cabot, an American author, published her first novel for teens entitled *Princess Diaries*. This book soon becomes a huge success to Meg Cabot as well as being sold over 25 million copies in 38 countries (megcabot, 2015). In 2000 also, Meg Cabot's *Princess Diaries* enters Indonesia when GPU (Gramedia Pustaka Utama) translated this English novel into Bahasa (Sutrisno, 2011). Then, GPU decided to produce Indonesian teen lit. It then begins to search for Indonesian writers that write novels about teenagers' lives. In 2004, GPU publishes its first Indonesian teen lit entitled *DeaLova* by Dian Nuranindya, *Me vs High Heels! Aku vs Sepatu Hak Tinggi!* by Maria Ardelia, and *Fairish* by Esti Kinasih (nyanyianbahasa, 2009).

From all teen lit writers in Indonesia, I choose to analyse Esti Kinasih's works because all of her novels have become bestsellers and were reprinted many times. Esti Kinasih herself was born in September 9, 1971. In 2004, Esti Kinasih published her first novel entitled *Fairish*. Her work became a huge success, gaining 4,172 ratings (Goodreads, 2017). This success then encourages Esti Kinasih to keep on writing more teen lit novels. In the following years, she has published *Cewek!!!* (2005), *Still...* (2006), *Dia Tanpa Aku* (2008), *Jingga dan Senja* (2010), *Jingga Dalam Elegi* (2011), and *Jingga Untuk Matahari* (2016).

From all of Esti Kinasih's teen lit novels, I choose to analyse *Cewek!!!* and *Still...* because the stories offer not only love, but also gender issues viewed from both boys' and girls' perspectives. In

other words, these novels are different because it is not only a story at campus but also it is about how the characters solve the conflict not only in their relationship and family but also in their friendship.

The story begins in the first book, *Cewek!!!*, that centres on three girls: Langen, Fani, and Febi who are tired of their boyfriends treatment toward them. Every Saturday, their boyfriends always cancel their dates because they want to spend the weekends hiking mountains. The three girls once asked their boyfriends to let them come along on their hiking trips. Yet, their boyfriends refused because they think that girls would never have enough strength as boys to hike mountains. They also said that the mountain is a dangerous place for girls because it is full of wild animals. This reasons angered the three girls that they challenge their boyfriends in a hiking competition. They use this competition to show their boyfriends that girls could be as strong and independent as boys, that girls are not just obedient individuals who should be kept safe at home. Their boyfriends accepted their challenge and soon enough they began their hike. The boys think that they would win the competition because they are physically strong and have more experience in hiking mountains. When the girls win, the boys suspect that the three girls have prepared lots of plans and tricks to win the competition.

The story continues in the second novel, *Still...*, where the boys are forced to be the three girls' servants as a consequence of losing in the hiking competition. The boys agreed to do so because before the competition started, they are forced to sign an agreement saying that if they lose, they should admit that girls are equally strong and capable of anything as boys. They are also forced to do whatever the girls want them to do. If they do not want to sign the agreement, their girlfriends threaten to taking off their clothes in public. At the end, these boys ask their girlfriends to climb the mountain together. They said that their girlfriends do not need to bring anything because they are not strong enough to carry heavy things while hiking. This time, the hiking is not for challenge. It is just for relaxing. Therefore, I am interested to analyze how the girls show their effort for equality and despite that, inequality is still shown. To analyze that, I use theory of gender stereotypes.

"Gender stereotypes is considered as a process which people organize their understanding of the characteristics behaviours, and aspirations of men and women, and of boys and girls. Thus it provides a basis for expectations about behaviour and also relates to an individual's identity in a group" (Gash, Morgan, and Sugrue; 1993).

The Girls' Effort and Failure in Achieving Equality

Cewek!!! and *Still...* are the sequel of the teenlit novels that tells about six main characters, three girls and three boys, who go hiking the mountain. In these novels, the girls show they have power, so they should not be underestimated by others. Langen, Fani, and Febi, are pictured as the girls who have power while the boys, Rei, Bima, and Rangga, are pictured as traditional boys stereotypes who believe that the boys are more powerful than the girls. Instead these girls follow their gender stereotypes, Langen, Fani, Febi shows their power. Because of this, *Cewek!!!* and *Still...* are the example of seemingly 'feminist' novel because it shows the girl power, but actually behind the novels show the empowerment, it shows traditional stereotypes.

