Satay, skyscrapers and *sarong kebayas*: the representation of modernity in the commercials of Garuda Indonesia and Malaysia Airlines

Yvonne Nijenhuis

s1476351

Supervisor: David Henley. Second reader: Jochem van den Boogert

Master Thesis Asian Studies (Track: History, Arts and Culture)

1st of November 2015

15.551 words

Table of contents

("Service concept" Website Garuda Indonesia)

Introduction

Southeast Asia is booming: the region is developing rapidly and has seen huge economical, cultural and political transformations in the last decades. After years of economic growth this part of Asia is quickly becoming 'modern'. This modernity arrived for Southeast Asia in a strongly globalized age. On the one hand these processes of globalization have played a key role in the economic successes of the region: foreign investment still forms a big part of the region's economic growth. On the other hand leads globalization to a fear of 'becoming overwhelmed by other cultures' (Condry: 2001, 386). This fear is mostly focused on economically and culturally strong nations such as the United States ("Americanization") or - geographically and culturally, closer to Southeast Asia: China and Japan. Southeast Asian nations are in doubt: they enjoy aspects of 'modernity' such as better health care and improvement of infrastructure that increases mobility, etc. On the other side they are afraid of losing their national and/or regional identities. These identities are often represented in all kinds of (invented) traditions and 'nation brands'. Summarizing: modernity seems to be embraced by Southeast Asians as long as it does not equal total Westernization. That would mean a loss of identity and 'authenticity'. This idea forms the starting point for my research that focuses on the representation of modernity in contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia in the commercials of Malaysia Airlines and Garuda Indonesia. In these commercials I see this dichotomy reflected: on the one hand they do their best to present themselves as 'modern', on the other hand they underline their nation's uniqueness or 'Asianness'.

For this thesis I will analyze the representation of modernity in the commercials of Garuda Indonesia and Malaysia Airlines. These are the national airlines of Indonesia and Malaysia. Their commercials give an exalted perspective on their nations. I will focus on what Malaysian- and Indonesian modernity looks like, how these two national 'modernities' overlap or differ, and hopefully this can tell us something about Southeast Asian modernity in general. Why comparing Malaysia and Indonesia? First of all are these nations part of the same Asian region: Southeast Asia. They have a long shared history and there has been cultural exchange between the areas that we nowadays call 'Indonesia' and 'Malaysia', for centuries. *Wayang kulit*: the shadow play is one example of an originally Hinduistic tradition from Java that is nowadays still very common and popular at the east coast of West-Malaysia. Another cultural

aspect these nations share is Islam: in both nations this is the most dominant religion. Indonesia and Malaysia also share a linguistic element: Bahasa Indonesia is an Indonesianized version of Malay. And Malay is –next to English- still the official language of Malaysia (Sneddon: 2003, 11-3, 127-31). Another important aspect is that Malaysia and Indonesia have both been part of the third wave of regional economic development in Asia that took place from the 1980s until 1997. These historical, religious, cultural, economic and linguistic elements make a comparison between these nations not unfounded. Even more important is that their airlines are comparable. Malaysia Airlines and Garuda Indonesia are both the outcome of the quick development and upcoming of aviation-infrastructure at the end of their nations' colonial periods: Malaysia Airlines' founding date is 12 October 1937, Garuda Indonesia's: 1 August 1947. They commenced though at: 1 October 1972 and Garuda at: 6 January 1949 (Website Malaysia Airlines "About – History", Website Garuda Indonesia "About - History"). Garuda and Malaysia Airlines are both symbols of their nations' gained sovereignty and symbols of national pride. Both airlines are still having a total or majority of government ownership. Malaysia Airlines is fully nationalized after the two disasters in the first half of 2014 (Linning: Daily Mail, 2014). The Republic of Indonesia owns almost 70% of Garuda Indonesia (Website Garuda Indonesia "About – Corporate Partners"). Another more practical reason to compare these two airlines is that they had enough recently made audiovisual material that was easily accessible.

Merie Limin has written the master thesis "Singapore Girl 2.0?" in 2014. Our researches look similar in the sense that we both analyze commercials (mostly modern commercials) of Asian airlines. However, there are differences in focus of research, choice of corpus and choice of methods. Limin's research focuses exclusively on the portrayal of "Asian women". More precisely her thesis focuses on the representation of the female flight attendants of Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines. Limin writes exclusively about the portrayal of Asian women, my research is not excluded to gender. My focus is on modernity and therefore I also discuss 'modern' gender roles, where I do also pay attention to the role of the family and men. Limin also places her research in historical perspective. Due to limited access to commercials before 2000, her historical research is restricted from "early 2000s" until 2013. Because of this restricted possibility of viewing pre-2000 audiovisual

materials of Asian airlines I focused only on the most recent commercials. A final important difference is Limin's use of a schematic method of Berger while I used the methods of film scholars Prammaggiore & Wallis as starting point of my visual analyses. They have written an introduction book for film studies wherein they outline different main elements of film that are relevant to analyze: narrative form, sound, mise en scène, cinematography, editing, genre, non-narrative fiction films, the relation between ideology and film, social context and film style and the role of economics and technology. This is a broader vision on film than Berger gives in the article that Limin used as starting point of her research. Berger aims to capture the complexity of any (short) film in one schedule that concentrates exclusively on mise-en-scene, cinematography and sound. I find this method too simplistic and restrictive for my research. My methods –on the basis of Prammaggiore and Wallis- can be classified as 'discourse analysis' and close reading of audiovisual material. On the one hand I look close to these films: similar to Berger's method, but on the other hand leave Prammaggiore & Wallis more space for the political, economical, social or cultural context in which any audiovisual text is produced. My corpus exists of promotional videos that were uploaded to the official *Youtube* channels of the airlines. Sometimes I will also refer to the websites of the airlines and the pictures presented there. Much of my research is inspired and built upon Terence Chong's book *Modernization Trends in Southeast Asia*. In the final chapter he writes:

