

# Digital Collaborative Literature:

## Responding to the millennials way of learning

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**Abstract**—The digital world is rapidly changing the human perspective that certainly impacts the way of life, not to mention on how people learn things. Various responses to the technological revolution that has reached various lines even to domestic affairs are always interesting to discuss. Countless platforms offer unlimited possibilities in exploring the unknown-world. Literature is one of the fields affected since the emergence of numerous genres that inevitably lead to the meaning-contestation in the literary world; which certainly change the overall meaning of learning-literature. Appropriate literary teaching for higher education students, also known as millennials, gets an immense challenge. Teachers nowadays are required to be able to cope with the age without going beyond the learning objectives. As a response to this particular condition, a synergy between postcolonial point of view and teaching strategies in the digital age is seen as one of the solutions. The synergy results on the specific phenomenon that is Digital Collaborative Literature; which focuses on the dynamic collaborative exploration that leads to the goal of the Introduction to Literature.

**Keywords**—digital; literature; postcolonial; teaching; collaborative

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Learning Literature in Digital Era

Narrative is the main subject of literature. Especially in relation to the context of the literature class in the language education study program, which one of the output of its graduates is a language teacher candidate. The teacher candidates are projected to be able to understand literature as one of the media in explaining the phenomenon of language. Meanwhile the presence of narrative cannot be separated from the creator, in this case the author. Narratives and author have an empirical attachment and are two subjects that are equally important in the context of learning literature to teach language phenomena. Thus tracking the position of the author in the realm of literary teaching in the language education class by providing an authentic experience to students is considered important.

By providing an authentic experience at this time is closely related to the technological development because the concrete examples available nowadays are mostly in the form of interactions involving the digital world. The development of

the cutting-edge technology occurs very rapidly throughout the world, raising new phenomenon that allows humans to be connected borderless through Internet. Not exceptionally in Indonesia. The need to communicate, or tell stories anywhere anytime has caught Indonesian people to make use of information technology, for instance online social media platforms as the medium for interaction in daily basis.

The rapid development of digital technology in life is also responded positively and constructively by the world of education through the emerging 21st Century Education Concept that focuses on preparing the student to have the competency in facing the challenging disruptive world. Goulao says that everything is changing in a globalized world, including the education system that possibly “recycle and expand it in order to give answers to the upcoming challenges. Computers’ literacy is an important competency in the 21st century” [1]. The idea of building digital literacy is also realized in designing the *up-to-date* learning environment in response to the millennial way of learning. Kaba says “Innovative processes, nowadays, are becoming everyday more and more main components of the educational system as students, being most of them part of the “digital migrants”, are urging their lecturers to be included in their world, which changes very quickly and continuously. Education starts from communication” [2].

The 21th Century Education Concept is also giving an interesting context to the Postcolonial discussion of ideas contestation dealing with the position of the author in the work produced as mentioned earlier, especially if taken in the realm of discussion about the effects or implications of the respective *positioning* and how it affects the way students have to learn literature in digital era. Does the *millennials*, as the digital author has an active role in fostering a literary learning environment in this multifaceted digital world? And how the literature students in the language education study program need to get in touch with the above-mentioned context in a classroom?

#### B. Postcolonialism and the Idea of the Digital Author

In the postcolonial perspective, the discussion on attributive identity issues embedded in the work of literature seems to be something that is constantly debatable. In this perspective the identity of the author often becomes one of the important

aspects traced in reading a text, which is interpreted holistically as a verbal recording phenomenon of forms of colonialism inheritance in general both physical and mental state.

Yet there are two major streams contesting each other regarding the connection between the author and the work. Barthes in *The Death of the Author* criticizes the practice of traditional literary criticism which combines the context of the biography of an author in a text interpretation that needs to be eliminated by the perception that "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin ... "(It) is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost" Barthes even believes that both the writing and the creator are not related [3].

Barthesian's basic assumptions about this relationship, as well as the antithesis group become quite challenging when confronted with nowadays digital landscape that has complex features related to the idea of author, creation and its aftermath effects; or in other words the significance of these 'digital products' to the both offline and online environment. The assumption then seems to raise other questions since the fourth industrial revolution has been rapidly changing the landscape. Especially after the rapid development of the digital world and the internet which offer various platforms that are interesting; in accordance with the user needs. One of them is Facebook

C. Digital Collaborative Literature

Indonesia accounts for the fourth largest number of Facebook users globally. According to data gathered from We are Social until January 2018, the number of Facebook users from Indonesia reached 130 million accounts with a percentage of six percent of all users. This number also records the name of Indonesia as a country in Southeast Asia with the most number of Facebook users. Taken from the same source, there are about 65 billion Facebook active users in Indonesia in which 33 billion of them are actively accessing the site daily (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Facebook's top countries and cities [4].

Indeed, Facebook is very popular among young people in Indonesia. Associated with the issue of creativity and creation, possibly because the platform has many advantages. Facebook

has successfully winning the heart of its users possibly because the web platform is offering so many advantages, particularly fit to Indonesian needs. **Real-time-based** which adopts the chronological timeline; the newest one appears at the top of the timeline; **moderation features** such as features of adding friends, hiding the content for specific viewers, blocking the access of unwanted party; and **interactive**.

Through the medium then, users are able to respond particular post by their friend such as posting a comment, showing reaction, replying comments, sharing the content of the post, and reporting violation of Facebook regulation to Facebook Developer. Those characteristics combined with the virtual-account-based are enabling its users to engage in identity creation (or re-conceptualization). Later, through their own account, Facebook users are building their own style, activity and identity desired. Furthermore, developing online connections and relationship across the time and space boundaries.

