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Author: Sushartami, Wiwik
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Chapter One

Introduction

> It is a pitiful history that remembers only official heroes and is silent about the thousands of victims (Schulte Nordholt 2002: 53).

A woman was screaming for help, but no one seemed to care. Blood was dripping from her nose and mouth. After being slapped repeatedly by her husband, she was eventually hit on her back with a wooden block. Even when she was finally thrown into a ditch, no one seemed willing to help (Video Menguak Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga, Revealing Domestic Violence, 2001)

*Two sisters were sitting on the veranda, facing the unseen interviewer and cameraperson. Below them is the caption, "*korban perkosaan Lhokseumawe*" (victims of the Lhokseumawe rapes).*[1] *They do not say much, do not even mention the word 'rape'. One of them explained that the rapist just came in without saying anything and laid his weapon at her side. A similar account of silence is also recalled by Sawiyah, who said that she hardly heard him saying anything except for his asking whether she was a GAM member (Gerakan Atjeh Merdeka, Free Aceh Movement), to which she responded "No, I'm not GAM, I'm a woman". While she reflected on the 'silly' question with a bashful smile, she turned her head away from the camera and fell into a moment of silence (Video Perempuan di Wilayah Konflik, Women in Conflict Areas, 2002).*

This thesis is about the 'imaging' of female victims of violence and its liaison in the construction of a 'new' identity of women in Post-Suharto Indonesia. It

[1] In the radio programme *Radio Jurnal Perempuan*, edition 144, on "*Perempuan Aceh di Wilayah Konflik*" (broadcast in May 2002), it was mentioned that in fact there were three sisters who were raped, but the youngest, Lelawati, died during childbirth. The radio programme was organised a bit differently from this video as the story about these rapes was placed almost at the end of the programme.

focuses on the representations of female victims of violence related to the events prior, during, and after the resignation of Suharto through 2004. The illustrations above show representations of female victims taken from two out of the five cases of violence against women discussed in this thesis.

The Context

The fall of the New Order (*Orde Baru*) regime and the vibrant women's political movements that both preceded and followed it brought to the fore an ambivalence of gender identity in Indonesia. While the New Order had constructed a dominant system of gender ideology and practise,[2] its fall gave way to a vigorous process of reification, renegotiation, and contestation of gender identity in the vacuum of power. The allegation of the state's misinterpretation and mistreatment of women during its power has become one of the predominant discourses upon which the emerging feminist trajectories have been founded. Resulting partly from the protracted women's movement that had been repressed for more than 30 years under the New Order, both the violent collapse of the Suharto regime and the subsequent opening of public space have been the bedrock of women's return to the public arena. Since then, some aspects in the lives of Indonesian women have indeed changed, although other aspects remain unaffected.

The debates concerning cases of violence against women cannot be separated from the discourse of violence in general—yet, in a particular time and context—in Indonesia. However, this thesis finds that due to the importance of the discussion of violence against women—pragmatically and/or representationally—as a way to understand how the discourse contributed to and was built on female victimisation, it deserves a thorough scrutiny itself. In focusing on the discourse of female victimisation, this thesis also underlines the import of the fall of the New Order regime and the opening of the media world in Indonesia at the same time. It finds that within this process of opening, the reinterpretation of women's identity inevitably became a must and, in the meantime, new vocabularies were adopted as political statements in the current feminist movement. As this thesis will show, this reinterpretation crucially appeared to revolve around the notions of female victimisation. The term 'female victim' (*perempuan korban*)[3], and its associated phrases, have

[2] A number of books and chapters in edited volumes have discussed the New Order state's attempt to control women by setting a rigid construction of gender. See, among others: Blackwood 1995; Sears (ed.) 1996; Brenner 1998; Sen 2002; Wieringa 2002; Blackburn 2004.

[3] The Indonesian translation of 'female victim', following the Indonesian syntax, would be *korban perempuan*. However, '*korban perempuan*' can mean two different things, i.e., a victim who is female or a victim of violence committed by a woman. Among feminists and those aware of gender issues currently in Indonesia, the phrase '*perempuan korban*', has been used to refer to female victims

become the vernacular language in the process of the 'reformation' of women's identity in the post-Suharto period—reformasi, as it is commonly referred to, observed in this thesis during its first five years. In short, 'woman as victim' has been one—and a particularly important one—of the new modes of address.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, this thesis focuses on the representations of female victims of violence in post-Suharto Indonesia. However, this focus does not necessarily mean it works only with the "'purely abstract' forms of signification" (Heryanto 2006: 4). Context and history of violence are inseparable aspects of the discursive formation of female victimisations in the aftermath of Suharto's resignation. Without such immense historical relevance of the New Order state's violence against women at its inception following the defamation of *Gerwani* (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia,* Indonesian Women's Movement) and the imprisonment without trial of most of its members in the aftermath of the allegedly abortive coup d'état of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965 (see Chapter Two); during its power when a militaristic approach and gender-based violence, for example, were deployed to settle unrest in some provinces (Chapter Five); and during its final moment of authority in 1998 with the yet unresolved cases of orchestrated gang rapes (Chapter Four), the discourse of female victimisation might not be as substantial as it is.

In the discourse of female victimisation, the visibility of female victims or, as concerned here, their representations, becomes highly important. As it is very much a discursive formation centring on the presentations of victims at the same time, it also means delineating the perpetrators and mediators. By focusing on the various representations of victims, we can observe that the meaning of each specific discourse is constantly changing and relational (cf. Heryanto 2006: 10-11).[4] Together with the perpetual debates among the burgeoning activist groups around the discursive formation of victim-selves, the positioning of women often becomes dizzily oscillating in the 'victim-perpetrator' dichotomy or 'victim-mediator-perpetrator' triad. At the same time, the transient and sundry visualisations of 'victimised' women—not

more than '*korban perempuan'*, although it is not (yet) commonly used otherwise. For some, politically and ideologically, the phrase '*perempuan korban'* puts more emphasis on the women as victims. Syntactically, '*perempuan korban*' is comparable to 'police woman' (which should be translated into '*perempuan polisi*', although '*polisi perempuan*' is more common). The feminists' choice of the use of the phrase '*perempuan korban'* reminds me of the political aspect in the use of the word '*perempuan*' during the New Order (see Chapter Two). Discussion with Yuniyanti Chuzaifah, Veven SP Wardhana, Suryadi Sunuri, and Bubung Insandoyo via Facebook (dated 22 March – 7 April 2012).

[4] Taking a stance away from 'Foucauldian discursive determinism' and 'Derridean deconstructionism', Heryanto emphasises "unequal power relationships among diverse texts and discursive practises in actual experiences of unequal social beings" (2006: 11).

always necessarily portrayed in bruised and wounded female faces—in the more 'mediatised'[5] public communication forms further complicate the identification of the victim. Regardless of the changing and elastic patterns of representations of female victims, their images have been, without a doubt, easily available in the varied and broad spectrum of identity mediation during the period of reformasi, as will be the focus of this thesis. This is proved not only in the political campaign media produced by women's NGOs, but also in the lighter presentations by the mainstream and popular media. The meaning of the exhausted term 'victim' (*korban*) then becomes multifaceted, sometimes involving tangential references, but at other times highly performative, oppositional, context-dependant, and very much reliant on personal/group aims, forms of media, and the reaction and coalition formed in response to the representation of the case in focus.

