

**Narrative on Facebook:
Questioning the Agency of the Postcolonial Subjects**

**Kandi Aryani Suwito / 3206068
kandee_aryani@yahoo.com**

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**Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Frank Kessler (Utrecht University)
Second Reader: Dr. Judith Keilbach (Utrecht University)**

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I. The Background of Main Question

Having suffered colonial domination and oppression for hundreds of years, Indonesia is struggling with the idea of being a nation in contemporary society. Even though the colonial period has ended, the colonial discourse remains and gives shape to anti-colonialist debates in the post-colonialist era which is materialized in the huge range of issues that shows the problematic concept of post-colonialism itself. The emergence of new media appears as a new area of enquiry within the discourse of post-colonialism and the problem of agency is the specific issue I focus on. The question of identity is central within postcolonial theories. It also has a considerable impact on the study of media. Postcolonial theories are continuously struggling with the idea of 'culture' especially when they claim to speak from the position of the marginal or the silenced. It means that these theories will always deal with identity as a construct, shaped and continuously transformed within new cultural conditions. The notion of agency is important in my thesis since I will scrutinize how identity under postcolonial discourse needs to be re-situated within the emergence of new media that put forward the political economy of signs as an inevitable part of hyper-capitalism. Thus globalization will never leave individuals free without trying to transform them as commodity. As the notion of power has unquestionably characterized the postcolonial discourse, it is interesting to see how new media have acted as an apparatus that bring the power of consumption as a means of understanding oneself. For this reason, my thesis is certainly an interdisciplinary study, positioning identity in contradiction - as an active agent that makes the most of new media but also nothing but a coded object materializing as an image.

Before the independence, Indonesia was striving to define what it means to be a nation since colonialism has forced the identification of the self as the 'Other' - a colonized subject. Being part of the contemporary milieu, Indonesia is still struggling with the issues of identity, since diversity is an inseparable characteristic of this country, making the task of defining the self more problematic. Since Indonesia has to deal with tradition and modernity at the same time, articulation of the national identity is even harder. Therefore this is a country where there will be no single history to be made. As a country that has wrestled with colonialism, Indonesia is the land where the desire of becoming modern intersects with the

need to stand up for its own identity as a liberated nation. Thus, this thesis is about the story of Indonesia - a nation that has no single narrative now and a nation that longs for the power to represent itself no longer as an object, defined by others, but as a subject. What does a nation need the most? Is it the power to produce knowledge as a way of liberating the self from the logic of subjugation endured during the colonialist era? Along with Fanon I will state that the power of description, of naming, is not to be underestimated, because it speaks about the way of seeing (Fanon in McLeod, 2000; 20). Therefore, postcolonialism is starting to take place in the history of modern Indonesia not only because the country had experienced colonialism. Rather, postcolonialism defines the process of restoring the dominant ways of seeing and trying not to reproduce the colonial values.

I.A Indonesia in the Changeover: Questioning the 'Otherness' of the Self

It is interesting to see that colonial discourse has been developed with the assumption that there is a binary position which makes possible the idea about the 'Other' to exist: the Occident (the West) and the Orient (the East). According to Edward Said (Said in McLeod, 2000; 41), the West occupies the superior rank while the Orient is its 'other', in a subservient position. Seen from this perspective, Indonesia is obviously the 'Orient' – not only because it is the place of Europe's richest and oldest colonies, as it had been colonized by the Dutch for almost 350 years, but also it exists to strengthen and justify the position of the 'Occident'. Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1978; 3), may become the product of the Western's ego in reiterating a distinctive image from the 'Orient'. There will be no 'Orient' if there is no 'Occident' and both are constructed. Reality and history give rise for these categories to exist. My goal here is not the comparison of the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' as constructed. Instead, I will show how the 'Orient' is a contested category and Orientalism as a discourse will still remain when the Orient is in question.

It is not easy to trace the imprint left by the colonizers in the media discourse since Indonesian identity has continuously been constructed in global cultural flows that create diasporic communities. However, what matters here, is how diverse identities are positioned as subjects in the production of knowledge, because the binary position of the 'West' and the 'East' was made based on the struggle about who has more authority and control to produce knowledge about the other. Things get even more complicated, as the division of the 'East' and the 'West' is materialized in the hybrid text, where the authenticity of the original source

can not easily be assured. Holding an identity as Indonesian is not the same as what it means of being Indonesian. But as Indonesians incorporate the concept of being the 'Orient' as a fundamental prerequisite for the West's existence, studying the 'Orient' is critical to embrace the notion of identity and subjectivity under PostColonial discourse, especially when the 'Orient' has the power to set up its own historical moment is now open with the emergence of new media that promote a participatory culture as the most promising feature of this century.

I. B Facebook for the 'Other': Indonesia Goes Online!

As a major domain of participatory culture, social networking site Facebook proposes a significantly new way of revealing/constructing identity. Yet as a phenomenon of contemporary culture it brings about questions on political consequences, because any subjectification of oneself implies the idea of the 'self' and the 'other'. This is exactly the way Facebook works. It functions as a mechanism, where in relation to 'the other' one constructs him/herself as a sign. This means that Facebook is establishing the symbolic order between individuals as systems of signs.

I have chosen Facebook as a specific case relating to the idea of agency, because during its rather short existence this social networking site has become the top-ranked site in Indonesia, beating Yahoo and Google.¹ This fact was published in *The Sidney Morning Herald* and this news story triggered some debates among local religious groups, responding to the popularity of Facebook with accusations of spreading lies and gossips. When *The Sidney Morning Herald* announced about the popularity of Facebook in Indonesia, the article acknowledged Facebook as a current phenomenon, dictating public actions. In the article in this online newspaper, Facebook has been accused for strongly arousing moral indulgence, enabling people to exploit this site in an inappropriate manner. Facebook even brought together Indonesian Muslim clerics to come together and criticize the existence of this social networking site that has successfully attracted around 1-2 million people and makes Indonesia the fastest growing country on Facebook in Southeast Asia.² About 700 Muslim clerics agreed and decided that Facebook is forbidden if it is used for spreading lies, gossips and sexual

¹ <http://www.smh.com.au/world/indonesia-gives-facebook-the-nod-but-no-flirting-please-20090522-bi9v.html>. Retrieved:10-09-2009

² <http://www.smh.com.au/world/indonesia-gives-facebook-the-nod-but-no-flirting-please-20090522-bi9v.html> & <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2009/01/11/indonesia-facebook-users-on-the-rise/>. Retrieved: 10-09-2009

content, even though this edict did not carry any legal weight. The involvement of religious groups in the evaluation of Facebook has opened up a valuable debate about the meaning of technology for human experience and the consequences of adapting 'the self' in technoculture, where identity is judged by the way individuals relate themselves to technology.

If technology continues to penetrate everyday life, it is understandable to worry about its capability to dominate both private and public spheres and challenge what was considered to be traditional values. Facebook can probably be perceived as seduction, provoking people to consume more texts and explore all the possibilities of what the medium can do. The seductive nature of the medium might also be the reason why the local government in Surabaya, the second biggest city in Indonesia, block access to Facebook and two other social networking sites for their employees during the office hours, arguing that civil servants, working for the local government, have wasted too much time using these services.³ What is it on Facebook that creates fascination and dread at the same time, establishes link between human and machine, fuses the real and the virtual in the new realm of reality', based on self-production and participation? This 'new reality' is the subject of my thesis which also bring me to examine how Facebook has promoted a space for resistance to the dominant ways of seeing by welcoming the users to create their own narratives and contribute to the definition of the new media.

New media now appear as a contemporary colonial discourse that works through the specific rhetoric, engaging people in a voluntary support of the imperialist projects. Facebook is a virtual world industry, an economic-oriented space intended to be the market leader in the real world. Sign becomes a commodity by generating 'needs' and offering a sense of individuality. The parade of images on Facebook reveals the fact that key categories of colonialism have been incorporated into the global market. Virtual commodities are linked with the actual substance, which distort the assumed border, dividing the virtual from the actual, which might not have actually existed before. It is intriguing to see how Facebook as a medium has captured the 'real self' and turned it into a sign that refers to 'the self'. At this point it is hard to recognize which one can be considered 'the real self', since this digital apparatus replaces the real subject with an object. If this is the case, I wonder if Facebook has actually put an end to the notion of 'the subject'.

³ <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/facebook-blocked-for-indonesia-city-employees-official-20090911-fjtt.html>. Retrieved: 10-09-2009

As colonialism had deployed diverse strategies and methods of control and representation (Loomba, 2005; 19), and now historically situates the forms of representation, reading practices and values which range across both the past and modern-day present (McLeod, 2000; 4), a contemporary study on postcolonialism should take a specific case that illustrates the mechanism through which the former discourse of colonialism has been challenged by the emergence of new media. Postcolonial theory has been accused of promoting a shift from locations and institutions to individuals and subjectivities (Ibid; 20), which in the meantime, Baudrillard and McLuhan have developed a powerful critique of the binary position of subject/object which is seen as irrelevant since every practice of representation will automatically be translated into 'sign-code', governed by the principles of a commodity system.

I.C Striving for Agency in Digital Narrative: Subjectivity, Identity and the Sign

So therefore, does it mean that the question of agency is no longer substantial to be put forward? The issue of identity becomes apparent in every act of representation as a site of contestation, where signs are exploited as a way of defining 'the self'. The specificity of Facebook is located in its nature as a social network that creates online connections among offline networks. Therefore I think it is urgent to ask: to what extent are the notions of agency, the self and identity still notable in the transformation of power that instantly takes place by means of 'the code' - replacing 'the real' symbolic relations among individuals with the semiotic process of consumption and creating people as consumers? If the myth of access as the ultimate-equalizer proposed by new media as introduced by Lisa Nakamura In her 'Cybertyping and the Work of Race in the Age of Digital Reproduction' (Nakamura, 2002; 27) really has the potential to create a space empowering the marginalized identity, this assumption leads me to the question: how can the subject get a new agency through the process of re-narration if it simultaneously places the subject as consumer whose identity is constructed under the logic of consumption and whose subjectivity is challenged by the authority of signs?.

When contemporary society is thought to suffer not from economic exploitation but from technical domination (Feenberg, 1999; 104), this does not mean that investigating the technical sphere of Facebook will mechanically exclude the human factor from the area of inquiry in view of the fact that only through the problem of agency the power of media in mass culture can be contested. Moreover, the new emphasis on agency in the technological

realm becomes an issue only with the understanding that the sovereign power of subjects has been challenged by the supremacy of the objects, seducing and distorting human beings into signs before turning them into commodities, capital and, finally, objects. This is one problematical issue that challenges the stability of postcolonial studies as it crucially points to the moment where the medium will be positioned not merely as a device that transmits messages and represents the 'real' but what is more, as the main actor that ideologically takes the place of the subject as the producer of knowledge. If this is the issue, it opens different angles in seeing the relationship between subject and objects, especially where commodities also fascinate individuals to take actions and become a part of the consumer society (Kellner, 1989; 159).

This makes me think that there is still a question that has not been answered adequately yet, namely, how the agency of the self should be re-positioned in the tension between the sovereign power of the subject, making the production of knowledge possible through re-narration, and the supremacy of the objects that forcefully transform any matters into signs? I believe that postcolonial studies need to be rethought within the political economy of signs, because colonialism is manifest in numerous different institutional and cultural practices. If this is the case, then I believe that the analysis of Facebook within the Indonesian context will produce a valuable study on how new media studies and postcolonial theory can mutually collaborate to tackle the challenge in incorporating the postcolonial subject not merely within a system of representation, but also by dealing with the propensity of the medium to absorb the content and question the supremacy of 'the subjects'. I will focus my analysis on the specificity of Facebook as the medium which brings the relation between the material and the ideological to light. The aptitude of Facebook will be elaborated to demonstrate the way postcolonial subjects represent themselves and are now responsible for their own images.

I will consider Facebook as narrative machine that provides freedom for users not only to relocate their world into texts within the realm of representation, but also to actually create the world in which the notion of agency manifests through the interpretation of events, without probing whether the events are real or imaginary. Rather I locate users' narratives within the social, cultural and historical frame in order to trace how Facebook gives form and mechanism for the reconstruction of the postcolonial subject. My research will explore the nature of Facebook and how it functions within the larger context of modern Indonesia. This thesis will define and typify what exactly within Facebook gives raise to the idea of the

transformation of the colonized subjects into liberated beings in the contested sphere of the digital media. It is crucial to note that the agency of the self is placed in the paradox of having an ability to create narratives and being commodified as a system of sign at the same time.

Moreover, this thesis will also draw attention to the way new media possibly create a new form of narrative caused by its digital materiality - not simply technological, but also ideological. Considering narratives not only in terms of what they say or mean, but also in terms of what they do (Bassett, 2007; 41), I will closely delve into Facebook to give an idea on how postcolonial identity can be historically made and challenged by unmasking the work of new media as means to provide the subjects with a space to articulate their past and present, as well as organize their experience and make it meaningful to them. I will take Ricoeur's viewpoint that corresponds with Wittgenstein who says that the meaning of human existence is itself a narrative (Bassett, 2007; 27). By considering Facebook as a space allowing users to rethink current cultural moment, my analysis will be aimed to ask how new forms and elements of narratives evident in Facebook show that the relation between human and machine enables to rethink and reconstruct the agency of subject through the process of production and interpretation of texts. At this point, I depart from the premise that material reality exists outside Facebook, even though it can not be assured whether the narrative has been based on the real or imaginary events. What will be considered as 'the real' is everything that has been documented on Facebook, a cultural artifact that plays with three different principles of narrative discourse – mythic, historical and fictional (Ricoeur in White, 1987; 170). I attempt to uncover how the relation between these three principles turn human experience into signs, which possibly happens through human agents, active subjects and their quest for the meaning in their life.

II. Main research question

In what ways does Facebook function to re-construct the postcolonial identity by means of narrative in marking the transition from colonized subjects to liberated beings if the agency of 'the self' is contested on account of the massive reality of signs?

I will use the following sub-questions to narrow down and structure my analysis:

- 1) How does Facebook create a new logic of narrative by transforming and politically reproducing PostColonial subjects in contemporary Indonesia?

- 2) How does Facebook as a new social networking site create a space for resistance for the Orientals (concept Said proposes in 'Orientalism') to free themselves from the logic of subjugation and domination? Or does the narrative created by the subjects on Facebook reinforce the stereotype posed by the West to the 'Orientals'?
- 3) How can the materiality of Facebook potentially recover the agency of postcolonial subjects and also enable re-colonialization, since the Indonesian has mostly been liberated and objectified all together by the production and consumption of signs?

III. Research Design and Theoretical Framework

In order to produce critical insights for answer to the main research question this thesis is developed by investigating how the theoretical frameworks function throughout my analysis. I will draw on web sphere analysis and cybercultural studies to capture the means, patterns, artifacts, and mechanisms on Facebook with the intention to explore how postcolonial identities are reproduced through the relationship between the nature of Facebook as a medium and as a form of narrative, formed by abundant content produced by its users. My analysis is based on an understanding that Facebook brings about the problematical nature of the narrative in the digital age, since the process of remediation from old to new media has challenged the narrative's centrality and makes various forms of signs pervasive.

Since web materials are time-sensitive in their nature, an attempt to capture the reproduction of postcolonial identity should include the unique mixture of ephemeral and permanent aspects of the Web. This needs to be done as I will bring together the materiality of Facebook as a medium and the text - the content produced by the users. According to Kirsten Foot, there are two aspects of the ephemerality of Web content: firstly, it is ephemeral in its transience as it can be expected to last for only a relatively brief time, but still can be viewed again at a later time; secondly, it is ephemeral in its construction where the content, once presented, needs to be reconstructed or represented in order for others to experience it (Foot in Silver & Massanari, 2006; 90). At the same time, Foot explains that the Web has a sense of permanence which is different from its predecessors (*Ibid*). I agree with Foot when she says that the permanence of the Web is somewhat fleeting, since it will be regularly demolished each time it is updated by its producers. However, this concept can not be fully

employed to clarify the mechanism of Facebook, as it broadly gives room for the users either to restore prior content or to remove it.

The position of the researcher should be clarified and taken into consideration in order to ensure that the research material will be properly approached and investigated by answering the proposed research question. Having said this, I will interactively engage with the objects, since the position of the researcher in the hermeneutical cycle is critical and therefore requires participant observation, whereby the researcher will be an observer and a participant at the same time. This course of action is essential for the interpretation of texts as a way to engage with PostColonial subjects and identity, which will also be claimed and taken by the author of this thesis. For this consideration, as a researcher, I will actively engage with the texts investigated. It means that I will simultaneously play with the production and consumption of the text on Facebook. This should be done as means of understanding how the relation between machine and humans is persuasively affecting the formation of identity in the digital realm. This can be achieved only if I become part of the system - as a producer, turning myself into a sign, a text, and the object of study all at once.

Aiming to explore how postcolonial identities handle the notion of agency, this thesis will deal with the internalization of the self as the 'other' in the dynamic of anti-colonial revolt. For that reason, I will categorize issues depicted by the users of Facebook into three different categories: 1) Issues about being 'a subject', 2) Issues about being 'a subject' in relation with the nation-state, and 3) Issues about being 'a subject' that constitute a nation in its experience of colonialism and imperialism in the global context. This classification is necessary to convey how Facebook as a specific digital networking site provides users with the opportunity to make the participatory culture seems sensible. These three issues will be elaborated in several chapters as I attempt to answer the questions I have raised. Before explaining how my analysis will be structured, I briefly introduce the conceptual notion of narrative as the main idea through which the question of identity and agency will be addressed on Facebook.

History is Happening: the Narrativization of Society

The process of re-narration can be seen by considering Facebook as a narrative machine - a mechanical device that captures the essential concept of a narrative as something that is inescapably present in every society. According to Barthes, narrative is international,

trans-historical, trans-cultural; it is simply there (Barthes in Bassett, 2007: 5). This definition intriguingly grasps the paradox of narrative which is both “natural” and simulated at the same time. I argue that it is impossible to take narrative as unproblematic, since like the human life itself it is socially, culturally and historically constructed. The mutability of narrative has been stressed to a great extent by the technological nature of new media that make the materials through which it is turned into matter.

The narrative of the world are numberless [...] Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy [...] comics, news, items, conversation [...] Under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society (Barthes, 1982; 79).

Like a life, Barthes considers narrative as a product of history that opens up the possibility to reflect the technology of which it itself is partly made in its forms and its content (Barthes, 1982, Bassett, 2007). It means that narrative will remain within the pervasiveness of technology as the basic condition of society. Bassett makes it clear that narrative is a formation emerging out of the contemporary interchange between information technology, culture and society, a socially symbolic material (*Ibid*; 6). The question is: Is it necessary for narrative to be factual? In his book ‘Recent Theories of Narrative’, even Wallace Martin (1986) says that an understanding of narrative is a project for the future.

Accepting Barthes’ idea of narrative, I stand in the position to regard narrative not as a distinct conception that limit itself with some categories, rather take the mutability of its form as a flexible version of representing reality or even the reality itself. Jerome Bruner in his essay ‘The Narrative Construction of Reality (published in Bal, 2004; 216) states that narrative is transmitted culturally by each individual’s level of mastery to organize his/her experience and memory of human happenings as with all accounts of forms of representations of the world. Bruner in conjunction with Goodman write: ‘A narrative is an account of events occurring over time, comprising an ensemble of ways of constructing and representing the sequential order of human events of which the sequencing of clauses in spoken or written ‘stories is only one device’ (*Ibid*; 217). The basic idea of their theory of narrative is that not how narrative as text is constructed, but rather how it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality (*Ibid*). Taking this statement into consideration, I am not focusing my analysis to a specific form of narrative by arguing that the main concern should be directed to how narrative as a version of reality is historically situated as a mode of thought that

undertakes the issue of how reality is represented and constituted in the act of knowing and articulation.

As narrative is about people acting in a setting, Bruner additionally makes a crucial remark in connection with postcolonial discourse by saying that agency is always present in narrative since agency presupposes choice – some element of freedom (*Ibid*; 218). His statement is in line with Edward Said who argues within postcolonial perspective that any cultural work is about a vision of moment, the articulation of experience of post-independence country where all texts are interacting creatively together with the requirements and conventions of narrative in their own special genius and history (Said as published in Bal, 2004; 74). Moreover, he stresses the importance to connect the structure of a narrative to the ideas, concepts, experiences from which it draws support (*Ibid*). Therefore I carry out my analysis in ways that put on view the relation between the technological qualities of Facebook (creating the particular cultural form of narrative) with specific historical moments (making the reproducibility of postcolonial identity visible). In particular, within the case of Facebook, I am dealing not only with the narrative *per se*, but also with the meaning making where expression materialized in any forms on Facebook only make sense in relation to other kind of realities. This is because the act of constructing narrative is about selecting events, moments, issues, or even memories and knowledge and subsequently re-structuring them in an appropriate and personal manner in proportion to the specificity of the medium used to deliver the narrative.

The Linkage of New Media and Postcolonial Theory

After Introduction (Chapter 1), in **Chapter 2**, I will firstly put Facebook under spotlight as a specific corpus from which I will propose the linkage of new media and postcolonial theory. I will describe the points of intersection between these two domains and how they can possibly work out not merely in supporting but also in challenging the postulations of the 'other' in order to understand how the notion of subjectivity, agency, and identity can be technologically formed. With the objective to show the inter-correlation between postcolonial and new media studies in the context of Indonesian polity, I will pose a problem of defining what colonialism is within the modern context. This is necessary, since this term implies not only the period of colonization but also several concepts and issues that are relevant for a nation with the history of colonialism. I will situate Facebook as a popular text that shows how cultural specificity is noteworthy for approaching texts, considered as battlefields through

which the ideas of power, domination, exploitation, oppression or subjugation are re-addressed and re-contested by PostColonial subjects, within a particular historical context. Different cultures and different political regimes will also exploit nascent technologies in radically different ways (Raymond Williams in Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003; 5). Drawing on McLeod that the machinery of colonialism does not simply disappear as soon as the colonies become independent (McLeod, 2000; 39), I will make an effort to figure out how Facebook potentially fabricates the idea that colonialism has continued after colonization and became part of contemporary world.

I aim to reveal the particular form of narrative in Facebook, emerging as a product of technological culture. What is meant by 'narrative' in Facebook that bridges new media and postcolonial studies? In order to achieve this objective, in chapter 2, I will specifically analyze how the language used by the users on Facebook can be regarded as a mode of revealing a sense of liberation (McLeod, 2000; 18), thus exposing how within colonial discourse language and power intersect. What makes Facebook interesting is its style of performance that provides space for a different articulation of language. How users perceive themselves and their way of looking at their culture, politics and relationship to other individuals are verbalized through statements they write on their account, accessible to other users.

