

## Computer-Mediated Communication and Gendered Presentation of Selves

Ruzy Suliza Hashim, Zillasafarina Jaafar, Imran Ho-Abdullah and Noraini Md Yusof  
School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

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**Abstract:** Malaysian women are turning to virtual space as a means to be heard. In this study, we explore a blog called The Madness of MokeikNab, written by a Malay woman blogger who shows the different subjectivities of a mother, daughter, wife and career woman in Malaysia. Talking to cybercitizens, many of whom will remain as friends that she would never meet or talk to in physical life, MokeikNab exemplifies the ways in which a modern Malay woman negotiates her many roles within the boundaries of socio-cultural norms and religious parameters. Using Erving Goffman's presentation of self in everyday life, the researchers investigate four elements: the self created by blogging in the internet, the weblog as the empowering tool for women, women as subject position in negotiating the norms cultural practices and religious way of life and the strategies of gender talk used in the weblog. This study illuminates that the weblog is an empowering tool used to express both private and public thoughts. The outlet allows women to write freely on issues she feels strongly about. In the process, she reveals her changing roles and invites a sense of camaraderie with other bloggers.

**Key words:** Weblogs, Malaysian blogosphere, Erving Goffman, presentation of self, gender construction, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

Blogging allows bloggers to present themselves in idiosyncratic ways. This study is triggered by the notion that one does gender online. Using a weblog called The Madness of MokeikNab (<http://www.mokeiknab.blogspot.com>) whose epithet reveals: the motives, mementoes and melodrama of a thirty something mom, it is clear that the blogger foregrounds her identity as a modern Malay mother who is techno-savvy and unafraid of making public her private life. Using the nickname MokeikNab, this blogger epitomizes a modern Malay woman who speaks about herself to a faceless audience. Her posts show the ways in which she negotiates her freedom of speech within the boundaries of social norms and religious parameters.

In her previous life as former well-known television reporter, editor and newscaster, MokeikNab has many interesting stories to share. She shows her multifacetedness: a career woman, a mother of three children, a loving wife, a good daughter and a caring friend to many. Her first entry was written on Monday, July 5, 2004. However, she stopped writing on November 15, 2007 before resuming blogging on 10 July 2008. The entries described three stages of her life: first, her life in Malaysia; second, her life as an expatriate in Jakarta

Indonesia and third, her return to Malaysia. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be mainly on the first phase of her life although, the researchers make selective references to the second and third phases of her life whenever necessary. MokeikNab posted her writings regularly on assorted topics of interest such as office matters, current political issues, family matters and her own personal predicaments. Her blog as captured below, functions as the medium for the presentation of self (Fig. 1).

The basic premise which underpins this study is the liberty encapsulated in cyberspace. Assuming a different identity from the one known in physical space can be both liberating and dangerous. In this weblog, MokeikNab is performing a self or many kinds of selves because of the many roles she assume in her entries. By appropriating Erving Goffman's theory on dramaturgy on everyday life, first the woman's lived realities can be explored in three ways: fluidity of identity; ambivalence of roles and assumption of the subject position. The theory is useful in giving insights on the presentation of life in which every person is a social construct.

**Weblogs:** Blog entries can be easily subscribed through the RSS news feeds (RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary). The blogging