In scrutinising media presentations of female victims, this thesis focuses on five overlapping scenes where women are represented and represent themselves as victims in the interaction with/in the state, society, domestic area, religion, and popular culture. In working with representations, the subject is approached via factors other than the victims, that is, the media actors (e.g., those who produce and read the media presentations), contexts (e.g., reformasi, the discourse of female victimisation, and media freedom), and materials (e.g., print, audiovisual, and electronic media and its mechanisms of production, distribution, and consumption). This thesis finds that these factors shape the aspects of discursive formation of female victimhood and are crucial in providing a pathway to examining the emergence of the discourse of female victimhood and, respectively, the canonising of female victims of violence. Framing the analysis in this way has to some extent also revealed the denial of female victims' agency, which has been generally acknowledged, yet not carefully anticipated. Such a denial might not be explicit, but representing violence can be sensitive when coming to terms with ethical boundaries, reproduction of violence itself, and the technical limitations of re-voicing the victims (c.f. Kleinman and Kleinman 1996).

This thesis acknowledges the vulnerability and suffering that many women in Indonesia face in their lives. However, bearing this in mind, this venture focuses on the reading of the emergent, and perhaps divergent, representations of female victims during reformasi. Considering the political significance of the discourse of women's victimisation during reformasi, bringing to fore issues of violence against women may result in two contradictory directions: on the one hand, it indeed raises a public awareness of the problem, however, on the other

[5] In the field of political communication study, "mediatisation is a theory which argues that it is the media which shapes and frames the processes and discourse of political communications as well as the society in which that communication takes place". See Lilleker 2008.

hand, which may be detrimental for women, these representations, focusing much on the aspects of violence and victimhood, may cast women as 'merely victims' who lack agency and are dependent on others, i.e. men and privileged women, to save them.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis we find that the 'new' women's identity symbolised in the representations of 'female victims' can therefore be seen as a result of a complex entwinement of the regime change, which is afflicted with the legacy of the prior state's violent practises, far-reaching public debates of violence against women, and vast development of the media. Subsequently, the canonisation of 'woman as victim' can be perceived as a precondition, as well as an effect, of the manifestation of the 'new' feminist movement in Indonesia.

Research Questions

It is necessary to state here that the questions concerning the representations of female victims did not clearly emerge during the onset of this research as stated in my position paper (Spyer et al. 2002(b): 200-204). The research started with a more general and optimistic inquiry to see if notably different kinds of representations of women during the post-Suharto regime—compared to the mode of female imaging during the New Order era (see further Chapter Three)—would arise. However, I found that the broad focus on the representations of female victims among feminist and social activists alike—noticeable through the increasing recognition of the political significance permeated in producing, accentuating, and distributing such images as part of the identity struggle—was too significant to simply be ignored. In the subsequent process of digesting the data collected during my fieldwork, this change of mode of addressing women turned out to be the most constitutive factor in the shift of the subject of this thesis.

The cases of state violence against women have so far been kept under the New Order administration. As much as women's bodies and sexuality were controlled through the use of many concealed strategies, such as the family planning programme and dissemination of popular discourse through the media on the appropriateness of womanhood, the control also employed overt mechanisms. In concert with the fall of the regime's leader, many cases of state violence against women have been disclosed. The questions are: How significant were the revelations of many cases of violence against women in leading to the discourse of female victimisation in the reconstruction of a new identity of women? How did women respond to these revelations? And how has this influenced the moods and modes of recent feminist movements?

Many important questions can be raised from the subject of female victimisation during reformasi in Indonesia. However, as this thesis focuses only on the imaging of female victims, particularly its textual and discourse analysis, and its process of production/consumption where possible, the questions are limited to the following concerns:

- Why did images of female victims become abundant in media presentations during reformasi? How did the opening of the media, which was inseparable from the initial reformasi process, relate to the reconstruction of a new identity of women?
- How are women represented as victims in the media? What do these representations say about the female victims, the media culture in which such representations became prominent, the producers of these images, and the context of reformasi itself?
- In line with the above questions, how does this mediated new identity of women play a role in shaping the nationalist gender ideology and framing the direction of new feminist movements in Indonesia?

Methodological Framework

An underlying question needs to be explored first in order to answer the above questions, i.e., Why do the images, discourses, or individuals particularly discussed in this thesis matter in probing the canonisation of female victims in the discourse of violence against women in Indonesia's reformasi? I selected notably prevalent and influential issues among media producers, feminist activists, social scientists, policy makers and general audiences that emerged during the period of study (1998-2004). The cases discussed are prevalent in the sense that they have become part of the canonical events in the history of Indonesian women during the post-Suharto period (c.f. Blackburn 2004). In addition to the significance of these cases, the individuals involved in the mediation of them are relatively distinguishable by means of their widely known efforts to raise gender awareness and use of the media in that process. Meanwhile, the cases are considered influential in that they have raised not only broad social concern about the issues, but also resulted in the demand for the formation and implementation of various regulations deemed important as a solution for some. For example, in the case of the intensifying debate on domestic violence, some feminist and other social activists demanded the enactment of a new bill against domestic violence (see Chapter Seven). Another example was the explosion of the dispute between the *dangdut*—a popular music genre related mostly with the middle-and-lower classes in Indonesia—king, Rhoma Irama, and a popular newly skyrocketing junior singer, Inul Daratista (see Chapter Eight). Following this dispute, a deep split emerged

between parts of the (Muslim) community who demanded the drafting of an anti-pornography law, and groups of feminist, social and cultural activists who rejected the idea.

Another way to address the research questions is by exploring how the discourse of violence taps into the process of constructing a 'new' identity of Indonesian women after the dominant gender discourse promoted by the developmentalist New Order failed. This can further be accomplished by looking into the aspects of "where, when, and how" the representations of female victims can be found if the locus is centred "at particular sites and in particular discursive formations" (Philpott 2000: 164). This thesis places its analysis of these aspects at a very specific point of Indonesia's history, i.e., reformasi. The 'particular sites' here are the representations that appear in 'public culture', including the print media (i.e., comics, books, journals, newsletters, and also newspapers and magazines), audiovisual media (i.e., video compact disc and radio/television programmes), and electronic-mediated media (i.e., Internet). Meanwhile, what is meant by the particular discursive formations here are those discourses centred around the violent regime change, the latest wave of the feminist movement in Indonesia, religious revivalism, and media freedom, all of which characterise the reformasi era.

I approached the issue of violence against women and the profound discourse of female victimisation from the angle of media representation, i.e., how the media presents the events, discusses them and, when possible, reader/viewer reactions. I analyse both the general and feminist media to see how women and women's issues are positioned differently. What has drawn my attention to the discursive construction of the identity of female victims is the symbolic force of victimhood as part of the national politics of representations among media and the feminist movement. The year 1998 and the debate over the May rape cases that lasted throughout the year stimulated the feminist movement in the subsequent years, as I will discuss in Chapter Two.