A Cultural and Political Fact of Orientalism: A Historical Construction of Narrative

In Chapter 3, the notion of colonialism will be scrutinized within the discourse of Orientalism which gives a crucial impact in constructing the binary opposition of the Orient (the East) and the Occident (the West) in the contemporary system of representation. Said's thesis about Orientalism will be best in making clear that the Orient is not a natural condition - rather a construction made in order to support the authoritative position of the West. The interchangeable terms between colonial discourse and Orientalism will be brought in such a way that the understanding of Orientalism will bring a productive level of analysis, bringing assumptions and stereotypes about the Orient (a term used to refer to the other of the 'West') The binary opposition the Orient - the Occident is not simply produced without involving a structured political domination between engaged parties. The theory of Orientalism will be valuable only if it can be exercised in reading produced text on Facebook. As Orientalism proposes imaginative assumption about what Orient is, it is necessary to see how the so-called 'Orient' produces text and narrative about themselves instead of just

becoming a fabricated construct, manufactured by the West. Foucault's theory on truth and knowledge will be employed to demonstrate how the Orient is empowered by means of technology to produce knowledge about oneself and others. In practice, I will use 'Orientalism' as a perspective to scrutinize how the language used by Facebook users in conveying their identities and what they want to address signifies the complex relationship between the subject with their nations.

Since Orientalism was a European enterprise from the very beginning (Brydon, 2000; 863), the Indonesian was captured as the objects of knowledge where its representation was construed by its colonizer. Before heading to the analysis on how postcolonial identity is incorporated in the discourse of Orientalism, I will present Said's reflective introductory commentary on Orientalism:

Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Orient" world. It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" [...] It not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an even exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political, power intellectual, power cultural, and power moral [...] Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world (Said, 1978; 12)

In all its politic and cultural complexity, Orientalism represents the idea that the Orient is incapable of self-representation, self-understanding, and self-consciousness because of its lack of power. In short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having the authority over the Orient (*Ibid*; 3). As stated by Said, because of Orientalism, the Orient was not (is not) a free subject of thought or action (*Ibid*). It confirms the idea that the Orient or the Oriental was and is not something that essentially 'there' to be found, rather made and *orientalised* as a necessity condition to support the supremacy of the Occident which was also man-made. Resulting from the system of knowledge that saw the distinction between the West and the Orient as a productive investment that will endure the idea of

European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures, Orientalism verifies that knowledge is fundamentally political (Said, 1978). What interests me most is how Orientalism functions as a forceful discourse that gives space for the form of colonialism as well as de-colonialism in a saturating hegemonic system like culture.

After a comprehensive analysis on how language shapes the online identity, situated within modern Indonesia in chapter 2, in the following chapter I will go deeper to analyze how key postcolonial categories manifest in the narratives produced and consumed by Facebook users, especially within the production of the self. I argue that the subject is always constructed in multilevel narratives, which bring me to additionally contend that the mechanism of Facebook provides me with pathways to trace any possible narratives made by and linked to the subject. At this point, I can speculate about the subject position within power relations in social networks, which points to the idea of being a postcolonial subject through the act of writing

In order to achieve the above goals, I will bring about the first two issues, which deal with the question of being 'a subject' and 'a subject' in relation with the nation-state as a way of investigating the reproducibility of postcolonial identity in the virtual space. My unit analysis will be: 1) a specific section on Facebook placed under the profile picture where users define who they are, 2) the section of 'political view', and 3) the section of 'religious view'. My choice is based on the fact that these two sections will be best in demonstrating the act of identification, since they provide space for the production of truth and knowledge for the Orient. Investigating these three specific sections on Facebook, I suppose that it will represent a means of understanding how language speaks for specific history and what does it mean by being 'a postcolonial subject'. It would be impracticable to evaluate all status updates on Facebook. Since there will be thousands of them each day shown off on every user's account, selection needs to be made to ensure that the intersection between new media and postcolonial theory is noticeable.

Therefore, I will pick out statements which strongly correlate with the idea of being a nation or the issue of nationhood, since postcolonial discourses are always involving identity formation of 'once-colonized countries' or 'countries with a history of colonialism' (McLeod, 2000; 5). I believe that this is infinitely an issue of language, a way of seeing and an ability to write, to name and to rethink our understanding the order of things. Even though I will not examine all statements written down on Facebook, I ensure that the selected narrations will become cases in point from which I can get significant details to build my argument. Here,

narrative will not be seen as unproblematic but quite the reverse, it is convoluted in its nature as a part of the system of sign that might have no relation with the referent.

The Supremacy of Signs, the Problem of Agency

In Chapter 4, I will use the materiality of Facebook as a social networking site to demonstrate how new media are strongly intertwined with the postcolonial discourse by arguing that participatory culture needs to be critically perceived as the emergence of new technologies and the experience of cyberspace. These are always conjunctural: an effect of intersecting practices – economic, technological, bodily, political and cultural (Balsamo, 1996; 127, Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003; 5). I will put the concept of ‘participatory culture’ under confrontation as stated by Huggan (2001; viiia) that postcolonial studies, it could be argued, has capitalized on its perceived marginality while helping to turn marginality itself into a valuable intellectual commodity. This provoking statement is helpful to make clear how postcolonial values have been reproduced by new media to take advantage of their consumer - the valuable market that supports the longevity of the global company.

For this consideration, I will do textual as well as medium analysis to elaborate how the problematical questions of subjectivity, agency, and identity can be addressed by the subversive nature of the medium which is ideologically destabilizing the content of the texts. The technical sphere of Facebook is certainly not going to be overlooked since it implies the idea of ‘re-mastering that has been seen by Nakamura as a new form of subjugation and re-colonization of otherness in a postcolonial world (Nakamura, 2002; 20). At this instant, technological mastering will produce paradox in questioning the agency of ‘the self’ when it is viewed from democratic approach within the perspective of cultural studies. In contrast with Nakamura, at this point, the subjects will not be seen as passive objects of manipulation, but I will show how they interpret and appropriate technology and the messages directed at them (Feenberg, 1999; 106). Having said this, the theory of democratic rationalization puts new emphasis on agency in the technical sphere as a link between cultural studies of technology and the problematic of modernity (*Ibid*; 108-109). The debate on positioning ‘the subject’ within the realm of technology consequently brings the question of power and resistance into light which I would like to elaborate by figuring out the mechanisms on Facebook that are possibly exploited to both depersonalize and personalize humans.

I will also examine users who frequently gain access to Facebook by following and tracing their narrative activities. Even though online material is a time-sensitive case, because

the nature of the web is a unique mixture of the ephemeral and the permanent, it is possible because the content on Facebook still can be viewed again at a later time by tracing the history of older posts. This needs to be done as it will demonstrate the engagement of users with the medium and how they establish their relation to others and to the medium when they address specific issues on their online space. Every act of performing in online space will be considered as a path of consumption as it always includes consumption of images once users deal with the configuration of content. This engagement with production and consumption of virtual space once they activate their online space creates their narrative and places it in the public domain. The cyberspace activities as captured by following the users in devoting themselves to the virtual world will be analyzed in order to view how the act of consumption signifies a form of liberation in postcolonial discourse.

Having said this, the parade of signs displayed on Facebook will be scrutinized as a way of defining 'the self' through the act of consumption. I will make an effort to focus on the realm of consumption triggered by the constructed images that work as coded identities and sequentially reconstruct what so-called 'the postcolonial subject'. In order to get the picture about how the production and consumption of signs continuously forms the agency of PostColonial subjects, there are steps that I will do to get the data before I come to analysis as I proposed above. My analysis from the previous chapter will be incorporated in the big scheme of consumer culture as I use Baudrillard's theory to reveal how the agency of subjects has been produced by way of sign systems. Once they engage with the production and consumption of signs, they are simultaneously positioned as subjects and consumers. In this section, I will draw my attention to the specificity of Facebook in organizing the visual as a mode of presenting 'the self', a consumer of images that actually is still struggling with the meaning of being 'a subject'. Some specific Facebook applications or features will be selected as a platform that aims to simultaneously communicate what the medium may convey and could stand for with regard to postcolonial discourse. Analyzing the carnival of signs portrayed in the limitless world of Facebook, I design this part to respond to the problematical claim that in the contemporary world, the boundary between representation and reality implodes as the very experience and ground of 'the real' disappears (Kellner, 1989; 62). Trying to test the legitimacy of this claim is not the purpose of this thesis. Instead, I am making use of Facebook as a corpus to raise the issue of simulated identity and show how it is embedded in the omnipresent reality of signs.

Jean Baudrillard maintains that the decisive passage from the commodity form to the sign form reveals a kind of control 'more subtle and totalitarian than exploitation' (Baudrillard, 1975; 121, Genosko, 1999; 114). I find that the authority to exercise digital mastering in new technology is the gateway to justifying the Western expansion, currently taking place in the global scene. For my research area, I will scrutinize the way the subject is coded as a sign, consequently performing as a series of aesthetic images that trigger consumption, materialized by means of re-narration. I argue that the concept of 'simulation' will be relevant in observing Facebook, as it explains the replacement of symbolic relations by coded or abstract signs which then become objects of consumption. Human interaction has been replaced by simulatory interactivity (Pawlett, 2007; 27). Users can not escape from the prerequisite of turning themselves into commodities once they translate their individuality into a sign, enabling them to perform their distinctiveness by choosing the desired images that represent their identities.

Baudrillard suggests that the structural law of value is the purest, most illegible form of social domination which no longer has any references within a dominant class or relation of forces (Ibid; 42). This statement marks the intriguing debate on subjectivism, since signs work as means through which the very notions of agent, self and identity become meaningful. Does this mean that it is not the subject who holds control, but rather 'the signs' which are not the property of any class, group or individual? The autonomy of the sign is what makes Baudrillard differ from the Marxist theory, since he understands power as a property of the system rather than an attribute of the individual (Ibid; 73). He goes beyond Foucault's analysis of power by proposing the system of consumption as a central concept that takes the place of power relations formed by actual networks, with 'the code' as a more effective means of control.

Meanwhile, as Henry Jenkins suggests, participatory culture is emerging as a culture that absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for the average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate and re-circulate media content in powerful new ways (Jenkins, 2009; 8). From this point of view, it is hard to consent with Fernandez who says that postcolonial studies and electronic media theory have a very few points of intersection (Fernandez, 1999, 59). Quite the contrary - key postcolonial issues, such as identity, representation, agency, gender, colonialism, power and space, have been inherently assigned to the new media discourse. But at the same time, Fernandez also states that electronic media have established electronic connectivity as a major practice, validating domination. At this point, I can see the correlation between Fernandez and Said, where the

connection with anyone in the world is the precondition of imperialist attitude – corresponding with the concept of ‘civilizing mission’ of earlier colonialism (*Ibid*). The fact that the digital apparatus has penetrated million of people is not something that can be overlooked, since in the age of liberal market capitalist domination is likely to use technology as a productive force to occupy the lives of modern people. I found that the authority to exercise digital mastering in new technology is the gateway of justifying the Western expansion which is currently situated in global scenery.

Chapter 2

Narrative in New Media: Revealing the Nation and Postcolonial Identities

I would like to look back to the era when new media were not present yet and therefore imagine how they emerged at that time. Did they change the way reality should be comprehended? I therefore project myself to our own present day when new media have appeared and ask this question: Is there anything really new about new media that introduces new discourse on postcolonialism which I wish to elaborate as the fundamental presupposition for my argument in this thesis? I recognize that one of the notable promises of new media is its capacity to give rise to participatory culture. In the following chapter, my concern is to answer the question that I believe will reveal the point of intersection between new media and postcolonial theory: Do new media really create a space to empower the marginalized identity through the myth of access as the ultimate-equalizer? Postcolonial theory strongly contributes the way new media should be comprehended in the period when digitalization has brought significant changes in the process of self-identification as a nation. I believe that the notion of difference as the point of identification should be able to empower the subordinate one as well as the dominant one. The complexity of new media practice in dealing with the question of identity will surely be placed under contestation since human subjectivities are shifting and fragmentary. The very concept of postcolonialism itself is always in tension, constantly in motion as a way of responding to the cultural and political change of the subject being investigated.

I start my analysis by staging the specificity of Indonesian history to show how the quest for agency as once-colonized country happens in the discursive space of Indonesian media. An understanding of how new media are fostering national identities to be continuously transformed and politically reproduced should be situated in a historical context as technological development always has different social and political consequences in a specific nation state. Coming into the discourse of postcolonialism, in the first sub-chapter, I firstly need to figure out what colonialism means for Indonesian. The search for meaning as to how media carry a great weight in identity building should consider the distinctive features of subjects especially in a country that is constituted of a wide-ranging diversity like Indonesia. Living with the memoirs of colonialism and dealing with the discourse of postcolonialism as an

independent nation is an ongoing process. That dynamically grasps the value of turning out to be a self-governing and free from the practice of colonization. I argue that it is hard to frame Indonesia as 'once-colonized country'. I bring the presupposition that the term postcolonial cannot be taken to simply denote the historical period. I will show how the fact that the nation is still experiencing and creating a chronicle of coercion and domination in modern context is not something to be neglected. This is important to give the basis for my next proposition that the postcolonial discourse should take the emergence of new media into account.

My analysis on the relation between postcolonialism and new media will be based on the assumption that there is no singular postcolonialism since it can be articulated in different ways as an enabling concept, even though this term has growth with difficulties in defining its own exactness (McLeod, 2000; 3). Situating postcolonialism as a distinctive area of enquiry that separately exists from the possibility to meet other discipline is not the purpose of this thesis. The discourse of postcolonialism is inextricably linked with new media studies, because Indonesian polity has put the principle of colonialism into media practice. When Loomba (2005; 8) defines colonialism as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods, she also admits that this process is not identical in all countries and involves a variety of techniques and patterns of domination, including the way media is governed and controlled. Understanding the way Indonesia has been governed in several different regimes will give a major consideration in exploring and investigating how the emergence of new media should be comprehended. The digitalization has amplified the understanding about how power can possibly be established and worked out by means of technological mechanism in new media to establish modern Indonesia. Having said this, in the second sub-chapter, Facebook is closely investigated to argue that the postcolonial subjects are re-fashioning and re-constituting themselves as the agent of representation, moving from a political object to a new subject of knowledge that able to actively involve in the negotiation of meaning as a struggle of identifications.

I. The Quest for Agency: Indonesian Media in Transition

I believe that the struggle over power is likely to happen in any kind of governmental system since there is no state, tradition, culture or society that can escape the need of power in making such action meaningful. As a matter of fact, there will be no nation without power

and the knowledge of power. In the case of the Indonesian history of colonialism, power is clearly integral to the ability of the Dutch to colonize what is now called Indonesia (Philpott, 2000; xix). The name of Indonesia itself was invented by non-Indonesians since there was only a specific geographical entity labeled with several different names: 'the Indian Archipelago', 'the Archipelago', 'the East-Indian Archipelago', 'Eastern India', 'the Indian Islands', 'India' and occasionally 'Dutch India'. All these terms were created by George Earl, a young Englishman who published an account of his two years spent travelling around what is known as the Indonesian archipelago. He coined the term 'Indonesia' that was acknowledged and circulates up till now.

Clearly, this is not a simple matter of naming, but of defining something that will be experienced as the Indonesian nation-state. Since the very beginning, the making of this object has been induced by the issue of power and authority. The fact that the name of Indonesia had to be invented by a non-indigenous person has raised postcolonial issues that still remain. Even though the term 'Indonesia' was not invented by an Indonesian, how and what it means to become Indonesia is and should be determined by Indonesians. But, which Indonesian and whose Indonesia are we talking about when there may not be any definitive identity of Indonesia? This sub-chapter wants to show how the reality of Indonesia has fascinatingly shaped the meeting point between postcolonialism and new media studies.

I. A. Indonesian Media and the Moment of State Intervention

The Historical Scenery of Early Indonesian Media

The growth of state authority after the period of Sukarno has strongly influenced the dominant discourse of Indonesian politics, especially because the meta-narrative under Suharto⁴ was defined by the concept and politics of development (pembangunan). Suharto's decision to return Indonesia to a basically pro-Western, pro-capitalist development, and his appointment of a number of American-trained economists to guide policy making has brought significant weight on nearly all elements of Indonesian society (Philpott, 2000; 164). Concentration on censorship and propaganda openly declared Indonesian government's campaign against freedom of expression. All attempts from media that were not in line with

⁴ Suharto was appointed as the second president of Indonesia after successfully defeating a coup which was allegedly initiated by the Communist Party. He replaced Sukarno's Guided Democracy with the *Orde Baru* or 'New Order' and reigned for 32 years.

the government' interests and policy would be contained and even banned. But the state's domination over 'old' print and broadcast media was not necessarily manifest in obvious and harsh ways. The Indonesian government under New Order had strategically shaped hegemonic sets of guidelines in a subtle way.

I will bring a specific example from the area of broadcasting when the making of a Nation became an integral part of the television project in Indonesia, starting from the era of Sukarno and perpetuated under New Order⁵. In the domain of broadcasting, Indonesia launched TVRI (Television of Indonesian Republic) in 1962. TVRI was set up and organized as a government television service under the direct control of the president. Even though government assured the creative autonomy of TVRI, there was still a policy to govern how TVRI should manage the programs. The way TVRI structured the programs was influenced by the government's perception of the nature of television itself. It would always be seen as an integral part of government apparatus to campaign the rhetoric of national development. TVRI was never fully liberated from the government's authority which led to interventions in programming.

There was an agreement that TVRI should be concerned with programming everything in line with the state ideology of *Pancasila*.⁶ None of the contents should conflict with the moral values of *Pancasila* and other national constitutions. This state ideology has to be applied in all aspects of social life. All organizations, including private business as well as cultural, social and political concerns must employ *Pancasila* as the only guiding principle. A strict policy to regulate the programs was applied to ensure that TVRI would perform its function in the process of nation building. In fact, Pancasila symbolizes Indonesian cultural identity which is characterized by cultural differences between the heterogeneous populations. The problem is not so much inherent to the five principles of Pancasila, but

⁵ 'New Order' was a term made up by Suharto to characterize his regime after he successfully came to power and replaced his predecessor, Sukarno. Suharto used this term to differ with Sukarno's era, the 'Old Order'. Sukarno was the first President of Indonesia who reigned from 1945 until 1966. He strongly opposed any form of Imperialism which he thought as a cultural movement that threatened Indonesian national identity. Soekarno's political philosophy was Marhaenism, guided by marxism, nationalism and religion. 'New Order' therefore was identified by the practices of corruption, collusion and nepotism. Authoritarianism became the main characteristic of Suharto's regime that ruled from 1966-1998.

⁶ *Pancasila* is the official philosophical foundation of the Independent Indonesian State. It was announced by Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia in the Independence Preparatory Committee on June 1st, 1945 as a result of a complex and sophisticated appreciation of the ideological needs of the new nation. *Pancasila* consists of five principles: Belief in one supreme God, Humanitarianism, Nationalism, Consultative Democracy, and Social Justice.

appears in how Pancasila as an ideological text should be interpreted. Under the New Order, the interpretation of Pancasila never became part of a public debate, as all efforts that tried to ascribe means to Pancasila were blocked. There could be only one single interpretation on Pancasila, which was state controlled.

The authority of Suharto was marked by means of centralized course of action that governed all facets of nation-building. In the name of restoring order and stability, the New Order effectively barred political activism and even political debates (Sen & Hill, 2000, p.3). The Indonesian government endorsed what McQuail calls the authoritarian theory of media for the purpose of nation-building (McQuail in Kitley, 2000; 4). It motivated the government's refusal at that time to incorporate the private sector, which was associated with disruption and anti-government attitudes. TVRI from the early beginning was considered as an extension of State's authority, the crucial site through which the vision of the nation from the government's viewpoint was ideologically distributed in the mode of cultural representation. Representations belong to the central practices which produce culture (Hall, 1997; 1). As a consequence, in early television history, the content of media and the conditions under which they were produced and disseminated were typically treated as issues of cultural and social policy, predominantly relating to nation building (Cunningham in Miller, 2002; 51, Kitley, 2000; 110).

National culture has been understood as something to be constructed and which requires the government to play a role on it. The national constitution authorizes the government to institute the national culture project (UUD 1945, article 32). It was Muhammad Yamin, an early Indonesian writer and politician active in the nationalist movement, who made an influential statement about the national culture as stated below. He was also the one who proclaimed *Bahasa Indonesia* as the language of the Indonesian nationalist movement which was acknowledged as Indonesian national language in the 1928 Second Congress of Indonesian Youth.⁷

*National culture is an outcome of the thinking of all the Indonesian people. Ancient and original culture is taken as the height of regional cultures throughout Indonesia and added together as national culture. Cultural efforts must be directed toward the advancement of civilization, culture, and unity and should not reject new things from foreign cultures that can develop or enrich national culture itself and raise the humanity of the Indonesian people. (Muhammad Yamin in *Ibid*; 4)*

⁷ http://litweb.net/biogs/yamin_muhammad.html

The idea of a unified culture took an important part in the history of Indonesia as a nation. The liberation from colonization could only be achieved through nationalist initiatives. The 'Youth Pledge'⁸ as the result of Youth Congress in 1928 becomes the sacred promise for the Indonesian people to admit the unity in motherland, nation, and language. The construction of national culture has been a part of state practice from the earliest day of independence, even before that, and has been perpetuated by New Order which significantly influenced the development of Indonesian television.

If the history of Indonesia has really been made through the oppression over cultural practice (which involved the strategic role of media in perpetuating it), there was a critical phase when Indonesia could finally break away from the totalitarianism of the New Order. The reformation movement in 1998 that successfully caused the breakdown of the Suharto era was the starting point when Indonesian media experienced the euphoria of freedom with the end of the government's authoritarian constraints. After Suharto stepped down, there was a great tension between professional media people and the government concerning the form of control that should be exercised to regulate media practices. The swift change in the political constellation triggered further debate in re-positioning media amongst the social, cultural and political systems. Nonetheless, Indonesian media will constantly struggle to conceptualize the function of media in democratic societies as culture and politics are overtly intertwined in the ongoing construction of national identity. If in the first place the search for national culture could only be achieved by liberating Indonesia from Dutch colonialism, the fight for nation-building after that has been aimed at the liberation of self-definition from all hegemonic practices.

Undemocratic Indonesia: The Ongoing Colonialism?