> *One major question concerning many Southeast Asian intellectuals and thinkers is: can Southeast Asia ever become modern on its own terms? Modernization and modernity have long been associated with the West because scientific breakthroughs, technological advancements, contemporary political systems and institutions have percolated from Western experience onto the contemporary Southeast Asian landscape. More than an esoteric philosophical musing, the question of a Southeast Asian modernity goes to the core of Asian ideals and values from which political systems, social structures, economic practices can be developed to negotiate modern life. A Southeast Asian modernity would be informed by the region's historical trajectory, social, and political formations, as well as conflicts, divergences, and convergences.*
> (Chong: 2005, 66)

This idea of 'Asian values' and the development of a modernity that differs from Western modernity, do I find highly interesting. These nations seem to embrace any advantage that modernity can offer, but at the same time they seem afraid of blindly copying the West. I see this clearly reflected in the marketing of Malaysia Airlines and Garuda Indonesia. First of all they are well-equipped and internationally operating airlines that meet the (Western) standards of modern airlines, but at the same time they label themselves explicitly as 'Asian' next to 'Malaysian' or 'Indonesian' at their websites. Apparently this is something they find important to mention. KLM's website, for example, does not mention that they are 'European' or 'Western'. Only in their international name (Royal Dutch Airlines) they mention their nationality. If you do not extensively search for it on their website, it is hard to be confronted with the Dutch-ness or European-ness of KLM. I had similar findings with the website of American Airlines and Aer Lingus: clearly proud national airlines, but they seem to focus on a sort of neutrality in their webtexts and the appearance of their cabin crew. This is a strong contrast with Garuda Indonesia and Malaysia Airlines that mention their nation and Asia several times in texts on the website. Besides they make people even more aware of their national- and cultural background by visual aspects such as uniforms of the cabin crew: revised versions of the traditional *sarong kebaya*, the serving of national dishes, and by the *sembah* gesture that the crew does when they greet or serve passengers. *Sembah* is the Indonesian and Malay word for the gesture of someone clasping their palms together –as people do when they pray- en place them in front of their chest. It is an Asian way of greeting and demonstrating respect (Online dictionary Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia 2015). With the *sembah* gesture, together with the choice of dishes and clothing Malaysia Airlines and Garuda Indonesia show their Asian-ness (see Fig 1.1). National symbols are used for marketing strategic reasons. Values such as hospitality, respecting authority and 'respecting family' are presented as important and typical for Indonesia and Malaysia. Garuda's website even mentions 'hospitality' as a naturally given aspect of Indonesian national identity. Hereby not only 'sticking' this value to Indonesian identity, but also indirectly implying that other nations are not as hospitable as Indonesia. The creation of identities works by showing ones 'difference' from others. In the case of nations these are created national identities endlessly repeated through different channels to make sure that the borders of a nation are not only clear by geographical borders but also by 'cultural' ones (Anderson: 2006, 141-54).

The commercials of the airlines can be seen as reflections of what these nations are proud of (specific traditions, food, dressing and skyscrapers) and what values their nation stands for (for example 'hospitality'). In my research I will distinguish several 'themes of representation', which will lead to a conclusion of 'what modernity in Malaysia and Indonesia looks like' in the commercials of their national airlines. I will pay specific attention to the representation of gender, Asian-ness, city life, mobility and technology. These are 'themes' that are influenced by processes of modernization, and changed by the arrival of 'modern' ideas.

In the first chapter I will discuss the role that national airlines play with nation building, national pride and a nation's modernity. The second chapter will focus on the concept of 'modern', 'modernity' and 'modernization'. Although it is a difficult term to pin down, I will try to give a brief outline of the historiography on modernity and how this can be related to Southeast Asia. In the third chapter I will discuss the videos of Malaysia Airlines. I will divide the chapter into a part where I discuss the 'non-fiction' videos and next the 'fiction' videos, In which I will give special attention to several 'modern' themes: the role of women and men, city life and the representation of 'Asianness', 'Malaysianess', and 'Malayness'. The fourth chapter encloses the videos of Garuda Indonesia with similar themes. In both chapters I will do close readings of the videos, pointing out several visual key-elements that represent 'modernity' or the exact opposite. In the fifth chapter I will compare and interlink the three chapters, to discuss 'what modernity looks like in Indonesia and Malaysia', how they differ or overlap. I will finish with a short conclusion where I outline several 'shapers' of modernity in Malaysia and Indonesia, some are also mentioned by Chong and are reinforced by my findings, others are not mentioned by him but did I find important after my research. These 'shapers' of modernity are processes or cultural elements visible in contemporary Indonesia and Malaysia that influence the 'form' or 'shape' of modernity in these nations. These main 'shapers' are: post-colonialism, the colonial history and struggle for independence by Malaysia and Indonesia. Secondly: the economic development that has led to processes of urbanization, consumerism and the emerging of a new middleclass. Thirdly: the influence of Islam. These three elements play an important role in the development of a *"recognizable modern Southeast Asian culture"* (Chong: 2005, 56) and form the background of the representations I deciphered in the videos.

Figure 1 – Stewardesses of Garuda Indonesia greet with the *sembah*: a traditional way of welcoming people and showing respect. (website Garuda Indonesia)

Airlines as flag carriers

My reason to focus on airlines is that they are historically seen as 'flag carriers' of a nation, and indicators of a nation's modernity and economic success. A significant part of nation building has to do with the construction of a well-functioning transportation system (Raguraman: 1997, 239). Similar to roads and railways decreases aviation distances. But where trains and roads are used on daily base by most people, is aviation not. This does not mean though, that aviation plays a little role in nation building. On the contrary I would argue: rightly because aviation is not for everyday use of most people, the creation of airports and more importantly: a national airline easily functions as a national symbol of pride (Raguraman: 1997, 230-53). Aviation is a high-speed alternative for cars and trains, and often international: surpassing borders and continents. Raguraman writes:

