

FACEBOOK : A Product Of Popular Culture And The Virtual Interreligious Dynamics

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Abstract

Popular Culture especially Facebook has become a part our everyday life. Religious communities such as church is also using this media of communication to support its ministerial purposes. In this article, I try to explore about the ideas of Facebook in order to see to what extent this media has already contributed not merely for any particular religion, but also for strengthening interreligious relations. This article begins with a consideration on why we should pay attention on Facebook in our theological discourses, followed by a brief description why it has been said as a form of popular culture. In the next section, I will analyze social, existential or hermeneutical, and transcendent dimensions functions of Facebook setting out from Gordon Lynch's theory. In the end, I will specifically highlight how Facebook can contribute for interreligious dynamics. This part ends up with three considerations that Facebook has built an *online interreligious community*, increased public awareness on social and political issues, and bridged the gap in the spatially-segregated community.

Keywords : *Popular culture, Facebook, integrated media of communication, religious dimensions, interreligious relations, and an online interreligious community.*

Abstrak

Budaya Populer terutama Facebook telah menjadi bagian dari kehidupan sehari-hari kita. Banyak komunitas religious, seperti gereja juga menggunakan media komunikasi ini untuk menunjang tugas-tugas pelayanannya. Dalam artikel ini, saya mencoba untuk mengeksplorasi gagasan-gagasan tentang Facebook untuk melihat sejauh mana media ini telah berkontribusi bukan hanya untuk suatu agama tertentu, tetapi juga untuk memperkuat hubungan-hubungan antar agama. Artikel ini dimulai dengan suatu pertimbangan tentang mengapa kita mesti menaruh perhatian terhadap Facebook dalam diskursus-diskursus teologi kita, diikuti dengan deskripsi singkat tentang alasan mengapa media ini dianggap sebagai salah satu bentuk budaya populer. Pada bagian selanjutnya, saya akan menganalisis fungsi sosial, eksistensial atau hermeneutis, dan transenden dari Facebook berangkat dari teori Gordon Lynch. Pada bagian akhir, saya akan secara khusus menyoroti bagaimana Facebook dapat berkontribusi bagi dinamika antar agama. Bagian ini berakhir dengan tiga pertimbangan, bahwa Facebook telah turut membangun *suatu komunitas antar agama online*, meningkatkan kesadaran publik tentang isu-isu sosial dan politik, dan menjembatani jurang dalam komunitas yang tersegregasi secara spasial.

Kata kunci : *Budaya populer, Facebook, media komunikasi terintegrasi, dimensi atau fungsi keagamaan, hubungan antar agama, dan komunitas antar agama online.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human history is changing drastically over the last three decades especially when the internet with all of its forms come to existence. It gives so much contributions for the development of human civilization in terms of its abilities to provide access for gaining as well as improving knowledge and science, connecting communities, transferring information, functioning as a critical means to control government and citizens, and even being used as a virtual media for religious purposes. By mentioning those contributions for humanity, I do not intend to eliminate the negative impacts of it. None can deny that this platform has also negatively affected people in different ways. Many forms of virtual crimes, immoral conducts, hoax, political black campaigns, etc. are some forms of negative impacts. However, I will not elaborate those general impacts specifically here. Both influences have signified the new era of global society with all of its complexity and shaped our identity as well as our approach to community.

Speaking about internet as a newly popular media in our society today, we cannot withdraw ourselves in looking at Facebook as a massive-global platform of communication. Facebook becomes so popular in entire world since its first launch in 2004. McCracken notes that only six years after its existence Facebook has surpassed 500 million users¹ and in the quarter of 2018 it has reached more than 2 billion active users making it the biggest social networking service in the world.² The massiveness of Facebook has created *lubang hitam kebudayaan* (a black hole of culture).³ As a part of social community, Church is also using Facebook to support its ministerial tasks. McCracken describes that, the church uses Facebook for a myriad reasons, including as a way of communication among congregations, publication of photos, videos, and presentational materials of the church, a connection point where people can invite others to community, spreading the Good News as well as an online box for prayer requests.⁴ In this context, I think that the narratives of Facebook should be placed in our theological discourses, otherwise our theology becomes less relevant to our modern world as put by Lanora Rand followed by McCracken, that “Facebook is a new way of being the church”.⁵ Moreover, the significance behind the efforts to theologically reflect on Facebook is because of this platform has become a part of our “everyday life practice”. Therefore, to set aside discussion of this issue is to make

our theology not contextual. Contextuality of theology depends on how it “seeks God” in the particular context where it exists. When a theology embraces context in its theological discourse it then becomes more attractive to the contemporary world and “rebrand” itself.⁶