How can I say that Indonesia has lived in the era of postcolonialism if this nation has been continuously experiencing the colonial practice? This is a problem of definition. It is difficult to frame colonialism, even though there will always be tendencies to simplify it by unpretentiously separating two discrete poles: the colonizers and the colonized. This simplistic classification is disregarding a critical problem that might be overlooked if the process of

⁸ The Youth Pledge was a declaration made on October 28th, 1928 by young Indonesian nationalist as the second Indonesian Youth Conference which aimed to initiate the idea of united Indonesia. They proclaimed three ideals: one motherland, one nation and one language, Indonesia. It is known as '*Sumpah Pemuda*' (Youth Pledge). This pledge promoted the Indonesian's struggle for independence and marked the role of youth in the development of nation building.

generalization overlooks particularities. Who should be regarded as the colonizer if colonialisation can possibly be materialized in modern society? This question has marked the complexity of postcolonial identity in Indonesia when key-related categories of colonialism are continuously embedded in the governmental system and contemporary Indonesian politics discourse.

Clarke makes a strong point when he poses an important question in the discourse of Indonesian politics: 'who has the authority to represent reality' and 'whose representations prevail'? (Clarke in Philpott, 2000; 5). His statement strengthens Foucault's arguments that power produces, it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth (*Ibid*; 5). Foucault's theory will be of assistance in laying a foundation to analyze the conditions in which the desire of being free from any subjugation has been strongly posed not only in the period of colonialism but also afterwards. Therefore the study of Indonesian politics after the WWII in the media realm provides valuable and significant insights to determining what postcolonial means to the question of subjectivity and political identity in Indonesian society nowadays.

Before having a chance to fully recover from the traumatic experience of Dutch colonialism, the description above shows that Indonesia had to deal with another form of oppression that powerfully constructed the whole idea of nation, as the purpose of government was not merely to establish the social control over Indonesian societies but also to discipline them as a way to secure the State's legitimacy. Citizens were mostly seen as the object of the government's political project that should be kept under control and manipulated through various techniques. Power is more than just a tool to have a hold over people, but moreover, it produces citizens by diminishing any possible access to self-articulation which had been viewed as a threat to the State's authority. Under authoritarian system, instead of having a freedom to express what it means to be a nation, allowing oneself to be governed seemed to be the only option left, as there would be great consequences when resisting government's authoritative hand. Oestreich gives a clear idea that suits best with the condition that has been experienced by Indonesian after the era of colonialism.

Being governed means being under police supervision, being inspected, spied upon, directed, buried under laws, regulated, hemmed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, censored, commanded...noted, registered, captured, appraised, stamped, surveyed, evaluated, taxed, patented, licensed, authorized, recommended, admonished, prevented, reformed, aligned, and punished in every action, every transaction, every movement (Oestreich in Philpott, 2000; 164).

The most accessible sign of colonial discourse that had been exploited to assure the success of the government's political beliefs was the absolute state control of Indonesian media. Technological development in Indonesia can never be understood without elaborating on the state's supremacy over the conduct of Indonesian media. Thus, the coming of Internet in the 1990s in Indonesia is significant and highly relevant to the study of postcolonialism in the Indonesian context only if it is grasped in relation to the preceding history of Indonesian 'old' media. Formerly they maintained the circumstances which reinstated the practice of colonialism.

The reason why colonial discourse still dominates modern society is due to its ability to re-generate the feeling of inferiority in native culture and perpetuate the patterns of behavior even after the era of colonialism is over. Nevertheless, I agree with Loomba (1998; 207) that as a nation, Indonesia itself is a ground of dispute and debate, a site for the competition of different ideological and political interests. Indonesia is facing a problem of defining how this nation should be nationally constituted and determining who is and is not Indonesian, which historically took in authoritarian practices exercised by the ruling regimes. Intimidation, violence and repression were customary in the era of Suharto, an authoritarian order that used censorship as an instrument of controlling the production of knowledge in media sphere. The fact that a political force has strongly influenced technological and social transformations is an instance of the inescapable relation between media and postcolonial discourse.

In the next part, the specificity of Indonesian polity that had been described before will be used to comprehend how the arrival of new media gives meaning to the term 'postcolonialism'. Frantz Fanon (in Brydon (ed), 2002; 463) says that within the framework of colonial domination there is not and there will never be such phenomena as new cultural departures or changes in the national culture. Once exploited under the Dutch colonialism and followed by the New Order regimes, yearning for revolt is the logic passion that needs space for expression and articulation of identity. I strongly argue that turning oneself from conquered people into liberated beings in the period of post-colonialism seems to be necessary to bring back the cultural life to a once-colonized country. Nevertheless, whilst defining what postcolonialism stands for and how this term has been understood differently in the colonial and the after-colonial phase (strictly speaking, before and after independence)

this thesis investigates how participatory culture, created and enabled by new media, functions as a mode of struggle against any operation of colonialism.

I. B. The Carnival of New Media: Featuring Facebook in Postcolonial Discourse

Understanding the 'Post' of Colonialism: Welcoming New Media

The authority of Suharto was marked by a centralized course of action that governed all facets of nation-building. In the name of restoring order and stability, the New Order effectively barred political activism and even political debates (Sen & Hill, 2000; 3). The centralization of the development policy also demonstrated the government's strategy to preserve the dominance of national culture over local culture. This is also revealed in the national motto '*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*' or 'Unity in Diversity' which expresses the ideal principle to propagate the supremacy of national culture. The interest in ethnic diversity then comes second (d'Haenens, Gazali & Vereist, 1999; 129). Moreover, government under New Order continuously exerted power to determine what should be regarded as national threat. In 1975, the government initiated the **SARA** doctrine stating four issues that are taboo in media: ethnicity (*Suku*), religion (*Agama*), race (*Ras*), social class (*Antar golongan*) (Schulte-Noordholt, in d'Haenens, Gazali & Vereist, 1999; 130). This clearly shows the political endeavor to restrict any form of differences in Indonesian society. Cultural diversity has been intentionally comprehended in a negative way for the pursuit of national unity.

For this reason, the SARA doctrine appeared reasonable to explain why the government insisted to control media content, prohibiting all media to mention these four issues. Any topic connected to SARA was forbidden and not allowed to be interpreted differently. The interpretation of these issues was completely up to the government and it resulted in what was called 'telephone culture': one call from security services or the Information Ministry was enough to dictate what could or could not be brought into the open (Schulte-Noordholt, in d'Haenens, Gazali & Vereist, 1999; 130). Moreover, the government also proclaimed that all cultural practices including the use of texts which were regarded as promoting Communism/Marxism/Leninism were illegal. The government had full power over media and dictated what 'story' should or should not be made public.

This ended with the coming of the Internet that began to make its presence felt in Indonesia in the 1990s. It contested the distinction between producers and consumers, which

formerly was exercised by the government to manipulate the public discourse. State-controlled media as a product of centralized media's non-democratic system has been considered as part of the state apparatus, (re)materializing colonialism in the modern context of Indonesia. If Internet is socially imagined as a powerful tool of opposition to authoritarianism (Hill & Sen, 2005; 11), I will show how Facebook makes room for a voice of disapproval of the dominant systems and create an independent surveillance over state, government and public discourse are changing the history-making. 'Netizens' was a term used to signify the birth of new citizens that rely on the machine to enforce their contribution to history making, performing a so-called cultural resistance: refusing to accept things as demanded by the ruling regimes. But, is it that easy to be free from the materiality of domination?

Facebook: Revealing the 'Face' of the 'Other' on a New History 'Book'

Facebook certainly is a parade of virtual identities in a digital environment. They conceive 'otherness' as everyone involved in this virtual community is now performing his/her identity and its relation to the others. Even though technology's greatest promise supposedly was to eradicate otherness, as indicated by Nakamura, I draw on her argument that chosen identities are not breaking the mold of unitary identity. Rather, they are shifting identity into the realm of the 'virtual' and they definitely create and reproduce same gender and racial stereotypes (Nakamura, 2002; 4). But how does this happen if race and ethnicity, for example, are not significantly appearing in Facebook? Does it mean that technology liberates minorities from a stigma of racial stereotypes since no one will be able to recognize a subject's historical root which consequently helps to put an end to identity superiority in Indonesia?

But, who are 'the other' in virtual space? How the subjects should comprehend their identities and recognize their 'others' if their subjectivities are now in between the virtual and the actual? What principles need to be used to differentiate these two realities? Are they truly poles apart? Is it the materiality of the medium that carves up our actual existence with our virtual identity and make them mutually exclusive? Who performs in the virtual space? Do they also hold their own authenticity as a distinct identity apart from their actual identity? The digitalization of identity does not automatically make the digital less real than the actual. The question of identity explores the area of debate in relation to what the media do to people and what people do with the media in the representational domain in which meaning is

constantly being (re)produced and (re)circulated both by the producer and the reader in everyday interaction. Hall's theory of identity provides noteworthy thoughts on the subject of power as the intrinsic quality of media. The account of 'true' reality has been challenged in a way that defining 'real' identity, for my viewpoint, is a matter of construction. Self-determining identities is an authentic construction by which individuals decide on how they want to be seen and situated historically. Making meaning is what people do in virtual worlds. Starting from self-definition, the subjects are actually constructing their understanding of the self based on cultural attributes. As Calhoun writes (Castells, 2000; 6):

We know of no people without names, no language or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made [...] Self-knowledge – always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery – is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways of others

Identities indeed, are the source of meaning and identification, through which people position their self-understanding with regard to others. Also, the building of online identities is a project of political subjectivity when the power of naming creates a new route of cultural resistance. Within the discourse of postcolonialism, I regard Facebook as a space articulating what is called a resistance identity, generated by actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society (Castells, 2000; 8). According to Castells, identity for resistance leads to the formation of communities, constructing forms of collective resistance, building a defensive identities in the terms of dominant institutions/ideologies (*Ibid*; 9). Having said this, my analysis will be focused on the way Facebook provides a mechanism to formulate a 'new' community that forms a collective struggle of those who were considered as the 'other' – the ones formerly excluded or marginalized from the oppressive discourse. Thus, my scrutiny must be situated historically in a specific context within the rise of the network society by means of new media. I believe that it is not exaggerated to argue that Facebook has become a substantial archive in the history of modern Indonesia, opening up unconstrained participation of people who are used to live under authoritarian regimes.

I argue that writing a narrative and making it part of history was an invaluable privilege for the Indonesian citizens by taking into account the repression of authoritarian regimes in the media sphere. There is one specific national issue that demonstrates how Indonesian society has a chance to resist the authoritarian practices that continue and

persistently hold control in dictating public affairs in representational domain. **“The movement of 1.000.000 Facebookers to support Chandra M. Hamzah and Bibit Samad Rianto”** will be my case in making clear how the postcolonial discourse is required to perform as dialectical concept that constructs the reality of a nation in the digital realm as a way to address the problem whether Indonesia has been totally liberated from repressive regimes or not. This case is a virtual campaign generated by Facebook users that challenges the commitment of the Indonesian government to exterminate corruption, which is seen as one of the biggest problems of modern Indonesia since the era of Suharto.

The General Backdrop of the Case: ‘Lizard vs. Crocodile’

A vision of realizing a nation free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism might probably stay as fantasy in the Suharto era since he became the central actor who originated and sustained all of these three practices. Particularly corruption as a form of economic exploitation causes major political consequences in Indonesian polity, since it occurs in nearly all institutions. The failure of the government to exterminate corruption is publicly considered as the symbol of the State’s powerlessness in standing for the interests of the Indonesian people who long for prosperity, truth and social justice. For this reason, under the period of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the former President of Indonesia, The Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi /KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) was formed in 2003 with the purpose to overcome and eradicate the problem of corruption in Indonesia. But in 2009, KPK was criminalized by the Polisi Republik Indonesia/POLRI (Indonesian National Police) when its two deputy leaders, Bibit Samad Rianto and Chandra M. Hamzah were put under arrest on charges of bribery, extortion and abuse of power. This is the case that successfully attested the significance of Facebook as digital networking site in laying a base for resisting the oppressive discourse.

There is a contextual factor explaining why this specific case raised awareness about the importance of digital media in endorsing widespread resistance to dominant institution’s ideologies. This case did not merely test the integrity of the Indonesian government in fulfilling the need of the Indonesian citizens for the implementation of good governance, but also placed some influential politicians and officers of state into the spotlight. After having been taken into custody, Bibit and Chandra claimed that they had a proof of conspiracy that made them arrested. A wiretapped conversation gave evidence that there was a conspiracy involving business-man, high-ranking police officers and state prosecutors attempting to

entrap them.⁹ The criminalization of the KPK was actually the repercussion of a former corruption case, a high-profile bank scandal that involved the National Police chief of detectives Comr. Gen. Susno Duadji who is currently still standing trial. This case is full of twists and turns since it resulted in several legal actions that are linked to each other. I will elaborate this throughout my analysis to give a comprehensive outlook on how the case of KPK vs. POLRI takes up the problematical notion of identity as a form of resistance in the digital realm.

Facebook as my primary corpus has significantly contributed to blowing up the case. Since the case had been nationally exposed on television and through print media, there were enormous movements to support Bibit Samad Rianto and Chandra M. Hamzah. **“The movement of 1.000.000 Facebookers to support Chandra M. Hamzah and Bibit Samad Rianto”** is the title of an account that purposely created on Facebook as a form of public reinforcement in the digital sphere that is aimed to foster the reign of law in Indonesia and to realize the “Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which is free from Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism”, as stated on the site. This movement has left its mark in the history of Indonesia since it demonstrates one of the notable promises of new media, namely a participatory culture in politics. It draws the public’s attention to the significance of Facebook as a social networking site in creating a new space for the process of identification.

Even though this movement does not have legal consequences in the decision making process, the fact that Facebook has strongly fostered the public opinion can not be easily overlooked since it helped raise more awareness about the case. Usman Yasin, the initiator of the Facebook group, said he supported the deputies, who the National Police deputy chief detective Insp. Gen. Dikdik Mulyana accused of jeopardizing the investigation by expressing their personal opinions to the public. “I have been dealing with prosecutors and courts for a long time and I think the KPK was born because the police and prosecutors failed to provide justice in Indonesia,” as he told *The Jakarta Post* after forming this group on Facebook.¹⁰ In my view, his statement reflected his doubt on State’s seriousness in solving the corruption problem, the reason why he pointed his optimism to new media that is believed to provide citizens with the space to articulate their voices and exercise what is called the freedom of expression. Facebook is an open space through which the users can liberally make meaning on national issues that happen at specific time. Supporters have left messages of support on the

⁹ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/11/25/constitutional-court-rules-kpk-deputies-keep-their-jobs-unless-found-guilty.html>. Retrieved: 10-09-09

¹⁰ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/10/31/public-support-kpk-deputy-chairmen.html>

page that is specifically dedicated to Bibit and Chandra pressing the government to take appropriate action.

Interestingly, the case of 'KPK vs. POLRI' has also been widely called as the case of 'lizard vs. crocodile' owing to one intriguing comment made by Susno Duadji, a person whose voice is suspected to appear in the wiretapped recording. Interviewed by TEMPO (July, 2009)¹¹, a popular Indonesian weekly magazine, Susno Duadji made a confrontational commentary when he talked about the tapping of his mobile phone by others related with his suspected involvement in the Century Bank scandal which triggered enormous responses from nearly all layers of Indonesian society afterwards. He specifically used the term 'lizard' and 'crocodile' to address the conflicting parties. Cited as part of the whole interview, his statement below marked the momentous point when he firstly used the metaphor of 'lizard vs. crocodile' to describe the battle between KPK and POLRI.

"[...] This is the association that will illustrate the situation... We are the crocodile and they are lizard [...] How can a lizard win against crocodile? Should the crocodile be mad at lizard? No, we just feel sorry for them. The lizard stays on foolish. We are the one who force them to be smart but they never succeed. We give them power but they choose to look for something worthless."¹²

Without possibly knowing the effect of his statement, Susno Duadji initiated provocative terms that broaden the reaction and debates among Indonesians related to the use of the words 'lizard' and 'crocodile'. These two terms had a significant impact in Indonesian politics since they are representing two different institutions that claim themselves as the representatives of the public. Freely used by the public, this metaphor is now giving substance to the problematical notion of identity, providing a means of identity articulation that helps Indonesian people to identify how they may position themselves between these contradictory factions. Nowadays, the opposition of "lizard vs. crocodile" is widely used by the public in media. It marks the specific period in the history of Indonesia, a stage when this nation is using the narrative as a form of struggle against the dominant system that produces coercion, both physically and symbolically. The appearance of self-consciousness through narration in the virtual domain is now becoming a source for the revival of a nation.

Hence, my analysis will be focused on the narratives created by the users who joined the movement of one million Facebookers to support Chandra M. Hamzah and Bibit Samad

¹¹ www.detiknews.com. Retrieved: 09-09-09

¹² Translated from the original version in Indonesian language

Rianto. Only users who had joined this movement on Facebook could write their opinion on this group's account. More exactly, I will emphasize how Facebook has promoted a mechanism for its users to create their own narrative in giving a value on the moral issue which had been captured by means of the metaphor 'lizard' and 'crocodile'. Considering the great number of users who joined the movement of one million Facebookers, I will limit my analysis only to the narratives that contain one or both of these phrases, 'lizard' and 'crocodile'. These two concepts and the opposition they have formed are valuable in representing what they stand for in the history of Indonesia, producing a discourse that shapes the identity of this nation.

II. Refashioning Narrative: Postcolonial Subjects in the Metaphor

II. A The Battle of Metaphorical Identity

There is a very popular children song in Indonesia which contains the word 'lizard'. There is nothing in the lyrics that can be related to the case of KPK vs. POLRI but it is inescapable for not drawing on this song to capture the phenomenon of lizard vs. crocodile, as demonstrated by Bang Andreaz when he rephrases the lyrics. These are the original lyrics of the song: *"Lizard...lizard on the wall. Crawling in silence...then the mosquito comes and hup... the lizard eats it."* All the words in this song stayed just the same except for the word mosquito that was replaced with the word 'crocodile'. I will cite the complete commentary made by Bang Andreaz: *"Lizard...lizard on the wall. Crawling in silence...then the crocodile comes and hup...the lizard eats it. The righteousness will win."* Only by visualizing the nature of these two animals, people can easily recognize the inequality between them. The lizard is nothing compared to the crocodile in terms of size, weight and power they might have. This is an unfair battle from the very beginning which makes me sure that it was intentionally fashioned by Susno Duadji to mark the supremacy of POLRI. I assume that it is a part of political tactic which is quite common as a way to claim POLRI's dominance over KPK which has been portrayed as lizard. But, it does not stop at this point as the political context behind the contention played a massive role in influencing how the public saw this case and gave free interpretations of the phrases 'lizard' and 'crocodile'. When Bang Andreaz rearticulated the lyrics of the song about the lizard and replaced the word 'mosquito' with 'crocodile', this became a form of resistance, as an attempt to fight the superiority of POLRI that has identified itself as the crocodile.

The contradiction between lizard and crocodile has been used without restraint in the narrative created by the users for they are free to exercise various styles of language as a way to engage with the case of 'KPK vs. POLRI'. It is quite apparent that one way of understanding the metaphor is showing how these phrases work through the notion of differences, which means that both objects may need to be conceptualized in chorus. Here is one of the commentaries made by supporters of Bibit and Chandra on Facebook that tries to reconceptualise the meaning of 'crocodile' by bringing back the context that comes with it when it was first uttered by Susno Duadji. *"Move ahead KPK, fighting corruption which also happens in an institution that consider itself as crocodile. That organization is a source of corruption and blackmail too."* (Galah Cascusjozz). Without mentioning what he meant by 'institution', Galah has actually made his point clear enough, as everybody know that Susno Duadji is the person who initially identified himself and his organization, POLRI, as 'crocodile'. In this statement, POLRI was positioned an as institution that needed to be seriously investigated for corruption, which formerly brought up against KPK when POLRI arrested Bibit and Chandra. Galah was not talking about neither the fact or the truth when he blamed POLRI for corruption, he was rather making an assumption and proposing his perception concerning the case of KPK vs. POLRI and how the phrase 'crocodile' is significantly functioning when he made an assessment. For this reason, when someone called himself "lizard" in the context of this case, he has positioned himself on the opposed side of the crocodile.

Exercising differences as a way to define oneself is confirming the value of one's identity. Hanz Togobu's commentary on Facebook is significant in delivering the central moral appraisal regarding this issue: *"I am a lizard! Fight corruption and go through its root to exterminate it. Don't let our country be labeled as corruptor. Set Chandra and Bibit free! Justice must prevail."* This statement is proposing a word of warning that Indonesia is now in jeopardy and struck by corruption. Hanz has convincingly declared that the trouble of having corruption as a source of moral crisis can be solved by establishing a strong institution that puts justice in the front line. He actually evokes that there is a tendency of bringing justice to an end in Indonesia when he appeals for Bibit and Chandra to be released from any charge or crimination based on the fact that they were still under trial when Hanz made the comment. I get the sense that he saw that sentenced Bibit and Chandra to prison is the evidence of State failure in the enforcement of justice.

Angudiargo Ayu Sari Pramono is one of the members of the movement who regarded the case of 'KPK vs. POLRI' as the problem of morality, which is articulated in her statement:

“When will Indonesia move forward and be totally free if morality is only a discourse? Ah, indignity is evidently high-priced. Go lizard!” She looks sceptical on the way this case is handled and assumes that the actors who are in charge of corruption do not have any morals or ethics since they never realize how corrupt they are. As the actors behind the act of corruption are also Indonesian citizens, the enthusiasm of the public in taking up the metaphor “lizard vs. crocodile” makes sense as all persons now need to classify themselves in the category they want to identify with. Interestingly, no one wants to be categorized as crocodile including POLRI, the institution that has been represented by Susno Duadji, the person who initially introduced this metaphor.

I choose to put up with the possibility to let the metaphor functions - at first as the external object and then as an image that inherently projects the way people look at things. The actual identity of users may not be transpired on Facebook but their narration will materialize the so-called ‘self-knowledge’ as a nation. Claudio Ananda Putra, one of the supporters on Facebook took a chance to create an alternative definition as a way of approaching the objects in his comment. *“KPK = ‘Kebenaran Pasti Kuat’ (The Truth is Powerful). BuAYA (crocodile) = ‘Busuk and Yakin Ancur’ (Mouldy and Must be Wrecked). Go ahead KPK! For all protesters who barricade the movement to support Bibit and Chandra, I just want to say that you all act as if you are cool. How much have you been paid for doing the demonstration and by whom?”* Claudio delivered a message that dealt with the question of morality and demonstrated what is called taking the responsibility for morality problem on your own. Claudio gives me a perspective that identity is always about making an option between at least two different categories. Even though I contend that identity is never fixed and dynamically changing, in the case of KPK vs. POLRI, none can be in two different positions at the same time. It means that Indonesia must firmly choose between two conflicting positions, reflecting how this nation will identify itself with, the lizard or the crocodile. The users have privilege of making judgmental statement without worrying of being suppressed. This is something that is not going to happen in other kinds of media like broadcast or print media which still have a mechanism of censorship in determining what should and should not be published.