> *"For many countries, the national carrier has played a significant role in nation building and national identity. Historically, airlines have been regarded as important national symbols and they have been used by governments as 'chosen instruments' for projecting their countries internationally."* (1997: 239)

Most national airlines of Southeast Asia came into being shortly after these nations gained independence. Sukarno, for example, made a triumph flight from Yogyakarta to Jakarta with the new national airline at the end of 1949. Garuda Indonesia still keeps this date as the starting-date of their airline. This is representative of how

strongly these national airlines want to be associated with the age of Independence of their nations. Another example from Indonesia, that shows how the airline-industry is subject of national pride, is Bacharuddin Habibie. Habibie was president from May 1998 until October 1999. He was given this function because he was vice president under Suharto and promised him to protect Suharto's family after his death. From 1978 till 1998 he was Minister of Research and Technology and in this function he played a key role in industrializing and modernizing Indonesia. Under Habibie's rule was the Indonesian Aerospace established in 1985 and from the 1990s onwards he almost exclusively focused on the development of the Indonesian airline-industry (McCarthy, 1998). Though his nomination had a lot to do with nepotism, it also shows that civil aviation is seen as an important aspect of a nation's pride and the nation-building process.

It is important to outline that 'airplanes' in general have strong connotations with modernity and therefore national pride. They can be seen as 'touchable modernity'. However an aircraft *an sich*, and the technology that makes flying possible is free of nationalistic claims and feelings. Of course is 'aviation' strongly associated with being an invention of the West – like many elements of modernity, and even 'modernity' in itself is associated with the West. I will elaborate on this in the second chapter. What I am trying to make clear here is that human actions 'make' an airplane something nationalistic. What is visible in the commercials of Malaysia Airlines and Garuda is that they do not want to present 'aviation' as something Asian, Malaysian or Indonesian. Aviation is even implicitly kept as something Western and modern, shown by presenting all the Western (not Asian) awards they won. The message that is implied is that the Indonesian and Malaysian national airlines meet the standards of technological advancement that are set by the West, without problems. At the same time is their nationality presented in the outlook of the aircrafts and airlines. In the dressing and food: with nation brands, is the link to nationality made. Nation branding is something that every nation does: creating a nation brand is to build up international credibility, and at the same time it enhances internal nation building. Having a positively appealing nation brand is primarily to attract tourists but also to stimulate inward investments and to boost exports (Chernatony: 2009, 16). Malaysia Airlines' – and Garuda's commercials are another number of 'texts' that consists of nation brands that are added to the stream of national symbols that are repeated

over and over. These commercials are not only to promote the airline, but also to promote the nation. How strong the link is between a nation and its national airline became visible in the aftermath of MH17 (shut down in Ukraine) and MH370 (disappeared in March 2014). Even though Malaysia Airlines has not been negligent when it comes to maintenance of the airplanes or made any other faults, the airline is now generally seen as 'unsafe' having big financial problems as consequence. Not only the airline's image damaged: Malaysia's reputation as a 'modern nation' in general is dented. This example shows that airlines can even be more influential for nation building, when it comes to national pride than roads or railway systems. Because national airlines operate internationally they function as showpiece for international passengers. Failing for an international audience is always more painful than failing on national scale. For my research I will not focus on what the makers of the commercials tried to communicate, and how this for example corresponds with reality. But I will take the idealized version of 'Malaysia', 'Indonesia' and aviation that they present in their marketing as standpoint. And I will research what this created ideal is telling us about modern Malaysia and Indonesia.

Modernity in Malaysia and Indonesia

Malaysia and Indonesia are "Asian Dragons": the name given to Asian countries that were part of the third wave of regional economic development in Asia that took place from the 1980s until the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. Other "Asian Dragons" are Thailand and to lesser extent the Philippines. Cheap labor, lower business costs and the availability of raw goods made these nations attractive for global capital. Both Malaysia and Indonesia sustained their early developments by producing petroleum and gas, and –as in most Asian countries- the manufacturing industry played an important role. These processes of industrialization and economic growth went arm in arm with many social and environmental problems: an increasing degree of pollution, mass scale deforestation, women who could hardly combine their demanding work in the factory with childcare and their household chores, and children who were not able to get educated because of their work in the factories to contribute to the household-income (Chong: 2005, 6-7). This is a very rough sketch of the context in which the economic growth and rapid modernization of Malaysia and Indonesia took place.

The idea(s) of 'modernity' plays a key role in my thesis. In this paragraph I will explore this term, its allied term 'modernization' and both their root word 'modern'. Modern, modernity and modernization, next to variations of the word such as "postmodernity", "alternative modernities", "late modernity", "second modernity", "radicalized modernity" and "high modernity" (Barker et al.: 2014, 12), are so often used by journalists, academics and politicians, and thereby so frequently heard in daily life that most people have an idea (or at least a feeling) what this concept means. At the same time this frequent and diverse use of the term makes it hard to grip a fixed meaning. 'Modern' connotes ideas of progress, newness and something to strive after. The antonym is 'backwardness' and nobody wants to be 'backward' or outdated. Raymond Williams writes in his book *Keywords* that in the earliest English sense the word 'modern' was almost interchangeable with the word 'contemporary'. It was used as synonym of something that 'existed now' or 'of the same period'. Starting in the eighteenth century 'modernizing' was used with special reference to buildings. From the nineteenth and twentieth century onwards 'modern' became equivalent to 'improvement' (Williams: 1983, 208-9). 'Improvement' was the keyword in "the development of a modernizing agrarian capitalism", in the eighteenth century. Underlining reason for this 'modernization' was to increase profits: 'Making something better by modernizing' was equalized with 'making profit out of something' (Williams: 1983, 160). Kipnis argues in the "Introduction" of his book *Chinese Modernity and the Individual Psyche* that 'modernity' is always somehow related to economics. He especially underlines that politicians often use this term ideologically to make promises of a better (economically more profitable) future (Kipnis: 2012, 4).