As mentioned earlier, I approached the subject via factors concerning representations of violence against women, that is, the media actors, contexts, and materials. In so doing, I directed my investigation, first, to the people or institutions that are concerned about or involved in unravelling certain issues and the production of the media presentations discussed here. In reviewing the representation of women in conflict areas, for example, I approached Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan (YJP, Women's Journal Foundation) and Offstream Production House, conducted both structured and unstructured observation and interviews in their offices in Jakarta, read their publications, viewed their videos, and listened to their taped-radio programmes (see Chapter Five). To analyse the entanglement of gender, identity, and religion, I spent an inspiring

period with the members of Rahima, a Muslim women's organisation also located in Jakarta, where I monitored their newsletter (see Chapter Six). Second, I investigated the issue of violence against women by examining the state's discourse regarding the topic. For example, when the state finally ratified the anti-domestic violence law in 2006, a decision mostly celebrated by the feminist and social activists who had championed the bill, I also used the new law as a source of information (see Chapter Seven). Third, I also investigated female victimisation by observing media presentations, both mainstream and alternative, during the period of research. One of the issues that the media brooded over quite extensively—it initially appeared on the Internet, then was gradually picked up by the conventional news media (Coppel 2006: 5)—but, as yet remains unresolved, is the case of the May 1998 rapes (see Chapter Four).

During my fieldwork, in August 2002 – January 2003 and August 2003 – January 2004, I conducted both structured and unstructured observations at Rahima, Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, and the State's Office for Women's Empowerment to monitor their media products and the processes of production and circulation. My participatory observation also extended to other women's NGOs and social groups that were concerned about women. I interviewed and became acquainted with other individuals engaged in projects related to mediation of women, for example, those involved in Offstream Production House, Kalyanamitra women's organisation, Kompas newspaper's women's section, *Swara*, and others. Where possible, I gathered information about the funding organisations that financially support the activities of those groups by talking to individuals working in those institutions and by consulting other sources, such as their websites, newsletters, or company profiles. In order to situate the media produced by women's organisations, which were sometimes too small-scale, I analysed them in terms of issues, production processes, public interpretations, and circulation by observing the mainstream media, such as national-scale newspapers, magazines, television, and radio programmes, and the Internet.

When we discuss representation, 'quantity' matters less than the 'recognisability' (Zarkov 1999: 122). Dubravka Zarkov, in her study on the imaging of violence against women following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, writes that representations "rest on the intimate knowledge of symbols and metaphors through which we grasp our reality" (ibid.: 122). Referring to Billig (1995), she continues that "such an intimate knowledge, symbols have special power, power of the banal. And, that power mobilises people". Zarkov takes as an example, the "intimate knowledge of people about their knowledge for their countries' maps" (ibid.: 120). In other words, we do not have to think, we see and we know. In line with Zarkov's notion, this thesis finds that the

representations of female victims in Indonesian media during reformasi have to some extent provided some kind of "intimate knowledge" through which we can try to understand what was happening with women in the course of the regime change. In addition, those representations have even become a vital catalyst through which political protests have been launched against the state. In this sense, the flow of representations of female victims has been a channel through which people give meaning to violence against women, a kind of "intimate knowledge" that was repressed under the authoritarian New Order regime. This thesis, as such, is concerned less with the quantitative analysis than the discursive and descriptive examination of the images and the production and consumption of the representations of female victims in various media presentations.

The following two sections provide brief outlines of the two strands of broader contextual background deemed relevant in this study, that is, the entanglement of reformasi with the discourse of women's victimisation and of the media development during the same period with the canonisation of female victims. Further discussion and a more contextualised overview that relate these two elements to the subject of this study are provided in the next two chapters.

Reformasi and the Discourse of Violence against Women

The 'phenomenon of violence' at the end of the 20th century in Indonesia has received growing attention and been intensively discussed by scholars, human rights activists, policy makers, journalists, and broader audiences after the fall of the New Order regime.[6] A detailed discussion of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this study. However, in this limited space, I will briefly examine the discussion about the history of violence in Indonesia, the state's proximity with violence, and the gendered aspect of violence. Violence in Indonesia has its history (Schulte Nordholt 2002), as does its representation (Spyer 2002(a): f.n. 33). Schulte Nordholt, drawing analysis from the phenomenon of violence in pre-colonial and colonial times and in the more recent period, finds that the Dutch legacy of violent acts played a dangerous role in the formation of Indonesia's post-colonial "state of violence" (Schulte Nordholt 2002; Coppel 2006: 3). If the Dutch government recently refused "to consider the technology of colonial domination" in textbooks (Schulte Nordholt 2002: 41), a similar

[6] Books that focus on violent events in post-Suharto Indonesia include: Anderson (ed.) 2001; Colombijn and (eds.) 2002; Dittmer (ed.) 2002; Husken and Jonge (eds.) 2002; Coppel 2006; Sidel 2006. Chapters in books and journals that belong to similar studies include: Siegel 1998(b); Spyer 2002(a); Purdey 2004; Retsikas 2006. See also Lapian 2004 and Spyer 2004(a).

strategy was also deployed by the New Order by omitting the story of brutal murders of those considered to be communist sympathisers following the 1965 September Movement in history textbooks. Colombijn and Lindblad offer the use of the concept of 'culture' to describe the phenomenon of violence (Colombijn and Lindblad 2002: 9). However, they stress, by referring to a 'culture of violence' in Indonesia, it does not mean that this refers to the characteristics of the culture and people as a whole. Rather, 'culture' here should be "treated as a set of alternative ways of behaviour in certain situations, which is neither static nor deterministic" (ibid.: 14). As such, this culture of violence "can be changed".

Studies have also shown that there was a close relation between "crime and the state" (Colombijn and Lindblad (eds.) 2002). Many examples of violent events show that the state legitimised the use of violence "under certain circumstances" (Colombijn and Lindblad 2002: 15). With regard to Indonesia under the New Order power, this legitimised use of violence was often reproduced below the state level, as in the cases of "violence in plantations" (Agustono 2002) or "petty criminal lynching" (Colombijn 2002). Sadly, legitimacy for these acts was often provided by the people who preferred 'mob justice' over the judicial process (Colombijn and Lindblad 2002: 15-16). Under the hegemony of the New Order state's language of propaganda, violence by the state and its apparatus was not recognised. In these situations, ignoring accusations of its organised crimes, the state instead presented itself as a policing body that restored order.[7]

When Suharto seized power in 1966, Indonesia was experiencing a negative growth rate, 600% inflation, a national debt of over $US 2 billion, and had virtually no foreign reserves (Vatikiotis 1998: 33). The new state's propaganda of National Development promised not only a new hope for the country, but also detachment from its recent history, and from the memories of the bloody turmoil preceding its inauguration. Modernisation, or the preferred term, *pembangunan* (development), became the buzzword of the New Order state.[8] With the booming price of crude oil, the primary traditional commodity in Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s, the country's growth rate rose from negative figures in 1967 to 7-8% per year (ibid.: 33). This ushered in not only infrastructure development, but also the development of the print media and advertising in Indonesia (Brenner 1999: 16). The increasing literacy rates

[7] The deployment of such a strategy can be seen, for example, in the case of *petrus*, or *penembakan misterius* (mysterious shooting). In the mid 1980s, the New Order military hunted down alleged criminals. Not only were these criminals eventually shot to death, but their corpses were publically displayed as a form of 'shock therapy'. For further discussion, see Siegel 1998(a). See also Braten 2002.

[8] For further discussion of the hegemonic term of *pembangunan*, see Heryanto 1995.

among the people and growing financial strength of the middle-class also influenced the rise of mass publications and the consumption of print media.

Triggered by the economic crisis in 1997, the New Order state's authority, which had been supported by economic stability and development projects, started to slide. Following student and public protests and demands for change, Suharto finally resigned on 21 May 1997, and the New Order collapsed. This chaotic situation was imbued with the escalation of violent incidents throughout the archipelago. This is the time in modern Indonesia's history known as *reformasi* (reform).