In this article, I would like to discuss about the essence of Facebook as a form of popular culture and on what reasons it is understood so. To understand the concept of popular culture, I will use theories of popular culture explored by Gordon Lynch and Keltonn Cobb. After that, I will continue to analyze religious functions or dimensions of Facebook in order to see to what extend Facebook has already taken religious positions. Afterwards, I will be focusing on how Facebook can be seen as a virtual-interreligious space in which peoples regardless of their religious, ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation, and national backgrounds can interact, affect, and shape each other. This gives us a new perspective about how interreligious interactions can take place on virtual spheres indicating that human encounter now goes beyond physical encounter. Setting out from this consideration, in the end of this article I will explore how Facebook can contribute for a segregated community.

II. FACEBOOK AS CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE

Before jumping to the identification of Facebook as a form of popular culture, it is better to understand the concept of popular culture itself. This term was not used before 1960s but later introduced after that year when the works of Arnold Leavis and Clement Greenberg had been published. They, however, did not use the term as we do today but naming it as “mass culture”⁷ (Leavis) and “kitsch” (Greenberg). They played those two words in a quite negative way when discussing the idea of popular culture as debased compared to other cultures, especially traditional one. Nevertheless, they did contribute to the development of the concept.⁸

Gordon Lynch explains that there is no static definition of popular culture meaning that the term has been differently defined based on the academic perspectives used by those who study it. He said, “Rather, popular culture is a term that has been used in quite different ways by different writers depending on the particular academic project that they are committed”.⁹ However, Lynch further

describes three ways of understanding popular culture. According to him, it should be firstly seen as an opponent to other different forms of culture such as “high culture” or “*the avant-garde*”.¹⁰ High culture is a category of classical tradition including arts, philosophy and literature, while *the avant-garde* is a progressive and modern culture such as figurative art. Secondly, he also points out the differences between “popular” and “high” or “folk” cultures by which we can see the characteristics of each. In following Bruce Forbes and Jeffry Mahan, he describes those differences in terms of their sizes of audiences and ways of transmission. Classical culture usually has a limited audience and transmitted through written media such as literary magazine and book. Classical culture is quite similar to folk culture which covers only certain groups such as family, clans, community, local or regional group. The difference between the two lies in the way they are transmitted where the latter takes oral form. Popular culture is another category that is widespread, transcending physical boundaries, popular and massive marked by its larger audience and supported by the use of mass media to transmit meanings or values. It uses technology or other media of communication to reach its goals. Finally, popular culture is a new attempt to oppose dominant culture which he sees “oppressive, outdated, and without the touch of experience or aspiration”.¹¹

Given these three different approaches pointed out by Lynch, we are helped to see that there is no indeed a particular academic definition of popular culture as has been mentioned earlier. However, the features elaborated in his second approach led us to say that that culture is totally different from classical, *avant-garde*, and folk cultures since it takes technology in transmitting the values, meanings, life-styles, knowledge or beliefs as well as its global reach. Yahya Wijaya has detailed this as follows: “popular culture is produced massively with the help of industrial technology, professionally marketed for the so-called profit, and addressed to the mass public. It is also spread globally, transcending geographical boundaries, languages, and primordial or social differences. It is closely related to the development of informative technology, especially electronic media and internet”.¹² These all have created a new world called “global village” in which the world is getting smaller.¹³