II.B Re-Historicizing the Moment in Metaphor

“The movement of 1.000.000 Facebookers to support Chandra M. Hamzah and Bibit Samad Rianto” is significant in the history of Indonesia, since it demonstrates how the

participatory culture authorizes the subjects to question, doubt and freely put forward the plurality of interpretations instead of receiving them narrated by others. It is interestingly analogous with the idea that the act of interpreting metaphor will always be more intense than engagement with whatever we take to be non-metaphoric (Booth in Sacks, 1979; 173). According to Booth, it is mostly caused by the figurative power of the language which includes the possibility of using the language seductively and misleadingly in the discourse of persuasion wherein a complex play of substitutions and repetitions take place between texts (*Ibid*; 13). The metaphor of 'lizard' vs. 'crocodile' has the power to tear apart any absolute and inherent meaning of the objects and turn them into fragments where concepts or ideas about identity are playing in every piece of articulation. It is within the objects, the lizard and crocodile, that the culture crosses the nature. Facebook gives space for different articulation of these two phrases to be present in politics domain and make human experiences meaningful through the process of interpretation. As stated by Black, metaphor evokes a certain response: a suitable perceiver will be led by a metaphor to construct a system (Black in Sacks, *Ibid*; 43). It helps the society to comprehend how the figurative meaning of language can be very helpful in inciting certain view, relieving what is there in the language that makes us see what we see.

When Sherry Tuckle (1997; 23) says that the digital world acts as a cathartic role-play space that allows real-world situations to be recast and rehearsed, I can see that the metaphor actually offers a mechanism for the subjects to disrupt the governing discourse in society especially if it is exercised in new media. It can function as an ideological terrain through which the meaning of the words is still and constantly contested. It is correlated with Punter's theory that 'metaphorisation' is not so much an occasional intrusion into 'normal' patterns of speech; rather, it constitutes a continuing process of 'translation' (Punter, 2007; 13). Metaphorizing one's identity with the term 'lizard' and 'crocodile' is more than just providing a resemblance of reality, but moreover, producing an identity in the shape of a metaphor. Facebook evokes the narrative culture in the digital realm through its capacity to empower the subjectivity of the self and make an engaging interaction between the human and the machine without ruling the narrative out. Exploring metaphors in the narrative, then, means figuring how language works to establish the postcolonial subjects not as essential beings, but historically constructed. I will agree with Fanon that the power of description, of naming, should not to be underestimated since it speaks about the way of seeing (Fanon in McLeod, 2000; 20). Meanwhile, participatory culture is emerging as society absorbs and

responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate and re-circulate media content in powerful new ways (Jenkins, 2000; 8). Intently looking at narrative created by users in the account of “The movement of 1.000.000 *Facebookers* to support Chandra M. Hamzah and Bibit Samad Rianto” on Facebook is essential to expose how the opposition of ‘lizard vs. crocodile’ culturally reveals the identity of postcolonial subject in Indonesian society since I am astonished to find out how the metaphor used in addressing involved parties has worked with the same principle of identity construction.

Defining identities always takes place through discursive formations because a subject is produced within discourse, and where there is discourse representations are juxtaposed; and things are grouped together and articulated (Foucault 1970). And if identity is about the questions of using the resources of history, language and culture, then the politics of exclusion never happen without any bias and prejudice. Hall pointed that out when he referred to Volosinov, that language as the medium of thought is ‘multi-accentual’, that the field of the ideological is always a field of ‘intersecting accents’ and the ‘intersecting of differently oriented social interests’ (Morley & Chen, 1996; 40-41). Consequently, identity should be regarded as a site of contestation and will be best understood by placing this issue in social and cultural changes.

The figurative meaning of ‘the lizard’ and ‘the crocodile’ calls the stimulating notion of national identity to mind because metaphor says one thing and means another (*Ibid*; 42). The fascination of using this metaphor lies in its openness for the people to apply the attributes of ‘lizard’ and ‘crocodile’ to someone or something that they regard as right and proper to be equated with these characters. It is not the metaphor that contains the cultural figures of any substances and the meaning of it, rather it is the metaphor that personally makes me notice what Davidson has said - the aspects of things that we did not notice before as they bring surprising analogies and similarities to our attention (*Ibid*; 43). It is comprehensible to have the postcolonial subjects alive in a metaphorical statement.

What makes the case of KPK vs. POLRI appealing in the postcolonial framework is the fact that the metaphor of lizard vs. crocodile was firstly affirmed by someone who clearly has a legal position and legitimate power in a State institution, but then suspected as one of the intellectual actors behind the political conspiracy that made Bibit and Chandra arrested. If the problem of identity is fundamentally a problem of representation, the process of identification had actually started from a verbal statement that brings power relations to light

by means of signification process, exercising language to make experience, action or event meaningful. The opponent of 'lizard' vs. 'crocodile' made by Susno Duadji has made use of the principle of identity even though it was not yet clear in the beginning what kind of qualities that the words 'lizard' and 'crocodile' alluded to.

There was no Indonesian fable that can be related to the metaphor 'lizard vs. crocodile' which may possibly help to give social or cultural context to this metaphor. Susno Duadji created this metaphor on spot by exploiting two different animals to strictly assert the differences between these two categories. When he addressed himself and his institution, POLRI, as 'crocodile', it did not automatically bring the debate about the meaning of this metaphor to an end. In fact, the public now have the power to freely use these metaphor as a symbolic identification through which the process of self-construction will take place. However, corruption is the issue that originally gives context to the metaphor 'lizard vs. crocodile' in the history of modern Indonesia these days. Furthermore, since the metaphor was used to light up the conflict of 'KPK vs. POLRI', the narratives produced by Facebook users are a valuable corpus to scrutinize how postcolonialism can be historically shaped in the relationship between subjects and discursive practices.

Even though the actual natures of the lizard and the crocodile have been assumed as the origin of naming the involved parties in the case KPK vs. POLRI, Indonesian citizens actually still try to grasp what the terms 'lizard' and 'crocodile' mean when they make a commentary with and about these two terms. Even though these terms are very popular and widely used in media discourse nowadays, it is simplifying to say that everyone must know what is meant by 'lizard' and 'crocodile'. Assigning certain figures with existing real animals that possess unique features will absolutely draw out some associations in reference to the objects. It needs to be stressed that what really exists is nothing but the words and people's perception of them, which in turn can only be known by scrutinizing how these phrases are employed in the narrative. In line with Foucault and Hall, I am concerned with the interpretation of the metaphor of "lizard vs. crocodile" in relation to Indonesian past and future since what knowledge means has varied from one historical period to another.

It is interesting to capture the relationship between the categories of the human and the animal where the metaphor has taken place in the figure of 'lizard' and 'crocodile'. According to Punter similarity and difference construct our understanding of what it is to be human, and also what it is that we conceal, repress, but continue to feel attracted to in the 'not human', in the creature of drives which, we might think after Freud, continues to inhabit

us all (Punter, 2007; 23). How can we be so sure that this metaphor implies the notion of national identity in a straight line if the words 'lizard' and 'crocodile' may possibly refer to any possible meaning? I share this doubt in a sense that the constructivist position of metaphor will lay the meaning open which depends on the context of use. Black is questioning what should be considered as the core and the extended meaning of the metaphor as a way to distinguish the metaphorical from the literal. He addresses the role of metaphor in suggesting an alternative way of seeing when the old words are applied to new objects or situation (Black in Ortony, 1979; 6-7). The natural traits of 'lizard' and 'crocodile' might have been comprehended literally first before functioning as metaphors when they are used as a simile corresponding to the symbolized objects.

At this point, I see the problematical nature of the metaphor when it is applied to manipulate the image of a nation. First, both the creator and the perceiver must be able to recognize the literal meaning of 'lizard' and 'crocodile' before starting to use these phrases as a figure of speech. Supposedly there should be essential characteristics possessed by these two different kinds of animal that are suitable for comparison expression. After transforming them into a metaphor, there is a question of how these two phrases can be inscribed in a complex sentence that show how somebody or something has a particular quality, use or category. But in fact, Davidson argues that a metaphor does not say anything beyond its literal meaning, that metaphor means what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more (Davidson in Sacks, 1979; 30). Having said this, it seems hard to find a direct correlation between the metaphor of 'lizard vs. crocodile' and postcolonial identity since there is no immediate connection between these two ideas. But, I concur with Davidson who ensures that it is not the idea that explains the metaphor, but the metaphor that explains them (*Ibid*; 31). For this reason, I believe that the metaphor 'lizard' vs. 'crocodile' does not fascinate the public only because of its attractiveness in comparing someone or something with a fixed and literal character of animal, but also due to its indefinite implications that can be attached to any meaning further than what the author tried to accomplish by using those words.

Chapter Conclusion

While broadcast and print media are still applying the mechanism of censorship, digital media offer great possibilities for anyone who has access to technology to occupy the

digital space and participate in the public discourse without nearly any restriction. When Gramsci says that ideology in general works to maintain social cohesion and expresses dominant interests and there are also particular ideologies that express the protest of those who are exploited (Gramsci in Loomba, 2005; 28), I argue that it does not automatically remove the complexity of drawing the strict line between the dominant and oppressed subjects. In fact, the history of Indonesia has shown how there is a swift change of power distribution in the media realm since the one that was formerly considered as the trivial group was capable to develop a counterwork against the prejudice created by the ruling party, the influential group/institution that can be considered as the elites by means of new media.

In the history of modern Indonesia, it is now obvious that the battle of lizard vs. crocodile, the specific case that I bring to light, is necessary for self-realization. The metaphor was formerly full of prejudices, claims and arrogance, not because the initiator employed the power of naming rather produced subjects and identities that reflected the inequity. Now, the metaphor no longer belongs to someone, or the institution, that initially created it. The meaning of it does not depend on them anymore. It becomes an open terrain in which the struggle over meaning is taking place, bearing both the dominant and the trivial groups in society to make use of it and put it in a new context. It is within his statement that the issue of postcolonial identity started to open a route for self-realization through the narrative, and the public inaugurated the struggle for meaning of what being a nation means.

I suggest that there will be no end for some kind of battle including the battle of the dominant vs. the dominated since it unfortunately still becomes the necessary condition of identity construction in Indonesian polity. But, the identification of what is called by domination is constantly progressing. So, is it too much to say that colonialism is bound and predestined to happen in modern society? More importantly, what should be addressed is how the ideological production of knowledge that constructs and keeps up the discourse of postcolonialism is making the most of the virtual community. After showing the interrelation between new media and postcolonial studies, I will situate Indonesians in the discourse of Orientalism as it tackles the issue of the otherness, positioning the once-colonized country in unbalanced power relation created by the binary position of the West and the 'Orient'. In the next chapter, I will show how Facebook is welcoming all individuals to actively contribute to the project of constructing self-knowledge about postcolonial identity.

Chapter 3

Narrating Anti-Colonialism: The Self-Knowledge of the Orient

In the previous chapter, my investigation on the history of Indonesian media has brought me to key debates on diversity, ideology, and domination as terminologies used by the Indonesian government to perpetuate and give a new sense on colonial domination. The problem of identity was consequently and historically connected to the practice of authoritarian regime to silence the postcolonial subjects in mass media. I have brought the description and my understanding of Indonesian polity after the independence in order to underscore how the rise of new media initiated the participatory culture. Postcolonial subjects clearly should not be defined only as identities inhabiting the period which followed colonialism. The arrival of new media gave a new voice to those who were marginalized and called as the 'Other'. It is very interesting to see how the concept of Otherness can not be simply adapted in the relation between the colonizer and the colonized as this concept has been employed to point at the subjugated natives who were excluded from the dominant national discourse without necessarily having a point of contact with former colonizer.

In this chapter, I will show how the attributes of the postcolonial subjects that were historically rooted and represented in the dominative mode of Western knowledge are reworked in new media. This is a considerable problem for Indonesia, since its identity was produced by Western representation. Defined by anything but the West, Indonesia was politically positioned to take on the opposition as the Orient. Without having the power to renounce being defined as the Orient or even question what the Orient means, Indonesia was destined to comply with the fate of being the Otherness of the West. This is why Said's theory on Orientalism suits best to elucidate how postcolonial identities strive to liberate themselves from stereotypes, biases and prejudices of being the Orient. The scope of my analysis in this chapter will be limited to answer the question whether the Orient can liberate itself/themselves from the logic of subjugation and domination or reinforce the assumptions made by the West through the act of narration.

While I focus my thesis on the representational domain, I am fully aware that the relevance of postcolonial studies remains central. Its heterogeneous inter-disciplinary nature opens up diverse meanings and implications of the term 'postcolonialism'. Living with the history of a former colonized country, Indonesia can not easily escape the definitions of those

who claimed their power over it. The question of superiority and inferiority in the production of knowledge is mostly evident in the process of naming as it implies the power relation between the dominant and the dominated. I will develop my analysis based on the theory of Said that to have such knowledge means to dominate it, to have authority over it (Said, 1978; 32). As the Orient was destined to be repressed and reduced to silence, new media promised to provide a way for the Orient to have their own voices articulated and expressed without restraint. But it would be premature to suggest that new media stand only for the sake of the Orient, since no arena is completely free from ideological contestation. In this chapter, I will take Facebook into account in relation to its popularity among Indonesian people. Far from claiming that the new media only promote the interest of the subjugated groups, by capturing the narratives performed by the Indonesians on Facebook, I aim to understand how this social networking site performs and shapes national discourse, especially in relation to the construction of the image of the postcolonial subject, the Orient.

Now, I will advance my analysis by bringing the identity of the Orient into light pertaining to the problematical conception of agency in the virtual domain. There are three areas on Facebook as mechanisms of self-identification that I will investigate in order to see how subjectivities are performed by the postcolonial subjects, which are: 1) identification under the profile picture where the users can narrate their identity, 2) political views under the section 'Info' and 3) religious views under the section 'Info'. Considering the numerous amount of information that I can get from 938 friends on my Facebook account, I will select only several relevant narratives that show variations of data. I will structure my analysis by dividing up each sub chapter into two parts: the historical background that gives sense to the selected narratives and the theoretical reflection as my way of showing my understanding on the narratives by taking relevant theories to mean.

I. Narrating the Orient: The Knowledge of the Self

Who has the right to dictate how individuals should say, act and articulate their thought on Facebook? The answer is very easy: no one. Facebook has policy to protect the privacy of its users by giving total control to them in selecting what and how their account should be directed. The users can activate their personal privacy setting that can be changed every time they want. The basic idea of this policy is that users should have control over what they share in cyberspace: who can see every post they share from status updates to photo albums. Once the users select what information will be visible to whom, they can be viewed

by others. Even if they decide not to reveal their profile, they can simply make a choice by leaving the section of personal information empty or customizing their privacy settings and making certain or all sections hidden to obscure their profile from other's viewing. Basically, Facebook users can make their profile visible to one of these four options: 'friends of friends', 'only friends', 'specific people' and 'only me'. It means that these four types of viewers can have access to user's account depending on how the privacy settings are organized to arrange on who should be able to retrieve which information on user's account. Since there are quite a few sections on Facebook, users should always adjust which information will be public and to which kind of viewers, or making it private to themselves. Since no one will not be able to change the setting made by the account holder, the control of navigation is totally in user's hand. In order to begin Facebook-ing, everyone needs to complete some stages of identification when they have to decide on how they will become visible.

Facebook has made an attempt to portray the identity of its users by providing several sections of identifications that can be filled in by the user, which are: Basic Information (sex, birthday, current city, hometown, home neighborhood, family, members, relationship status, interested in, and looking for), Personal Information (activities, interests, favorite music/TV shows/ movies/ books/quotations, and about me), Education & Work, and 'What Genre Music Are You'? Users are free to utilize these segments and describe who they are without bothering whether the information is reflecting their 'real' selves or not. There is obviously no rule in digital media and networking sites for authenticity. No one is required to reveal any pieces of information that does not correspond to his/her objectives and interests on virtual world. The exposed identities on Facebook are the only source of meaning and experience in online network society where the cultural and political attachments are free to be formulated. There will be several statements placed under the identification section that will be closely investigated to capture the ways emerging personal narratives can create a sense of liberation for Indonesians.

I.A The Narrative and the Historical Background: Speaking of Colonialism

I will take three statements made by the users on Facebook that address the idea of colonialism. The first statement made by Jones Batara Manurung that directly articulates his thought into words: "Against Colonialism" as a way to portray his identity. I also take a look at the second statement made by Yordan M. Batara Goa on his profile which does not straightforwardly take in the word 'colonialism': "*In which there is no exploitation of man by*

man, there is no exploitation of man by the state, no capitalism, no poverty, no slavery, no women who desperately miserable because of the double burden". The third statement is written by Budiman Sudjatmiko: "*My life is going through the agreement I have made with the conscience of humanity. If we are willing to listen, this conscience of humanity will be here, sneaking in our childhood naïve questions. My life is seeking for the answers of those childhood questions*". He also describes himself in these words: "I am a Palestinian in the West Bank of Jordan river, an Aymaran-speaking Indian who lives in the city of La Paz, an Afro-American in Mississippi... fighting for freedom, justice and liberation". Before investigating these three statements, I should take Indonesian history into account as Yordan cites one of Sukarno' speeches as a way to reveal himself and Budiman Sudjatmiko was well-known as Indonesian activist and politically abused in the New Order era.¹³ It needs to be done before grasping the meaning of having a political statement on a social networking site. The process of identification is unlimited not only through the act of naming, but also by pronouncing what signifies political affiliation.

I will start by explaining the history of Indonesia under Sukarno era and the history of violence experienced by two political parties that were strongly associated with Sukarno's vision of nation. Sukarno introduced the acronyms and abbreviations: NASAKOM, as the central revolutionary doctrine that combined Nationalism, Religion and Communism as his ideological and political view. This was further refined in the Political Manifesto for the 1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy and Indonesian Autonomy (Vickers, 2005; 146). Sukarno's daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri, was also inaugurated as the President of Indonesia from 2001-2004 and formerly the leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia - Perjuangan/PDI-P*). Being formed as a challenge to PDI, one of three political parties in New Order era, PDI-P is a symbol of resistance against the regime of Suharto because Megawati was not acknowledged by the government as the leader of PDI even though she was elected at the 1993 National Congress. After Suryadi was chosen as PDI's Chairperson at another National Congress with the government's backing, Megawati and her supporters formed PDI-P for she refused the result of the second Congress. This conflict was followed by a riot on 27 July 1996, a moment that marked out the inescapable clash between these two parties when Suryadi and his supporters attacked the PDI's headquarter and faced resistance from Megawati's supporters.

¹³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People's_Democratic_Party_\(Indonesia\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People's_Democratic_Party_(Indonesia)). Retrieved: 27-11-2009

This conflict also involved People's Democratic Party (PRD) that had been formed in 1996. Led by Budiman Sudjatmiko, PRD has based its struggle on the ideology of democratic socialist which frequently makes people regard it as communist party. Since its establishment, the party had showed a critical and opposing stance against the Indonesian authoritarian government which under Suharto had been strongly controlled by the militaristic regime. Inspired by its ideology, PRD has positioned itself as a party that fights against the poor social, economic, and political condition in Indonesia. Because of its movement in actively advocating and organizing protest and demonstration in grassroots community, PRD started to be physically assaulted by the New Order regime and considered to be subversive.¹⁴ PRD's involvement in the incident of 27 July 1996 when PDI-P had a clash with PDI led by Soerjadi, the representative of Suharto's regime, has brought a great impact on the existence of this party and its member.

This event is very momentous in the history of Indonesia as it symbolized the authoritarianism of New Order that never hesitated to use violence and coercion against any groups that had different political views. Afterwards, Megawati and PDI got a great sympathy and popularity nationally, strengthening the authoritative image of 'New Order' and lifting up the proletarian image of PDI as the party of grassroots. Lots of people are still seeing Megawati as the successor of her father and hoping that she can continue Sukarno's vision of the nation, based on socialism. His support for the latter stems from his advocacy of the Third World as the opposition of imperialism, where the US and Britain are seen by him as the chief international agents (Vickers; 2005; 149). This policy was the complete opposite to the New Order which returned Indonesia to a basically pro-Western and pro-capitalist development (Philpott, 2000; 164).

I.B The Significance of Narrative: Performing Anti- Colonialism Identity

Even though Indonesia was not ruled by Suharto's regime anymore, Yordan's description implies his high expectation of seeing Indonesia to be reigned by a system that does not act in accordance with the principle of capitalism and imperialism. Considering the fact that Yordan is the associate of PDI-P as stated in the section of "political view" on his Facebook account, I see that the tendency of bringing the political affiliation publicly in the process of identification is made possible not only because Facebook provides the specific

¹⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People's_Democratic_Party_\(Indonesia\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People's_Democratic_Party_(Indonesia)). Retrieved: 27-11-2009

section about political view but also through the specificity of this medium in creating a space for 'forbidden' identity that formerly was restricted in the era of New Order and can not be done in other kinds of media.

It is interesting to relate Yordan's profile with the fact that Sukarno employed Communist-rhetoric in his political system 'Guided Democracy'. After Sukarno was overpowered by Suharto, communism was prohibited in Indonesian society which lead to the ban of any literature or media suspected of propagating this political agenda. *Pancasila* is the only political view that has to be employed by all Indonesian political parties and groups. There was nearly no media that gave significant space for self-articulation where Indonesian citizens could freely express their own political view and put their own viewpoint into words. The message conveyed in mass media is always institutionally formed to reach the mass as their audiences. Even though individuals can place their opinion in media, the selections still need to be made to ensure that no messages will endanger both the social and political stability and the existence of media institution from which the reports, news or opinion are produced and circulated. This process is not an issue for new media since there will not be any procedures that control the content posted by the public.

Writing any statements that are opposed to the dominant discourse used to be considered as the act of threatening the unity of Indonesia and going up against the ruling government. This is not just a bullying as it really happens in Indonesia until now. For me, it speaks to the fact that the emergence of new media fundamentally influences the formation and representation of the self since individuality is taking a crucial place in the media landscape. In order to speak up about any ideological contests and revolt against the ruling authority citizens no longer need extra bravery or institutional positions in the governmental system and political parties. Access to technological device is the vital thing needed to play part in the national discourse.