'Optimists' have viewed reformasi as promising a better future for Indonesia with "a new democratic system of government in which civil society will play a more prominent role" (Schulte Nordholt and Samuel 2004: 1). However, there are those who contest that this transition will lead Indonesia to its doom. These 'pessimists', as Schulte Nordholt and Samuel write (ibid.: 2), classify Indonesia as a 'messy state', where outbursts of "ethnic and religious violence in various regions of the archipelago, regional resistance movements, the inability to structure both the army and the economy and to curb collusion, nepotism and corruption" occur. Reformasi, in its extreme negative impact, will lead Indonesia into 'further disintegration'. In light of the uncertainty, Schulte Nordholt and Samuel (ibid.) propose to use a "more neutral term 'post-Suharto Indonesia'".[9]

The escalation of violence during a transitional period is not exclusively Indonesian; neither is the absence of images of state violence under a totalitarian regime. To compare Indonesia's experience of state suppression of its violent history with other places, we can find a parallel in what Schulte Nordholt writes that "the silence of national history about the country's own violent past is a common phenomenon in many post-colonial societies in Asia, as well as in Africa" (Schulte Nordholt 2002: 53). Totalitarian states tend to silence victims of violence and, even further, censure representations of violent events for public consumption. In comparison, referring to the absence of representations of massive starvation in China in 1959-1961, Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman argue that "the official silence of violence is another form of appropriation. It prevents public witnessing. […] The totalitarian state rules by collective forgetting, by denying the collective experience of suffering, and thus creates a culture of terror" (Kleinman and Kleinman 1996: 17).

[9] Meanwhile, Patricia Spyer interestingly deploys the term '*belum stabil*' (not yet steady) and uses as an illustration the recent Indonesian media preoccupation with children to define the condition, that "while things may be out of order and radically insecure—*belum stabil*—the future will be another" (2004(c): 250).

In the post-Suharto period, images and narrations of the state's multifaceted forms of violence were instantaneously present in the public's daily lives through various media presentations. Media reports on the shooting of protesting students, four of whom died, on 12 May 1998, possibly became the most iconic and publicly available reference to recognise the state-and-its-apparatuses' violence against the people. The escalation of protests against the shooting of the students the following day and the public unrest in the days that followed eventually led to Suharto's resignation on 21 May (for further discussion see Chapter Two). Soon after this, the revelation of gang-rapes during the May 1998 riots grew in intensity to focus on a different facet of state violence (see Chapter Three). Although both women and students were equally victims of the reformasi process, only the latter attained respected status as 'heroes' (Siegel 1998(b): 77; Heryanto 1999; Strassler 2004: 701-702). Meanwhile, the female victims of the rapes—being the underprivileged, both in terms of gender and ethnicity—could not even voice their suffering. Most of these women who were stigmatised because they were victims of rape or other kinds of sexual assault and for crimes they never committed have had to hide for an unspecified period of time (Heryanto 1999, Strassler 2004: 712) (see Chapter Four). The fact that there has been little, if any, mention of the significant roles women played in the reformasi process, let alone designation of any of the female activists as 'reformasi heroes', regardless of the fact that many deserve it, also accentuates the gendered bias in assessing individual contributions in the reformasi process (see Chapter Two). The women were portrayed at best as the (female) victims of reformasi. The issue of violence against women and the discursive narratives of female victimisation were soon widely and openly discussed, theorised, condemned, and also problematised (among others, Siapno 2002; Blackburn 2004; Purdey 2004; Tan 2006).

Recent studies note that violence in Indonesia is 'gendered' and that "the perpetrators of violence are all men, with the exception of a small female presence in cases of mob violence" (Colombijn 2002: 19). Susan Blackburn, while acknowledging that women may have been perpetrators in some cases of violence in Indonesia, argues that "women are more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violence, a fact connected to their position in the social and political structure, where they are more vulnerable than men and less able to voice their views" (2004: 196).

The discourse of violence against women, *kekerasan terhadap perempuan*, became a topic of broad discussion in Indonesia only after the regime change in 1998, although an initial aspiration had already been voiced by some women's groups a few years prior to the time (Blackburn 2004: 202). Public debates of the May 1998 rapes—which have yet to be resolved—eventually triggered more disclosures of other acts of violence against women conducted and/or

sponsored by the New Order state during its military occupations in the provinces of Aceh (now Nanggroe Atjeh Darussalam), Irian Jaya (now Papua), and East Timor (now an independent nation state, Timor Leste) (for further discussion, see Chapter Five).[10] Seemingly, this was in tune with the deterioration of the state's authority that had long dominated the nationalist gender ideology and practise. Gender analysis of violence in Indonesia's case cannot be separated from the fact that violence against women has been the focus of "international institutions and conferences" (Blackburn 2004: 194). While the state had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),[11] since the 1990s, its effectiveness in the 'socialisation'[12] of the issue of violence against women and the advocacy for the female victims was still questionable since the New Order had never seriously implemented it either in formal regulations, court practises, or gender equality campaigns. As the state's power was weakening and at the same time the global, more liberal and radical feminist ideas flooded in more freely and easily—due to the opening of the media world—the state's gender ideology was in peril. The state's marginalisation of women, which was based on the 'formalised' dichotomy of public and private, began to be more harshly challenged by many, especially feminist activists, which can be observed from at least two counts. The first count is that the state's gender ideology that placed women in the second-ranked position in the society could no longer remain attuned to the fact that Indonesian women were capable of seizing the public arena, regardless of minimum public acknowledgement, during the reformasi process. Women, along with students and people from various walks of life, took to the streets, protested against the rising prices of staple goods, and supported the overthrowing of the then-current regime in 1998 (see Chapter Two). The New Order's downfall, which was accompanied by a burst of violent acts, many of which were gender related, also played a significant role in transforming the women's movement to focus on the cases of violence against

[10] The change of the names of these provinces has also been a result of the regime change.

[11] In 1984, Indonesia ratified CEDAW, which required Indonesia to promote and protect the rights of Indonesian women. In 1994, Indonesia played a prominent role in preparations for the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women by hosting the Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women. At this conference the government restated its commitment to defend women's rights in ministerial speeches, signed the Jakarta Declaration to affirm that women's rights are "inalienable, integral, and indivisible parts of universal human rights", and regarded the implementation of CEDAW as "crucial". See Aditjondro 1997.
The definition of violence against women provided by CEDAW includes the following: violence against women at home; violence conducted by the society; and violence perpetrated by the state (Blackburn 2004: 194).

[12] In Indonesia under the New Order, the word 'socialisation' was widely understood to refer to dissemination of information of the state's programmes. Presently, stripped of its political implications, it is loosely used to refer to any process of spreading information.

women and to "speak on behalf of women victims and lobby for their protection and for ways to avoid violence", a move that had never previously been included in their agenda (Blackburn 2004:217). With this development, women could no longer be restricted from the public domain.

