

Prenuptial agreements: Negotiating women's roles and changing how people think love, commitment, and relationships

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Abstract

The topic of Prenuptial Agreements in Television Series (TV Series) has emerged as a phenomenon reflecting a shift in the societal significance of marriage within popular culture. This study aimed to analyze this concept as a trend in popular culture and negotiation methods for women in Marriage with Benefits, broadcast on Viu, employing a qualitative methodology and utilizing Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis, which includes subject-object positions and viewer positioning. The findings demonstrated that women are frequently assigned subordinate roles: yet, instances of resistance and negotiation illustrate the fluidity of gender power dynamics. TV Series are a key part of popular culture that changes how people think, act, dress, and talk. In light of Baudrillard's concept of Simulacra, the representation of Prenuptial Agreements appears as a simulation of reality, depicting love and commitment in an exaggerated manner, divorced from its original meanings. This is new because it uses Baudrillard's ideas on Simulacra and Hyperreality to look at how marriage is shown in popular media and how media shape people's views about Prenuptial Agreements through fake and mediated images. In the context of hyperreality, Prenuptial Agreements depicted in television programs go beyond mere fiction: they actively influence societal perceptions of love, commitment, and relationships.

Keywords: marriage agreement; popular culture; sara mills; simulacra

Introduction

People know a lot about Prenuptial Agreement, and marriage law often discusses it. Article 29 of the Indonesian Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974 and the Constitutional Court Decision No. 69/PUU-XIII/2015 (Law No. 1, 1974) declare that this form of agreement can be reached before or during the marriage. Before getting married, these agreements frequently talk about how to split up property, keep assets separate, and protect each person's rights (Lagalitas.org, 2025). Previous research examining the Prenuptial Agreement between Indonesian and South Korean regulations indicates that, while prenuptial agreements are legally binding in both nations, their enforcement and public acceptance differ significantly. This study examines the legal frameworks governing Prenuptial Agreements in Indonesia and South Korea, which have been adapted into television series and are influenced by dramatic marriage storylines in South Korea (Asmarani et al., 2024).

A Prenuptial Agreement helps prevent legal issues in both monogamous or polygamous marriage and provides legal assurance to third parties such as creditors or heirs (Begawan & Kasta, 2025). From a legal aspect, lack of a clear agreement typically leads to arguments about how to divide assets, debts, and child custody (Novany & Putra, 2023). Although prenuptial agreements provide various benefits, a considerable proportion of individuals remain uninformed about their intent. Most couples do not discuss establishing a prenuptial agreement before they get married because they think it will harm their trust in each other. This agreement can really help each individual understand their rights and duties and make the marriage more open and healthy (Arief, 2017). It is still lawful for a marriage to start with an agreement instead of love. Movies not only show the human side of prenuptial agreements by telling interesting stories about them, but also show powerful ways to communicate with the public. They affect how people think, shape public opinion, and provide individuals a chance to discuss tough legal and social issues. In this way, as part of mass media, TV shows make legal issues that are hard to understand into experiences that many people can relate to and understand more easily. Movies, TV shows, and news that feature these kinds of marriages also show valid marriage legislation.

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Movies and TV shows often deal with legal issues that come up in marriage, such as Prenuptial Agreements, divorce, child custody, and division of property. They do this by narrating stories about people and demonstrating emotional conflicts, which makes the law seem more genuine to the audience. People sometimes think that short films on social media represent their own life, especially when there are marriage-related scenes. This tendency backs up and shows stories about marriage that are often unfair and full of stereotypes. Short video sites, which are one of popular social media sites, are perfect for viral marketing since they are easy to access and make people interested in (Shang, 2024). There are a few reasons why this trend is increasingly popular, one of which is that Generation Z cares about having freedom and feeling well in relationships. Another reason is that bad family-related experiences make people less likely to trust others. Another is that people expect things to be fair when it comes to domestic tasks and money. Lastly, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) affects how people feel about their relationships (Fikri Asy & Rizqy Amelia, 2024). In popular culture, especially in content for kids and teens, traditional, religious, and conservative values are still a key topic of debates about marriage and family (Choiron & Eliyanah, 2020). Shows about marriage have become more compelling when they feature role-playing or conflict between characters. A lot of religions consider marriage as a holy act of worship and a chance to gain spiritual rewards, although its meanings vary based on culture. Wedding ceremonies differ greatly according to ethnic traditions, religious convictions, cultural standards, and social strata (Noor Justiatini & Zainal Mustofa, 2020).