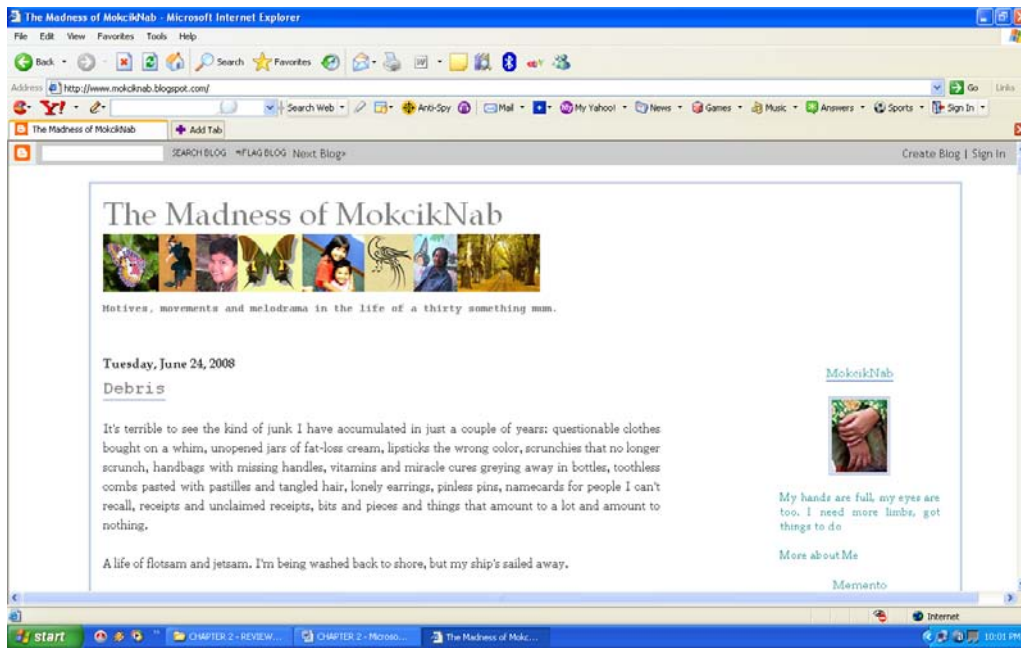


Fig. 1: MokcikNab's webblog

community can easily get access to the blog entries of a few selected blogs by using the news reader software offered by the RSS feeds, all displayed on a page. By clicking any chosen headline on the page, the reader will be able to read the full story. In fact, the RSS format is useful as it is adaptable to the technology of other media apparatus such as cell phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). Therefore, this internet technology maximizes time efficiency and versatility in readers surfing the internet and the blog researchers publicizing their research. This eventually creates a strong networking between the blog readers and researchers.

Such innovation explains the tremendous increase of internet traffic consisted of those who blog and own their own blogs. Huang indicate that bloggers have become the mainstream internet consumers as 70 million blogs with 1.6 million new postings were done everyday and 120,000 new blogs were produced on the internet. In Malaysia, there are about 500,000 active blogs in estimation. Malaysian blogosphere has even received more visitors when there are any hot, controversial issues raised in the blog for instance, prior to the latest 2008 Malaysian political election which has attracted 3-4 million blog readers. Women make 64% of bloggers which shows their visibility in cyberspace.

Many kinds of blogs exist. Blogs on personal matters and family relationships attract biggest traffic to their blogs (Nardi *et al.*, 2004a, b). MokcikNab's blog falls within the same category. Her blog can be categorized as

a personal website as it functions both as journal and diary (Cadle, 2005). The characteristics of a blog is unique as the distinct quality of a website as her blog somehow falls under the definition given by Torill Mortensen in Personal Publication and Public Attention:

What makes weblogs a genre different from the autobiography, the diary, the researcher's journal or any other pre-internet writing? The researchers recognize the weblog through the connections between text fragments within one blog but also to other texts available online. This means both existing connections and potential connections: those made by the writer and those made by the reader as the reader again becomes writer and links to the weblog from his or her own piece of work-frequently a weblog. While weblogs have many non-digital predecessors, blogs cannot live outside of the computer ([http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/personal\\_publication.html](http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/personal_publication.html))

Indeed, bloggers are empowered by blogging through the on-going communication that takes place between the bloggers and blog readers (Hourihan, 2002). Anyone who has access to computers and the internet can make his or her voice heard.

This gives marginalized people, namely women, an opportunity to articulate on issues they feel strongly about to anyone and everyone.

**Women and computer-mediated communication:** As much as the cyberspace is no longer a consensual hallucination as it becomes part of reality (Senjen and Guthrey, 1996), women's voices being heard through their writing in the blog entries have also become authentic (Mitra, 2004). It is in the blogs that their stories can be heard and ideas be shared. Through sharing of experiences over the blogosphere, the women have transformed what is private into political (Hollows, 2000; Stavrositu and Sundar, 2008). As a consequence, these women bloggers can express their voices as individuals and be able to define their own identities. The diary-like blogs enable women to indulge matters intimate or otherwise. If previously a personal diary is written and kept in secret and made more secure by lock and key now the blogs are no longer private.