Secondly, the New Order's gender ideology that praised women's submission to their *kodrat* (destiny) (Tiwon 1996) was proven to be obsolete against the new, eager feminist movement that strove for equal justice for women. This change can be understood when we look into the history of the New Order's gender ideology and practise. The state's gender ideology had strongly emphasised moral and religious interpretations of women as "feminine" (Sears 1996), "domesticated" (Suryakusuma 1996), and "apolitical" (Sen 1998), and as a consequence, demonised women who were considered to be defiant against all these prescribed notions. The implication of this gender ideology that applauded women's obedience was that any 'punishment' for their non-compliance was never seen as a form of violence against women. The New Order's gender ideology, for example, failed to recognise the position of women as victims of violence in the home precisely because it overemphasised the idealisation of the harmonious family (Blackburn 2004: 202)—with the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the dependant housewife; the man as the head of the household and the woman as the adherent. This image was sometimes incongruous with the reality of the numbers of households in Indonesia in which the women were the main wage earners. What followed from this idealisation, and possibly was not even the worst-case scenario, was that a man slapping his wife with the intent to educate her to be a 'proper' woman often escaped with public sanction (see Chapter Seven). The failure of the state to protect women and eliminate violence against them has since become the target of more open feminist criticism. The demand by women's groups for the formation of a bill outlawing violence against women can be perceived as another effort that blurred the dichotomy of public-domestic areas by actually exposing the issue of domestic violence as public concern.

Following the regime change, there has been a shifting paradigm in the state's Office for Women's Empowerment. The newly appointed minister of this office, along with various women's NGOs and feminist activists, formed the RAN-PKTP 2001-2005 (*Rencana Aksi Nasional Penghapusan Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan*, Plan for National Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women 2001-2005).[13] This shift and development in the gender

[13] This plan targets seven strategic fields, that is, the state (including the military), laws, social-cultural concerns, employment, health, education, and the media. This plan includes in their definition of violence in the seven strategic fields: state negligence of cases of violence against women; militaristic violence conducted by militia, armed civilian groups, or para-military; gender-biased law system that is disadvantageous for female victims; gender bias in religious

paradigm, along with the change of regime, have been in accordance, not only with the transnational feminist trends, but also with the development of the national media, which has a similar history of state repression. In other words, as the women of the reformasi era have striven for freedom and justice, the media has done the same thing for the same reason.

However, the amplification of the discourse of female victimisation does not go without criticism. One may question the "simplistic dominant narrative of victimisation" (Siapno 2002). In her study of the Acehnese women's struggle with the state, society and religion in recent times, Jaqueline Aquino Siapno argues that this dominance leaves no room for the significance of Acehnese women's political agency (ibid.: 182). She further problematises the role of international women's groups, those "Euro-American and First World feminists", in the construction of a dominant discourse of female victimisation. These groups, she says, having generally categorised women from Third World countries as "docile victims, servants, and inferior subordinates" (ibid.: 181), simply cannot see that the story about Acehnese women is not only about violence, but also about agency and keen struggle. She is also concerned with the "romanticisation of the arena of the 'international' as an impartial, effective space for seeking redress of grievance" (ibid.: 185) after the dominant discourse of state violence attests to the fact that the state failed to offer a sense of equality and maintain security for their people. Furthermore, "inequalities inherent in the supposedly equivalent relationships between International and local NGOs" is also in need of more thorough scrutiny (ibid.: 187).

Media Development in the Profusion of Violence

Together with the weakening of the state's power, the media has been released on its way to freedom, marked significantly by the cancellation of publication regulations in June 1998 (see Chapter Three). Following the loosening of state control of the media, new publications started to flood the public space. This media development also came to grips with the political trend of denouncing the old regime, i.e. the New Order, by criticising, not only the corruption issue, but also violence conducted or sanctified by the state. This new media tradition was interlocked with—both supporting and supported by—the general enthusiasm to rework the identity of a 'new Indonesia', which was detached from the corruptive and violent New Order. Under the New Order, the media was used as "agents of stability" that served the best interests of the state's

interpretations; discrimination in the work place; population control by forced family planning upon women; inequality in the access for education for women; and female objectification in the media. See Nurdiana, et al. (eds.) 2000.

"authoritarian" and "developmentalist" paradigm (McCargo 2003: 77). However, this started to change when, in the last week of Suharto's power, the media reported the news more critically and turned into an "agent of change" (ibid.) (for further discussion see Chapter Three).

Reformasi has been viewed by many Indonesians as embodying a "dream of transparency" (Strassler 2004: 692), that is, when the public fixation for the most visible truth about the wrongdoings of the precarious regime started to encompass daily reality.[14] Following the end of the New Order, suppressed stories of state violence started to fill the public's worldview (for further discussion, see Chapters Two and Three). The regime change not only allowed more exposure of cases of state violence during its authoritarian leadership, but was also signified by the mass mediation of "more frequent and more varied" violent conflicts among the people (Purdey 2004: 189).

Media development in accordance with the democratisation of the state is also true in other places. Authoritarian states that undergo a process of democratisation share similar experiences.[15] Common amongst the states that have undergone a similar political change, from authoritarian to democratic, is how the transitional period becomes a time when "the crisis of meaning produced by violence, spoken and marginalised forms of knowledge begin to weave new networks of representations that, ultimately, must be addressed—responded to" (Rotker 2000: 10). It is when the alternative voice begins to be recognised and manoeuvres its way into the mainstream.

It is without question that reformasi has been a bloody and very complex transitional period in Indonesia. The change of regime has reversed almost every aspect of the people's imagery about nationhood. On the one hand, Indonesians were perplexed by the chaos and social-economic-political instability compared to the usually 'under-controlled' situation that had been the norm under the New Order. It was soon followed by another surprise as Suharto eventually resigned under the intense pressure of student and popular protests, a reality that had never been imagined by anyone in Indonesia prior to the actual event. The condemnation of Suharto and his cronies escalated when the issues of state corruption, collusion, and nepotism (popularly referred to as KKN, the acronym for *Korupsi*, *Kolusi*, *Nepostime*) and violent practises started

[14] James T. Siegel writes that the use of the term 'transparency' first referred to the financial condition following the economic crisis and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) contract. It was then used to refer to common practises attributed to the state, i.e., corruption, collusion and nepotism (*korupsi, kolusi dan nepotisme*, KKN) (Siegel 1998(b), f.n.1). Meanwhile, Patricia Spyer finds that transparency refers not only to cases of state corruption, but also to the appeal to disclose "organised terror" (see Spyer 2002(a)).

[15] For a discussion of the role of the media in the process of social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa, see Zegeye and Harris (eds.) 2003. For a study of a similar issue concerning Pacific Asia, including Indonesia, see McCargo 2003.

to be openly discussed and disseminated in media presentations. On the other hand, together with the deterioration of the state's authority, freedom of the press has nearly achieved its pinnacle, social groups and non-government organisations have thrived, and individuals have almost complete access to the media to convey their ideas. If the strengthening of civil society, citizen engagement with public matters, and freedom of the press can be seen as parameters for democracy, it should be noted that while reformasi was violent, it was also the beginning of the democratisation process in Indonesia.

During Indonesia's reformasi, the promise of democracy has evolved alongside development of the media and, as the focus of this thesis, discursive formation of female victimhood. This situation has generated issues of which it is imperative to discuss here. The first issue concerns the significance of "transparency" (Siegel 1998(b); Spyer 2002(a); Strassler 2004). Framed together, the issue of violence that was prevalent during reformasi on the one hand, and freedom of the press and the dream of transparency on the other, has spawned public fixation on the aspect of 'visibility'. The appeal for transparency produces the signification of visualisation, including photography, as "photographic visibility would ensure recognition for victims of state violence and secure a place for the accounts within national history" (Strassler 2004: 691). Meanwhile, in a situation where the people are concerned with relentless "fear, insecurity, and mental and physical exhaustion", there is distrust of almost everything (Spyer 2002(a): 35). According to Patricia Spyer, this leads to the conditions of "hyper-hermeneutics", that is, when "things are so thoroughly scrutinized because their nature and appearance are suspected of concealing something else" (ibid.).