'Modernity' not only has a link with 'improvement' but also with the term 'civilization': the opposite of 'barbarity'. Civilization is a word of the late eighteenth century (that is highly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment) meaning a specific combination of 'the ideas of a process' and 'an achieved condition': emphasizing secular and progressive human self-development. Civilization celebrated the associated sense of modernity as 'an achieved condition of refinement and order'. This 'refinement of manners' is related to culture. Williams quotes Mill, who wrote about positive aspects of 'civilization' in 1872: *"multiplication of physical comforts, advancement and diffusion of knowledge, the decay of superstition, the softening of manners, the decline of war and personal conflict, the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the*

strong over the weak, the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the co-operation of multitudes." Williams labels this enumeration as *"a fully modern range"* (Williams: 1983, 58). Mill also describes the negative effects: *"loss of independence, the creation of artificial wants, monotony, narrow mechanical understanding, inequality and hopeless poverty"* (Williams: 1983, 58-9). Though Williams' *Keywords* is a good starting point to get a general overview of this concept from the Cultural Studies-perspective, it is also a Eurocentric view. There is not one example given that is related to Asia or Asian history. For a more (Southeast) Asian perspective on 'modernity' it is necessary to explore the works of different Asian authors.

Chong emphasizes that industrialization is part of modernization. Modernization is a broad term for the physical changes that a landscape and the daily life undergo while developing from a 'rural society' towards a 'developed society'. Symbols of modernization can be new buildings (often: high buildings), roads, dams, new machines, new technologies, the upcoming of universities and technical institutions (Chong : 2005, 5; Amrith: 2011, 127-34). Modernization has its roots in Europe where the Industrial Revolution of Britain started around 1760. This revolution led to numerous technological innovations that are still symbolic for the early modern age: the steam engine, the construction of railroads and increasing efficiency in the manufacturing of products, which led to production on big scales in factories. Important to keep in mind is that Southeast Asia's modernization has started in the last decades of the twentieth century. In this time globalization already played a key role (Chong: 2005, 5). This is visible in the way modernization was shaped in Malaysia and Indonesia. Modernity is an outcome of modernization but has more to do with 'the intellectual and cultural features' of a society. Chong writes: *"Modernity conventionally denotes the modern age and the ideas and styles associated with this age"* (2005, 6).

William Lim gives in his book *Alternative (post)modernity* an explicit 'Asian perspective' on modernity. Lim is a Hong Kong-born Singaporean architect, who studied in London and Harvard. He underlines that he is formed by Western education and that he will never fully get loose of this background (Lim: 2003, 95). Because of this background, he is the ideal figure to know the similarities and differences between the East and West. Spivak already famously wrote about the

subaltern who first needs to learn to speak in the language of the dominating Other, before he can critique the Other. Lim had to make himself familiar with the West and Western ideas before he could critique the West's "claim" on modernity. He writes:

> *"Modernity is understood by the West as the process of historical transformation that has taken place in Europe and later in the United States. It includes the concepts of freedom, human rights and individuality as well as democracy and the rule of law. The West has experienced many conflicts in realizing its modernist democratic systems. It is therefore understandable that many in the West have a strong sense of possession over modernity. (…) Since the Industrial Revolution, the Western technology-based civilization has emerged as a superior global power that conquered, colonized and dominated the world. (…) Chinese scholars still question "how to be modern" and still return to our sources… Keeping the Chinese substance intact while using Western experiences."* (Lim: 2003, 96).

Lim uncovers here "Asia's" mixed feelings towards 'modernity'. On the one hand "Asians" seem to admire Western modernity, on the other they find it annoying that it is presented as if the 'Western way' is the only path to modernity. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, an Indian-born scholar who works in the United States, adds to this idea with a new theory. He pleads for a "cultural" as opposed to an "acultural" theory of modernity, because: *"modernity is not specifically Western, even though it may have started in the West. An acultural theory is a theory of convergence: the inexorable march of modernity [that] will end up making all cultures look alike"* (Gaonkar: 2011, 17). Nation-states in general and for this research Asian nations in particular fear to lose their national culture that expresses their nation's "uniqueness". They therefore seek to take the benefits of modernization: mostly economical benefits, and leave certain aspects of modernity (here meaning a certain "lifestyle") behind. For example 'individualization': an aspect that modernity brought in the West that is strongly fought against by Asian governments. Some Asian nations also proved successful – Singapore in front- in disproving the idea that democracy is necessary for economic success. It must be noted though that both Indonesia and Malaysia are officially democracies. Michael Hanchard writes in *Alternative Modernities* about Afro-Modernity. He distinguishes in many African areas *"a selective incorporation of*

technologies, discourses, and institutions of the modern West. (…) To create a form of relatively autonomous modernity distinct from its counterparts of Western Europe and North America. It is no mere mimicry of Western modernity (…) (Hanchard: 2011, 274). What Hanchard writes about the African situation also seems applicable to the situation of many Southeast Asian nations.

For my thesis I distinguish several 'themes' through which I will research 'modernity' in the commercials of the airlines. These themes are: the representation of gender, the city and urban life, Asian-ness, Malaysian-ness and Indonesian-ness. These themes are not randomly picked: they come to the forth in the selected corpus and are often connected to ideas of modernity. For example: a general Western ideal of a 'modern' relationship between a man and woman is characterized by equality, allowing both men and women to undertake actions outside the domestic area without the explicit permission of the other. It is interesting to see how 'Indonesians' and 'Malaysians' give form to this kind of relationship, as it is reflected in the commercials. It might be important to underline that my goal in this thesis is not to 'judge' or 'check' if Malaysia and Indonesia meet with "the standards" of modernity. First of all because such a "checklist of modernity" does not exist, and if it would, it would be highly debatable. Secondly: because this would lead to a Eurocentric (or otherwise colored) outcome that does no right per se, to Indonesia and Malaysia. For my research I assume that these nations are modern, or at least: that they see themselves as 'modern'. This should lead to a research wherein the 'voice' of Malaysia and Indonesia is heard. My goal is to research how they represent this modernity. In other words: what do they bring to the forth, to present themselves as modern?