The weblog has certainly become an empowering tool for women. Having a voice in the society, be it offline or on-line is very vital for the women (Hashim, 2007). Penrod (2007) analysis of the Pew Internet Study on Blog suggests that there are great number of minorities, namely the women and teenagers, who are located at the periphery of mainstream society who blog. Blogging is now seen as the conduit to decentralize their demarcation and submerge their silence. A demography of Malaysian blogosphere in 2006 reveals that most local bloggers are women which encompasses 64% of the whole Malaysian cyber-community (The Star, 30 November 2006; Tan, 2008) and this proves that Malaysian women are appropriating the new technology as the means to be heard and understood better. Hashim (2007) study of women bloggers showed the ways in which women congregate in cyberspace and articulate issues ranging from the home front to politics. Through the blogs, their stories travel in space and are read not only by another woman across the room but by other thousands of others around the world who have access to the technology.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Since blogging has caught many modern Malaysian women's imagination, it is important to explore an example of a blog authored by a woman to see the ways in which women's sense of liberation is made possible and plausible. This is due to the fact that in reality, a Muslim Malay woman is still confined within the constraints of social expectations and religious parameters as a devoted wife, caring mother and good daughter. For instance, as a devoted wife, she has to prioritize the husband and family over her own. She is also expected to be an ideal mother who waits for every need of the children. In addition as a modern Malay woman, she has to contribute to the career she is holding. As a consequence, she has

to submit to the Islamic way of life while being educated, financially independent and hold important position in the public domain (Omar, 2003). She definitely has to make a lot of adjustments and negotiations in representing herself.

The focus is placed by examining the written text and drawing analysis by applying Dramaturgical analysis. Using Goffman (1959) two sub principles of performance that is believe in the part one is playing and front highlight a woman's sense of liberation through blogging in the cyberspace. He argues that the interactions people have with each other are seen as the performance, defined as all the activities of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way of the other participants (Goffman 1959). According to Barnhart, Goffman's interaction is viewed as a performance, shaped by the environment and audience, constructed to provide others with impressions that are consonant with the desired goals of the actor (<http://employees.cfmc.com/adamb/writings/goffman.htm>; Manning, 1991).

Goffman's adoption of the perspectives echoes the memorable saying that all the world is a stage but we merely players as employed by Shakespeare in his play, *As You Like It*. Rosalind, the main character in the play becomes a young lad in guise. Similarly, MoksikNab is a mere player in the cyber stage who takes on a number of roles to play as part and parcel of her composite being in life. She may be seen guising her role as MoksikNab however, there may be parts played by her on stage which seem real.

One of the factors that determine the acceptance of the performance is the Belief in the Part One is Playing (Goffman, 1959). This leads to the evaluation of the plausibility of the social performance presented as the social reality. An actor who acts a part of the play expects the audience to put their faith in his acting thus believing the impression he has projected. This trust requires the audience to really think that he possesses the features of the character he has played and leads the life as played on the stage.

This brings to three different nature of the performances played by the actor; one as the actor who sincerely believes in the performance he has put up; two, who seems trusted by his performance but he himself does not believe it or three, who is the traitor to his performance by being cynical to the action. A sincere actor may experience satisfaction when he can convince the audience to take his impression as the real reality whereas a cynic may be indifferent towards the role played and the interest of the audience. However, an actor could neither be the true or cynic performer as he may show the traits of believability while role playing the character he is not taken by.

It is interesting to note that according to Goffman, an individual may become his true self when he has experienced the characteristics of the performances mentioned above that is the movement from being cynical or sincere to having conviction and aspiration to cynicism or being uncertain. What is important is that the role an actor holds can be seen as the mask to reflect self-awareness. The mask helps him to survive until the confirmed self is formed. This masquerade also helps the actor to struggle to be what is preferred as the true self.

Front, as used by Goffman (1959) is defined as the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance in a general and fixed way which is put in certain location. This perspective research to show the intended roles the actor has to present.