The public appeal of visibility is in line, both sustains and is sustained by, the prevailing paradigm among journalists of the "search for the truth" (Vatikiotis 2001: 144). When referring to the debate of the May 1998 rapes, the public call for visibility has led to the appeal for "hard proof" (Strassler 2004; Sai 2006) reference to the availability, visually, of victims, of which I shall discuss in more detail below under the discussion of the position of female victims during a period conflated with violence and media expansion.

Secondly, alternative media, both propelling and being driven by the freedom of the press, which was part of the package that came with reformasi, is used by many groups in their processes of self-identification. There have been on-going debates on what defines alternative media. Some compare the term 'alternative' with 'radical' where the definition of 'radical media' is "primarily concerned with social change", while 'alternative media' "is of more general application" (Atton 2002: 9). Meanwhile, Raymond Williams made a distinction between 'alternative and oppositional practises' in which "alternative culture seeks a place to coexist within the existing hegemony,

whereas oppositional culture aims to replace it" (McGuigan 1992: 25 as quoted by Atton 2002: 19), although "'alternative' culture, was 'at its best … always an oppositional culture'" (Williams 1983: 250 as cited in Atton 2002: 19). However, since any definition cannot be disentangled from its "historical and cultural contingencies" (Atton 2002: 18), the definition of 'alternative media' as concerned here should also be put into context with Indonesian history, in this case, specifically with the history of the 1998 regime change.

The development of alternative media in Indonesia did not occur overnight following the regime change. The alternative media has always been the 'resisting' force that undermined the state's authority (for further discussion, see Chapter Three). The relevance of the opening of the media for the recent flourishing women's movement is evident in the increasing circulation of many publications produced by feminist groups. As media in general disseminates images of new subjects, alternative media also helps to distribute, and is boosted by the distribution of, images of women with new identities. This is the main aspect of the significant role of alternative media for the women's movement, that is, its capacity to promote a new identity of women (Kellner 1996: 4). Alternative media is often paralleled with 'repressed voices' and, as such, is deemed potentially useful in voicing repressed or oppositional ideas. As such, it is discernable if some women's groups use symbols or words corresponding to the word 'voice' (*suara, swara*) in their activities and programmes. One well-known Indonesian Muslim feminist activist, Ciciek Farha of Rahima, a Muslim women's organisation, said that they consider their newsletter a *corong* (loudspeaker) to amplify their voice (Chapter Six). They even named their newsletter, *Swara Rahima* (Voice of Rahima). *Kompas*, the leading mainstream newspaper in Indonesia, has a weekly supplement, *Swara*, which covers women's issues with a more feminist perspective (Chapter Three).

Third, related closely to the first point, public fixation on the aspect of visibility has also raised public appeal concerning the position of victims. In this 'new' kind of public space, the position of victims becomes important, if not determinant, in the 'true' visualisation of violence. This situation also opens up a possibility for the emergence of a kind of new mode of address of women as victims. Under the New Order, the female victims of violence never surfaced, either because the state always denied the existence of the issue or there was a lack of strong support from women's groups due to their concern that the state might react harshly. The state's denial of the existence of violence against women, which was reflected in a lack of authoritative law, also resulted in the reluctance of the victims to bring their cases to public attention because of the uncertainty that there would be an advantage to doing so (Blackburn 2004: 195). On the other hand, violence against women, which earlier on had "no

place in the agenda of women's organisations is now at the forefront" (ibid.: 217). Once the taboo was stricken, even domestic violence has gone public. Domestic violence was no longer considered to be a private matter, but became "part of broader social, political, and economic processes that are embedded in state policies, public institutions, and the global economy" (Giles and Hyndman 2004: 4). There was an urgent need for comprehensive action to address the issue.

As it is also true in other places of conflict, the importance of the numbers of victims soars following a change of authoritarian regimes, as well as prior and during the period of transition. As the New Order has been remembered for its enduring repression, its fall presented an opportunity for those who considered themselves, or were considered to be, victims of the state's ferocity to redress their grievances and attain justice.

However, some aspects involved in the freedom of the press have been excessive. The booming of the media industry comes hand-in-hand with commercialisation of the media. After the resignation of Suharto hundreds of new publishing permits were granted to new publications, most of which were tabloids, "many of them given to sensational reporting" (Vatikiotis 2001: 144). In this case, if freedom eventually won, "was the truth served" (ibid.)? The dimension of sensational reporting has been evident in the debate of the May 1998 rapes, where the news coverage of the rapes was often inflated with 'sensationalised' narratives or visualisations emphasising female sexuality (see Chapter Four). The media in general is said to be more interested in reporting cases of violence against women when they "are regarded [to be] titillating" (Blackburn 2004: 195). Another effect of the explosion of new media during a period that is profuse with violence is that the bombarding of visualisations of violence may result in "fatigue compassion". With regard to Africa, Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman write that over-exposure of the visualisations of "suffering" of the famine that overwhelm the viewers has instead "desensitized the viewer" (Kleinman and Kleinman 1996: 9). Kleinman and Kleinman further say that "our epoch's dominating sense that complex problems can be neither understood nor fixed works with the massive globalization of images of suffering to produce moral fatigue, exhaustion of empathy, and political despair" (ibid.). Is this tendency also true in Indonesia? This thesis, to some extent, also seeks the answer to that question.

Reading Representation

This thesis finds that representations are not "merely symbolic" images; not only are they political, they are also constitutive in the debate of, in this case, violence against women. Some terms and concepts in the study of textual

analysis are important and relevant here. This thesis concentrates on works from linguistic and media studies, social theories and elsewhere that are deemed fruitful in developing the analytical framework. The following section provides some pointers for the terms and concepts that shape the analysis of the examples discussed in this thesis. Their meanings may become clearer when referred to again and contextualised in the examples that are discussed in the chapters that follow.

Ideology, Interpellation, Subjecthood

Ideology, according to Louis Althusser, a French philosopher, refers to "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1972: 162). Althusser perceives ideology as an intercessor between the system of power that operates in a specific context and individuals. As such, it becomes possible for the hegemonic power to reproduce itself by concealing subjugation and merging individuals into the structure of power. To illustrate how ideology allows individuals to recognise themselves as subjects, Althusser introduces the term 'interpellation'. He gives the example of a police officer yelling, "Hey, you there!" at an individual (ibid.: 174). When the individual turns around after hearing this call and "by this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject" (ibid.). In this illustrious example, the police officer does not only "represent the law [but also becomes the one who binds] the law to the one who is hailed" (Butler 1993: 121). Or from the perspective of the one who is hailed, not only is he recognised as a subject by law, but he also becomes subjugated to the law as well.

Althusser stresses the simultaneity of the process of interpellation in which "the existence of ideology and call or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (Althusser 1972: 175). As for Althusser, ideology, interpellation and subjecthood buttress each other, or in other words, "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subject, which neccesarily leads us to the one last proposition: *individuals are always-already subjects*" (ibid.: 176). Within the reach of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), such as the family, schools, and media forms, including newspapers, radio and television, Althusser asserts, subjects are always ideologically constituted (ibid.).