The Girls' Effort to Achieve Equality

The girls show their strength. It can be seen from these quotations below. From Collins dictionary, strength means "the ability to withstand or exert great force, stress, or pressure" (Collins dictionaries online, n.d.).

"*Itu, La... waktu ke rumah gue itu, lo sebenarnya mau ngomongin apa?*"

"*Oh, yang waktu itu? Nggak. Gue cuma mau ngasih tau lo aja, cowok-cowok itu ternyata pada bohong. Selama ini kan mereka selalu bilang kalo kegiatan-kegiatan itu cuma untuk intern. Kalo nggak begitu, ya mereka ngasih alasan macem-macem deh. Kesannya orang awam gunung kayak kita-kita bakalan cuma ngerepotin, nyusahin aja. Makanya gue punya rencana mau bikin mata mereka melek. Kalo cuma naek gunung aja sih... kita juga bisa!*" (*Cewek!!!*, pg. 34)

This quotation tells about how Langen show her effort because she thinks she and her friends can control their life by showing their strength. When Febi asks to Langen why she came to her house

few days ago and Langen says that she wants to show that hiking the mountain is simple and easy, and they can do that. They refer to Langen, Fani, and Febi. Langen does that because the boys, refer to Rei, Bima, and Rangga, say that the girls cannot climb the mountain. Therefore, she says that they can climb the mountain to prove to the boys that they can do that and also the sentence when the girls said that 'just' climbing the mountain, means they think that everyone can climb the mountain. The character of Langen that is shown in these novels give evidence that the girls show strength since she holds on to her belief that the girls have the same ability with the boys in hiking mountain.

Secondly, the novels also show that the girls' effort in being independent. According to Dictionary, independence means "freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others" (Dictionary online, n.d.).

"Bukan gimana cara kalian bisa sampe puncak. Pake kaki atau tangan. Bukan itu. Yang aku mau tau....sama siapa?" tanyanya dengan suara yang dipaksa datar. Langen baru akan membuka mulut, tapi Rei langsung memotong, "Bukan dengan Fani atau Febi!"

Bibir Langen langsung terkutup lagi. Cuma sesaat. Kemudian dijawabnya pertanyaan itu dengan tegas, "Cuma kami bertiga!" (Cewek!!!, pg. 135)

From these quotations, I find that the girls show their independence because the girls said that they can reach the mountain without the boys have to accompany them. They do not need to be taken care by the boys. In other words, they can do or solve it by themselves. This quotation is about Rei forces Langen to tell to him who help her and her friends and he also says that she cannot say she goes with Fani and Febi because it does not answer Rei's question. However, Langen insists that she and her friends do not get help from anyone to reach the mountain's peak. In other words, the girls show her effort by being independent.

Thirdly, these novels also shows another girls' effort in achieving equality such as intelligence like in this quotation below. From Collins dictionary, intelligent means "people who have ability to think, to understand, and to learn something quickly and well" (Collins dictionaries online, n.d.).

Jangan membayangkan cewek-cewek itu merayapi tebing dalam arti yang sebenarnya. Jauh deh! Mereka merayap hanya untuk memudahkan proses penarikan. Di tebing-tebing yang overhang malah lebih asyik lagi. Ketiganya tinggal duduk manis di seat-belt sambil menikmati pemandangan. Sambil minum juga boleh. Atau sambil makan sekalian kalau memang tidak punya perasaan. Lalu ditarik sampai ke atas. (Cewek!!!, pg. 90)

In this quotation, the girls show their intelligence from their idea. In reaching equality, by their intelligent, these girls become more confidence that they can reach the mountain's peak quicker than the boys and show to the boys that they are better than the boys. This quotation tells about the girls' idea to climb the mountain. They realize that they cannot climb the mountain instantly, so they ask their friends (Iwan, Rizal, Evan, Yudhi, and Theo) to help them.