There are basically three standard parts of front. One, there is the setting which refers to materials such as scenic, furniture and props used to exhibit the presentation layout. As these are at static location, the actor has to bring himself to the setting once the performance begins and leave the stage at end the performance. Two, the personal front is the expressive equipment seen from their rank, clothing, size and looks, speech patterns, the appearance that tells about the social status as well as manner that reveals the expected interaction role to play in related situation. These sign-vehicles are closely connected to the actor, yet it may be not when the signs are mobile and transitory. Three, the stimuli for personal front can be divided into two parts: appearance that shows the social status of the actor and how we look like and manner that refers to the stimuli acting to warn the actor's subsequent roles and how he acts.

Appearance' may be seen in formal or informal social actions or marks changes in the actor's life cycle meanwhile manner signals the pilot of the actor's stance as it comes from those stimuli which function at the time to warn us of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the oncoming situation. Appearance is everlasting thus signifying who we are and manner is how we want to be recognized as. Both elements are complementary as actors of different social status may project different interaction role; yet this may not be true all the time.

The three elements of setting, appearance and manner then correspond in practice when the interacting roles of a performer are agreeable to the status and the setting given. As such, a performance has to ensure that the expression given and given off will accentuate the

intentions. Otherwise, there will be a mismatch between the way we want to communicate to others and the look we are wearing or the stage we set.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The handle MoksikNab is very significant though it demystifies the modernity observed in the woman. In cyberspace, handle refers to the chosen name to represent one's self as evident in MoksikNab's entry on July 6, 2004 as she pays her tributes to her late paternal grandmother, Tengku Zainab:

I chose the handle MoksikNab to honour and embrace a woman I could not love while she was alive. I chose this name so that I do not forget how far I have come and to remind me of the guilt of having misunderstood my grandmother. And to never repeat the mistake with another (July 6, 2004)

The honorary Moksik is influenced by the way the word Moksik or Aunt is pronounced in Terengganu dialect. By adopting the name MoksikNab, she is melancholically invoking the nostalgic memory of her grandmother whose life is very much confined to the traditional norms yet her convictions to fight against all odds were captivating and inspiring. Therefore, reading the weblog entries enthralled the readers into her realities of life because imprinting the image of an elderly woman in a modest poise saying many things savoury or otherwise as the subject matter are somehow mismatched.

The memory of her grandmother conjures the bittersweet picture of a mother-in-law in P. Ramlee's movie as she was very cynical and outspoken yet charitable to the needy and loving to the grandchildren. Tengku Zainab, her grandmother was forbidden by her late grandfather from engaging in a scandalous affair with her own relative makes her the real MoksikNab became contemptuous and hardy. Though once admitted to the asylum due to the pressure, she raised herself from depression and upheld her dignity and maintained her status in the society.

The image has also given a significant effect to Tengku Elida's personality as the late MoksikNab's exactness and expressiveness are observed in her. She also exhibits vastness of knowledge as she has been brought up by his father's liberal education introducing them to various perspectives on life through the literature found at home. In addition, her grandfather's interests in music as the violinist playing the oldies as well as the traditional tunes has turned Tengku Elida into a music lover as she is enthusiastic of songs and entertainment. She reminisces:

A vivid memory was a Melayu asli jamming session at the house. Bah played the violin, accompanied by some members of Kombo RTM Pantai Timur. I hoped my children would inherit his musical gift or his fine penmanship or his skills with the rifle or his talents at badminton but none has displayed any such hint (March 29, 2006)

With appreciation for fine music and writing flair, MokeikNab epitomizes a modern Malay woman, wife and mother with agency. She works and prefers to be independent and having the right to voice her ideas. She also refuses to be seen the typical apple-pie sort of mother who sacrifices her entire time with the family as she rather be the fun mother. She even advocates a partnership in a husband-wife relationship give and take is the key to the marriage so she says, though she admits being the taker most of the time. She is vastly different from the ideal mothers or wives who are the givers of all their time and attention to their family and none to themselves.

Those women, paragons of motherhood who wake up at five to make breakfast, get their children ready for school, help them with their homework and sleep at their elbows when they're sick. The moms who would rush home after work to make dinner, who'd sew buttons, bake cakes. The apple-pie kind of moms, self-sacrificing, martyrs. I'm not one of those (May 13, 2007)

However, it is interesting to note that despite the modern outlook she puts on she is the Malay woman who adheres to cultural norms and religious ways of life which are negotiated in different ways in her blog. She admits that the husband is the pillar in the family and she carries out the fundamental tasks of a mother. This is proven by her migration, along with the children, to Jakarta to be with the husband who works there though her caution towards men's fidelity also sparks her intention to be with him.