The forms of popular culture can be seen in many kinds of instrument. Kelton Cobb mentions a number of example such as telephone, radio, the cinema, videocassettes, video games, compact discs, fax machines, computers, the internet, cable satellites, broadband and digital technologies along with newspapers, magazines, catalogues and books.¹⁴ In our context of discussion, Facebook is seen as a newest form of the culture. Some considerations should be taken into account. Firstly, based on our limitation to the features of popular culture we can see that Facebook is a product of communication technology and its working mechanism depending on technological devices such as the internet, hand phone or computer. It is therefore obvious that Facebook is a multi-technological media that can combine more than one instruments. In Facebook we can find not only “the words”, but also “audio” and “audio-visualized products” such as video, live news, online magazines, books and newspapers, and even calling facility such as Facebook Messenger. It is then better understood as *the most integrated form of popular culture* in our contemporary world. Secondly, its ability to globally and massively reach people in different times and spaces is undeniable. Once the user click “share” button from Ambon, people in Amsterdam or in Marrakech can also see at the same time, or in some cases, they see faster compared to people who live in the remote areas of Ceram Island due to network issues. Not only that, it also provides them space to interact simultaneously. These abilities also signify the difference between this media and other forms of communication as newspaper, telephone, or television. In eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, magazine was labelled as a tremendous invention in human history that could transfer information massively to the public. This is why Alexis de Tocqueville in 1830s said, “Only a newspaper can put the same thought as the same time before a thousand readers”.¹⁵ Compared to now, magazine has already been left behind by Facebook due to its low-level of speediness as well as its limited reader community. Another example is conventional telephone which functions as a means of communication, but lack of any visualization. The last example is television. This kind of popular culture is more integrated compared to newspaper and telephone in terms of their massiveness, speediness, and visualization. It is, however, still unable to give space for direct interaction between the producers with the audience like what

Facebook offers. Therefore, in virtual circle created by Facebook the patterns of human interaction becomes so dynamic.

In addition, although Facebook is an instrument to connect people as well as to deliver meanings and values, this platform should be seen as more than just a “messenger”, but “media”. The first is static, but the latter is dynamic. Kobb emphasizes that the media are not neutral instruments and functioned not like pipelines that deliver symbols produced in the traditional spheres of culture. Media at some levels can be “a cultural sphere itself”, so it too can turn to be “the message”¹⁶. I myself agree with this changing form of Facebook from “the messenger” into “the message”. For instance, when a user becomes so addictive and dependent on Facebook that could mean that it has defined the user and give her or him an alternative identity.

III. RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF FACEBOOK

After discussing how Facebook understood as the most integrated platform of communication signifying the new era of popular culture, now I continue to analyze religious dimensions or functions of Facebook. Our attempts to see this should be placed in the frame of religious aspects. Speaking about religion, there have been two aspects that we have to keep in mind, namely *substance* and *function*. As a *substance* religion is characterized by certain elements such as belief, people with special religious tasks (priest, *imam*, or *guru*), scripture, traditions, rituals, and sacred places, while as a *function* it plays certain roles to improve human relations, both inter-personal and inter-communal, to provide them with a set of resources that can be useful in search of the meaning of life, and to experience God. Lynch elaborates them in three categories, namely “social, existential or hermeneutical, and transcendent functions of religion”¹⁷.

As a social structure, religion can “bind” people bringing them together into one communion such as church. In the community, any particular barriers are erased and replaced by mutual interaction among community members. For instance, in church congregation the members represent diverse backgrounds; man or woman, straight or LGBTQ people, educated or uneducated, poor or rich, immigrants or indigenous people and so forth, but when they come into the church they all become one. This is what Lynch identifies as a social function of religion.

The second function (existential or hermeneutical) is related to the strengths of religion to help people to understand the meaning of their life, shaping their attitudes, and encouraging them to live their lives. In this way, realities such as human relations, families, justice, harmony, and diversity as well as discrimination, terrorism, violence, disaster, or death are reflected. He mentions a set of resources which are decisive in achieving the goals such as myths, rituals, values, and narratives. Finally, religion also functions as a medium through which people are able to experience God. This kind of spiritual encounter can be experienced through prayer, worship or meditation.