Gender, Violence against Women, Agency

Now allow me revisit the notion of gender. Here, gender should be seen as a fluid variable, which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times, and not as a fixed attribute in a person. In other words, gender is a performance; it is what we do at certain times and in certain situations, and is

never a universal standard that shows who we are (Butler 1990: 24). Gender is not the same as sex. Gender is not inherent as an identity, but rather is claimed as one's identity. In other words, there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; it is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (ibid.: 25). However, gender is not 'a set of free-floating attributes' because there is always an essential effect of gender, which is "performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practises of gender coherence" (ibid.: 24). In other words, the identification of a gendered person cannot be disentangled from its intersection with "racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities" (ibid.: 3). The intersection between gender and those modalities is not always constituted in coherence and consistency within different contexts and time. It is thus impossible to separate gender from the production and maintenance of political and cultural intersections within the society concerned.

In the context of reformasi, the contestation involved new proposals of gender ideology, media freedom, and less centralised control of the state's power. All of these aspects tap into the process of identity 'reformation' for Indonesian women. In addition, the social actors of the 'project of identity formation' became more varied and originated from a broader background: not only the state and its apparatuses, but also feminist activists, popular media producers, 'reformed' state officers, religious leaders, and intellectuals. Gender identity became a site of contestation among those social players. In other words, the intact context of violent reformasi contributed to shaping a new identity for Indonesian women.

In regards to violence against women, or violent acts in a more general term, gender should be seen as a "relation" (Cockburn 2004: 24). As societies almost everywhere 'normally' emphasise and represent the "differences between men and women", and even reinforce them into norms, "sex roles and responsibilities are accepted, even idealized, as contrasted and complementary" and "represented as natural rooted in biology, and confirmed in history" (Cockburn 2004: 27). This normalisation is evident in most families in the world, as well as in multinational corporations and international financial institutions. Hence, if boys are associated with toy guns, girls will likely be associated with dolls. When this normalised difference is imbued with a 'power imbalance', as for example, when a toy gun is approximated to war, power, destruction, and thus, masculinity, and dolls to home, powerlessness, and thus, femininity, it becomes more discernable if in war and conflict situations men are affiliated with soldiers and women with victims.

Another issue that becomes a concern in the discussion of female victimisation is agency. Lamb, examining "the current cultural requirements for being a victim, including the pathology, the diagnoses, and the expectation of

long experience of suffering" finds that this, most importantly, "robs victims of agency" (Lamb 1999(a): 8-9). Lamb further argues that the focus on 'pathology' rather than 'resilience' renders the "medical aspect of victimhood [...] emphasized" and "political aspects" of female abuse "de-emphasized" (Lamb 1999(b): 131). De-politicising of female abuse would contribute least to the attempt to change the culture of violence against women (ibid.: 133).

If the condition of victimisation can be paralleled to that of subordination or domination, Foucaldian theorists have their stance on the constitutive power of subordination. Referring to Foucault's insights, Saba Mahmood elucidates that power should "be understood as a strategic relation of force that permeates life and is productive of new forms of desires, objects, relations, and discourses" (2005: 17). And secondly, it should be understood that "subject does not precede power relations, in the form of an individual consciousness, but is produced through these relations" (ibid.). Foucault's notion of the 'paradox of *subjectivation'* becomes the key point here, that is, "the very processes and conditions that secure a subject's subordination are also the means by which she becomes a self-conscious identity and agent" (ibid.). To conclude Foucault's notion above, Mahmood writes:

> Stated otherwise, one may argue that the set of capacities inhering in a subject—that is, the abilities that define her modes of agency—are not the residue of an undominated self that existed prior to the operations of power but are themselves the products of those operations. Such an understanding of power and subject formation encourages us to conceptualize agency not simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of *subordination* create and enable (Mahmood 2005: 17-18).

The example of the study conducted by Amanda Konradi (1996) (as quoted in Lamb 1996(b): 117-8), who observed cases of female abuse in the courtroom may clarify the complicated notions above. Konradi found that the women victims "played the role of victim to get what they wanted—a guilty verdict for their perpetrators" (Lamb 1996: 117). They deployed the techniques of, what Konradi terms as, "'appearance' work" and "'emotion' work". To fit into the image of "culturally approved victims", these women chose appropriate clothing for the trial and showed 'correct' emotional expressions (ibid.: 117-8). The bottom line is, these women "actively prepare for their cases with lawyers and make plans to influence juries, determining how best to fit into our common understanding of what a victim should be like" (1996: 118).

Representation and Media Culture

The media has become an important constituent of modern society. Jean Baudrillard, a French philosopher, argues that the media are "key simulation machines which reproduce images, signs, and codes" (Baudrillard 1989: 68). The simulations of images, signs, and codes in turn constitutes an "autonomous realm of (hyper)reality" (ibid.). Hyper-reality thus comes to play a key role in everyday life and the obliteration of social reality. By this process there appears a significant reversal of the relationship between representation and reality. If the media was previously believed to mirror, reflect or represent reality, now they are constituting a (hyper)reality, "a new media reality, 'more real than real', where 'the real' is subordinated to the representation thus leading ultimately to a dissolving of the real" (ibid.). We consume signs and images rather than real things. Everything is, seemingly, a copy of something that does not (or did not) exist, a simulacrum.

However, meanings are not produced through the free play of signifiers alone, but are rather the products of power forces in society (Gottdienner 1995: 26; c.f. Heryanto 2006: 10-11). Increasingly, studies point to the interplay of power and knowledge in the society. Influenced by Foucauldian notions of the interconnections between power, knowledge, and the formations of social norms, many scholars have adopted the view that "material culture" results from the consolidation of "past knowledge and ideologies" that control society through "materialised technique, modes of desire, and knowledge" (Gottdiener 1995).[16] What determines the dissemination of signs, symbols, and images are then the insidious workings of power and knowledge in society.

In reading the proliferation of signs emerging in the media we cannot ignore the interplay of power and human agency in constituting, accentuating, and controlling the images and meanings produced in the society. To analyse the proliferation of the images of female victims in the media of the post-Suharto era, a contextualisation of the political and economic conditions within which these images and signs are produced is vital. Changing notions of female identity can only be better understood by recognising the changing modes of power relations within the society concerned.

[16] Gottdiener argues that in the essence of the multiplied expressions there lies the "mechanism of power", which constrains the play of signification. This means that the indispensable link between the mental image and material forms is constrained under the interplay of power and knowledge in the society. He gives the example of theme parks or shopping malls. According to him, they are in fact "engineered for effect just as are Foucault's prison, clinic, and hospital". They are not only the representations of meaningless commodity culture (1995: 30-31).

Media Discourse Analysis

Text analysis cannot be disentangled from the dynamics of the production and consumption processes, as well as the socio-cultural background, of the text. According to Norman Fairclough, a linguist, "textual analysis can give access to the detailed mechanism through which social contradictions evolve and are lived out, and the sometimes subtle shifts they undergo" (1995: 15). In response to the critique of text analysis, especially among the media reception researchers that emphasise the multiple meanings that texts can have as a result of different interpretations and, as such, offer different effects, Fairclough finds that "the range of potential interpretations will be constrained and delimited according to the nature of the text" (1995: 16). He contends that "any reading is a product of an interface between the properties of the text and the interpretative resources and practises which the interpreter brings to bear upon the text" (1995: 16). For Fairclough, text analysis is still a 'central element' in analysing media, although he reminds us that "it needs to be complemented by analysis of text reception as well as by analysis of text production" (ibid.).