Prenuptial Agreement is an agreement that is made right before or during the wedding. Many people still do not know how to make Prenuptial Agreements. Some individuals still think that it is immoral and even selfish to make such an arrangement (Gresnia, 2024). However, as society evolves, an increasing number of individuals recognize the importance of Prenuptial Agreements (Sherman, 2005). Prenuptial Agreements are not selfish; they can make marriages stronger by getting people to talk openly about money and agree on what they expect from each other. They also serve as a legal umbrella that protects both parties, which is especially important in today's society when divorce rates are still high. Thus, suggesting that prenuptial agreements are negative does not take into account how vital they are for developing trust between people and keeping money safe.

Marriage with Benefits, which is a romantic comedy series, is based on a tale from Wattpad. Wattpad is a website where users publish made-up stories about various topics like loveless marriage, which is when two people get married for various reasons, including social prestige and money, or when they want to hide other reasons without having a genuine emotional tie. TV Series *Marriage with Benefits* does not use the term "prenuptial agreement" directly, but it does represent marriage as a partnership based on a contract. The series exposes how marriage may turn into a business deal, where love, dedication, and family are less essential than strategy and personal gain. Indonesian law stipulates that a Prenuptial Agreement is only valid if both couples agree to it and it is made official before the wedding. However in the series, the agreement is depicted as an informal and not legally binding agreement. Marriage is valid when everyone respects their own religious standards and beliefs. Marriage involves a commitment to live together as husband and wife, with the intention of forming a family, offering mutual support, and sharing responsibilities (Ad et al., 2024).

The Prenuptial Agreement in *Marriage with Benefits* is not only a plot device, it also shows how marriage is changing in today's culture. This portrayal facilitates the negotiation of women's roles and reveals the complex dynamics of gender power relations. This study aimed to examine the positioning and negotiation of prenuptial agreements in relation to women's roles in the series, and to evaluate the impact of this representation on public perceptions of love, commitment, and relationships.

Method

This research employed a critical lens that emphasizes social transformation and gender-related concerns. The research utilized a qualitative technique grounded in Sara Mills' paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis. In studies utilizing Mills' methodology, the ideology uncovered predominantly relates to power, domination, and gender, as well as the methods via which this ideology is sustained or challenged through language uses. Mills contends that injustice, especially against women, is often reflected in skewed portrayals that depict women as weak and subjugated in comparison with men. This study cantered on an Indonesian TV Series named *Marriage with Benefits*

(2023). This Series was chosen because it extensively reflects the theme of Prenuptial Agreement. This study's unit of analysis was the concept of the prenuptial agreement, demonstrating how one character's economic and emotional distress necessitates their acceptance of the arrangement. This is a new idea that marriage does not have to start with love; it may be set up like a business deal. A study demonstrated that women engaged in economic activities and having substantial control over household assets are less susceptible to violence (Bhattacharyya et al., 2011). The cultural stigma surrounding premarital agreements, often regarded as materialistic and harmful to the sacredness of marriage, further complicates this scenario (Iwan, 2022). These factors collectively contribute to the challenges encountered by couples in Indonesia, especially in urban areas, regarding marriage and family stability. This study examined the following analytical aspects:

Table 1. Framework of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis	Unit of Analysis
Subject-Object Position	The definition of women in terms of their gender roles and sexuality as portrayed in the TV Series, including the presence of popular culture trends and the negotiation of women's roles within them.
Audience Position	This context influences how the theme of Prenuptial Agreements is received and interpreted by audiences.

Source: TV Series *Marriage with Benefits*

Based on the traits of men depicted in *Marriage with Benefits*, it seems like a male-cantered society is dominant in many fields of work, which makes women seem like a group that needs males. Consequently, among women, rationality is frequently eclipsed by the pre-eminence of emotional factors, whereas men are generally regarded as possessing stronger intellectual control. In addition, this study also included four female participants aged 23 to 42 years, representing various marital statuses: single, married, divorced, and those who did not plan to marry. This variety of informants' traits was selected to investigate a range of viewpoints concerning the research subject more thoroughly and profoundly.