The question now is whether Facebook have those religious dimensions or not. Let me answer this question by examining those three dimensions in detail.

a. Social Function of Facebook

I will start by giving a brief description about my Facebook profile. I have been an active member of this platform since the late of 2007. I have almost 5000 friends on my friend list reaching the maximum number of friendship. I do not recognize all of them, even probably only 60 percent of the total users whom I know at least by their names, while some others I know very well since they are my family, relatives, friends, classmates, workmates, travel mates, students, etc. They all represent different backgrounds – religious (Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, local religious practitioners, and even unreligious), ethnic (Ambonese, Batakese, Javanese, Papuan, Chinese, etc.), sexual orientation (straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender), national (Indonesian, other Asians, Africans, European, and American), and so forth. To put this simply, my Facebook space has become a place where people of different identities are virtually united. This union signifies the existence of community, a community that Ben Anderson calls “an imagined community” because of the larger integration in it.¹⁸ In such an integration, communication and interaction often happen even though among the users there is still a place for strangeness. That interaction at least indicated through the executions of “like”, “comment”, or “share” buttons. These executions can both strengthen and weaken the relationship either in virtual or real world. Despite its destructive impact, however, we cannot deny that Facebook has made those unknown become known,

strangers become friends, and those who are far become nearer. Therefore, it strongly implies that the social function of Facebook – just like in religion – cannot be overlooked.

b. Existential or hermeneutical Function of Facebook

Speaking of this function, I think that “the content” that Facebook presents to its community should be taken into account. Almost every single day I can see on my Facebook circle people come up with so many different postings, but I herewith do not describe it all one by one. To be clear, however, I will mention the suicide attacks done by ISIS on three churches in Surabaya, May 2018 that have taken innocent souls. This news has been spread both by individual users and news agencies through words, pictures, videos, and (or) live videos. On postings, people condemn the act of terrorism, showing their empathy and prayers to the victims, urging the government to take actions, and or trying to interpret why this happened. What have been shown on Facebook related to this reality indicate that Facebook increases their sensitivity of what is going on in their surroundings. The postings on Facebook help us to reflect upon what kind of society we live in today and what roles that we should take to make it better and to reduce any life-destroying potentials. In this context, we could see that there is meaning, which closely relates to our existence that Facebook is trying to bring and support. I end this part with a strong belief that Facebook has also existential or hermeneutical dimension.

c. Transcendent Function of Facebook

We may find difficulty in analyzing the transcendent function of Facebook as a means of encountering transcendence. This is because Facebook is a quite different form of popular culture, especially compared to “film”. In quoting Robert Johnston’s evaluation to film, Lynch points out that in film there is a possibility for us to have transcendent or religious experience. It can be achieved through the process of watching which is sometimes aesthetic (maybe he means ‘emotional’). Even though it is difficult for us to have religious experience through Facebook, but the explanation about film provided by Johnston reminds us that since it is the most integrated media of communication in which we can

also download movie through the link attached and start watching it there, I can assume that it also bridges us to the religious experience indirectly.

The description of the *social, existential or hermeneutical*, and *transcendent* functions of Facebook has shown that as a product of popular culture this platform has something to do with religion. By saying that I do not intend to conclude that Facebook is “a new religion” just like Rupert Till argues when speaking about pop music, especially the concert of Bruce Springsteen which according to his fans, “seeing Bruce concert is like a religious experience; it is a spiritual experience; one leaves a Bruce Springsteen concert with the feeling that one has just been to religious revival and there is reaffirmation of faith and hope and joy”.¹⁹ On the contrary, it has to be seen as an instrument that can help people of faith to be more religious since it strengthens and widens communal networks, opens their eye to see realities around and motivated to do something as religious people, and bridges them to religious experience. This religious essence will now lead me to see interreligious motive in Facebook.

IV. FACEBOOK AND INTERRELIGIOUS DYNAMICS

If Facebook serves religious functions as we have already noted before, it can also have interreligious dimension. In this part, I have three considerations on how Facebook can be understood as interreligious.