Modernity in the commercials of Malaysia Airlines
For Malaysia Airlines was 2014 a horrible year: in March 2014 flight MH370, which was scheduled to fly from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing disappeared. Until July 2015 there were no remnants found. Four months after MH370's disappearance, in July 2014 flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down in Ukraine. Due to these accidents became Malaysia Airlines associated with accidents and unsafety which was reflected in their marginalizing sales figures. Cabin crew also left the airlines massively which led to understaffing of the airline. Leading to work days of 12

hours for the staff that stayed (NOS: "Personeel Malaysia Airlines vertrekt." 2014). These accidents were completely invisible in the marketing of Malaysia Airlines of this year. Besides one video, named 'A look back at 2014, our comeback story' that was uploaded in March 2015, there is no attention paid to the accidents in the videos on the official *Youtube* channel of Malaysia's national airline. In the videos that I selected for my research are the accidents completely ignored. As my research is not concerned with the media coverage of MH370 and MH17, these accidents are only worth mentioning here, to provide the context that Malaysia Airlines finds oneself in. For my thesis I am interested in the representation of modernity in the promotional videos of Malaysia Airlines. I selected nine videos that were uploaded between January 2014 and February 2015. These videos can be divided into two groups: 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. Both are in the end fulfilling promotional goals, but their strategy and form is different. I do not think that their target audiences are very different, though the fiction films are clearly also of interest to Malaysian citizens, while the non-fiction is mostly interesting for people who are planning to visit Malaysia. It could be that Malaysia Airlines tried to show their 'dedication for their nation after the accidents with the fiction films. A reason for this can be the loss of potential international passengers, which made that the airline had to rely more strongly on Malaysian passengers. I chose both the fiction and the non-fiction film material because they form together the most important audiovisual marketing material for Malaysia Airlines in this period.

After a careful analysis of these videos a few things became prominent: first of all that Malaysia Airlines is not showing much that is linked to the airline-industry such as airports, cabin crew members, airplanes, etc. In their 'fiction' videos this is totally invisible, in the 'non-fiction' material is the airline very much in the background. This focus on the airline as "carrier to dreams" and carrier to lovely holiday destinations instead of emphasizing the experience of the flight, might be seen as a consequence of the accidents. Though it must be noticed that before March 2014, Malaysia Airlines' videos already focused mostly on the promotion of Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia as places to visit, than on themselves as airline.

<u>Non-fiction videos</u>

The non-fiction section consists of videos in which a host is showing and promoting Kuala Lumpur. Kuala Lumpur is promoted as a great destination for holidays and worth visiting during stopovers. There are two hosts that have a series of videos consisting of several episodes that can be watched apart from the other episodes. The first series of videos used for my analysis are presented by Danny Chen, and called: "Dash of Colourful Kuala Lumpur" and "Under the Shades of the Twin Towers". The other series is called *Destination Kuala Lumpur* and consists of five episodes: "Departing Home", "In the Air", "Shopping & Luxury", "Food Capital" and "Departing Kuala Lumpur". This series is hosted by Malaysian-born Poh Ling Yeow, an Australian writer and television presenter. Her episodes are openly addressed to Australians and New Zealanders, as she mentions them a few times explicitly. But the places and hotels she recommends can of course be of interest to anyone.

Main goal of all the videos is to promote Kuala Lumpur. The viewer is shown around in the city by a host. This form gives an idea of showing the 'reality'. It seems "unstaged" and undirected, as people in the streets and in the malls are passing by without taking notice of the camera (see Fig 4.1 and 4.2). This is of course not true. These videos are carefully edited and the makers have made well-thought decisions in their choice for specific images. Though the cameraman must already have made choices of what people were 'allowable' in the background, the videos were filmed undirected as far that 'people in the background were not told how to behave or how to dress'. They were there by accident and this adds to the impression of seeing unpolished film material: seeing "true reality". So what does this "true reality" of Kuala Lumpur show?

Fig 4.1 – People taking photos without taking notice they are filmed ("Under the Shades of the Twin Towers" - 4:44 min)

Fig 4.2 – Danny walking through an undirected Kuala Lumpur ("Under the Shades of the Twin Towers" - 0:02 min)

Representation of the modern city

Kuala Lumpur is presented as a modern city, because of its infrastructure and smooth transportation system on the one hand, and its skyline and tall buildings on the other. These elements that are symbols of 'modern' city-life, are presented as an unmistakable part of 'modern' Malaysia: something that is informed by the economic growth that has led to urbanization - one of the processes I define as 'shaper' of modernity. In the videos is Kuala Lumpur's transportation system promoted as well functioning. No queues or traffic jams are shown in the videos, though these could be expected in a city that accommodated almost two million people. There is a smooth transportation network shown in the videos, represented by cars, bicycles, trains, train stations and airplanes that all cooperate fluently. Cars instead of scooters or

motorcycles dominate the traffic, this adds to the idea that habitants of Kuala Lumpur or Malaysia are already able to afford a car (Fig 4.6). These vehicles are symbols of mobility, an essential part of modernity. Figure 4.3 is a strong example of how modernity is represented by means of showing a vehicle. It is night and there are colorful light pointed at the building, while a short train –that is far from crowded- is fast and smoothly passing two buildings. This image connotes: speed and mobility, and the ease of accessing different places: also during nighttime. The idea that there remains action during the night is an important aspect of 'modern cities': a modern city never sleeps.