The category of marital status is determined by an individual's personal beliefs while making decisions related to family life. Each status indicates if a person is legally married, has never been married, has been married and divorced, or has lost a spouse. This means that a person could be single, married, widowed, or divorced. Many people consider TV shows and other sorts of media coverage regarding marriage to help them choose a partner. This study analyzed television programs by examining texts that define subject and object positions, in accordance with Mills' Critical Discourse framework. This criterion was used to look at how popular culture has impacted the definition of marriage. For instance, serialized TV dramas generally present marriage as dramatic and problematic. Some prevalent issues are the concept of a Prenuptial Agreement and the plot that women are often portrayed as being adversely affected by such arrangements. The study employed source triangulation, including the analyses of a film and pop culture critic, Hikmat Darmawan. In his research on women and popular culture, Darmawan asserts that the portrayal of women in the Indonesian film industry has increasingly diversified. The camera depicts women's bodies in ways that alter their significance, frequently oscillating between portraying women as objects or subjects within the narrative (Darmawan, 2013).

Results and Discussion

Prenuptial Agreement is the main story, and it highlights how marriage is changing in the news. It is also a way for women to talk about their rights and interests in both public and private life. At first, the woman in *Marriage with Benefits* agrees to the Prenuptial Agreement because she wants to move up in her job or because her family pushes her to do so. However, as the novel goes on, she

starts to think about the agreement and tries to change her position and place in the partnership. This TV episode reveals that popular culture not only depicts how society works, but also influences gender roles and power dynamics in subtle ways. Prenuptial Agreements depicted in films or television series transcend mere narratives, fundamentally altering perceptions of love, commitment, and relationships through the lens of hyperreality. This representation simultaneously evolves into a medium for the negotiation of women's roles within the entrenched framework of gender ideology that has traditionally governed societal norms. In these stories, women often have roles of power and submission, but they show resistance and try to change these roles through negotiation. This portrayal elucidates complex power dynamics, as women engage in the negotiation of their identities and obligations while simultaneously challenging or reinforcing existing ideas of gender subordination.

Utilization of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Framework in the Analysis of *Marriage with Benefits*

Subject–Object Position

Marriage with Benefits revolves around a marriage agreement driven by each character's personal interests, namely the pursuit of individual goals such as going to Paris and returning to their respective partners after the Regional Election (*Pilkada*) has concluded. The series comprises eight episodes, each of which depicts how a modern form of marriage agreement is constructed, drawing from various popular situations that reflect prevailing trends, values, and behaviors. These elements are shown through modern styles, music, technology, and ways of life, all of which support the cultural trends in the story. The story of *Marriage with Benefits* takes place in Paris and follows the main character's goal of becoming an international makeup artist, which adds to the show's current feel. The negotiation of the female character's role is depicted in multiple ways throughout the episodes, including:

Table 2. Framework of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

Episode	Dialogue	Sequence	Subject–Object Position (Sara Mills)
3	<p>“Kita harus posting banyak foto di berbagai macam tempat, supaya <i>keliatan honeymoon beneran</i>”. (“We have to post many pictures in different places, so we look like we’re on our honeymoon.”)</p>	<p>The scene depicts a honeymoon photo shoot with a professional photographer, set against the iconic backdrop of the Eiffel Tower—symbolizing modern romantic ideals and global lifestyle aspirations.</p>	<p>▪ Subject Position: The female character or the couple serves as an active subject who strategically constructs public perception, as indicated by the phrase “honeymoon” appearing authentic on social media. This reflects the character’s awareness of social performance and positions her as a narrative agent, rather than a passive object.</p> <p>▪ Object Position: The scene of a hug and a forced cheek kiss illustrates the social expectation that married couples are naturally permitted to engage in such physical gestures. In this context, the behavior is initiated by the male character</p>