II. METHOD

Data and facts about Facebook's popularity among young people (average college-age) provide a strong reason for the world of education to engage social media in order to achieve learning goals. Especially in this case is literature class. Thus, the engagement of social media to provide authentic experiences in literature class is advantageous.

Facebook Group is a popular feature of Facebook. It enables people to form a group for whatever reason as long as it goes in line with the platform guidelines. The study on the application of Facebook Group in learning process is often conducted. Hantari once conducted a research on one of the non-college Facebook groups that is *Sastra Ruang Hati*, which is quite frequent in discussing and sharing constructive work of literature [5]. Having 4,200 active members, mostly youngsters and routinely increased by 50-59 new members each week this Facebook Group somehow is surviving and even discovering new form of literary work.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This evidence reinforces that social media plays a role in the opinions formation in relation to the process of learning. Another interesting fact found in the study is the collective conduct of using pseudo name by members who actively share the work.

Quite different from the focus of the previous research, this paper analyzes the application of Facebook to provide authentic experiences for students in becoming digital authors. It is a collaborative project where all students in one class are involved to make an elaborative story. The name of the group is *Collaborative Fiction Project ITL 1718*. ITL is Introduction to Literature and 1718 is the academic year. The number of students involved in this project is 33 students. In this project students are required to use the account they normally use and use their real name.

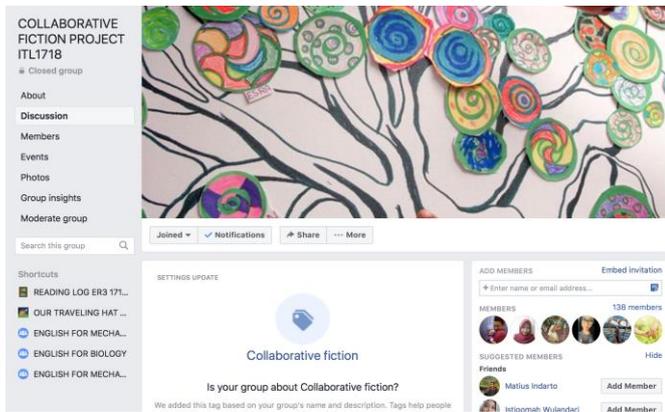


Fig. 2. Collaborative fiction project using facebook as medium.

In addition to monitor the interests of students who respond to the story, the use of real name in this project is intended to challenge one of the propositions which states that, most likely the use of pseudo-name influences the behavior in using social media. She said that, regardless other empirical factors, any netizens using pseudo-name tend to be more active and outspoken because he/she does not have any responsibilities related to the real world.

The most basic rule of this project is that they have to continue the current story alternately. The story must follow the aspects of fictions they are learning in the class in prior e.g. plot, theme, setting, mood, atmosphere, etc. There is no special plot directed or required by the lecturer. One random student is assigned to start the story. The lecturer only requires the story to run approximately for 4 weeks. No specific rules are set for the ending of the story as well. Students are free to respond. There is no special or added/lessen point for students who respond more or less. So that the response appear in this project is an initiative of the students participating in the group.

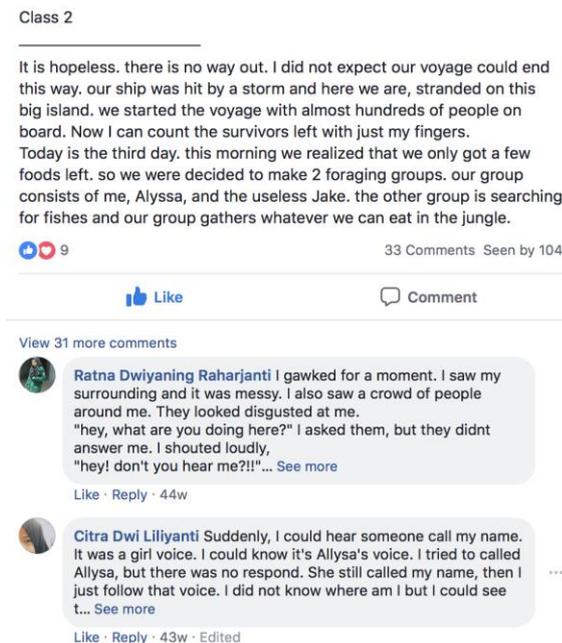


Fig. 3. The story.

In total 14 weeks, 3 collaborative stories are crafted. Students are showing quite decent graphics in terms of the level of participation [100%; 121%; and 115%]. The normal frequency of student's participation is once for each story, while some students are taking part twice. About 75% of the students are satisfied about the plot they collaboratively made, while 23 % are saying that the plot can still be made better, the rest 2% are having no comment about the story.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In evaluation section by the end of the project students are interviewed about the author's position from their perspective; whether the narrative produced can be interpreted as a meaningful text which is closely connected with information about the background of the author [which is, in this case the author is more than one, the author are 33 persons]. They are asked some 'Postcolonial questions' related to the idea of the position/significance of the author in the story produced; whether the knowledge of the author's background or the identity selected by the author somehow influences the reading of a text as well; whether they do agree that the author is really dead, especially in the current digital era? The answers are various. However, the more important point is their understanding of some important postcolonial discussions in literary analysis through authentic experience.

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