The Girls' Failure to Achieve Equality

The first quotation is about the girls are pictured as weak. According to the theory of stereotypes, "a weak woman is frail and unhealthy in appearance, a weak woman cannot do anything without the approval of others and usually her actions are caused by the need to make others happy with her, she never drives or goes anywhere by herself, and she must always have someone beside her" (Blair, Ma, and Lenton; 2001).

"Lo tanya dia aja, planning yang jelas itu gimana, La. Oke?" Bima menatap Langen sesaat, sebelum kemudian beralih ke Rei. "Lo jelasin yang sejelas-jelasnya, ya. Biar muka paniknya itu hilang. Kasian..." Ditepuknya bahu Rei. "Kami duluan. Bye!"

Bima pergi, bersama Fani dalam rangkulannya. Rei dan Langen masih bisa mendengar suara Bima menjelaskan rencana pendakian ke Semeru itu kepada Fani. Rei mengembalikan tatapannya pada Langen setelah kedua orang itu hilang dari pandangan.

"Semeru nanti pendakian santai, kayak yang tadi udah dibilang Bima," jelasnya dengan nada suara yang menenangkan. "Kalo kamu nggak sanggup bawa beban pun nggak apa-apa."

Nada berharap itu...

Langen jadi tidak tega untuk menolak permintaan itu. Dia mengangguk dan tersenyum.

"Oke!" (Still..., pg. 109)

From this quotation, I find that Langen shows she is physically weak because she does not protest when the boys, or in this case, Rei as her boyfriend, says that it is fine if she cannot bring any things for climbing. This quotation tells about Langen refuses to go climbing together but Rei says to Langen that she does not need to bring anything. When Langen accepts Rei's help, she shows that she is physically weak because she is not strong enough to carry any objects while climbing. From this quotation also, Langen accepts Rei's invitation because she wants Rei to be happy.

The next quotation shows the girls are pictured as emotional. From gender stereotypes of emotionality in general, by Brody & Hall (1993) and Shields (1991), are "more robust than those concerned with specific emotions" (Robinson and Clore; 2002).

"Mestinya lo bertiga mikir dong. Jangan punya cewek kalo masih menganggap diri sendiri harus selalu yang nomor satu!"

"Bukan begitu Fan..." kata Rei

"Bukan begitu apa?" potong Fani seketika. "Kami bertiga emang selalu diem. Tapi bukan berarti lo semua bisa seenaknya aja. Cuma mikirin diri sendiri".

"Fan denger dulu," bujuk Rangga

"Denger apa lagi? Selama ini kami selalu jadi pendengar. Sekarang saatnya elo-elo untuk ganti denger! Dasar egois!" (Cewek!!!, pg. 58)

From this quotation, I find that Fani's character is emotional because she gets angry quickly and she tells a lot of things which she and her friends hate from these boys. The quotation above tells Fani gets angry when she hears that she and her friends have to accept the condition where Bima, Rei, and Rangga would not visit them every weekend since they are busy preparing for their hiking trips. It also shows Fani's character is emotional when Rei and Rangga try to say something, Fani always cuts whatever they want to say.

Thirdly, the girls are pictures as submissive. According to Cambridge dictionary, submissive means "describes someone who allows themselves to be controlled by other people" (Cambridge dictionaries online, n.d.).

"Belajar emang bisa. Tapi untuk apa coba? Kalo tujuannya cuma untuk menyaingi mereka, gue rasa nggak bagus. Kegiatan-kegiatan yang kayak gitu kan emang sudah dunianya cowok. Kalopun ada ceweknya, itu cewek-cewek yang pada dasarnya emang bener-bener suka. Bukan karena ikut-ikutan atau punya tujuan lain. Jadi nggak usahlah kita ribut. Nuntut ini, nuntut itu. Jadi perempuan itu mesti tau kodrat, La. Kamu juga, Fan. Mesti bisa mawas diri. Mesti tau mana yang pantes dan mana yang nggak."

iiiiuuugh! Langen mendesis pelan. Jadi tambah dongkol lagi.