Let's see, let's see, let's see. The biggest thing that's happening to me right now and which everyone is probably sick of hearing about, is my Big Move to Jakarta. Initially, we thought that we'd endure a trans-strait relationship with the kids and I staying put in Malaysian suburban heaven while Saiffuddin can camp out in Jakarta, work like mad and come home every fortnight. Curiously, every woman, no matter the age, would vehemently advise me against this (May 6, 2006)

She also adheres to certain practices such as wearing the head cover (tudung) and taking the Islamic doctrine as the guide to her life.

A couple of years ago, I decided it was high time I wore the hijab. It was not easy, for there were many instincts to suppress-the greatest of which is the instinct to use your looks as a shorthand for gaining attention. If I followed the voices in my id, I'd be in a short skirt forever. I have been asked numerous times by friends and strangers alike, why I decided to wrap my hair in a scarf. The answers are manifold. I'm still trying to figure it out myself (December 13, 2004)

These two entries show facets of the same woman who tries to make sense of her identity by talking about her predicaments. Despite her modern outlook and liberal sense of clothing, she has decided to become more restrained and conservative. In another entry, MokeikNab reveals the multiplicities of her identity. Below is the entry: The mokeiknab 101 (cringe, cringe)

**Three names you go by:**

- Eli- if you are allowed to call me this, it means we're related and you were born before 1960
- Jap-if you know by this name, please sign a non-disclosure agreement.
- Mak Engku-generally hollered at me by News Editors, camera crew, audiomen, makeup artists and drivers. Those days

**Three names you have had:**

- Tengku Elida Bustaman
- MokeikNab, the occasional blogger
- Monica Belucci (if you look closely at any of her films, you'd soon realize that Tengku Elida Bustaman and Monica Beluci are actually, one and the same. That's why you'll never see both of them onscreen, at the same time) (December 26, 2006)

By giving her real name, Tengku Elida Bustaman, nicknames, Eli and Jap and Mak Engku, she divulges different presentations of selves. Goffman reveals that one will go through the trial on the playing the roles that may move from being cynical to truthful or otherwise. Only when one is comfortable presenting herself without any mask, he admits that the confirmed self is constructed. When she decides to make her identity known, she is casting away the masks she has been wearing that hinder a better view of her performance. She eventually feels comfortable with her self-construction and prefers to be acknowledged as her own real self.

However, it is interesting to note that MokcikNab associates herself with the Monica Belucci. She is making public her desire of how she dreams to be seen. Through blogging, she sees the means to emancipate herself as she can determine what to be included in the blog to represent the virtual self. As Campbell argues that the practices of self is not based on one's free will as it has been proposed suggested and imposed. Franz (2004) in contrast reveals that online interaction may also lead to the creation of multiple selves which is self-constructed. Cheung (2000) in *A Home in the Net: Self-Representation of Personal Homepage* also emphasizes on the flexibility of weblog as through homepage-website produced by an individual or couple or family (centering) around the personality and identity of the researchers becomes a redefinition of the acceptable selves, conditioned by the social settings and audiences. This means in cyberspace, MokcikNab is seen testing the boundaries of acceptable sexuality as she is marveling into what is considered taboo in the society. Revealing one's fantasy in the offline interaction may be taken as blasphemous; hence the weblog is chosen the safest channel to reveal what is usually silenced.

Goffman refers to front as the setting of the performance which can be both immobilized and moveable. To him, static front means the scenery and the prop of the performance whereas the moveables are made up of appearance and manner. It is important that setting is reflexive of the mobilized as it represents the individual state of mind. However, the connection tends to be asymmetric when what is practised is totally different from what is expected. In MokcikNab's weblog entries, there are many evidence that front play significant roles in

determining MokcikNab's roles in the society. First, the immobile representative is togs as one of weblog mechanisms function as the front of the MokcikNab's performance (Fig. 2).