I think it is necessary to find out how the former leader of PRD, Budiman Sudjatmiko, makes the most of Facebook in campaigning his political view after the era of transformation since and accused of being responsible for the riot of July, 27, 1996. Believing that the operation of power in the modern world can never be separated from the technological progress that provocatively brings modern people to actively engage with the process of making the history of present instead of just being an object of the history, the chronicle of the past, I argue that the subjectivity of Budiman Sudjatmiko should be investigated with the purpose to give meaning on the revolutionary nature of new media, in this case, Facebook. Is

the quest for hope to recover Indonesia from a long practice of colonialism finally realized by the new media? Have postcolonial subjects who are still striving to be completely free from modern colonialism worked out by indigenous people really been able to become the knowable man that can liberally perform their resistance strategically? Surprisingly, there is no word of Indonesia mentioned in these two statements and in other sections on his Facebook account. Besides the fact that he does not mention his hometown, the only notification that reveals his identity is what he wrote in his political view which I will discuss it later in the next sub chapter.

Instead of mentioning 'Indonesia', stating three other national identities all at once is his choice. At this point, narratives, symbols and rituals that constitute a sense of mutual and national belonging are something that can possibly be shared with other nations. Freedom, justice and liberation are what Budiman has in mind when he personally approaches the idea of nation, not by plainly ascribing the mutual sense of community as a nation but also positioning nationalism in the global perspective. Budiman Sudjatmiko has mentioned three different identities that both represent the trivial figure, marginalized groups of people that live in separate geographical space but share the same vision of freedom, justice and liberation. Every identity might experience the different sites of oppression, diverse ideological principles and each has to contribute to the very fundamental conception and vision of emancipation which are relevant to their unique characteristics. However, by posing the issue of freedom, justice and liberation in global digital media like Facebook, Budiman Sudjatmiko argues that it is an urge for all nations, especially those who still strive for liberation from colonial forces in all senses.

The history of Indonesia is marked with violence therefore it is not surprising that most people see power as a destructive force that was frequently deemed in parallel with domination. Foucault makes a clear explanation that domination is not the essence of power and as a matter of fact, power is exercised upon the dominant as well as on the dominated; there is a process of self-formation or auto-colonization involved (Foucault in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; 186 and Smith, 2006; 100). The political agenda inscribed on Facebook as a modern networking site reinforces Foucault's theory that power is channeled through mechanism of discipline – various practices and regimens – that form the individual by conforming him to what society wants (Smith, 2006; 101). It is not necessary to determine whether it is technology that forms society or society that control the growth of technological industries. The repressive situation that occurred outside the online world before and after

the emergence of Facebook has actually happened, but the centrality of narrative in mediating subjects's understanding of the world has significantly been forced by the specificity of this medium

I believe that the invisibility of national identity does not automatically mean that national identity has not been taken into account. Rather it signifies the important issue about how the global nature of new media creates the so-called the borderless world, where the postcolonial identity is placed in an intricate position. Who is the Orient? If the Occident used to define what, who and how the Orient should be, there is now a broad space created by the new media for the Orient to create and represent themselves, celebrate their own culture, and even write their history. Being promoted from an object of history to the rank of creators (Abdel-Malek in Brydon, 2000b; 829), the Orientals should think how to call themselves. Living in the world called the Oriental, the resistance to the politics of Orientalism can be performed by asking what Said has asked in 'Orientalism Reconsidered' -who writes or studies the Orient, in what institutional or discursive setting, for what audience, and with what ends in mind? (Said in Brydon, 2000b; 848). Posing these questions will lead to a wide range of answers that convey a problem about how postcolonial identity (the Orient) can produce non-dominative and non-coercive knowledge without being trapped to think within the logic of colonialism. Since there are numerous different identities in Indonesian society, this can set the scene for a new form of repression where the dominant one puts an end to the marginal one. At this instant, the individualized subjects reproduced on Facebook need to discover what kind of mode of power one can conceive and exercise in order to recover the agency of the Orient. Foucault has made it clear when he envisioned that the fundamental technical inventions and discoveries, a new technology of the exercise of power has emerged which is probably even more important than the constitutional reforms and new forms of government established at the end of the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1980; 12). Mostly, users who address the key issues of colonialism do not clearly state how colonialism can potentially be materialized in contemporary world, even for someone who explicitly states the word 'colonialism' like Jones Batara Manurung.

Articulating his thought into words: "Against Colonialism", on his Facebook account, Jones Batara Manurung stimulates a question about what colonialism means on his account when he wrote this word and how diverse forms of struggle can be brought to light in the contemporary society. At this point, there is no such thing as an inherent meaning since the readers consciously determine the meaning of what is written. This appears with their

subjectivity and makes the authority over meaning present once they start to comprehend the word (Muller, 2004; 113-114). In order to understand how this works in new media, I need to clarify that there has been a change in the social and cultural implication of writing caused by the new media. Formerly, it was believed that written language did not issue direct response from the reader by assuming that there would be a delayed feedback from the reader in a quite long time after the reading process ended. This has changed drastically with new media, which grants the audience the capacity to interactively reply to the messages in no time.

But, it is not only the new mechanism of feedback that says something about the change of paradigm in the construction of the self that I would like to address in this section. The written ability has included the knowledge of looking at, criticizing, deconstructing, reordering and improving the regime of truth. This is why the word 'colonialism' still exists in contemporary Indonesian history as a way of addressing the political act of those who formerly were assumed to have the oppressive power. But how the self is brought into being by way of writing a narrative? Interestingly, the way new media empower the subjects rests not only in the act of narrative but also in the process of reading and interpretation when the circulation of meaning happens in the reader rather than in the writer. After reading the statement of Jones Batara Manurung the readers will be the subjects who subsequently assume what the colonialism means in modern Indonesian polity. The section of political view will be scrutinized to interrogate the identity of postcolonial subjects as a way to answer the question: 'How does the Orient politically construct or historicize his own reality?'

II. Where Am I Politically? Narrative, Resistance and Power in the Digital Realm

II.A The Narrative and the Historical Background: Apolitical is Political

I choose national issues depicted in the section of 'political view' on Facebook as a space that defines the subjects not only based on their political affiliations but also their capacity to overcome the possibility of oppression. The struggle to define Indonesian nationalism has always happened in times of conflict, starting from the intellectual movement that formed nationalist organizations during the Dutch colonialism to find the meaning of being Indonesian and fight for the independence to modern resistance during the New Order to current developments that bring colonialism into a broader sense. The nationalists conceptualized a new force in Indies society, the masses, but the aristocratic and middle-class lifestyles of the nationalist made it difficult for them to communicate the ideals of nation and

freedom to these masses (Vickers, 2005; 83). Since the beginning, the Indonesian society has struggled to deal with diversity in political agenda which has frequently been seen as a threat to Indonesian unity. This illustrates current struggle between modernity and tradition. The parade of diversity in political principle is one of the radical changes that revolutionary transform Indonesian citizens from passive subjects into the subjects of knowledge. There are quite a lot of political views stated by the users on Facebook which were never imagined to be seen publicly before without causing a problem for the subjects such as: “Left Hedonic” (by Airlangga Pribadi), “Transrational” (by Novri Susan), “No Facism” (by Jojo HateFesbuk), “Liberal” (by Eka Rahma), “Abstain” (by Kristina Lydia), “Apathetic” (Cindy Tomaso), “Other” (Harris Abdullah), “Neutral” (Alexa Saxon), and “Proud to be the member of People’s Democratic Party” (by Tulang Iyek Marp). I believe that a range of political views should be seen as the end of dominating and homogenous system of knowledge where individuals are not determined by others in formulating and displaying their self-images.

Convincingly testified, all those political declarations above are defending beliefs and becoming a struggle for emancipation. For me, they are arguing on the importance to keep identity heterogeneous by standing up against the Unitarian system that attempts to keep other voices but the dominant one silenced. When Kristina Lydia goes for “abstain”, the political statements posed by Cindy Tomaso have the same tone with ‘abstain’ as she states ‘apathetic’ in her profile which is also analogous with Satrya Wibawa has ‘political what?’ in his Facebook account. The self and the political are obviously conjoined regardless of how apolitical their statements are for whoever reads them. I know that I should retain information about the historical fact that politically relates with this word.

Refusal to vote for any parties and abstain from Indonesian politics formerly was considered as a subversive act. As a matter of fact, individuals who decline to vote in the election are called *golongan putih* (*golput*). Literally, it means ‘white group’, but it signifies the non-voters. Even though the values and the consequences of abstainment are still debatable, the New Order had frequently propagated a campaign against *golput* even though there are no laws prohibiting the Indonesian citizens to abstain. Accused of being rebellious and disrupting the public order, Indonesian citizens were politically forced to vote while there were still individuals or groups who insisted to be non-voters and considered it as a kind of political act. Among various reasons why people do not vote, *golput* was commonly deemed as the expression of apathy toward the government and political order in Indonesia. Astonishingly, after the New Order was over and reformation era has come forward, the total

amount of *golput* has significantly increased. According to recent survey in Indonesian election 2009, the number of *golput* has approximately reached 50 millions of people or 30 percent from Indonesia's total population.¹⁵ Whoever abstained in the election can never be detected - these citizens remained anonymous, except for who choose to explicitly state political standpoint in public.

II.B The Theoretical Reflection: Performing a Nation without a Nationality

Although Facebook is understood as a social networking site, the assumption that technology will consequentially be utilized to bring the world, strictly speaking, the others, closer than before has been challenged by a range of categories of subjectivity as it becomes harder to recognize who should be counted as the 'Others'. Facebook does not provide any section for nationality which means that this specific kind of identity categorization has been obscured and made invisible. If technology's greatest promise is to eradicate otherness as indicated by Nakamura (Nakamura, 2002; 4) and if the Orient take the chance to reveal their postcolonial identities and challenge the stereotypes projected by the West to them, how does it make their origin visible if it does not even appear on their Facebook account? It seems that the subjects on Facebook mostly use their personal social background as the basis of making a national statement to others. The fact that online world can easily be manipulated is well-understood which enables any virtual spaces to forcefully stand for their own sake and the subjects behind it. Without personal experience or knowledge about others, every person on the social networking site will only rely on the information presented online. Yordan M. Batara Goa, Airlangga Pribadi, Novri Susan, Jojo HateFesbuk, Eka Rahma, Kristina Lydia, Cindy Tomaso, Satrya Wibawa and Tulang Iyek Marp are individuals who actually exist that I personally am familiar with. But if I never knew or heard about them in advance, I am not sure that I can make any considered opinion concerning their nationality.

I realize that there are actually no sufficient reliable indications that can be used to point out the nationality of the users on Facebook. I notice that the information about hometown is the most significant clue to identify the origin of users on Facebook even though it does not mechanically imply their nationality. So therefore, I start to realize that even language can not be considered as the genuine and accurate pointer in the process of identification. Taking their statements into account, I will not be able to accurately identify

¹⁵ www.nasional.kompas.com. Retrieved: 02-12-2009

their national identity since they use different kind of language, one of sign system that can be used to presume the origin of individuals. The conflicting nature of language as one of the principal facets that constructs cultural identity has made the task of identification more demanding. It seems that the truthfulness of one's identity can only be attained if there is personal relationship between users that makes the engaged parties know for certain other's nationality. For this reason, investigating political view of users inescapably involves the notion of proximity and familiarity which bring me back to the problematical distinction between what so-called virtual and actual reality. At this point, it will not be valuable to argue how they are distinctively discrete but a fruitful analysis about the agency of postcolonial identity can be drawn from an awareness on how the virtual intertwines with the authenticity in the realm of new media.

I agree with Nakamura's argument that chosen identities are not breaking the mold of unitary identity but rather shifting identity into the realm of the 'virtual' and it can definitely create and reproduce stereotypes as well (Nakamura, 2002; 4). Identity is truly traveling now, traversing the frontiers between the offline and the online screen. I also concur with Bhabha on his theory that postcolonialism will always operate through the dimension of time, history and space, both geographical and political by positioning new media as a space through which activities by which new identities, new geographies, and new conceptualization of the world are fashioned and performed (Young, 2001; 66). Formulating national identity can no longer be done by simply drawing a strict line that physically separates one object from another. Even though national heritages are apparently materialized in tangible or natural matter and marked out by geographical borders that did not happen by accident rather were contested, defended and constructed (McLeod, 2000; 68), national identity has possibly been envisioned by positioning one's nationality among others, exercising the notion of differences as well as similarity.

Taking all statements, I am continuing my analysis into the point where the otherness functions well in picturing the profile of a nation with no reference to its own name. As I have mentioned before, the term 'Indonesia' has been concealed in all those political views. At this point, narratives, symbols and rituals that constitute a sense of mutual and national belonging are something that can possibly be shared with other nations. Freedom and liberation in political views are values attached by the users when they approach the idea of nation, not by plainly ascribing the mutual sense of community as a nation but also positioning nationalism in the global perspective. This is done by featuring ideas that represent the condition of

marginalized groups of people that possibly live in separate geographical space but share the same vision of freedom, liberation and even rebellion. Every identity might experience the different sites of oppression, diverse ideological principles and each has to contribute to the very fundamental conception and vision of emancipation which are relevant to their unique characteristics. However, by posing the issue of self-sovereign in global digital media like Facebook, they all argue that this is an urge for all nations, especially those who still strive for liberation from colonial forces in all senses.

I believe that the invisibility of national identity does not automatically mean that national identity has not been taken into account. Rather it signifies the important issue about how the global nature of new media creates the so-called the borderless world, where the postcolonial identity is placed in an intricate position. Who is the Orient? If the Occident used to define what, who and how the Orient should be, there is now a broad space created by the new media for the Orient to create and represent themselves, celebrate their own culture, and even write their history. Being promoted from an object of history to the rank of creators (Abdel-Malek in Brydon, 2000b; 829), the Orients should think how to call themselves. Living in the world called the Oriental, the resistance to the politics of Orientalism can be performed by asking what Said has asked in 'Orientalism Reconsidered' -who writes or studies the Orient, in what institutional or discursive setting, for what audience, and with what ends in mind? (Said in Brydon, 2000b; 848). Posing these questions will lead to a wide range of answers that convey a problem about how postcolonial identity (the Orient) can produce non-dominative and non-coercive knowledge without being trapped to think within the logic of colonialism.

Since there are numerous different identities in Indonesian society, this can set the scene for a new form of repression where the dominant one puts an end to the marginal one. At this instant, the individualized subjects reproduced on Facebook need to discover what kind of mode of power one can conceive and exercise in order to recover the agency of the Orient. Foucault has made it clear when he envisioned that the fundamental technical inventions and discoveries, a new technology of the exercise of power has emerged which is probably even more important than the constitutional reforms and new forms of government established at the end of the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1980; 12). The political agenda inscribed on Facebook as a modern networking site reinforces Foucault's theory that power is channeled through mechanism of discipline – various practices and regimens – that form the individual by conforming him to what society wants (Smith, 2006; 101). It is not necessary to determine whether it is technology that forms society or society that control the growth of

technological industries. The repressive situation that occurred outside the online world before and after the emergence of Facebook has actually happened, but the centrality of narrative in mediating subjects' understanding of the world has significantly been forced by the specificity of this medium. Mostly, users who address the key issues of colonialism do not clearly state how colonialism can potentially be materialized in contemporary world. Rather, they affirm the reference points that are implicit. It does not happen only in the sections 'about me' and 'political view', but also in the 'religious view'.

III. What do the Orientals Believe in? Online Religion (Without Religion)

III.A Religion, Nation and Violence: Another Faces of Indonesia

When new media are believed promoting no boundaries in the physical world, the same things also happens in the incorporeal realm where the border that constructs the basic conception of religion itself has been stretched out beyond the conventional principles. It is not my intention to say that before the reformation, Indonesian people were frightened to stand for what they believed. Yet it must be clearly recognized that every cultural phenomenon leads to significant changes in ways of thinking. I concur with Schaeffer (Schaeffer in Smith, 2006; 20) who claims that "If we are to understand present-day trends in thought, we must see how the situation has come about historically and also look in some detail at the development of philosophic thought-forms". I believe that the conception of the self will always be embedded by what the history has brought to the subjects and the way it shapes the actuality of identity in all notable moments. I will bring the historical context of Indonesians in order to show how this nation is very familiar with the tradition of violence even in the realm of religion. It needs to be done before understanding how new media, and Facebook in particular through the section of 'religious view', function as a break down that can potentially disrupt the dominance of tradition for having religious matter as a grounding of coercion.

Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism are five official religions acknowledged by the Indonesian government. Other believers are prohibited to engage in religious practices or worship and also are not allowed to bring up any disciples or followers. In Indonesian context, the first of the five principles in *Pancasila*, the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state, which is 'Believe in the one and only God' (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) has established a strong interrelation between the State and religion. All believers are not

merely convinced by the dogma to have faith in God but are also required by the State to confess one of six officially recognized religions. This first principle was initiated as an alternative to the creation of an Islamic state, even though there were many who were in favor of founding the state on the basis of the religion of the majority (Vickers, 2005; 118). With the endeavor to recognize the value of other religions and minority groups, the first principle was set up to guarantee the rights of all Indonesian citizens to hold any acknowledged religions. In fact, the use of the term 'official religion' (*agama resmi*) is still debatable until now. In 1978 the government issued the circular letter of the Minister of Home Affairs which stated that there were only five religions in Indonesia even though the higher constitution, the former Presidential Decision No. 1/Pn.Ps/1965 1/Pn.Ps/1965 recognized Konghucu as a valid religion together with the other five. As a consequence of this circular letter, all citizens were ordered to fill in the religion section in their National Identity Card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk /KTP*) by choosing one of five religions. Konghucu was excluded until K.H Abdurrahman Wahid, the fourth Indonesian president, annulled this in 1978 and acknowledged Konghucu again as one of six official religions in Indonesia. Even though the 1945 Constitution does not explicitly state these six religions, it is still generally assumed that Indonesia recognizes only them which leaves out other forms of indigenous spiritualism. Until now, religious affiliation still needs to be listed by all Indonesian citizens in their National Identity Cards which brings many discrimination practices based on religious differences in reality. The government's discrimination towards Konghucu is surely not just a problem of how the personal needs and interests of the minority can be fulfilled, but more importantly, it shows how domination and totalitarianism can also be rooted in religious matter.

Current Minister of Religious Affairs, Muhammad Maftuh Basyuni says that it is very important for citizens to carry a sign of their religious affiliations because it is vital to ensure a good harmony between religious groups.¹⁶ In his opinion, the performed identity has to be as complete as possible.¹⁷ But at the same time, the obligation to affirm religious affiliations on national identity card has actually aroused critics in Indonesian society since formerly as a result of clashes between different religions Indonesia went through several fatal national conflicts. The diversity in religious affiliation should be treated and appreciated equally since the state has acknowledged plurality as the essence of the Indonesian society. But Indonesian history has proved how diversity, especially in ethnicity and religion has caused a paradox in

¹⁶ <http://www.indonesiamatters.com/834/ktp-religion/>. Retrieved: 02-12-2009

¹⁷ <http://www.indonesiamatters.com/834/ktp-religion/>. Retrieved: 02-12-2009

the life of the nation. Some traumatic experiences of having a deadly conflict between different religions has made Indonesian people doubt the sincerity of their own commitment in recognizing the value of diversity and distrust government's seriousness in coping with religious conflicts.

The country has witnessed anti-Chinese violence sparked by Muslim extremist groups which at the time was blended with wider Christian - Muslim conflicts (Vickers, 2005; 214). The conflict in Ambon in 1999 may probably be the greatest conflict in the history of modern Indonesia. It is estimated that approximately 3000 - 10.000 people died in the riots that made Muslims and Christians confront each other. Conflicting parties clearly announced a war that was aiming to exterminate people of other religion. The Muslims killed the Christians and the other way around. Even though it is believed that there were many reasons which set off the conflict and the intellectual actors behind, they have not been identified until now. Thus, religious line has been playing an important role in the growth of the conflict. The assumption that the conflict was designed for political reasons has heightened people's mistrust and antipathy toward the government and the Indonesian political affairs in general. The inability of the government to deal with the conflict and discover who should be responsible for it has forced many social groups to file their demands to the government. Violence was the only language known by the people who lived in Ambon at the time when words were no longer working to conciliate both parties. This tragedy showed the failure of the state to protect and provide security to its citizens. Moreover, Indonesia failed to deal with its fundamental nature - the diversity. As a matter of fact, this was not the first and the only time when Indonesia dealt with religious conflict.

Before and after New Order, there were and still are many incidents of destructed, closed, and burnt churches which show the incapability of the state and the government to respond to the problem of discrimination. Recently, Indonesia was witnessing again the acts of violence toward minority religious groups when the sacredness of religious harmony was wrecked by groups of people who acted on behalf of specific religions. After being accused of practicing a cult, Al Ahmadiyya Jamaa'ah Mubarak in Parung was attacked by a group of Muslims. As a new religious system, his confession was regarded as misleading, false and potentially causing public unrest. This incrimination was supported by Majelis Ulama Indonesia¹⁸ (MUI) who issued the religious guidelines (*fatwa*), accusing Al Ahmadiyya

¹⁸ MUI is the non-governmental organizations that facilitate the Muslim clergies and Islamic scholars in Indonesia and aim to guide, nurture and protect the Muslims in Indonesia.

Jamaa'ah as a cult, prohibiting the inter-faith prayer and ruling out pluralism, liberalism and secularism in Indonesia.¹⁹ After that, the chain of violence has continued. The closing of churches in the West Java was happening again and the second of Bali bombings was the peak of what is called global terrorism. Bizarre conspiracy theories appeared in Indonesian media about the Western – Jewish – Chinese – Masonic plot to discredit Islam (Vickers, 2005; 219). These terror acts were strongly related to Jemaah Islamiyah led by Abu Bakar Basyir who in the aftermath highly influenced the image of Islam and created suspicious prejudices about Islam since it was associated with violence and hatred.

III.B The Uncategorized Religion: The Multiple Images of the Orient

There are multiple images of the Orient portrayed on the section of 'religious view' on Facebook which should not be oversimplified as they reflect the intricate concept of culture itself which. Its "differential and relativist" functions are precisely what is important (Clifford in O'Hanlon & Washbrook in Brydon, 2000; 905). The absence of a unified identity is the most obvious feature displayed on Facebook and religious view is the section where the Orient is constantly performing their cultural differences, bringing any possible form of subversion, mockery and cynicism into play as an effort to deconstruct any single master narrative and reject all universal forms of cultural centralization. At this point, being modern or staying traditional may not be the main issue for the Orient. Rather what is at stake is the construction of new ways of exercising knowledge about oneself and the others. Facebook equally privileges the voices of indigenous individuals and gives space for the Orient to reinvent themselves in unpredictable ways.