1. Facebook builds and strengthens an online interreligious community!

In above description about the social dimension of Facebook, we have already seen that as a networking site, Facebook is building a new kind of community in which people of different faiths – known or unknown before – can be connected. Related to this, Mia Lovheim comments that,

“The internet can be seen as a new kind of space for social interaction, constructed by networks of computers. Today the internet is also increasingly being used as a religious space, where people can get access to information, and interact with *like-minded people* or *those of different convictions* in discussions but also through the enactment of rituals.”²⁰

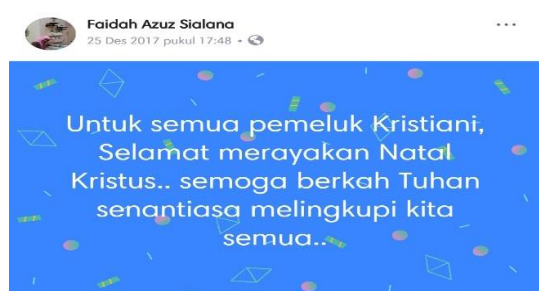
The networking site is obviously providing a higher intensity of interaction and communication, something that has already been a crucial issue in our real world, particularly in modernized-urban society. Idi Subandy

Ibrahim implies that when urban citizens no longer respect to both inter-personal and inter-communal relations, this media comes to uplift *the sense of community* by which people will feel that they still have room “to exist, be listened, be cared, and be recognized”.²¹ A study related to Twitter (which is similar to Facebook) conducted by Anatoliy Gruzd, Barry Wellman and Yuri Takhteyev has also concluded that this media can form the basis for interlinked personal communities and even of a sense of community (or a sense of belonging).²² Therefore, Facebook is said as a site for interreligious encounters²³ and at the same time creating *an online interreligious community*. This idea is developed from Heidi’Campbell’s view of the internet as “an online religious community”.²⁴

An online interreligious community created on Facebook has indicated that religions are now entering a new age where interfaith dialogue is taking place both in real and virtual world. That, our dialogue has gone beyond physical encounter and at the same time widening interreligious networks penetrating the boundaries of geographical spaces and times. Such an engagement will become more massive, widespread, and effective since Facebook is now considered as the most integrated platform of communication because of its massiveness, speediness, integration, and global reach. As a consequence, the church as well as the other religious institutions should take Facebook into account in conducting interfaith projects.

Another interesting thing of *online interreligious community* built by Facebook is how community members use the platform to improve their relations. Postings containing of greetings or wishes to another Facebook members who celebrate any special religious days is just one of the examples. In the following pictures I quote two examples of Facebook postings:

(Posted by *Faidah Azuz Sialana*)



(Posted by *Yudit Tiwery*)



On the left picture we see that a Facebook user (Faidah Azuz Sialana) delivered greetings and wishes to all Christians who celebrated Christmas on 25 December 2017, while on the right one we see another example from Yudit Tiwery who also did the same for Moslems who were entering the fasting month of Ramadhan (on 16 May 2018). Both users belong to different religious traditions: the former is a Moslem woman and the latter is Christian. What have been posted by them clearly indicated that this virtual network helps them to maintain interreligious relation as well as giving examples on how this platform should be used to promote the narratives of tolerance, inclusiveness, and peace.

2. Facebook increases public awareness on social or political issues

The contribution of Facebook is not merely in term of the high intensity of interreligious interactions, but also for the improvement of public awareness on social or political issues. Through postings a user can express his or her opinion related to any particular issues; government's policy, general election, law enforcement, human rights, economics, as well as corruption, social injustice, xenophobia, human trafficking, poverty, ecological disasters, and terrorism. Ibrahim in his analysis also concludes, that:

“Facebook sebagai website jaringan sosial memungkinkan anggota untuk berbagi informasi personal, opini, dan media. Anggota Facebook juga dapat mendukung kandidat politik, namun mereka juga bisa memunculkan pandangannya tentang isu-isu partikular.”²⁵

In the following part, I will give an example to show how users regardless of their religious backgrounds commenting on terrorism.

(posted by Metta Dian)



(posted by Rudy Rahabeat)



The two postings above addressed the same issue of terrorism in a quite same date, which indicated that they are related to suicide attacks occurred in