Through the explanation about the togs in a post entitled *Sister in Seattle, Take a Bow* (January 26, 2005), MokcikNab introduces the family members-the son, Adam; the daughters, Aiysha and Aliya and Tengku Saifuddin, the husband. The other images of butterflies and woodcut print of a woman signify her identity. The first butterfly which is called Malay lacewing and zoomorphic Thuluth script in the shape of a bird represent her ethnicity and faith, respectively. The second image the Japonais woodcut print of a woman is related to her nick name, Jap when she was in college. The last image is the pathway in Fawkner Park, a place which she and her husband had studied. All seven images located in the tog template are the elements in her life she has incorporated in her weblog discourse. These elements are also the window through which the blog readers can comprehend what the blog is about. This is confirmed by MokcikNab herself; if you have been reading my blog some time, you'd realize that most of my posts revolve around my navigation of marriage and motherhood (April 29, 2005) and Tons of apologies for those in tears over all these mommy blogs blogging, a sort of communal therapy with other mommies (March 28, 2006).

The inference that she is having universal and myriad perspective of life is seen though the inanimate motives chosen. MokcikNab carefully chooses the motives to be the representative images of herself. The butterflies are the dominant symbols as they signify her agility and dynamism. They also symbolize captivating life that is



Fig. 2: Togs

brief and brilliant. She also purposely chooses Malay lacewing as the first image as it represents her origin. However, these two images of butterflies are located on different backdrops as one is holding on a leaf and another on a hard, yellow painted wall. This insinuates her durability and flexibility to any problems and changes as she can still perform well despite of the surroundings. Likewise, the zoomorphic Thuluth script in the shape of a merry and confident peacock is noteworthy as it tells the readers about her background as a Muslim Malay who is unorthodox and adamant of her convictions towards the Islamic doctrines.

This symbol suggests her liberal way of presenting herself. Rather than inserting the typical image of moon and ellipse to represent her religion, she opts for the modern and artistic representation of being a Muslim. In addition, the print of woman-sculpture taken as a dancing or ready to strike pose tells of MoksikNab's characteristics which is aggressive and vibrant. The ambiguity of this pose somehow suggests her uniqueness as the print signifies possibilities. As such, the tog elements suggest her myriads of identities created out of her sister's techno-savviness and her own creativity. By and large, her togs become the signals of liberation that work within her realities as a Malay Muslim woman. Therefore, it is expected that her perceptions on any issues such as motherhood and gender are revolutionary as well.

However, ironically, her avatar tells us otherwise. The image shown is a woman in traditional attire, baju kurung (long dress) on top and kain batik (sarong) at the bottom. She is adorned with a wedding band on the fourth finger. Her slogan *My hands are full, my eyes are too, need more limbs, got things to do* is cunningly reflexive of what is highlighted that is to tell of her many tasks she has to carry out while playing the multiple roles as the mother, wife and career woman.

However, in the entries, these roles are all blurred. Her blog name, *The Madness of MoksikNab* may lead the readers to imagine the blogger a strange woman due to the inappropriate attire code she is portraying: a Malay woman will not wear a sarong on her hip on top of the baju kurung.

This image is what she is aiming for as the avatar can suggest the insecure picture of a mad woman or a woman who is frantically involved into her myriads of interests and concerns of which each can never be a priority as they overlap with each other (Fig. 3).

Her poise suggests her modesty as a typical Malay woman who is refrained from the westernized elements by



Fig. 3 : MoksikNab's Avatar

the Malay adat (customs) suggested from the way she holds her left wrists close to her body. Hence, she is expected to be the accommodating mother as prescribed in the any Asian ethics and morality on the responsibility of Asian women towards the family's needs. As such, she cooks and maintains the family and the house well and plays the role as the subservient wife to patronizing husband.

As her mother comes from Terengganu and father from Singapore, her family holds on Adat Temenggung whereby adat practice is more rigid and less democratic (Mamat, 1991).

It is unmistakable to take the saying, 'One's life is governed by customs and traditions' appointed by Omar (2003) as the guidance in her life.

In fact, her pose can also suggest her act of covering her vanity, deduced from the way she covers her private part behind her left hand. Her right hand can also be taken as controlling the left hand from doing any movement.