Kuala Lumpur's buildings and urban design form the second aspect of what makes Malaysia's capital a 'modern city'. Aspects that are shown as essential parts of the city are: concrete buildings next to skyscrapers, parks, fountains (Fig. 4.4 and 4.5), roads and railways (Fig. 4.3 and 4.6), shops and malls (Fig. 4.7), restaurants, nightclubs and luxurious hotels (Fig. 4.8) and lightshows by night. Most videos consist for 30-35% of night shots. This gives an idea that Kuala Lumpur is a true metropolis that keeps running 24 hours per day. In popular imagination 'never sleeping cities' are associated with 'modernity'. New York, the city that is often used as template of what a modern city looks like- is nicknamed as 'the city that never sleeps'. Timberman Newcomb writes in his article on American skyscrapers, wherein New York has a central role, that: *"the skyscraper is the central visual symbol of capitalist modernity, as September 2001 forcibly reminded us, and has been so for a hundred years."* Huge buildings, from which the skyscraper is the best known one, are *"harbinger[s] of modernity's possibilities"* (Timberman Newcomb: 2003, 98). They are symbols of a new time that is an outcome of a process of industrialization and modernization. The complexity of the construction of these enormous buildings is an expression of what the new (modern) age is capable of. At the same time these tall buildings make individuals look tiny and small: almost as if they are unimportant. The city is physically so big and looking down at individuals that people must feel impressed (Timberman Newcomb: 2003, 98).

Showing the skyscrapers of Kuala Lumpur so often, underlines the idea that Kuala Lumpur has undergone similar processes of modernization as New York for example has, which has led in both cities to a modern outlook. Kuala Lumpur is not backward

but joins the 'club of modern cities'. This idea of modernity is not only accentuated by the images of Kuala Lumpur's skyline but also by showing people enjoying food at night, hip nightclubs, lightshows of the skyline and trains that run during nighttime, which also link Malaysia's capital to other '24/7 cities'. Poh Ling Yeow promotes Kuala Lumpur in one of her videos for its *"modern luxury, while still being very affordable"*. She names it a "great place for shopping, partying and food". Kuala Lumpur is presented as a place that offers food, entertainment, accommodations and a transportation system of high quality. Western standards are used for these judgments as these videos are made to convince Westerners to visit Kuala Lumpur.

Fig 4.3 – Train running smoothly through an urban area by night (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Departing Home" – 1:00 min)
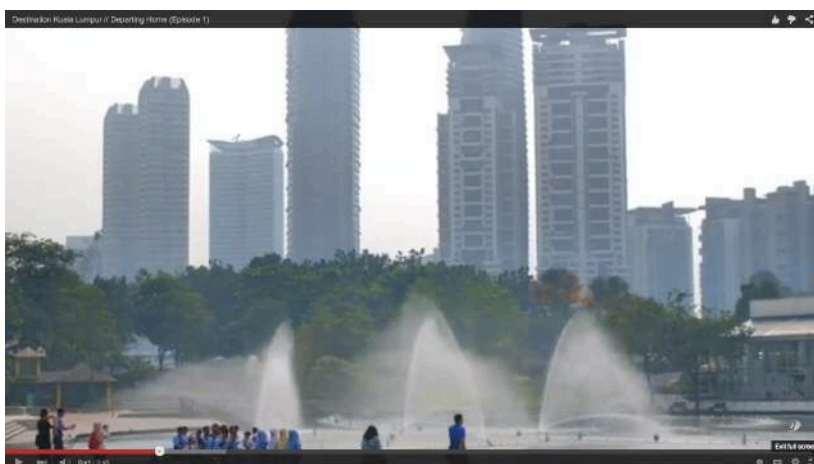

Fig 4.4 – skyscrapers, parks and fountains in KL (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Departing Home" – 00:41 min)

Fig. 4.5 – 'modern' architecture next to the Kuala Lumpur Tower, and a palm tree (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Departing Home" – 00:41 min)

Fig. 4.6 – Mobility in Kuala Lumpur; smoothly moving traffic (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "In the Air" – 1:44 min)

Fig. 4.7 – shopping mall as symbol of modernity (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Departing Home" – 00:43 min)

Fig. 4.8 – nightlife as symbol of modernity (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Departing Home" – 00:44 min)

Representation of Malayness/Malaysianness/Asianness
Showing all the things that make Kuala Lumpur a 'modern city' also means that the city is not 'special' or 'authentic'. Of course the videos also point out what makes Kuala Lumpur unique and different of other places. Herefore is Malaysia's multiculturalism and 'Asianness' pointed out. This is visible in the highlighting of different neighborhoods that are worth visiting: Chinatown and Little India/Brickfields: having the underlying assumption that Malays are the indigenous population, and that the Chinese and Indians are the 'others' that have later become part of Malaysia. Chinatown and Brickfields have shops and restaurants where they sell Chinese, and Indian clothes and more importantly: food. Both hosts of the videos are often shown eating and they actively promote dishes and cuisines. Yeow enjoys a meal of a chef that claims to have made a dish that *"blends Indian, Chinese and traditional Malay cuisine"* (the word 'traditional' underlines here that the Malays are the 'sons of soil' and the 'tradition holders' of Malaysia). Communication between the hosts and the people they 'meet' is all in English, showing that different cultural backgrounds of Kuala Lumpur's population is not an obstacle for conversations: everyone is able to speak English (Fig. 4.9 and 4.10).

Kuala Lumpur is also presented as Asian. Its limited multiculturalism, that only involves Malays, Indians and Chinese, is fully Asian. But on a more visual level there are also plenty of elements in the video that make the viewer (unconsciously) aware that this is an Asian place: Chinese characters, lanterns in the streets (Fig. 4.11),

'Asian flowers' such as orchids and lotuses, Asian faces, tropical weather, Asian food that is sold in stands at the street, and parlors for 'Eastern' massages. Poh Ling Yeow is receiving a foot massage in a parlor by an Asian woman who is not centrally on screen (while Yeow and another client: a blonde "Western" woman, are) (Fig. 4.12). Next there is a shot of a fountain that has pink petals at its bottom. This must reflect the inner peace people experience when having a foot massage. These final 22 seconds of the third episode are clearly taking place in an Asian context, but it could be anywhere in Southeast Asia. Showing that Kuala Lumpur is a Southeast Asian city that is attractive for tourists, seems the main goal. This forming of a Malaysian national- or Asian identity is something that I link to the 'shaping' effect of Malaysia's colonial history.