Surabaya in May 2018. Metta Dian (a Moslem woman) posted that if someone is found posting something like hatred speech and publicly show their support to the acts of terrorism, she will immediately delete them from her friends list, while Rudy Rehabeat (a priest of GPM) encouraged his interreligious online community to keep standing in the paths of peace and love and to stand against terrorism. The message of these postings are clear, that both disagree with all forms of terrorism and implied that that barbaric act has no place both in their personal and public spaces. There are two things that we can mention regarding their comments. Firstly, Facebook is used by them to show their participation in the process of maintaining national security stability. Secondly, the expression of social belief entails the use of Facebook.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Ibrahim also supports the idea of Facebook as a means to increase political awareness. According to him, when the criminalization of two commissioners of *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* (Corruption Eradication Commission) were detained in 2009 (Bibit and Chandra), Facebook also took role in supporting them. He counted that within a short period of time the number of Facebook group members (*Gerakan Satu Juta Facebookers Dukung Chandra Hamzah dan Bibit Samad Riyanto* official group for the supporters, literally translated by the author as ‘the movement of one million Facebook users to support Chandra Hamzah and Bibit Samad Ryanto) had surpassed 500 thousand people. That online support resulted in the establishment of Fact-Finding Team instructed by the President and at the same time signified the civil revival.²⁶ An example given by Ibrahim here helps us to explore a bit about the background of those online supporters. The members represented different religious, ethnical, social, political, and cultural backgrounds, but bound by the common political awareness. Their response for political situation in Indonesia can be understood as a way in which they fulfill their responsibility as religious Indonesians. At last, this case also strengthens our analysis concerning the religious function of Facebook as we have elaborated in the previous part.

3. Facebook bridges the gap in the Spatially-Segregated Community

Segregation happens almost in many parts of the world, especially in the post conflict area such as Ambon. Quoting Wolff, Urwasi defines segregation

as ‘a formal or informal separation of one group from another based on markers on differences, where race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation or religion is used as the foundation for justifying a split between groups and population’²⁷. The process of segregation can be caused by either voluntary or forced fashion.²⁸ Historically, segregation in Ambon took place in 16th century when the Portuguese occupied *Nusantara* (Indonesia before independence) and sharpened by the Dutch policy favoring Ambonese Christians. At that time, segregation in Ambon was clearer due to the geographical setting created among the Ambonese. In later period especially after the independence, the central government initiated a massive transmigration program bringing many people from Sulawesi, Java, and Sumatera to the island of Ambon and some other surrounding islands. That New Order’s development program also worsened segregation in the region. In 1999, ethno-religious conflict broke in Ambon causing hundred thousand Internal Displaced People (IDP) that later became a basis for the government policy of relocation in post-conflict era. Those three periods were a crucial stage in which Ambon became more and more segregated.²⁹ As a consequence, Ambonese people lack of public spaces where people can live together day by day. Lacking spaces for intensive interaction in society will of course give an impact for social relations. In order to prevent this, many projects have been taken by the government, religious institutions, or civic society to bridge the gaps among the society members, but still it does not change the spatial structures. Nevertheless, what we have seen on Facebook seems more interesting to be noted. The ways users use that platform to interact and make conversations with other Amboneses leave an impression that for them segregation only exists in “physical spaces”. The presence of this networking site makes them really ‘present’ to each other, no matter how segregated physically they are. By saying this I do not intend to conclude that the existence of virtual world has replaced the real one, but what I am observing is that when it seems that as if physical public space in Ambon is getting smaller, Facebook has arrived to break down the walls and become another alternative public space for the Ambonese community.

V. CLOSING REMARKS

As church or religious communities living in the contemporary world we can no longer overlook the existence of such popular culture, especially Facebook as the most integrated platform of communications that has been proven able to create “an online interreligious community”. It is therefore an obligation for religious institutions to take the platform seriously, not merely to spread their religious announcements, but as a media to engage with people of different faiths. Our interreligious projects will be more effective, massive, and impacting a global community if we take this networking site into account. Its massiveness, speediness, and global reach should be benefited by religions to build, improve, and strengthens their interreligious relations.

Endnotes :

¹ Brett McCracken, “The Separation of Church and Status: How Online Social Networking Helps and Hurts the Church” in *The Princeton Theological Review* Vol. XVIII No. 2, 2010, p. 23.

²Information gathered from www.statista.com accessed on 25 May 2018.

³ Hikmat Budiman, *Lubang Hitam Kebudayaan*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2002), p. 32.