Generally, the multiple interpretations of MoksikNab's avatar tell us of the obvious: that she practices self-censorship from any actions that are considered obscene and blasphemous to the eyes of her society. Due to the ideology created from deciphering the avatar, she may be taken to be the typical Malay woman who must be seen ideal and feminine. Yet, this is proven not true and serves as the antithesis, observed in an entry entitled *Martyr Mater, Not:*

Mother's day should be reserved for. Those women, paragons of motherhood who wake up at five to make breakfast, get their children ready for school, help them with their homework and sleep at their elbows when they're sick. The moms who would rush home after work to make dinner, who'd sew buttons, bake cakes. The apple-pie kind of moms, self-sacrificing, martyrs. I a'm not one of those. I'll ignore a child if I'm sleepy or if I have a good book to read. I'll tell them to come back later and we're usually good with that arrangement (May 13, 2007)

MokcikNab is being truthful in telling the weblog reader that they are reading a non-ideal mom's blog as she does not subscribe to the traditional depiction as the bearer of the culture that must be seen demure, selfless and all-rounder mother (Appendix C). She prefers to be the fun mother who joins them in search of fun as well as truth in life:

But I do other things, I really do! I read with my kids. I help them with their stories, I invent jokes, I download songs, I draw, I dance, I do voices. For all intents and purposes I'm the fun parent I bring them out and buy them things and lie on the bed with them while they spin yarns about jumbuk and dancing princesses I let them play with my makeup. I let them tell me I'm fat I talk to them about politics, poverty and providence. I never insult their intelligence and even though my kids tell me I should be more responsible or that I should learn to drive, I think we have mutual respect (Sunday, May 13, 2007)

She is happy that her children become individuals who are not afraid to voice their own opinion even if theirs are different from others or from her. She has definitely taught them to be uniquely self-empowered beings (March 23, 2006). She also bravely admits that she is not the typical Pantai Timur wife who serves the husband to great length. Though she exhibits some of her grandmother's characteristics by being critical and outspoken, she is observed not taken by what has been advised by her idol to be practised:

My late grandmother, the Real Mokciknab, used to admonish me for not giving my husband the full Pantai Timur Wife treatment which I think included after-dinner mints and a foot massage. She'd complain if I don't iron my husband's clothes, complain if I don't wait at my husband's elbow for his every need. I used to make a go for it when she's around but after a while I got tired. I think she had a minor heart attack when she saw Saiffuddin making me breakfast (25 April, 2005)

Pariser (2000) has pointed out that creativity can be helpful in representing one's identity. Art becomes the self-referential to illustrate self seen in the tog and avatar to represent MokcikNab's identity. Both contrastive literary descriptions reveal the irony as the tog conjures the images of modernity whereas the avatar suggests traditional. As much as she wears the up-to-date perspectives on life, she reveals of her other self that is related to her culture and root which prioritizes that family upon others. For instance, another written image of her a career woman wearing a denim jacket in a long skirt with a pashmina as headcover (December 13, 2004) the image of a modern, Malay woman in an interview for a master-of-ceremony post is a reflection of her ambivalent of roles subjected to Islamic resurgence and industrialization in Malaysia. She is the Malay woman who accepts the norms of the society as well as to the expectation of modernity. She is thus seen putting on the hat of modernity and wearing the attire of tradition. As a result, she is projecting the image of a woman whose roles are ambivalent as the front revealed two contradictory characters.

## CONCLUSION

Performance as Goffman's selected principle on Presentation of Self in Everyday Life is therefore the most suitable framework of analysis to explicate the lived realities of a woman with multiple roles. Even though this theory is dated, it gives insights into the dilemma and challenges behind every construct of her roles. In defining herself as the modern Malay woman, she also has to satisfy the social expectations informed by tradition and religion. While she tries to embrace liberalism, she is seen strategizing her approach on life to suit the expectation of the society while at the same time exercising the agency for self-construction.

It is through the appropriation of weblog as a new form of computer mediated communication that women can consider the definition of identity. This will eventually assist them to liberate themselves from the traditional confines and restrictions that hinder their visibility and significance in the society. The Madness of MokcikNab is a weblog revealing the kaleidoscope of the realities of a Malay woman living a modern world and exhibiting her own perspectives on every day matters. This narrative that focuses on the emergence of self and self-reflection also highlights the idea on subject-position in the throng of discourses any individual is subjected to such as in playing the multiple roles in two worlds-the physical world and the virtual world.



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