			toward the female, positioning her as a subject who is expected to comply. This dynamic reflects an unequal power relation, in which the woman's agency is limited by societal norms that legitimize male-initiated physical intimacy within the framework of marriage.
4	<p>“Sorry ya, lo jadi harus ikutan ngurusin keluarga gue”. “I’m sorry that you have to deal with my family issue.”</p>	<p>The spatial arrangement characterized by physical distance and open space emphasizes the emotional detachment and lack of intimacy in the interaction, reinforcing the formality or tension between the characters.</p>	<p>Although the female character serves as the subject in her own story, she is simultaneously portrayed as troublesome. Her autonomy is framed as a source of disruption to the male character’s comfort or goals, reflecting implicit gendered expectations.</p>
5	<p>“Pernikahan kita cuma kontrak, jadi gue nggak ada kewajiban untuk ngasih tau lo semua hal yang gue lakuin”. “We’re in a contract marriage, so I don’t have any obligation to report my activities to you!”</p>	<p>The conflict unfolds as a mutual act of self-defence, yet the female character is positioned in a disadvantaged role feeling cornered due to the controlling behaviour exerted by the male character. This dynamic reflects a power imbalance that underscores gendered asymmetries in the relationship.</p>	<p>The female character’s statement suggests a deeply embedded gender dynamic, where a woman’s abilities, no matter how substantial they are, remain subject to male authority. This reflects a structural imbalance in which masculine control is normalized and women’s autonomy is constrained within</p>

			patriarchal expectations.
5	<p>“Why do we have to sleep on the same bed!”</p> <p>“As far as my mom and Jennie are still here, we use <i>aku Kamu</i>, okay? I don’t want to get caught.”</p>	<p>The sleeping arrangement where the man sleeps on the floor while the woman sleeps on the bed visually signifies a negotiated boundary in their relationship. It may reflect tension, lack of intimacy, or an attempt to assert personal space and agency within a socially constructed marital framework.</p>	<p>The decision to sleep separately is presented as a deliberate consequence, highlighting a perceived deviation from the normative expectations of marriage. This spatial separation challenges conventional marital intimacy and reflects the underlying tension between formal marital status and emotional or physical detachment.</p>
7	<p>“I’ve done all my obligations in our agreement.”</p> <p>“The election has concluded, so our agreement has ended.”</p> <p>“You’re never a real husband to me. Our marriage is fake, and everything is over.”</p>	<p>The scene portrays a seemingly minor disagreement that escalates into an emotionally intense moment, resulting in the female character’s decision to leave the domestic space. This act signifies a temporary rupture in the relationship and may reflect the limited emotional space afforded to women within the narrative.</p>	<p>The female character leaves the house, which belongs to the male character. Her departure reflects an awareness of her position as a guest, reinforcing a sense of gender-based marginalization. This moment highlights the power imbalance within the domestic space, where the woman lacks full agency and is subtly positioned as an outsider rather than an equal partner.</p>

Source: Analysis of Sara Mills

Marriage with Benefits portrays the female character as an object by telling the story of how she balances her duties as a wife with her job as a working woman. However, she is also the main character, and her actions and decisions are very important to how the story ends. She demonstrates her autonomy and decision-making capability in this subject position. The female character fits all the four Sara Mills's requirements for subject positioning: (1) define herself, (2) tell stories, (3) represent reality, and (4) tell the stories of other characters. The series portrays her as a tough woman

who accepts the repercussions of entering into a contractual marriage, thus conveying a broader message about female power and autonomy. Additionally, the existence of another female character depicted as her adversary underscores how the primary female character formulates and expresses her identity in relation to others. The interaction between these female characters gives us a deeper look at how the story deals with gender and subjectivity.

Viewer Position

The textual analysis of *Marriage with Benefits* examines the utilization of language, dialogue, story, and symbolism to clarify the role of prenuptial agreements and the obligations of women. The way people choose their words, how they speak, and how they tell tales demonstrates the beliefs that are built into society, especially when it comes to power and gender relations. For example, conversations that reveal how women are less powerful or how power is negotiated in marriage show how women's roles are made and disputed. It is also crucial to know about the social and cultural setting in which the TV Series is developed and viewed. This Series is from a society that has very strict norms and beliefs about how holy marriage is and how women should behave as wives and mothers. This context changes how people understand and respond to the problem of prenuptial agreements. By understanding this social and cultural backdrop, the series' portrayal can be connected to broader societal issues, such as the persistent influence of patriarchal ideology and gender dominance on mainstream cultural narratives. This study investigated both the overt meanings present in the text and the underlying significations related to power structures and social hegemony. This helps us gain better understanding of how *Marriage with Benefits* works as a medium that shapes and reflects how people think about love, commitment, and women's roles in marriage.