Fig. 4.9 – Friendly multiculturalism in Little India ("A Dash of Colourful Kuala Lumpur" – 4:36 min)

Fig. 4.10 – Multiculturalism in Kuala Lumpur (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Food Capital" – 07:02 min)

Fig. 4.11 – Asianness represented in lanterns (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Departing Home" – 00:54 min)

Fig. 4.12 – Poh Ling Yeow getting a foot massage (*Destination Kuala Lumpur:* "Shopping & Luxury" – 3:32 min)

Fiction goals

This section of 'fiction videos' consists of two videos: *TERBANG* and *BLESSINGS*. Both have a length of ten minutes and are short films, which means: having a scripted narrative and actors playing in it. In none of the two is an airplane or airport shown. Links to the airline are more indirectly made: 'terbang' for example means 'to fly' in Malay. And the main character Ahmad is wondering what it would be like *"to touch the sky"*. In *BLESSINGS* discuss two elder women the pictures that the main character (a Chinese dentist) made abroad. One of the two wonders aloud *"why the younger generation does not like home as much as they like abroad."* This seems an interesting point for a video that is made on behalf of an airline: a company that earns

more money from fanatic travellers than from people who enjoy staying at home. Nationalistic feelings and showing their dedication to Malaysia, seems to be the main motivation for Malaysia Airlines to make these short films. At the end of the credit titles is written: *"To all members of the Malaysia Airlines family. This work is based on Malaysians who inspire us everyday".* Characters in both short films speak interchangeably Mandarin, Malay and English. The videos are subtitled in English and Chinese characters. Though the video is made easy to follow for foreigners (by the subtitles), it seems that these videos mainly have Malaysians and loyal passengers as target audience, while the non-fiction section seems more focused on non-Asian English-speaking foreigners who consider going to Malaysia. Nevertheless seems the target audience in general to be middle-and upper class: people who generally have the money to travel by airplanes.

TERBANG's main character is Ahmad, a schoolboy who needs to tell a 'Merdeka story' at his school. He lives with his parents in an undefined Malaysian city, and enjoys kiting in his spare time. His grandfather is moving from the countryside and he needs to get use to live in an urban area. Grandpa was a *wau bulan* (traditional Malaysian kite) craftsman in his village and when he discovers Ahmad's interest in kiting he decides to make a *wau bulan* for him. Ahmad's father is working hard and feels stressed, when he is confronted with his youth at the countryside and his passion for kites as a child, he slowly thaws out.

BLESSINGS is a video that was published by Malaysia Airlines during Chinese New Year, as the story takes place around this holiday. A Chinese dentist is the main character of the story, who has two female assistants: an older Chinese lady who wears a headscarf, named Mary-Anne and a fat Malay woman with short hair. The dentist is unhappy, unfriendly and selfish. He only thinks of possibilities to make more money. Mary-Anne is his opposite: she is always friendly, caretaking and very generous. She gives everyone *ang pao's* (traditional Chinese envelopes containing some money). Mary-Anne invites the dentist for dinner with her and her family, but he says to go on holiday tomorrow. At the end of the workday (she was not allowed to have a day off because of Chinese New Year) she leaves an *ang pao* for the dentist. When he finds this small envelope he gets a flashback of his youth: when he was a child he threw an *ang pao* his mother gave him away because he did not like it that

she left home for work. This memory makes him decide to have dinner with Mary-Anne and her family to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Representation of the modern city
TERBANG and *BLESSINGS* are both situated in the city. It is never made explicit which exact city but it most likely is Kuala Lumpur. Skyscrapers, dense traffic and overcrowding are left out. The city has clean roads, spacious homes, and parks with colorful playground equipment (Fig 4.13). Many houses in the films have a garden. In short is the city presented as full of shops and everything you need, but not hectic or anonymous: people are chatting with each other, and people walk on roads without the danger of being driven over (Fig 4.15 and 4.16). In *TERBANG* is the dichotomy of the village versus the city one of the main themes. Ahmad's grandfather represents 'the village' (Fig 4.14) while Ahmad's father represents the city-life that is characterized by 'strict modernity': individualistic behavior, consumerism (represented in the quote of the father to the grandfather who proposes to make a kite: *"Why not just buy a* wau bulan*, instead of making one?"*), having a job at the office, ambition with making (more) money as main motivation, being high educated and being familiar with 'modern devices': ability to drive a car, able to use a smartphone, etc. Grandfather needs to get used to the city, he stands for: tradition, community, social behavior, enthusiasm, authenticity and handmade work. Ahmad's father seems very closed and is often busier with his smartphone than with his family, he is the impersonation of individualism. Ahmad's grandfather however, is not afraid of asking other people for help or chat with people he meets. On several levels is made clear that modernity and the city life is inevitably the best way to live: Ahmad's grandfather is moving in with his son, it is not the other way around. This move from the rural area to the city is presented as the "natural" order of things. But on the other hand many elements of the village life are something to strive for: a feeling of community, having an eye for each other, not blindly consuming. The message seems that total absorption of modernity, without remembering and cherishing the good things that were already there before the arrival of modernity, leads to unhappiness. Not only Ahmad's father is impersonating this unhappiness, the Chinese dentist in BLESSINGS is this too. He is enjoying the opportunities of the city to make money but at the same time modernity feels as a burden to him. As soon as he sees through that his extreme individualistic behavior is not the best way, he joins

'the community' at dinner and starts to feel slightly better. He speaks out that happiness is not something far away, but often something very close and nearby. Both videos present modernity as 'the best way': they do not argue that Malaysia should (literally or figuratively) go back to villages where traditions are still 'alive'. But the traditions should get blended with modernity. 'The best' of both lifestyles should be combined. The higher standard of living must be picked from 'modernity', while the traditions must give this modernity a 'Malaysian face'.