This thesis will not emphasise text as much as Fairclough does (1995: 62). However, I find some elements of his critical analysis of media discourse relevant and important for my analysis of the representations of female victims discussed in this thesis. Let me quote at length the elements of Fairclough's media discourse analysis:

> My view is that we need to analyse media language as *discourse*, and the linguistic analysis of media should be part of the discourse analysis of media. [...] But discourse analysis is concerned with practices as well as texts, and with both *discourse practices* and *sociocultural practices*. By discourse practices I mean, for instance, the ways in which texts are produced by media workers in media institutions, and the ways in which texts are received by audiences, as well as how media texts are socially distributed. There are various levels of sociocultural practices that may constitute parts of the context of discourse practice. I find helpful to distinguish the specific social goings-on that the discourse is part of, the institutional framework(s) that the discourse occurs within, and the wider societal matrix of the discourse. Discourse analysis is an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices and sociocultural practices (Fairclough, 1995:16-17).

So, the first element is text. Fairclough defines texts, first, linguistically in both spoken and written language, including "a transcription of broadcast … as well as a newspaper article". Secondly, text is defined by the audio-visual media that include "visual images and sound effects". Finally, text in a "multifunctional view" in which the aspects of language's "ideational, interpersonal, and textual

functions" can be found "simultaneously at work" (Halliday 1978 as quoted in Fairclough, 1995: 17). For Fairclough, these three functions resemble his three aspects of text, that is "representations, relations, and identities" (ibid.: 58).

The second element is discourse practise. This thesis will not discuss discourse in purely linguistic terms that focus exclusively on the elements of language. Neither will it lean to Baudrillard's definition of discourse that involves freely flying signifiers. Rather, it pays homage to the more Foucouldian concept of discourse that defines it "as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough 1995: 18). Here, power plays an important role in determining the most dominant discourse without losing ground to the context. However, in line with Fairclough, I agree that Foucault's sophisticated theory of discourse analysis and discursive formation of subjectivity remains highly conceptual and in need of more practical tools to see how it can be used to critically analyse discourse—that is, text and its relation to context (Fairclough 1989: 13).

The third element involves the socio-cultural practises that come in "different levels of abstraction from the particular event" (Fairclough 1995: 62). The layers here mean the levels where a "communicative event" can occur, from the "more immediate situational context" to the "wider context of institutional practises" to the "yet wider frame of society and culture" (ibid.). Fairclough argues that the "wider socio-cultural context" is very important to attend to because not only does it play a significant role in shaping the media, but also "in the diffusion of such social and cultural changes" which include changing constructions of gender relations, race relations, and class relations" (ibid.: 51). With regard to the subject of this study, the canonisation of women as victims is thus not only defined by the context of reformasi, but should also be examined as being potentially generative of the creation of a new culture of female victimisation.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis examines various selected issues centred on the theme of identity reconstruction and representations of female victims. While each of the issues is interesting and important in itself, each of them is significant for the overview rendered of the reconstruction of new identities of women in Indonesia. I consider each issue worth mentioning for its place within the trajectories of the histories of women and media development in Indonesia, as well as for its own distinctive stance and rhetorical strategies for the feminist movement. While each of the examples exhibits its exemplar and deserves unrelenting attention on its own, framed together they indicate a tendency in the canonisation of female victims as one ardent predilection in the women's

movement in the history of post-Suharto Indonesia. This relates to my key point in organising the thesis as a series of case studies following a thematic and chronological analysis of the representations of female victims in the discourse of reformasi.

The next two chapters present descriptive accounts of two contexts that focus on, first, the return of women into the public arena and, second, the opening of the media world after the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998. These two chapters lay out very important contexts for the entire analysis of the mediation of the 'new' identity of women as female victims of violence.

Chapter Four discusses media 'reconstructions' of the identities of the female victims of the May 1998 rapes by a close reading of the comic, *Jakarta 2048*. This reconstruction of the events is questionable because both the rapists and the victims remain absent. However, it is important to note that the reconstruction of the event and the actors/victims cannot escape from the thick nuance of racialisation of the May 1998 situation, which resulted in the prevailing use of symbols, images, and idioms related mainly to ethnic Chinese physical traits to signify the victims, juxtaposed against other ethnic identities as the culprits, thus suggesting that the events were, allegedly, a manifestation of ethnic clashes. Here, the understanding of the victimisation of women seems to be easily laid in the nest of the long story of ethnic, rather than gender, discrimination, and more significantly through the images of Chinese women as victims.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the representations of women in conflict areas by closely examining two films, *Perempuan di Wilayah Konflik* (Women in Conflict Areas) and *Bade Tan Reuda* (Aceh's Never Ending Tragedy), which recount the lives of women in conflict areas. By indexing the various images of the female victims next to each other, while at the same time registering a generic story and language of victimhood, these two films reconstruct the women's experiences within a larger scenario in which women are juxtaposed vis-à-vis the state or a rebel group. This chapter further discusses the aspect of 'voicing' women's experiences with violence, which is deemed significant by the films' producers.

Chapter Six is about the representations of women wearing veils and the spectrum of identities elicited from their choice to veil. By examining images of women wearing the *jilbab* (veil) in contemporary Indonesia, and also the juxtaposition of veiled women as victims/fighters as promoted by various groups with different perspectives, we will be better able to see the central positioning of women in the discourse of religious revivalism in Indonesia during reformasi. While the proliferation of women wearing veils is considered a success by those who advance *islamisasi* (Islamisation) through appearances, the enforcement of veiling for Muslim women has elicited strong

reactions by others in the inner circles of Islamic women's groups. That both the groups that advance the *jilbabisasi*[17] and those who are against the enforcement of wearing a jilbab draw on women as symbols of victimhood demonstrates that women have been central in both the Islamic feminist movement and religious revivalism in general.

Chapter Seven focuses on the representation of victims of domestic violence. It discusses specifically a media campaign, i.e., a video entitled, *Menguak Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga* (Revealing Domestic Violence, 2001), produced by Kalyanamitra, while situating this presentation into a broader scope of mediation of violence against women in domestic areas that was endorsed by the mainstream media, such as television programmes. Looking into the representations of female victims of domestic violence can not only help to understand the discourse of domestic violence in Indonesia and its denotation in various public media presentations, but also more generally fathom gender and marital relations in the society.

Chapter Eight examines the import of the positioning of Inul Daratista, a popular and controversial *dangdut* singer, within the mediatised controversy apropos of the framing of women's identity during reformasi. Her various positionings as an aggressor, victim, and survivor—bearing in mind that these labels were assigned to her by others and were highly saturated in a complexly knitted series of discourses—provides a note that popular culture forte cannot be undermined as part of the larger, more political moves in the identity struggles among women in Indonesia during reformasi (c.f. Heryanto 2008). Accordingly, this chapter shows that such positionings of women into the aggressor-victim-survivor transformation and the discursive reaction related to it reflects, and is part of, a larger concern regarding women's victimisation during reformasi.

The concluding chapter highlights the importance of context in reading the representations of female victims in the period of disruptive regime change and addresses the concepts of ideology, interpellation, identity, and agency, which are substantive essential elements in this discourse.

[17] *Jilbabisasi* refers to veiling as a more structured programme, likely comparable to *islamisasi* or other state programmes, such as, modernisation (*modernisasi*), urbanisation (*urbanisasi*), etc.