Movies as a Driving Force behind Popular Culture Trends

Kotler and Armstrong assert that lifestyle is mostly influenced by internal and environmental factors. Things like behavior, personality, observation, perception, and self-concept are all part of the internal side. On the other hand, the external elements usually have a stronger effect and are largely shaped by things like reference groups, culture, socioeconomic class, and other things that are going on at the time. These external forces often have a greater impact on lifestyle decisions, particularly in social environments that emphasize conformity and group affiliation (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). A journal article, entitled *The Commodification of Rituals in Bridal Shower Practices in Yogyakarta*, asserts that the emergence of a new cultural phenomenon, namely the involvement of event organizers in wedding-related activities, has led to a significant transformation of traditional rituals, particularly in relation to bridal showers. Bridal shower is acknowledged as a representation of popular culture rather than a local or indigenous tradition. Consequently, it embodies the impact of global cultural exchanges and the commercialization of individual and collective festivities within the overarching context of consumer-oriented cultural practices (Vidiadari & Rismayanti, 2022). In the context of popular culture, films and TV Series regularly show arranged marriages, which are often set up by family members. These marriages are nonetheless influenced by parental authority, religious standards, and shared cultural values.

Prenuptial Agreements represent an individual's negotiation within the broader socio-cultural context. In popular culture, prenuptial agreements are not only legal contracts; they are also places where people can talk about the differences between love and duty, tradition and originality, as well as masculinity and femininity. These contracts serve as narrative devices that enable audiences to critically analyze the evolving meanings of marriage in modern contexts, while also maintaining traditional social and gender norms. People's thoughts, actions, fashion style, and speech are all shaped by movies and TV series. They also play a huge role in how popular culture changes. They are not merely things to watch; they are cultural agents that make particular values, lifestyles, and worldviews seem normal by creating, spreading, and making them seem normal. The accompanying analysis investigates the marriage agreement as a prominent cultural symbol and the methods by which female characters engage in negotiation within these circumstances in certain TV Series.

Table 3. Analytical Framework based on Baudrillard and Sara Mills

Sources:	Aspect	<i>Marriage with Benefits</i>	Analytical Framework (Baudrillard and Sara Mills)
	Main Theme	Contractual love and simulated relationships	Simulation of love and commitment as a form of hyperreality
	Woman's Role	Decorative figures in contractual narratives	The illusion of female subjectivity in narratives that reinforce objectification
	Gender Representation	The Male-Controlled Direction of Intimate Relationships	The construction of female subjectivity and objectification is shaped by market-driven romantic ideals
	Simulation of Social Reality	Romanticizing inauthentic relationships through media narratives	Hyperreality: representations of love detached from social reality
	Popular Cultural Trends	Becoming an Inspiration for Trends in Novels and Fanfiction	Simulation Produces a False Ideal Lifestyle That is Accepted as Reality

Analysis of Sara Mills

People have been debating about marriage, sex, power relations, religion, and identity because of *Marriage with Benefits*. These are all issues that shape ideals that become part of the public consciousness over time. The Prenuptial Agreements or marriage that starts out without love, yet it blossoms into deeper emotional relationships. In Indonesia, prenuptial agreements are not legally binding. Consequently, children born from such marriage are ineligible for official birth certificates because the marriage lacks legal recognition (Mulyanti & Sari, 2021). Some people turn prostitution into a business, but the way it is shown in the media makes it clear that it is more than just a way to meet biological requirements. Jean Baudrillard asserts that within the realm of popular or mass culture, consumption supersedes production, and the importance of signs and symbols surpasses that of utility and exchange. In his theory of popular culture, Baudrillard talks about simulacra and simulation. He argues that contemporary civilization operates within a temporal structure shaped by the precession of simulacra, in which symbolic representations precede and replace reality. At this point, the public's interpretation of symbols is no longer based on what they meant at first. Baudrillard incorporates this concept across various fields, encompassing history, science fiction, politics, economics, film, and literature. Simulating not only reproduces symbols, but it also makes hyperreal signals that do not have anything to do with reality or where they originate from. These simulations are not real; they are made up. Prenuptial Agreements, like those shown on TV shows, are a type of hyperreality that is not prevalent in real life but becomes normal through frequent media repetition. The media makes people believe in a romantic illusion of forced love that turns into real love. People act out these kinds of dreams as if they were real, which makes it impossible to determine what is real and what is not. By symbolically creating simulations, hyperreal signs are generated, and spatial experiences are concurrently condensed, deconstructed, and reassembled, enabling humans to engage with entirely new spatial and emotional realities (Piliang, 2010).