⁴ Brett McCracken, “The Separation of Church and Status: How Online Social Networking Helps and Hurts the Church” in *The Princeton Theological Review* Vol. XVIII No. 2, 2010, p. 23.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*. (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), p.20

⁷ John Fiske (1989) differentiates between “mass culture” and “popular culture”. As quoted by Lynch, he says “mass culture is the cultural system of commercially produced and marketed entertainments and commodities that are offered to the mass population. Popular culture, by contrast, is what people actually do with these entertainments and commodities in their real lives, which may have little to do with the meanings or uses that their commercial producers intended for them (Lynch, p.12)

⁸ Ibid, p. 195

⁹ Ibid, p. 2

¹⁰ The *Avant-garde* is a term used to the products of ideas, styles, and methods which are very original or modern in comparison to the period in which they happen (compared to definition provided by Cambridge Dictionary).

¹¹ Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*. (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 3-13.

¹² Teaching material for Theology and Popular Culture formatted in Microsoft Power Point entitled “Perdebatan Akademis Tentang Budaya Populer” (translated by the author as “Academic Debate on Popular Culture”), Post Graduate Program of Theology, UKDW, 2012.

¹³ Hikmat Budiman, *Lubang Hitam Kebudayaan*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2002), pp.57-58.

¹⁴ Kelton Cobb, *Theology and Popular Culture*. (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), p. 37.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The idea of media seen as the message is developed by Marshall McLuhan and quoted by Cobb (see further in Cobb, *Theology and Popular Culture*, p. 38).

¹⁷ Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*. (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp.27-33.

¹⁸ Hikmat Budiman, *Lubang Hitam Kebudayaan*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2002), p. 60.

- ¹⁹ Clive Marsh and Vaughan S. Roberts, *Personal Jesus; How Popular Music Shapes Our Souls*. (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), pp.94-96.
- ²⁰ Mia Lovheim, "Young People and the Use of Internet As Transitional Space" in Heidelberg Journal of Religions on Internet 1.1, 2015, p. 6.
- ²¹ Idi Subandy Ibrahim, *Kritik Budaya Komunikasi* (translated by the author as Criticisms of Communication Culture), (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2011), p. 101.
- ²² Anatoliy Gruzd, Barry Wellman and Yuri Takhteyev, "Imagining Twitter as an Imagined Community", in *American Behavioural Scientist*, 2011, pp.19-21.
- ²³ Read more about this case study in Ruth Illman and Sofia Sjo, "Facebook as a Site for Interreligious Encounters: A Case Study from Finland" in *Journal of Contemporary Religion* Vol. 30, 2015.
- ²⁴ "An online religious community" developed by Campbell in the context of here discussion about the relationship between religion and the internet pointing out what the internet has contributed for religions. This can be seen in: Heidy Campbell, "Religion and the Internet" in *Communication Reserach Trens* Vol. 25 No.1, 2006, p.6.
- ²⁵ Quoted by the author from its original version in Bahasa Indonesia that may be translated: "Facebook as social networking possibly members to share personal information, opinion, and media. They can also support any political candidate, but also expressing their views on any particular issues". Idi Subandy Ibrahim, *Kritik Budaya Komunikasi* (translated by the author as Criticisms of Communication Culture), (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2011), p. 117.
- ²⁶ Idi Subandy Ibrahim, *Kritik Budaya Komunikasi* (translated by the author as Criticisms of Communication Culture), (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2011), pp. 115-116.
- ²⁷ Wara Urwasi, *Spatial Segregation and Ethno-Religious Violence: A Lesson from Ambon, Indonesia*, a paper of Arryman Fellowship, 2014, pp. 8-9.
- ²⁸ Mohammad Hasan Ansori et all., "Post-Conflict Segregation, Violence, and Reconstruction Policy in Ambon", a research result (online version) by National Violence Monitoring System (SNPK), the Habibie Center, p. 12.
- ²⁹ For further reading: Badrus Sholeh, "The Dynamics of Moslem Christian Relations in Ambon, Eastern Indonesia" in *International Journal of Bussiness and Social Science* Vol. 4. No. 3, 2014, pp.303-305. Also, Mohammad Hasan Ansori et all., "Post-Conflict Segregation, Violence, and Reconstruction Policy in Ambon", a research result (online version) by National Violence Monitoring System (SNPK), the Habibie Center, pp.14-16.

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