The online religion emerges as a response to the call to deconstruct grand narratives. The word 'others' used by Nayarini Estiningsih when she defines her religious view on her Facebook account is quite provoking as it implies a distance, a separation from anything that has existed before. One intriguing statement is written by Muhammad Amin: 'Religion' and 'Atheism' are the same stupidity with different name whilst PennyRoyal Tea writes down 'Believe 1 God' for her religious view'. For many and nearly all people, cyberspace is a playful and sacred space at the same time. Imagination and vision about the self, others, society and nation are all penetrating this virtual terrain and showing the unstoppable transformation of reality and history. Social, political and religious institution are about to change by the power

¹⁹ <http://islamlib.com/id/artikel/setahun-memasung-kebebasan-beragama/>. Retrieved: 01-12-2009

of free will, a will for interpretation and multiple production of identities. Satrya Wibawa passionately envisages that spiritual experiences are expected to happen in cyberspace when he says this appealing statement in his religious view: 'God is in Internet! Believe me'. All these users are reluctant to state or choose one of 'official' religions. As an alternative, they put forward their enthusiasm of playing part in the self-determination and taking advantage of Facebook that allows their identities to be embedded as unconventional towards religious views. Some of them still correlate their religious view with the existence (or extinction) of God to different extents whereas others prefer to approach religious matter quite unconventionally. How can one comprehend such words like 'agnostic', 'toujours fidele', 'progressive muslim', 'proud to be infidels...they shall enjoy freedom, democracy, art and rock music', 'esoteric', 'inheritance' (*warisan*), 'monyetism' (*'monyet'* means monkey) or 'samawi religions' (*agama samawi*) with no trouble at the first reading of subject's account on Facebook?

Some phrases might be relatively more familiar because they make use of concepts that are generally recognizable and highly allied with religious matter. Some labels are considered as unusual for naming a religion since they widen the very conception of what should be considered as religion, especially when the enduring religious traditions have habituated the followers to get familiarized only with major religious affiliation which are Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism and Hinduism. In her book 'Give Me That Online Religion' Brenda E. Braser has explored more than one million operating online religion websites. They encompass every major religious traditions in the world, most new religious groups and innumerable social movements that function as de facto religion for their follower (Braser, 2001; 6). This online phenomenon provides evidence on the aptitude of new media to promote an interreligious understanding. The challenge to traditional religion has been set up not only by modern religious institutions but also it is made possible by every single individual in the virtual space. This way narrative introduces an opposing point of view, perspective, consciousness to the unitary web of vision (Said 1978; 240). For me, the fundamental issues of human and social life are now under erasure since everyone starts asking the essence of being which in my opinion arguing that there is no essential being that can escape from the historically-cultural shift. All ideas are seeking for self-expression and new media overpoweringly endows individuals with an immense power to pose their incredulity toward meta-narratives.

If the religious freedom comes to be construed as the individual's right to worship any god or none at all (Tipton in Arjomand, 1993; 274), it does not automatically render the position of religion outside of public life. But if God is in Internet as said by Satrya Wibawa, then God must compete with the others positioned as the center of religion in the online world. Religion may still need God, but speaking of religious view, any corporeal matters or forms of knowledge can potentially catch the attention of a new devotee without being institutionally engaged. The way the internet fascinates its users may be the main reason why Satrya Wibawa argues that God (must be) in the Internet. Re-fashioning God and giving Him/Her the new look that goes well with face of the digital era can be the case here, but erecting boundaries that formerly existed between faith and knowledge is quite liberating for many people. Religious skepticism (a religion without religion) may be the product of postmodern religious faith which is not linked to any particular dogma, doctrine and denomination (Smith, 2006; 119). If Satrya Wibawa's statement should be considered as a radical view for bringing the Internet as the new sanctuary where everything that people believe in God are already provided by technology, how about the indigenous religions which actually exist in the Indonesian society? Do new media bring their existence back or make them present in Indonesian people's lives after prolonged concealment in nearly all media representations?

Indonesian government has chosen to call the indigenous Indonesian religion as '*aliran kepercayaan*'. It is analogous with a cult which means that it is not acknowledged as a religion, but only as a spiritual practice that believes on the existence of God. Personal experiences and relationships between the followers and their God is the basis of the practice that combines different system of religious beliefs with mystical elements that are typical to local values among particular ethnicities. In some areas in Indonesia, there are existing indigenous beliefs, such as the 'Sunda Wiwitan' embraced by the community in Baduy, Lebak, Banten and also known as CIGUGUR religion (and there are several other names), 'Buhun religion' in West Java; 'Kejawen' in Central Java and East Java; 'Parmalin religion', an indigenous Batak religions; 'Kaharingan religion' in Kalimantan; 'Tonaas belief' in Minahasa regency, North Sulawesi; 'Tolottang' in South Sulawesi; 'Wetu Telu' in Lombok or 'Naurus IslandSeram' in Maluku Province. These indigenous religions are degraded as a doctrine of animism, pagan or just as a cult as I mentioned before. The religious matter had been exercised by the government as the instrument of oppression instead of being developed as national heritage.

I used my personal Facebook account to ask other users whether any of them write down the indigenous Indonesian religion or not in the 'religious view' section. None of my friends on Facebook responded positively. This implies different meanings. The users may not know what the indigenous Indonesian religions are or they choose not to relate with traditional values. It is easier to find various religious views which are not rooted in Indonesian ritual or tradition. The Orient occupies the virtual terrain and brings representational images posed by the West to trouble. This is the point of departure for the negotiation of the self, the process of destabilizing the firm construction of the Orient by progressively challenging any homogenous intellectual, cultural and political narratives.

If the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority (Said, 1978; 42), does the formulation of contemporary religious view on Facebook point towards the idea of bringing the Orient closer to modern realities as a refusal to accept the binary distinction made by the West? When Said says that everywhere among Orientalists there was the ambition to formulate their discoveries, experiences and insights suitably in modern terms (1978; 43), I personally find out the paradox between the potential to break out from the stereotypes of the Orient and the tendency to intensify the constructed figure of the Orient. By realizing that the construction of binary positions was based on the imaginative vision about the Orient who is oddly different – unusual, fantastic, bizarre, irrational, extraordinary, or abnormal (McLeod, 2000; 44) – and that history is made by men, 'religious view' materializes power exercised by what has been called the Orientals in order to give shape to the new material reality of the Orientals.

IV. The Theoretical Reflection on the Narrated Subjects: The Burden of Authenticity

From the analysis above, I see that the process of identification has become the source of experience for postcolonial subjects. It deals with the possibility to see experience as the medium through which resistances could emerge and create a condition under which the subordinate ones can become active agents of their own emancipation on the basis of this experience (O'Hanlon & Washbrook in Brydon, 2000; 903). I see narrative as the ideological apparatus that seeks to liberate marginalized subjects by giving them the power to interpret their own experience and subjectivity without conforming to the dominant discourse. The medium is now giving a sense of pleasure and fascination in designing the conception of being a free agent. The process of self-identification produces acts of contestation by making clear the fact that identity is historically unstable and an object of change and reconstruction. Can

the attempts of post-Orientalist's scholarship to release the third world and once-colonized country like Indonesia from its marginal position really recover the suppressed identities? Or do they essentially reinforce the supposition that the Orient is desperately in need of liberation, admitting that the division of the Orient and the Occident inescapably exists since the beginning?

At this point, it is difficult to be completely sure how to state the nature of identity portrayed in Facebook when the actual is no longer visible in the virtual world. The material evidences (visual recognition, the sound of voice, the style of handwriting) that are considered as authentic proofs of particular identities may be present (Crampton, 2003; 74), but there is no mechanism to verify whether these matters are representing the authentic identity in physical space or not. Once the screen name is chosen and my online identity is activated, then I, one of Facebook users, officially start coming into contact with the digital social network and engaging with an intriguing experience of being captivated in between the offline and the online world. At this instant, I find myself not completely able to make a strict distinction on what should be counted as 'real'. Compared with other virtual lives on the Internet, Facebook has positioned itself as social networking site which means that it has been developed in order to enable the people to share and make the world more open and connected.²⁰ As it implies that there are lots of individuals who have a need of being connected, the problem of defining who they are is far from easy.

I am not assuming that there is an essential being by mentioning the notion of authenticity but instead, I see the subjects as always constructed in reference to historically-specific discursive practices. However, the issue of authenticity still remains in the cyberspace, not to suggest the continuation of essential identity, rather to give a new sense of understanding authentic-cyber identity. According to Crampton, in cyberspace, authenticity is constituted as authentication of identity which brings the notion of 'confessional discourse' into play as a mode of producing identifying documentation, making something new, creating something, that is, identity in cyberspace (2003; 74). This is not a less real identity than the actual one, rather the cyberspace functions as the site of identity politics which are continuously governed and contested by all participants. I think Baudrillard's conception on simulation and simulacra is worthy of note because of its concern about whether the virtual is real, imagined, a simulation of the real, or a simulation which eclipses the real (Baudrillard,

²⁰ <http://www.facebook.com/facebook>. Retrieved: 05-12-2009

1994, Crampton, 2003). Moreover, his important focus is about the production of truth about its being, that our judgments concerning its authenticity rest fundamentally on what kind of truth it can produce (Crampton, 2003; 75). I will opt to concentrate my analysis on the role of confession as a way of producing knowledge and identity authentication. But first I have to agree with Crampton (*Ibid*; 79) that there are different stages of confession for authentication. One of them relies on technology.

All users need to be firstly authorized and enabled by the machine in order to begin with the production of knowledge. The first truth produced by the users is the truth about oneself since one's identity should be authenticated through the confession of correct user ID and password (*Ibid*). This is the same procedure for nearly all internet-based networks when the autonomy of subject in the process of identification can only work under the authority of technology. Without it, all further interpretation of who we are in the virtual domain may not be possible to happen. After that, the self is something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity (Foucault in Martin, Gutman & Hutton, 1988; 27). The political technology of individuals as introduced by Foucault explains in detail how we have been led to recognize ourselves as a society, as a part of a social entity, as a part of a nation or of a state (Foucault in Martin, Gutman & Hutton, 1988; 146). I see the crucial purpose for not even to think how to totalize the individual experiences which formerly were used as a strategy of domination, especially in Indonesian polity where individuality and plurality was seen as a threat to the nation-building process. I've explored how the representation of identity on Facebook has revealed the new formulation of knowledge that operates within the paradigm of emancipatory culture, the term that is critical for postcolonial identities in the discourse of Orientalism due to its aptitude to give a chance to resist any kind of systemic coercion.

Chapter Conclusion

By scrutinizing the sections 'About Me', 'Political View' and 'Religious View' on Facebook, I come to the conclusion that the process of self-identification is a way of confronting the idea that Orientalism assumed an unchanging Orient (McLeod, 2000; 44). All stereotypes about the Orient are formerly formed based on its relationships with the Occident without considering the uniqueness of the Orient. Now Indonesian scrutinizes Indonesia on Facebook. It is not the Occident's narrative that revives the subjectivity of Indonesian. Even if the existence of the Orient was intentionally made to be reliant to the Occident or the West, the conception about who the Orient is will likely happen in relation to its otherness without

necessarily involving the West. It is true that through the eye of the indigenous, Indonesia is now seen and comprehended, but however, it can not be simply said that the Orient is living without carrying the stereotypes made by the Occident. On the one hand, even the Orient itself can not be performed and represented in one single image, not only by others but also by themselves. Yet on the other hand, the Orient is not completely free from the logic of subjugation, rather moving to the other form of colonization that authorizes new practices of coercion and religious/political-based violence.

It is actually not surprising to see how religious matter intertwines with political affairs. At the most fundamental level, politics subsists in religion, the conscious reflection of the constitution of order in nature and society that make it one of the oldest institutions of the humankind (Arjomand, 1993; 1). In the context of modern Indonesia, the rejection of public over state intervention in religious affairs is not new anymore. The presumption that religion should be kept in private space emerged from the fact that the life of the nation has still been defined by the way religion influences social practices. The narratives created by the users on Facebook are used to create a character over the religion per se, giving it a political shape and a face which then makes the relationship between politics and religion highly complex. As the nation faces a turbulent situation caused by the conflicting nature of religion, it is not possible to set the religion apart from political sphere as the articulation of religious view as part of identification of being Orient has also functioned to give meaning to colonialism.

In the last sub-chapter of this chapter, the issue of authenticity is inescapable in responding to the problem of agency when the self-production of knowledge will entail the question of who the self is in the virtual world. Compared with other virtual lives on the internet which require individuals to create their avatar as their virtual identity that possesses virtual characters and appearances before joining the virtual world as their second life, the on-screen life, Facebook lets individuals to freely express their individuality, choosing whether to portray their actual identity or create a totally different character. However, assuming that Facebook was initially built as social networking site through which people are seeking to connect with others, I realize that it is not reasonable to make a generalization that people tend to reveal their actual identity. I never deal with the authentic users in the 'real' world when I analyze their profile as depicted in the specific section where they describe who they are, but it does not mean that the virtual identity can not comprise an 'authentic being'. In cyberspace, authenticity is constituted as authentication of identity. That is how subjects

produce themselves in cyberspace and how they are at the same time produced in a set of mutual relations (Crampton, 2003; 74). The narratives created on three sections of Facebook as I have described and analyzed above are a kind of knowledge offered by individuals that brings values to the conception of who the Orient is.

However, it simplifies the complex quality of new media by assuming that the users fully hold the power and control over reality they produce. Considering Facebook as the Western expansion in economic and cultural terrain, in the next chapter, I am going to develop my analysis based on hypothesis that Facebook must work in specific rhetoric that successfully fascinates people to voluntary support the imperialist projects, inviting people to become a part of global market since identity in virtual space has been fashioned as a commodity. It means that there must be a specific platform developed and staged on Facebook that becomes the basis of control on how the subjects will be determined to act. I will investigate how the sense of power and liberation is performed if they actually are incorporated in the controlled mechanism of Facebook. I need to explore the available features on Facebook and analyze how their feasibility as a system of signs creates a new means of narration, a method of self-articulation/personalization and commodity as well.

Chapter 4

The Rhetoric of Spatial Colonization and Commoditization

The previous chapter scrutinized how the postcolonial subjects (formerly constructed as the Orient) make the most of the narrative in reviving their agency through the production of knowledge about the self. Indonesians strive to re-constitute their identity free from Western's assumption or prejudices. I made it clear that the process of identification does not necessarily happen to counter the unequal dichotomy between the Orient and the Occident, rather showing that the Orient's reality exists as the manifestation of cultural/political differences amongst Orient's identities. However, I realize that the construction of postcolonial identity can not neglect the fact that Facebook is developed and situated in the global economic and political network. It implies the prospect of new media as the contemporary colonial discourse that works through specific rhetoric in engaging people to voluntary support the imperialist projects.

In this chapter, I further my analysis by elaborating how key postcolonial categories are exploited by the new media to foster greater participation in the consumer society. I develop my argument on a belief that the cultural history of new media is all about the promise of alternative space (Bassett, 2007; 132). I propose that the production of narrative in the virtual realm can not be overlooked as it speaks to the idea that space is produced and consumed for the purpose of resistance and commodity at the same time. Facebook opens up an extensive chance for the individuals to create and explore a virtual community as a particular kind of space. Constructing and negotiating their identity on Facebook, postcolonial subjects are incorporated in the rhetoric of spatial colonization. This is because new media initiate the production of the kind of space which I consider as the success of this social networking site in approaching the problem of power. This triggers a question of who wins and benefits from the new configuration of space in Facebook. Who controls and dominates this 'new' space where knowledge is 'posted' is my object of inquiry in this following chapter. In what way does the production of cultural space initiated by the digitization of daily existence in new media contribute to the discourse of colonialization? By addressing this question, I argue that power is located at the point of intersection between the struggle for

emancipation and the preoccupation with being governed by the order of the medium that captivates the subject in the system of signs.

For that reason, I propose to structure my analysis based on different significances of spaces to postcolonial subjects. Realizing that the postcolonial reconstruction of identity is inevitably spatial when it is materialized in the establishment of a narrative, I have to phase in the rapid technological and political changes in the dialectical debate concerning the re-conceptualization of space and re-construction of postcolonial identity. Firstly, I draw on the concept of confession and cyberspace together as a course to illuminate that it is within the mechanism of confession the production of truth about subjects is actually materialized in narrative. Making narrative is about dominating spaces as a way to assert power to others. According to Crampton (2003; 101), confession takes the issue of power as it deals with the production of truth that takes place on those who speak. Facebook definitely encourages confession that manifests in the narrative. It means that the articulation of identity is not merely practicing power in relation to the construction of the self, but also producing a sense of place that consequently enables the subjugated knowledge to become visible. As I have started to justify this argument in the previous chapter, I move my analysis by giving an account for the meaning of space itself within postcolonial discourse when it is materialized in the confessional conception of the self. I believe that this is likely to happen in the highly complicated power relation between the hegemonic power of dominant system and the opposing groups that are ready to issue the opposite interest in cyberspace.

I then propose to build my argument with regard to Lefebvre who says that spatiality is not only as a product but also a producer and reproducer of the relations of production and domination, an instrument of both allocative and authoritative power (Lefebvre in Shileds, 1999; 153 and Soja, 1985; 110). Even though Lefebvre does not address new media, I argue that his theory is relevant to comprehend the occurrence of virtual community as I agree with Bassett (2007; 131) that reading the history of Internet means reading the history of space. I will explore one of applications on Facebook that Since Facebook has made the virtual 'social spaces' possible and appear exponentially, I investigate one of its application that demonstrate how the meaning of space to the subjects is also historically specific since virtual community has a different story of different identity.

Continuing this line of argument, in my proposition, Facebook has played an enormous part in the history of *spatialisation* as space has become so warped, distorted and extensively transformed in a rhizomatic network: "Networks are appropriate instruments for a

capitalist economy based on innovation, globalization, and decentralized concentration [...] for a culture of endless deconstruction and reconstruction” (Castells in Warf, 2008; 169). Taking this statement into consideration, I then discuss Baudrillard as he makes a crucial point that the decisive passage from the commodity form to the sign form reveals a kind of control ‘more subtle and totalitarian than exploitation’ (Baudrillard, 1975; 121, Genosko, 199; 114). His remark is important to elucidate the hegemony of the code that makes commodity appear inoffensive on Facebook. I bring Baudrillard’s theory on consumption and consumer society to light in investigating how the production of space gives room for the organization of the signs that triggers the act of consumption. The users are fashioned to take the role as a consumer of images as a way of struggling with the meaning of being ‘a subject’.

I. The Confessional Space: The Subversive Nature of Self-Writing

Narrative serves the longing for postcolonial subjects to be included in the reproduction of concepts where individuals are reading the text in question instead of taking all the meaning for granted. In this sub-chapter, I start to propose the issue about control of territory that come forward together with the dominant mode of finding the truth in confession. I select the narratives created by Airlangga and Galih as for me it enhances the idea of technology as realm of possibility which consequently makes it the colonial territory, a space to be colonized and conquered, not essentially in physical manner but moreover, in ideological way. Their narrative directly addresses the significance of Facebook in the debate about the relation between human and technology which brings implication to the idea of confessional space as a form of production and consumption which correspond to the idea of resistance and colonization.

Airlangga: *Facebook has potentially become an oasis for the wounded*

Galih: *It is not an absolute condition. Facebook is only an option. Suffering is subjective in nature and it depends on the subjects that suffer to decide on what kind of media they would like to choose to make well the misery. Any potential can emerge from any kind of media. It is like the oasis that suddenly comes out from the cracked dry soil, both real and virtual, they offer the same potency. The difference only lies on the amount of the users. Hopefully, whatever the medium is, it can be an oasis for those who suffer.*

Airlangga: *That is true. That is why I said it has potency. I just want to uplift the optimism of all friends who cynically read the role of technology*

Galih: *It is the same as energy. Technology always exists in the neutral point. Its strength is founded on its usefulness. Technology has a limitless function which is compatible with its fast acceleration. Unfortunately, not every one is able to follow the speeding up of its development until finally crushed by the*

latest technology without having enough time to take the advantages. At that point, sometimes, there is pessimism on the role of technology. I occasionally feel that way too.

Airlangga: *Technology can not be separated from the gravitational pull of capital. That creates the capitulation of subjects to the dominance of technology. But it does not mean that the subjects really comply with technology because they make history but not within a condition that they wish for (whose words are they? Can you still remember? And in which book they are written?) Now, there are many chances that make a new arena to be present in the process of meaning-making about the relation of capital between human and technology in the acceleration of globalization.*

Taking form as a confession, the narrative created by Airlangga and Galih is central to the issue of space as the product of an organized system of signs that implies the discourse of postcolonialism in two ways: 1). Confession as the self-authentication, 2). Confession as the production of space. My argument is based on the theory of confession as self-writing where the point of confessing is not merely in the content but also in the form or process itself. I discuss how these three conceptions of confession are interrelated in the following section of this sub-chapter.

I.A Confession is the Space of Authentication

Every time the users log in to their Facebook account, they are directed to 'home' page, one of four main sections on Facebook besides 'profile', 'friends' and 'inbox'. When users are on 'home' page, they instantly see the updated statuses of their friends. The latest statuses continuously change every time someone updates her status. Facebook is very dynamic and designed to provide its users with the sense of newness. The users get the updates of everybody every time they access Facebook. Sharing ideas or thought with others can be done through this specific mechanism since the posts are visible both on others' homepage and one's own profile. Even though because of space limitation only some updates are visible on the homepage, account of other users can still be accessed to keep informed of others by searching and clicking on the names of friends. This is a kind of self-production when the subjects hold control to what they want to share and at whom they aim their writings. This is made possible because all of our friends can have access to our profile if we let them to do that. It means that they can view our personal information, photos, and 'profile' section where our postings and others' posting are displayed on the wall. This is applicable for both parties as we can also post something on our friends' *wall*, one of the features on 'profile'

page where all materials such as commentary, photos or videos are posted and accessible to everyone. The writing is meant to be read by the community, a set of people connected by Facebook, whatever the motivation or the purpose behind this might be.

The conversation between Airlangga and Galih shows how Facebook is considered as the product of technology that catches the attention of the subjects to take part in the production of the self not as a contrast or reflection of their identity 'in real life', but as a way to work on oneself in the area of possibility. Considering Facebook as a product of spatial politics of cyberspace, the issue is about how the self is placed in the virtual world which is no longer seen as the opposite of the physical, but part of the 'real world'. Confession tackles the issue of subjectivity in the digital realm as it embraces the question of 'what am I revealing, to whom, and for what interest'? This is exactly what Facebook has tried to reveal, *questioning* its users: 'what's on your mind?' in the blank column under the 'profile' section on the main page of their account. Users usually call this section as the 'status' section because every time they write something, their post appears next to their name and it can be updated whenever they want to. In order to get familiar with Facebook and its devices, I will briefly explain the main mechanism that works on this networking site to give reasons why self-writing is a crucial feature significantly reviving the agency of postcolonial subjects. The conversation above displayed on Airlangga's wall when he posts statements on his 'status' and gets response from Galih.