In the hyperreal domain, the gap between simulation and reality dissolves, coalescing into a singular continuum where lived events transpire without differentiation between the genuine and the simulated. The interviews with the informants showed that they lived in a digital age where media has a huge effect on how people feel. There are two basic ways to see this. First, the emotional responses that TV shows induce, like crying over made-up scenarios, are often stronger than real-world experiences of problematic or broken marriages. Second, TV shows are both places to escape and places to learn about life. People really enjoy the character Aksan in *Marriage with Benefits*, which shows how much they like him as a potential future partner. Popular culture shapes new notions about love, marriage, and gender roles by telling the same tales over and over again in the news and other media. These ideas do not come from religious or legal convictions; they come from how the media shows them. *Marriage with Benefits* shows, in many significant ways, how women's roles are

negotiated. The main female characters in these TV shows have to cope with the struggle between being a wife and pursuing their own goals.

Their responses to unconventional marital arrangements indicate attempts to alter the perception of women in popular culture. These choices, made through resistance, compromise, or tacit negotiation, show how female characters break the rules of society and gain some control over their relationships. The responses from the audience, particularly from women (as indicated in the informant interviews), demonstrated a variety of interpretations. Some people loved the story and even made it sound romantic, while others read it critically and pointed out the unfair power relations. These different responses showed how audiences actively shape meaning, showing how popular literature can both support and challenge common conceptions about gender.

Marriage with Benefits gives viewers a misleading image of what marriage is truly like by showing it in a deceptive way. These anecdotes reveal how hyperreality takes the place of real life, making the fake image of marriage seem more "real" than real life. Critically, *Marriage with Benefits* is regarded as a distorted depiction of marriage, rather than an authentic representation of marital life; it constitutes a constructed narrative that ultimately transforms viewers' understanding of the institution of marriage. The critical paradigm compels researchers to clarify how media not only reflect social reality but also create and sustain fundamental power structures and ideologies. This analysis criticizes the social and cultural constructions inside the TV series, functioning as a framework to understand the reproduction and contestation of notions such as patriarchy and societal norms regarding marriage in popular culture. TV shows and movies are not mere entertainment; they can also be used to analyze and think about the social and cultural dynamics of Indonesian society. This is especially true when it comes to understanding how simulacrum theory operates. They illustrate the combined impact of media and culture on individuals' perceptions of reality (Damayanti et al., 2024).

Conclusion

Marriage with Benefits portrays marriage in a phony and socio-economic style, where love, dedication, and family values are occasionally replaced by personal interests and strategic considerations. In Indonesia, prenuptial agreements are only valid if both parties agree to them and make them legal before the wedding. However, the series displays these agreements in a way that is not legally binding, which is how women negotiate their rights and interests in the marriage. The series not only reflects societal realities shaped by patriarchal norms and gender theories that prescribe household roles, but also subtly reconstructs and negotiates power dynamics within marital partnerships. It specifically emphasizes the status of women as frequently subservient, while simultaneously displaying resistance. This study utilized textual analysis of language, discourse, and symbolism to clarify the impact of popular media on societal perceptions of love, commitment, and the roles of women within the institution of marriage. Employing a critical perspective informed by Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis, this study examined how language and discourse within the series both sustain and challenge dominant assumptions, especially about gender and power dynamics. Mills' paradigm emphasizes the role of language in sustaining social injustices by normalizing particular power relations and marginalizing other viewpoints.

Marriage with Benefits talks about prenups in a way that reveals how women's identities and duties are created by patriarchal stories that are common in society. It also shows how these stories can be questioned and changed. The series also uses Baudrillard's simulacrum theory to create a hyperreality, i.e., a fake picture of marriage that replaces people's understanding of what marriage is really like. Media is not mere entertainment; it can also be used to criticize society and maintain dominant beliefs and power structures alive, like patriarchy and the restrictions of marriage in Indonesian culture. In general, this TV Series is both a mirror and a battleground for debates over gender norms and power dynamics in popular culture. Henry Jenkins suggests that these findings could be further developed within the context of participatory culture. Jenkins' theory emphasizes the active engagement of audiences, not solely as consumers of media contents, but as makers who reinterpret, reproduce, and distribute cultural significances. This interactive dynamic shows how media texts like *Marriage with Benefits* may start conversations, fandom activities, and new ways of looking at things that might support or challenge dominant cultural narratives.

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