"Terus juga...", sambung Febi. Kali ini nada suaranya sangat hati-hati. "Mereka itu kan udah semester enam, dua tahun lebih tua dari kita. Jadi elo seharusnya manggil Rei itu, "Mas Rei", La. Elo juga Fan, janan panggil "Bima" gitu aja. "Mas Bima", atau "Bang Bima" kalo pake adat betawi. Atau "Kak Bima"-lah, kalo elo mau panggil dia "Abang"

"Kita harus hormat pada orang yang lebih tua. Apa lagi- kalo langgeng nih- mereka akan jadi calon suami. Dan selamanya, Suami adalah tuan!" (Cewek!!!, pg. 18)

This quotation shows that Febi is submissive because she is very obedient toward the value that has been taught by her family. In this quotation, Febi tells Langen and Fani that as girls, Fani and Langen should not question whatever the boys tell them and also they should not do any boys' activities in order to show that girls can do any activities that the boys do. She also says that girls should know 'her place' and respect the older. The term 'her place' refers to the ways the girls are expected to do while the words the elder refers to the boys since they are few years older than the girls.

The last but not the least, the girl are pictured as unintelligent. From the theory of stereotypes, there are a belief that women are unintelligent (Clance and Imes, 1978).

"Apaan tuh kebut gunung?" tanya Langen

”Dulu-duluan sampe puncak,” jawab Yudhi. Langsung kedua alis Langen bertaut.

”Mana bisa lagi! Mereka naek gunung kayak udah jogging!”

”Pake taktik dong. Kalo naek kayak biasa ya jelas nggak mungkinlah.”

”Taktik apa? Taktik apa?” seru Langen seketika.... ”Wah! Taktik apa Wan? Kasih tau dong! Cepet!” Jeritnya.

” Kita potong kompas! Jadi begini, dulu gue pernah buka jalur-jalur baru. Sama mereka juga...” Iwan menunjuk teman-temannya. (Cewek!!!, pg. 74)

From this quotation, Langen is portrayed as unintelligent because she asks to her friends what marathon mountain climbing is. Her question shows that she does not have knowledge about climbing to the mountain. Langen’s question proves the belief that the girl is not intelligent is true. Langen also shows that she does not know how to win the challenge even though Iwan, one of her friend, has already give suggestion that the girls can win if they climb to the mountain with a strategy. Langen does not have an idea what kind of strategy is. Her ignorance shows that she does not know anything although it is a basic knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from my analysis in chapter two, I can conclude that even though these novels shows the girls’ seem to achieve equality, the stereotypes still happen and the girls are still judged by their physical appearance and behavior. In the future, I hope that Indonesian writers will write teen lit stories that do not judge girls, but shows real equality.

REFERENCES

- Biography*. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.megcabot.com/about-meg-cabot/>
- Blair, I., Ma, J., Lenton, A. (2001). *Imagining stereotypes away: The moderation of implicit stereotypes through mental imagery*. The American Psychological Association, Inc.: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2001, Vol. 81, No. 5, pp. 828-841
- Cambridge dictionaries online (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- Clance, P., Imes, S. (1978). *The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: dynamics and therapeutic intervention*. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 15(3), 241-247
- Collins dictionaries online (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com>
- Dictionary online (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/>
- Gash, H., Morgan, M., Sugrue, C. (1993). *Modifying gender stereotypes in primary school*. Educational Research Centre: The Irish Journal of Education / Iris Eireannach an Oideachais, Vol. 27, No. 1/2(Summer/Winter, 1993), pp. 60-70
- Gramedia*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.gpu.id>
- Kinasih, E. (2005). *Cewek!!!*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kinasih, E. (2006). *Still*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Orionara. (2012). *Gaya bahasa teenlit*. Retrieved from <https://www.wattpad.com/296018547-serba-serbi-dunia-menulis-gaya-bahasa-teenlit>
- Robinson, M., Clore, G. (2002). *Belief and Feeling: Evidence for an Accessibility Model of Emotional Self-Report*. The American Psychological Association, Inc.: Psychological Bulletin, 2002, Vol. 128, No. 6, 934-960