The concept 'confession' derives from blogging - a similar phenomenon that has previously drawn significant attention among in new media scholars and enthusiasts. *Wired Magazine* recently called weblogs 'the hottest publishing phenomenon on the linternet, a case of working on oneself as the practice of finding oneself in the world' (Crampton, 2003; 95). Blogging can be interpreted as a modern digital equivalent of the memoir and diary since bloggers can update their personal interests online on a daily basis (*Ibid*). Through the mechanism of visibility Facebook has encountered the problem of authenticity when its mechanism enables all confessions to be read by others. To confess is to be in the position of (1) being authenticated as who you say you are (real/false) and (2) being placed in a discourse of normalization (*Ibid*, 97). One important aspect that characterizes the online confession is that it is voluntary, self-controlled and can be used to uncover what has probably been hidden from the dominant culture. By means of delivering free participation in the online discourse and providing a broad space of self-actualization, Facebook was designed to perform many functions for the process of self-identification. This medium strongly persuades its users to

make use of 'self-writing' by making it desirable and exciting. The next sub-chapter explains how the confession functions as a form of resistance through the act of production.

I.B Confession is the Space of Production

For the postcolonial subject a tale about oneself is not merely a way of representing the competence to produce knowledge about oneself, but also a mode of ideological expression. Narrative serves the longing for postcolonial subjects to be included in the production of concepts where individuals are reading the text in question instead of taking all the meaning for granted. The narrative produced by Airlangga and Galih shows perfectly how the fascination with technological expansion itself leads them to act of production. The magnetism of Facebook resides in its capacity to enable the users to produce the unlimited space of confession. It is within each confession they make, the resistance becomes visible. In this case, the performative function of confession remains in the production of content, the narrative.

From the narrative above, instead of totalizing, Facebook as the product of technological expansion in virtual realm has been considered as giving a space to all interpretive activities which are expected to respect the specificity and radical differences in society. At this point, Indonesians emerge into a space in which the reading and the production of narrative can be very liberating as the statements written by Airlangga and Galih are both focusing on the role of technology to recover suffering subjects. It is very interesting to see how their narrative implies and holds the assumption of the existing hardships of the Indonesian society. Interrogation of Facebook shows how the work of narrative itself gives meaning to the relation between technology and culture, and in my case, Indonesian culture which is still learning to contend with the diversity of postcolonial subjects.

The perplexity of dealing with differences in identity should be faced by all Indonesians when they demand the freedom of expression as a major feature of a democratic society. Facebook represents the promise of technology in securing the personal liberation in the process of cultural interpretation which also brings back the hesitation toward the willingness and the readiness of Indonesian society in dealing with the issue of cultural difference. I will bring another statement written and posted by Airlangga Pribadi on his Facebook wall that again take this problem in hand: *“Pluralism is a form of recognition and defense of diversity and religious variety, ideas, perspectives, social and cultural background of each person. So, it is deceptive if anyone criticizes religious pluralism as a doctrine that states*

that all religions are alike. It is wrong by definition! Plurality and similarity is obviously different!". Airlangga's commentaries tackle the issue of cultural differences as a way of showing his disposition of knowledge and his mode of thinking about contemporary issues. If his statements are analyzed from Bhabha's point of view (Brydon, 2000; 633), the aim of cultural difference to re-articulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the 'other' that resists essentialism and disturbs the calculation of power and knowledge will produce a form of spaces of subaltern signification as a possible emancipation from domination. By scrutinizing his profile on Facebook, I believe that he is fully aware of technology's aptitude in producing other spaces for cultural debate. Due to his ability to construct a rich understanding about the current national issue, I am sure that the potential to construct the resistant ideas or desires is what makes Facebook appealing to the Indonesians.

If the production of the nation as narration can be regarded as the narrative movement of the postcolonial people in their attempts to create a national culture as said by Bhabha (in Brydon, 2000; 623), I can grasp what the act of confession is getting at: it leads to a sense of satisfaction or evokes the pleasure of resistance on the side of the narrator. According to Crampton (2003; 101), confession takes place in the presence of a partner who is not just the interlocutor, but an authority. He says that confession produces deep differences within the confessing subject – he is unburdened, purified, relieved although the listener or the reader may be the dominant, the production of truth occurs in the very process itself and the effects take place on those who speak, not in those who receive it (*Ibid*; 101). Of course, it does not mean that confession and the narrative making is a one way process of communication since the continual exchange of ideas will advance the narrative itself, especially where non-pluralistic discourses are brought to an end with the assistance of new media.

I believe that in the movement of meaning the process of 'becoming' takes place. In my view, there is nearly no end as there is no beginning for the identity of the subjects to be reproduced in the continual course of writing. Compared with other kinds of medium, the presence of space in new media is incommensurable. At the first sight, it seems that new media make 'space' available and realized as a vehicle that transports the narrative to the reader. Nevertheless, the case turns out to be the narrative that paves the way for the production of space in digital domain. Having said this, space has become the prerequisite and the product of resistance. Facebook provides space for and evolving identity where empowering knowledge emerges from the postcolonial subjects and their narratives contest

culture-specific ways of representation. But the confession does not stop in this level of production. Instead, the organization of narrative is a form of confession goes well with conception of consumption introduced by Baudrillard on his writing of 'The System of Objects' as I explain in the following sub-chapter.

II. The Consumption of Space: the re-Signed Subjects

The concept of consumption is stimulating and central in this sub-chapter since Baudrillard states that the material goods are not the objects of consumption. Rather, he argues that consumption, in so far as it is meaningful, is a systematic act of the manipulation of signs; the virtual totality of all objects and messages presently constituted in a more or less coherent discourse (Baudrillard published in Poster (ed), 1988; 22). This definition converts all subjects into objects which are then transformed to a systematized status of signs. In the context of confession, it is problematic to determine whether the narrative that becomes the object of consumption as narrative is consumed as well as produced, or the space itself that is consumed through the production of narrative. Employing Baudrillard, I should take both the narrative and the space as the object of consumption as they have become the sign, the precondition of consumption (Baudrillard, 1996; 200, Poster, 1988; 24, Pawlett, 2007; 8). My scrutiny on Baudrillard takes me to the position of regarding the code as the problematic apparatus that provides the conditions within which the very notions of agent, self or identity take shape and become meaningful (Pawlett, 2007; 73). In this sub-chapter, I propose the vague distinction between signs and subjects that constitutes the intricate act of consumption as a way of constructing the identity of postcolonial subjects in the era of simulation. Therefore, all ideas can coexist as signs within the idealist logic of consumption (*Ibid*; 24). It is hard to harshly separate the analysis of subjects and the object – the sign – since the means of control that gives an agency to individuals on digital realm is obviously secured by exercising the code that gives the direct access to the truth which I comprehend not as the 'real' and unmediated truth, rather the truth as the self-production of knowledge.

When everything is re-signed and coded, I think it is plausible if I can easily get myself, as a subject, lost in the boundless net of signs, finding hard to refuse the big temptation of taking pleasure in a myriad of choices created by simulacry interactivity. Even though I can still find the way out from the virtual, once the adventure starts on Facebook, I am confronting the feeling of alienation if I do not reconcile my everyday life with the others in

the online world. Seeing and knowing others is what mostly draws me to Facebook before I make myself seen and known, which then makes me realize how my online engagement becomes repetitive and Facebook turns into a collection of things and activities that constructs my everyday life. I start to search for the authentic others while recognizing that the subjects become 'other than themselves' when the things that make them as they are and they are not are reproduced and turn out to be signs.

If the explosion of the sign has practically triggered the act of consumption over the image, technology has become a system that nurtures the coming out of the active participatory consumers. I argue that new media as a specific medium should not be eclipsed by the content on the one hand, and similarly the content should not be automatically destabilized by the quality of medium. If the existence of subjects on Facebook can be noticed from their activity, then the narrative production results in the consumption of the produced spaces in which representations and signs take a new role as modes of resistance. They also bring the agency of subjects into trouble. This happens when groups of signs need to be exercised, regulated, and exchanged first to resist the force of dominance but also to consequently foster the hegemonic nature of the code. Strictly speaking, there will be no agent if there is no code. It means that Facebook applications and features are how technology responds to the need of the subjects to express and liberate themselves from any system that tries to restrict them. But how does the practical materialize the ideological? My case study on Facebook here is the application of 'Create A Group' that I assume implying the idea that spaces are easily produced in virtual domain, then generating a sense of sovereignty to the users as long as they accept the system that seems to personalize them as free individuals.

II.A Grouping and Conquering Spaces: Consuming the Produced Space on Facebook

If I am looking for Indonesia on Facebook, I must be prepared to come into contact with loads of new social spaces which are constructed and inhabited by groups of people who did not necessarily know each other. Given this fact, I can not simply erase one troubling question about the quality of space provided by Facebook that gives noteworthy values to the participatory culture. My inquisitiveness is mostly driven by the reality that there are many cyber communities created and launched by Facebook-ers with a variety of interest and category. All individuals who had already joined Facebook have an opportunity to create 'a

group' for many different purposes. Only by clicking an instruction button 'Create A Group', the users engage in the production of space, designing how their groups will look to other users. Functioning more than just a networking site, Facebook has been built as an apparatus that upholds authority to create. It is based on the importance of technological competence as the initial step to control the production of space. This feature constructs the subjects' imagination on the idea of globalization when spaces are fractured and linked through the machine that allows the users to nestle worldwide and travel across different location. This is one of features available on Facebook that deals with the excitement of having access to any imagined space on which the subjects are able to assert power. In this sub-section, the content of groups will not be the focus of my analysis. Instead, I will concentrate on representational space - a space that has a propensity for the coherent system of non-verbal symbols and signs (Lefebvre in Shields, 1999; 164) and is fashioned as a key spatial site for resistance or re-colonization.

The creation and the administration of social groups in networking sites like Facebook are not about how to trans-locate the physical to the virtual, rather to transcend the physical boundaries in order to perform the social struggle. In the movement through which such as 'culture' and 'politics' are endlessly realized within the discursive aspects of space. For a large number of people virtual community's commitment to free expression in all levels and domains enables to exploit the possibilities of a medium as an inhabitable space. Facebook has been developed into a new kind of space that provides a basic structure and support for people to be in the forefront - building spaces and taking control of them. Once the users enter the page of group application, they will be in charge of the process of selection. New digitally enabled spaces are about to be made. After naming and describing them, the users have to select one of these categories for their group: Business, Common Interest, Entertainment & Arts, Geography, Internet & Technology, Just for Fun, Music, Organizations, Sports & Recreation, and Student Groups. Each selection will lead to different type of groups. For example, if I choose 'Common Interest' for group category, Facebook will provide several types of groups such as 'Activities', 'Beauty', 'Beliefs & Causes', 'History', 'Philosophy', 'Politics', or 'Religion & Spirituality'. If I select a different category like 'Just for Fun', for example, the machine will direct me to other different types of grouping which are 'Totally Pointless', 'Totally Random' and 'Outlandish Statement'. A wide range of options helps both the creators and the prospective members of the group to decide what kind of topic and specific sense of place they want to create. As stated in and by Facebook, groups are meant to

foster group discussions around a particular topic area and to enhance overall user experience by making it easier for the members of groups to connect, share and even collaborate on a given topic or idea.²¹ At this instant, I agree with Lefebvre that the political nature of space rests in its capacity to broaden the concept of production where spatialisation is a product and a productive medium in which other products are created and in which exchanges take place (Shields, 1999; 159). How space can be an element of social struggle for postcolonial subjects is an issue that should be investigated from the materiality that delivers a promise to all who want to take part in the production process.

If Internet architecture is settled, colonized, inhabited, navigated, surfed and linked by the practices of its users (Bassett, 2007; 145), I argue that the project of participation within the discourse of postcolonialism works under the logic of digitality. Baudrillard's key argument is that all definitions of the social are reversible since the power structures have been altered by electric and electronic speeds that erase margins and create centers everywhere in a generalized implosive communication, an instant implosion of space and function (Genosko, 1999; 94-96). Facebook becomes a medium delivering the moment envisioned by Baudrillard when the social is reduced to telephatic functionalities: points of contact, information processing and exchange, a generalized connectivity, encoding and decoding ruled over by a digital code (Genosko, 1999; 89).

These are a number of groups created in response to current issues in Indonesia: *A Peace Forum of Inter-Religion in Indonesia*, *The Movement of Rejection of Free Trade in Indonesia*, *The Rejection of the Banning of Books by the Attorney General of Indonesia*, *Against Anti-Democratic Regime*, *One Million Vote of People's Distrust to President SBY²²*, *DCGI (Democracy and Conflict Governance Institute)*, *Support Socialism in Indonesia*, etc. The production of social space in Facebook comes into paradox when it gives a certain sense of freedom and colonialization at the same time through its capacity to disrupt the lived space of everyday life by creating a new site of struggle but also by implying the emergence of a new parade of the exotic 'unknown'.

The massive number of groups on Facebook exposes a strong need among Indonesian people to get involved in current Indonesian political life. The desire to be known might be expected to be felt mostly by the trivial that has been historically obscured by the dominant discourse before even though this assumption has strengthened the idea of the Orient's

²¹ <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=16140>. Retrieved: 05-01-10

²² SBY is the nickname of the President of Indonesia, Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

inferiority or peculiarity. I believe that the people, previously referred to as the Orient are more than just a submissive category. Rather, they have multiple identities which do not necessarily need to be simplified into one of the opposite position created by the West. Any attempts that try to make totalizing assumptions should be treated as objects of criticism. The representations of space as introduced by Lefebvre, is central in the process of understanding how knowledge and claims of truth made in relation to the conceptual depictions of space linked to production relations (Shields, 1999; 163). And providentially, the production of social space materialized in the virtual community also needs to be followed by an investigation of the discourse of space where space appears as a site of struggle for the process of self-realization as imagination seeks to change and appropriate (Shields, 199; 164). The technologically-driven groups created on Facebook have definitely erased the assumption that society is passive and static.

II.B The Predestination of Signs: Liberation is Colonization

Creating a group on Facebook can be the answer of a passionate yearning of the postcolonial subjects to sustain the hope for a nation without colonialism alive. It can materialize in the production of space that is marked by cultural and political differences and the feeling of connectedness at the same time, this way showing the political self-determination of the subjects. I concur with Bhabha that postcolonialism will always operate through the dimension of time, history and space - both geographical and other - by positioning new media as a domain through which new identities, new geographies, and new conceptualization of the world are fashioned and performed (Young, 2001; 66). Web-logs, or blogs, for example, have become an increasingly important sources of personal, social, and political commentary, alternatives to the mainstream media and a voice for independent views that widened the domain of popular political participation. While hegemonic powers utilize this medium to its full extent, it can also be used to challenge established systems of domination and to legitimate and publicize the political claims of the relatively powerless and marginalized (Warf, 2008; 197). Providing a mechanism for the production of spatial struggle through the application of 'Create a Group', Facebook intriguingly reveals how the promise of new media to award equal recognition to different groups may successfully attract a large number of potential public to consume the benefit of technology.

Even though in this sub-chapter I only concentrate on the commitment of virtual community on Facebook to free association as a shared place, I argue that this networking site

gives a suitable setting for the significance of space in the production of imagined nation which also inescapably forms new instruments to exercise colonial practices. Interestingly, Facebook provides evidence to what has been stated by Huggan - that postcolonial studies have capitalized on postcolonialism's perceived marginality while helping to turn marginality itself into a valuable intellectual commodity (2001; viii),. This provoking statement is very helpful to illuminate how postcolonial values are reproduced by the new media, Facebook in particular, to take advantage of its users - the valuable market that supports the longevity of the global company. This is possible because the creation of groups also means the extension and formation of a new social space, a prospective ground for global economy. Even though I can not say that 'Groups' is the foremost and popular feature on Facebook, the substantial amount of groups created by the users demonstrates the fact that colonialism has been incorporated in the global market. Virtual commodity becomes linked with the actual subsistence - the advertising of the 'real' product.

It is interesting to observe the fact that Facebook developers periodically update the layout of Facebook page. It shows how virtual spaces consume the everyday while its users become the most essential artifact that determines the success of this networking site. I argue that it is not Facebook itself that should be regarded as the commodity although it is true that the process of consumption is related to Facebook as a product. But, the process does not end at this point since Facebook has consistently exploited its users by thinking of them as objects of interest to support the next long-term goals and refashioning them as a commodity. Without necessarily mentioning this goal in direct manner, Facebook has made this logic of exploitation clear in the description written by its developers:

At Facebook, our mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. Our home page is an integral place users go to discover and consume information about what is going on around them [...] Today, we're launching the updated home page to a portion of our users with the intention to roll it out to everyone soon. In doing so, we hope to make it as easy as possible for our more than 400 million users worldwide (!) to find what they are looking for and engage with the content most relevant to them [...] The new design offers more intuitive navigation from the home page to commonly used areas of the site: Messages, Friends, Photos, Events, Applications and Games [...] This layout will allow Facebook Ads to be displayed in a wider format [...] We will be testing and iterating in the coming weeks to ensure we are optimizing for the most success.²³

²³ http://www.facebook.com/note.php?id=34170993416¬e_id=326050130129. Retrieved: 20-01-10

This description is a commercial ad displayed on Facebook, but it works exactly with the same sense as it acts as a campaign of Facebook to convince its users that they have become the purpose of improvement designed by Facebook. The statements above encourage what Baudrillard has said about the consumer system where the subjects are addressed by the system, claiming that Facebook knows what is best for its users, what they might desire and enjoy or what they ought to try even though it does not matter *what* they try, it matters only that they *do* try or use (Baudrillard in Pawlett, 2007; 17). The users have evidently been treated as particular consumers – identified, targeted and figured out by Facebook in order to make them feel personalized. But as a matter of fact, by declaring to have more than 400 million users worldwide, Facebook is actually quantifying its users and capitalizing them in a very subtle manner. The new configuration of space as promoted by Facebook is surely bringing lots of benefit for the users, but does it clarify the logic of consumption that always consistently creates the sense of belonging to the consumed product when the new layout is designed to get the users more attached to the space and displayed features? It is clearly mentioned in the statements above that the new layout will perform better for advertising. The virtual space exists only to be consumed which then optimizes the success of any parties who utilize this space for profit.

When Nakamura (2002; 2) says that re-mastering implies subjugation and re-colonization of the 'otherness' in a postcolonial world, it is no exception to Facebook. This medium verifies this idea by creating mechanism that economically exploits the users and beneficially brings more money to the company. A simple skill is what it takes for the users to partake in the creation of groups that contribute to the production and multiplication of spaces as a result. Facebook has provided a basic platform that executes what Huggan states about fetishism as consumer's desire to achieve access to the cultural other (Huggan in Brouillette, 2008; 15). It means that postcoloniality has been fashioned as an industry that deals not only with the promotion of 'non-Western' cultural product in and for the West, but also with the reversal, selling the West to the Others as a strategy designed to capitalize on the 'others' in supporting global industry. However, I concur with Baudrillard that the experience of those who have been hidden from the history and now are made visible with the assistance of Facebook needs not to be trapped in the inclination to represent the masses which can not be generally represented.

I argue that maximizing the promise of connectivity as utilized in the creation of 'Groups' can be viewed as a strategy to overcome the simplification of different voices that

need to be articulated whilst functioning also as a scheme of gaining profits. They encourage individuals who have the power to access to be drawn into the politically charged spatial configuration as one of thrilling postcolonial experiences. I think Dirlik makes a crucial point by saying that postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism (Ibid; 19). I realize that contributing our effort to build a discursive space as a source of power in our virtual life has manifestly determined our identification of not merely 'who we are' or 'where we come from' but so much as 'what we might become' at any point of time and spaces. When Hall (1996; 4) states that the questions of identity will always be placed 'under erasure' since it always deals with how we might represent ourselves in ongoing process, new media seem to find it difficult to move away from the persistence of global capitalism system that does not want to miss the opportunity to make profit on the practice of resistance.

I do not think it will be overstressing to say that Facebook application 'Groups' becomes a colonial space despite its goal to empower postcolonial subject to resist the colonial practice. 'Groups' reproduces the virtual space and execute it as the 'other', an object to be conquered in which the subjects will locate himself/herself in a particular power framework. It is more debatable now that such neglect on the seriousness of economic system to be involved in the manufacture of national values will only obscure the great potency of capitalism in re-configuring postcolonial discourse and relations especially when the language of postcolonialism itself is the language of Western knowledge system (Dirlik & Jameson in Loomba, 1998; 247, 250). Even if we could use Facebook as a mode of resistance against any form of colonialization, the voluntary participation of the users has transformed Facebook into a desirable resource of power that can only be exercised by intensifying our technological mastering which subsequently turns ourselves into commodities in the global industrial world.

But moreover, the creation of group on Facebook has fascinatingly worked under the circuit of 'needs', the basis of all decision making that subsequently turns all subjects and all coded realities into commodities. Facing various types of groups, the users are the consumers at that point in time. They are treated as free subjects whose individuality and subjectivities are highly escalated by Facebook. The sign-code reality works as a system in which the notion of 'individual' is meaningful and powerful to convince the users to consume by providing them with choices, selections and more importantly, the needs to desire. Baudrillard develops a radical concept of subject/identity as constructed through 'needs' generated by sign-code since their personalities are given by the code (Baudrillard, 1996, Pawlett, 2007). Viewed from

the postcolonial discourse, I am fascinated to see how Facebook encourages the users to realize their aspiration and assures them to believe that their craving for participation will get the accomplishment in the groups they create. Before individuals start to exert power to others by means of this application, the system has actually constrained the power of the subjects. I continue elaborating this issue in the following sub-chapter that takes other application of Facebook to make clear how the production space re-situate the object-subject-sign in the consumption system.

III. The Emancipatory Space: Whom Are We Supporting?

III.A Making 'Causes': Exercising the Domination over Spaces

'Causes' is one of Facebook applications and developed with the intention to support activism by empowering individuals to change the world and to express and act upon their beliefs by providing them with an arsenal of tools to leverage their network on Facebook.²⁴ I re-cite the description on Facebook that is officially stated in the site about the significance of joining this social networking to see the point of the rhetoric used for 'Causes':

This is a natural evolution of social networking. Leveraging real world social networks is an important part of activism, fundraising, and political campaigning. This is especially true of grassroots activism, local-chapter style nonprofit organizations, and the walks/runs used by many charities to raise money. Given all this, it's a bit surprising that online social networks haven't been more aggressively leveraged until now.

The cyberspace activities as captured by this statement imply the opportunity to accentuate personal and group needs. The Facebook users can focus to specific issues they care about and then pick an existing non-profit organization as their beneficiary by creating 'Cause'.²⁵ Cause members are then given tools to recruit supporters and raise funds for their selected nonprofit if they want to even though they can also only raise the awareness of others about particular issues without aiming to get donations.

Working with similar method as the application of 'Create A Group', Facebook also provides several categories of Causes such as: 'Animals', 'Arts & Culture', 'Education', 'Environment', 'Health', 'Human Services', 'International', 'Public Advocacy', and 'Religion'.²⁶ Facebook will show all available 'Causes' that exists once the users click on the selected

²⁴ <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/about>. Retrieved: 20-01-10

²⁵ <http://www.causes.com/pages/tos>. Retrieved: 25-01-10

²⁶ <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/about>. Retrieved: 20-01-10

category with information about the total members of 'Causes'. Their activities on 'Cause' can also be observed since there are information about actions taken, donations/fundraising, and their achievement in recruiting members to participate in their 'Cause'. As stated on the site, working with the rhetoric of promoting 'an equal opportunity activism', the developer invites the users to contribute on the success of this application by showing that the main concern is about empowering individuals to change the world.

'The world' is the term used to refer to the actual reality outside the media which needs to be taken care of by individuals. There is a principle of need here yet again engendered by Facebook, positioning individuals as the agents of change who have the power to liberate others from misfortune. The world then is divided again in two extreme poles, a group of people who need to be saved and a group of saviors who have need to come and rescue the less fortunate ones. New media will be reappraised for their power to cause a liberation movement through its contribution in creating a progressive and modern advocacy of the powerless people. Getting involved in this project seemingly transposes the participation from the virtual space of Facebook into the actual space, since the impact of the causes will actually reach the unfortunate ones.

Since Facebook has offered a fund-raising platform for the initiators of 'Causes' who aim to raise money for their initiatives, it is claimed that more than \$20 million have been donated through 'Causes'. Thus, the virtual has become the factual. Small organization can expand their reach and impact.²⁷ This already heralds an advanced degree of participation and impact in the actual world which is sustained by the financial assistance authorized by Facebook and its partner that provide the members of 'Causes' with several options of an existing non-profit organizations as their beneficiary to whom they give their donation.²⁸ At this point, even though 'Causes' members are given tools to recruit supporters and raise funds for their selected non-profit, providing the users with the role of participants, it is hard not to reckon them as a commodity as well.

Besides the fact that Facebook is created by the developers for certain purposes, it is interesting to see that individuals are treated as consumers and stimulated in many ways to take an action on and with this medium. The Facebook users invest many things but their money as they do not need to pay anything for their online activities. But as a matter of fact, they have become a part of the circuit of need. First, they are provoked by the need to know

²⁷ <http://exchange.causes.com/>. Retrieved: 25-01-10

²⁸ <http://www.causes.com/pages/tos>. Retrieved: 25-01-10

what technology can do for them, to become aware of current issues or problems that occur both in local and global scenery, to participate in the project of helping others, and finally to create a cause as a response to those needs. They go beyond the actual borders with the purpose of defining their identities and their relations to others. According to Baudrillard, it can be maintained by conforming and introducing marginal differences that we promote in order to define our distinctiveness, individuality and personality (Baudrillard in Pawlett, 2007; 10). The assumption that once-colonized countries are passive, submissive and in need of civilization or salvation are not the case here since both the West and the Orient can play equal parts in liberating the 'others'. The proficiency of re-mastering the technology applied on Facebook and the competence to convince others about the significance of their 'Causes' are most appreciated and cause more impact in dictating the public to see what the initiator of the 'Cause' wants them to see. The perceived world is constructed and it depends on how qualified the subjects are in making the most of technological advancement.

The very definition of who should be considered as the 'other' is no longer restricted by the old assumption created by the West who formerly framed the Orient, the marginalized, and the subaltern identity as the 'others' - the insignificant others. Classification and stereotyping may still happen in any space in all types of media including Facebook, but the possibility to bring all biased labels to crisis is also widely open. However, seeing how loads of different parties have made use of 'Causes' such as individual activist, non-profit organizations, foundations, and companies with different reasons, I notice that identity is always in a paradox. Even though technology's greatest promise is to eradicate otherness, as Nakamura argued (2002; 4), I also draw on her argument that chosen identities are not breaking the mold of unitary identity but rather transfer identity into the realm of the 'virtual' and, thus, can reproduce gender and racial stereotypes evident outside of the 'virtual'. Is it possible for the multiplicity and heterogeneities of identity to be really obscured? If technology liberates minorities from stigma and racial stereotypes (since no one can recognize the 'actual' identity of participants in 'Causes'), the ongoing reconstruction of identity is definitely maintained by the new media where alternative representations can emerge.

III.B The Connected Network: Arguing Definition on 'Causes'

In relation to the 'Cause' that I bring to light in this section, I need again to respond to criticism of Orientalism that criticizes Said for his statement that every European or the West, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost

totally ethnocentric (McLeod, 2000; 48, Said, 1978; 204). This premise was deemed as totalizing since it did not include the West which opposed colonialism or imperialism. Concerning this issue, I choose to focus on one specific 'Cause' about the fight between two previously colonized countries (Indonesia and Malaysia), which demonstrates how contradictions appear even in the same category - the Orient. The Cause is called '*Hey Malay, Stop Stealing Our Property!!! Pendet, batik, Reog is ours! Nurdin M. Top is yours, Bastard!*'. Just like the other 'Causes', it is followed by a statement: 'Help by joining, donating, or inviting your friends'. Aimed to raise awareness of Malaysian people and the government that they have committed to stealing Indonesians' cultural values, this Cause has recruited 45.210 online members via Facebook. This Cause has three objectives on its site: 1) Sue Malaysia for claiming, using and stealing Indonesia's properties; 2) Stop insulting Indonesia by calling Indonesians 'Indon'; 3) Show to the world that Indonesian citizens still care about their country.²⁹ Situated in the same region, South-East Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia share a common history of colonialism, but also live with the memory of a long historical conflict.

During 1962-1966, there was a confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia triggered by the will of the British government to unite their colonies of the Kalimantan, the island that was divided into four administrative areas: Kalimantan, Brunei, Serawak and Sabah. Soekarno rejected this plan because he considered Malaysia as a mere British puppet. This plan was seen as a threat that endangered the sovereignty of Indonesia, since these two countries were sharing the border. This conflict also involved Filipina that acknowledged Sabah as a part of their territory. The conflicting parties had finally reached an agreement to arrange a referendum organized by the United Nations as a means to get the decision of the people who lived in the conflicting area. But before the results were reported, Malaysia had announced that the unification of those three areas was part of Malaysian domestic affairs. This statement was seen as a violation to the agreement that was made between the conflicting parties. It was then followed by a demonstration 'Anti-Indonesia' in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) where the protester attacked the Indonesian Embassy, tore up the photos of Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia, and carried the Indonesian Emblem, Garuda Pancasila, to Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, and forced him to step on Garuda Pancasila. This incident obviously triggered the anger of Soekarno and Indonesian people as Malaysia insulted Indonesia and opened up the political confrontation between

²⁹ <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/339844/67623948?m=ce751e9c&t=1252693740>. Retrieved: 25-01-10

these two countries. Responding to that disparagement, Soekarno launched a movement known as '*Ganyang Malaysia*' ('*Ganyang*' means 'attack', 'assail' or 'strike'). This term was manifested not only in a physical aggression toward Malaysia, but also as a renunciation of Indonesia toward the British imperialism. This political confrontation might end but there is now a recent phenomenon that demonstrates the cultural clash between Indonesia and Malaysia which evokes hatred and bitterness between these two nations until now.

Recently, after the Balinese dancing and leather shadow puppet, the two cultural heritages of Indonesia, were presented in a Malaysian tourism ad, there were enormous responses from Indonesian society concerning the ad as an attempt of Malaysia to claim the art forms as their own.³⁰ Even though both representative officials of two countries denied this claim, Indonesian people took this action seriously as a form of cultural and political attack on Indonesian identity. The street protest march was followed by online demonstration, which confronted Malaysia as the enemy of Indonesia. It needs to be noted that this is not the first conflict with Malaysia since there were some frictions between Indonesia and Malaysia before³¹. This is the background story that gives context and relevance to the creation of '*Hey Malay, Stop Stealing Our Property!!! Pendet, batik, Reog is ours! Nurdin M. Top is yours, Bastard!*'. It shows the complexity of the postcolonial discourse since the binary opposition the Occident-the Orient is not the only category that does justice to colonial practice, especially if it is situated in modern and global scenery.

For the binary opposition itself contains a stereotype and a totalizing assumption, therefore it is obvious that the 'Other' does not essentially refer to the homogeneous other of the Westerner. Rather, the construction of 'otherness' is exceedingly correlated with the native conception about who has the power to produce knowledge about 'the self' and 'the others' and the relation between these two categories. In this case, Malaysia is obviously 'the other' of Indonesia which consequently undermines the assumption that Indonesia had been assumed as the other of the West, especially of the Dutch colonial. Since the distance between the colonizers and the colonized is brought within the boundaries of the Western knowledge (Bhabha, 1994, McLeod, 2000), an awareness that the logic of the colonial can materialize in any possible expression is part of self-realization of postcolonial subjects about their identity and their conception of 'otherness'. I believe that the sovereign structure of

³⁰ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/08/23/protets-over-presence-pendet-dance-malaysia's-tourism-ad-continue.html?page=3>. Retrieved: 25-01-10

³¹ A particular case worth mentioning is the fact that Noordin M. Top, the most wanted terrorist suspect involved in several bombings in Indonesia is a Malaysian.

knowledge is what the postcolonial subjects need to build as a mode of resistance in order to liberate themselves from the deceptive and entire structure of the colonialism discourse.

I believe that it is not only the colonialism that needs to be interrogated but also the authority of colonial discourse. When it comes to new media, the idea that the nation is Western in origin and emerges with the growth of Western capitalism and industrialization as fundamental components of imperialist expansion corresponds with the principle of consumer agency (McLeod, 1999; 68). The global cultural system emerged in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when technological innovations created complex colonial orders centered around European capitals and spread throughout the non-European world (Appadurai, 1996; 29). New media, and Facebook in particular, can be approached as means of fortifying the transnational construction of the imaginary landscape where the role of image is persistent and omnipotent. As Appadurai (1996; 31) claims, imagination is a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility, a key component of the new global order. The concept of *mediascapes* is best to illuminate the world where the lines between the realistic and the fictional landscape are blurred and the world of commodities is profoundly mixed with the world of politics (*Ibid*; 35). My analysis of 'Causes' exposes the complex relationship between culture, politics and economy where individuals are positioned in a conflicting role. Since new media have inescapably become a part of today's global economy, the fetishism of consumer takes place - the idea that consumers are consistently helped to believe that they are actors, whereas in fact at best they are choosers (*Ibid*; 42). The subjects actually choose what signs represent their identities best, which simultaneously position the subjects in symbolic and discursive formations.

Chapter Conclusion

I believe that the history of Indonesia should be developed from the insurrection of subjugated knowledge which is most likely achieved by 'self-writing' as an active agent of articulation, a specific form of confessional culture, a way of revealing the 'truth' about 'the self' and 'others' against the dominant relations of power and knowledge. Besides the narrative created through the act of confession between Airlangga and Galih, I specifically investigate two different applications on Facebook which are 'Create A Group' and 'Cause'. There are differences and similarity in the ways these two address the idea of contestation and colonization. Whilst 'Create a Group' works by utilizing the benefit of connectivity to

encourage the users to participate in the production of space for social/cultural/political resistance, 'Cause' support the desire of the users to contribute on the project of empowerment and helping others. 'Cause' challenges the assumption that once-colonized countries are passive, rather recognizes their needs and capacity to play an equal part to influence and exert power over others. This mode of contestation has simultaneously opened up the possibility of colonization.

The subversive nature of self-writing is not only manifested in the content of narrative, but also in the form, in the process of production. This is because confessing is producing a space for self-liberation. But at the same time, the narrative produced by the act of confession is also consumed when it is materialized in the system of sign. At this point, all ideas, belief and even the subjects who formerly produced the space for narrative has been turned into commodity since the only identity perceived online is the sign of the self. Having said this, I agree with Baudrillard that nothing can escape from the logic of consumption which consequently brings colonialism back again. At this point, narrative and space are not merely produced but consumed and the identity of postcolonial subjects is now determined by the act of consumption whilst at the same time, the extension of space in virtual domain can be utilized by the global capitalist system that never leave anyone/anything free without turning it into profitable commodity.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to answer the problem of how Facebook functions to re-construct the postcolonial identity by means of narrative in marking the transition from colonized subjects to liberated beings if the agency of 'the self' is contested on the account of the massive reality of signs. Situating Facebook in a contemporary Indonesia, I used narrative as the means of access that integrated the textual, the materiality of the medium and the historical context in the dynamic process of reading and interpretation. I have argued in the introduction (Chapter One) that the postcolonial studies should reckon the pervasiveness of new media in challenging the postcolonial key categories. The persistence of narrative in virtual realm is significant not only because of its new digital character but also its ideological values that bring the agency of postcolonial subjects to crisis. The discussion about how the agency of the self should be re-fashioned in the multiplicity of identity that makes postcolonialism discourse impossible to be oversimplified is central in my argument. Starting with the presupposition that the agency of the self exists in the paradox of having a power to create narrative as a mode of representation but being turned as a commodity at the same time, this thesis attempted to figure out the relation between subject – object – sign that gives meaning to postcolonial agency.

In Chapter Two, I showed the linkage of new media and postcolonial theory that is specific in Indonesian context. The point of intersection between these two domains remains in the self-identification of being a nation that consequently triggers a debate about what colonialism means for Indonesians. The wide-ranging diversity that constitutes Indonesia has also perpetuated the colonial practice after the period of Dutch colonialism. It is materialized in the history of Indonesian media that was governed and dictated by the authoritarian regime. In the first section of Chapter One, I came to the conclusion that it is hard to frame Indonesia as once-colonized country since this nation is still continuously experiencing the history of oppression, domination, control and coercion, but in a different pattern. The ongoing construction of national culture corresponds to the ongoing colonialism.

The State's intervention on media realm that gave a new face in modern colonialism is what makes the emergence of new media crucial in the discourse of postcolonialism. The second part of Chapter Two was welcoming new media as a symbol of resistances toward domineering discourse. I concentrated to the specific phenomenon on Facebook that strengthens the belief of participatory culture as the notable promise of new media. "The

movement of 1.000.000 *Facebookers* to support Chandra M. Hamzah and Bibit Samad Rianto” historically marked the momentous point in the history of Indonesia since it brought Facebook, the most-growth networking site in Indonesia, to light and gave it a sense of struggle since it addressed the problem whether Indonesia has been totally liberated from repressive regimes or not. This movement intriguingly captured the moment when the image of a nation is materialized in the problematical nature of metaphor ‘lizard vs. crocodile’. It is within this metaphor, the national identity becomes the arena of clash, debate and confrontation. The production of narrative on Facebook, especially in the account of this movement was enormous. It proves that narrative will always remain within the pervasiveness of new media and its emergence is the product of interchanging relation between information technology, culture and society. Metaphorizing one’s identity is significant in the history of Indonesia, since it demonstrates how the participatory culture promoted by Facebook authorizes the subjects to question, doubt and freely put forward the plurality of interpretations instead of receiving them narrated by others. I have suggested that there will be no end for some kind of battle including the battle of the dominant vs. the dominated since it unfortunately still becomes the necessary condition of identity construction in Indonesian polity. But more importantly, the postcolonial subjects are now transformed from the object to the subject of knowledge.

Following the previous remarks, in Chapter Three, I proposed the importance of Orientalism discourse in the self-production of knowledge. Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism demonstrates how postcolonial subjects are continuously striving for self-identification. I have argued that postcolonial subjects clearly should not be defined only as identities inhabiting the period which followed colonialism. The arrival of new media gave a new voice to those who were marginalized and called as the ‘Other’. It is about the time for the Orient to produce the truth about oneself, finding its place in the virtual in order to be known as they want to. The self-image of the Orient was scrutinized through three different sections on Facebook which are: 1) identification under the profile picture where the users can narrate their identity, 2) political views under the section ‘Info’ and 3) religious views under the section ‘Info’.

Spoken or written down from the perspective of Orientalism, the notion of the otherness has been lively played out by the Orient, the Indonesian, to mock any supreme political and religious institutions that persistently put forth their existence as the legitimate sources of ‘truth’ and power. It is very interesting to find out how the concept of Otherness

can not be simply adapted in the relation between the colonizer and the colonized as this concept has been employed to point at the subjugated natives who were excluded from the dominant national discourse without necessarily having a point of contact with former colonizer. It is shown from a range of political and religious view that I have selected. 'Left Hedonic', 'Transrational', 'No Facism', 'Liberal', 'Abstain', 'Apathetic', 'Other', 'Neutral', and 'Proud to be the member of People's Democratic Party' are the chosen political views that I exposed in my analysis. For me, all statements are arguing on the importance to keep identity heterogeneous by standing up against the Unitarian system that attempts to keep other voices but the dominant one silenced. On the religious views, I selected statements as narratives that stand outside the mainstream-institutionalized religious institution in Indonesia: 'God is in Internet. Believe me!', agnostic', 'toujours fidele', 'progressive muslim', 'proud to be infidels...they shall enjoy freedom, democracy, art and rock music', 'esoteric', 'inheritance' (*warisan*), Religion and Atheism are the same stupidity with different name' 'monyetism' (*'monyet'* means monkey) or 'samawi religions' (*agama samawi*). The multiple image of the Orient as performed on those three sections criticizes the former assumption that the Orient is the single and unchanging Orient. However, even the Orient itself can not be performed and represented in one single image, not only by others but also by themselves, yet at the same time, the Orient is not completely free from the logic of subjugation, rather moving to the other form of colonization that authorizes new practices of coercion and religious/political-based violence. The struggle of postcolonial identity (the Orient) is about how to produce non-dominative and non-coercive knowledge without being trapped to think within the logic of colonialism

Formerly situated in the binary opposition between the West and the Orient, the Indonesian people live in the paradox, because their resistance cannot escape from the need to be free from being defined by other than themselves. This problem comprises in the issue of authenticity since it addresses the question of who the self is in the virtual world, not as an essential being but as an authentic being that authenticates him/herself through the self-production of knowledge that is frequently contradiction in terms. On the one hand, the production of the self on Facebook is aimed to free the Indonesians from the stereotypes, biases or prejudiced posed by the West. On the other hand, even though the struggle of emancipation is meant to challenge the dominant discourse in local context rather than to confront the Western knowledge, the Indonesians still are situated as the Orient, the label created by non-Orient. This is because the resistance of the Indonesian people does not aim

to substitute the term 'Orient' with other self-created name as a way of showing self-liberation or freeing themselves from the binary the West-the Orient. Rather, it promotes self-built images and makes them visible for the others by continuously constructing self-definition of who should be considered as the 'Others'.

I am convinced to say that new media is a major contribution to bring the power back to the citizens which formerly was concentrated in the ruling regimes. Certain ideas are liberally spread out in Facebook, creating an unstoppable flow of resistance toward the dominant discourse. It is the communal production of the narrative in the virtual reality that gives space a new magnitude of regulating conflict, constructing the dominant discourse, and producing ideologies. But however, I also think that it simplifies the complex quality of new media by assuming that the users fully hold the power and control over reality they produce. Considering Facebook as the Western expansion in economic and cultural terrain, in the last chapter I argued that postcolonial subjects have to face the fate of being ruled by the supremacy of objects. I have suggested that the process of transformation from colonized subjects to liberated beings will necessitate the involvement of medium as it brings the material into the representational system when the system of signs is mediating human experience and bringing the notion of agency into crisis.

In the first sub-chapter of Chapter Four, the rhetoric of spatiality on Facebook demonstrates the problematic function of space in the discourse of postcolonialism. In the first part of this chapter, I explained that self-writing is the manifestation of confessional space. It produces the confession as the space for authentication and production. The former is significant in showing the position of the subjects in the cultural debate as demonstrated in the narrative of the users that addresses the issues of having technology as a way to uncover what might be obscured by the dominant discourse. This is possible to happen because of the later conception of confession: the space of production that enables the subjugated people to produce space for cultural or political resistance through the making of narrative. I propose these two conceptions to lay a path for the next model of spatial configuration that troubles the identity of liberated subjects.

For the Indonesians, the production of spaces bring implication not only because it makes the postcolonial identity known to others, but also turns it into commodity once it takes place in the form of signs. I have made an attempt to make it obvious by analyzing two applications on Facebook which are 'Create a Group' and 'Cause'. Each speaks to a distinct subject and addresses the issue of consumption in a different way. 'Groups' uses the benefit

of connectivity to encourage the users to overcome the simplification of different voices by creating their own space for resistance. 'Causes' challenges the assumption that postcolonial subjects are passive by utilizing the accessible space to play an equal part for social support and take this action as an alternative way to confront any stereotyped prejudices. Even though these two applications are differently making the most of virtual space to incite the participation of the users, I start to see how they both also support the modern colonization that has been incorporated in the global market. Besides helping the postcolonial subjects to confront the space of homogenous narrative, at least by giving the sense of participation, Facebook is refashioning the rhetoric of colonization through the manipulation of signs. When the self is enhanced technologically, identity becomes a sign.

Finally, in this conclusion, I argue that as long as the subjects are constituted in the circuit of need that triggers the act of consumption, not simply over the material goods but over all possible ideas and manifestation of culture, they are fated to be a consumer. At this point, narrative and space are not merely produced but consumed and the identity of postcolonial subjects is now determined by the act of consumption in four ways: 1). creating a virtual space through the act of self-writing and formation and the creation of virtual community is voluntary participating in the extension of actual space, 2). the extension of space in virtual domain is the precondition for global capitalism to expand the opportunity to gain more profit, 3). producing and utilizing more spaces also means manipulating the system of signs as they produce identity through the making of narrative and, 4). the production of narrative is the process through which the subjects are manipulated and turned into a sign, a commodity that becomes the precondition of consumption. It is within this interrelated mode of production and consumption that the postcolonial subjects, a consumer, continuously take their agency to mean and bring the colonization and contestation to trouble when Facebook is situated in the continuance of global capitalism system. The enthusiasm for interdisciplinary approach of new media and postcolonial studies opens up the possibility to ask the possibility of new media to escape from the logic of colonialism. If the agency of the self is preconditioned by the mechanism of global network that perpetuates domination, realizing that the equal access to technology has not happened yet, then it is fruitful to argue whether the representational system in new media has always been dominative and exploitative.

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