Fig. 4.13 – Ahmad playing in a 'modern' park (*BLESSINGS* 02:11 min)

Fig. 4.14 – Ahmad's grandfather in his younger days in the village (*BLESSINGS* 02:52 min)

Fig. 4.15 – Ahmad's father walking by himself through the quiet modern city (*BLESSINGS* 05:26 min)

Fig. 4.16 – Street scene in *BLESSINGS*: Chinese lanterns above the street (0:26 min)

Representation of multiculturalism: Malayness/Malaysianness/Asianness
Modernity is something that does not automatically lead to happiness, because modernity easily means (complete) Westernization, or Japanization/Koreanization/Chinesezation: other modern, foreign powers being culturally dominant in a nation that is modernizing. These short films seem to argue that Malaysians should not forget their cultural background, if they do: they will feel empty and unhappy. This is what happened to Ahmad's father and the Chinese dentist. They were so much 'stuck in modernity': consumerism, making money, making use of technical devices, that they had lost sentiment of unity. This feeling of solidarity is often expressed as part of traditions: whether it is the manufacturing of a traditional kite, or the celebration of Chinese New Year. Both with the making of a *wau bulan* that is a Malay tradition and the celebration of Chinese New Year that

26

obviously is a Chinese tradition, is the most important thing that is done together. From what ethnic group the tradition originally comes from seems not important here: in the films are Malays, Chinese and Indians fully equal. These three 'races' make up Malaysia's multiculturalism. And they should equally stay strong against Westernization or any (East Asian) form of modernization that endangers Malaysian culture. This cooperation and blending of Malaysia's three cultures is made very visible in the films. For example when Ahmad's grandfather (Malay) is helped by a Hindu (Indian) to chop down bamboo sticks. Indirectly is the Indian helping to make a traditional Malay kite. In this way the kite becomes something Malaysian, instead of something Malay. A similar thing happens with the Chinese New Year. Mary-Anne, the older Chinese assistant of the dentist speaks Mandarin and is most fanatically busy with Chinese New Year, but she also wears a headscarf: symbol of the Islam which is traditionally the religion of the Malays. All characters: Chinese and Malay are celebrating Chinese New Year as if it is a naturalized tradition of Malaysia. Finally is the multiculturalism made visible in Ahmad's class wherein children of different cultural backgrounds are sitting next to each other. In the films are the three different cultures naturally and peacefully blended, but the physical differences are still very clear (Fig 4.18). Every student can fit in one of the three official 'races' of Malaysia. This mixed school class is representing Malaysia's limited multiculturalism that must resist full Westernization. Ahmad's kite becomes representative for Malaysian resistance against complete Westernization. He has a Western style kite, but his grandfather shows him a Malaysian equivalent that is 'better' and more 'beautiful'. This shows how Malaysians should not blindly takeover everything that modernity brings, but that they should be aware of the richness of their own culture.

Fig. 4.17 – Indian helping grandfather to chop bamboo sticks (*TERBANG* 04:43 min)

Fig. 4.18 – Ahmad's 'multicultural' class (*TERBANG* 0:27 min)

Representation of gender and 'the family'

Something that keeps coming back in the historiography on modernity in Malaysia is its ambition to combine modernity with Islamic faith, especially in gender patterns. Stivens partly sees this 'thirst' for Islamization as *"a counter-hegemonic discourse to oppose the ills of western modernity, including individualism and materialism"* (Stivens, 1994: 86). In the short films are these themes of 'individualism' and 'materialism' (as "bad") clearly present. Azalanshah and Runnel distinguish two important elements *"that define Malay culture and identity"*: the social norms of Malay *adat* (norm) and Islamic faith (306). These values are clearly expressed in the short films wherein all of the female characters have a job. Mostly in subservient roles such as assistants of the dentist, flight attendant or teacher. Ahmad's mother is also said to be working, though in the films she is never seen outside the domestic areas such as the house or park. Ahmad's father is shown driving in his car and being on his own outside domestic areas (Fig. 4.15), Ahmad's mother is not: there is not one scene of her not being surrounded by one of her male family members. All of the female characters seem to have 'serving' and 'helping' as main task. These are passive tasks instead of more active ones such as the profession of a dentist, pilot or even a craftsman of kites. The importance of the woman for having a happy family is heavily underlined. One of the reasons for the dentist's sourness is that his mother was off to work too often. Leaving your child alone too often for 'financial benefits' is bad, especially if you are the mother, seems the message. Ahmad's mother is the impersonation of the ideal 'Malaysian mother': she is without sulking only busy with supporting her husband, son, father in law and her mother. It seems that women that

have work are common and generally accepted, as long as they do not neglect to look after their family. Important to notice in these films is that they tend to end up with professions that are stereotypically seen as 'feminine' and that do not require high education. Men on the other side seem to enjoy jobs that require some form of higher education. They have to work hard and are the first one responsible for the finances, but they also should have an eye for the family life. This seems a quite traditional pattern of gender roles: though women are allowed to work outside, they should not forget their (more) important role of taking care of the family. I am not claiming here that this situation is unique to Malaysia: As stated before (page 12) in many 'modern' Western nations this idea is also still alive, but it is something that comes to the forth in these films and therefore worth mentioning. Something that seems stronger than in most Western societies, however, is that the family that has to be taken care of is bigger than 'the nuclear family': it is common that family members (such as grandparents or unmarried uncles or aunts) move in when they are in need of help (Fig 4.19 and 4.20).

Islam is an important 'shaper' of 'modern gender-patterns' in Malaysia. Ahmad's mother is not wearing a headscarf, as she is a Chinese-Malaysian. But some other female characters are. The UMNO (Malaysia's largest political party) rediscovered and promoted the headscarf as *"the appropriate clothing for modern but culturally grounded Malay women"* (Azalanshah & Runnel: 2014, 307). But the Islam, though highly promoted, is not something that is imposed on women or people. Interestingly many middleclass (working) women are voluntarily veiling and covering their bodies themselves. Stivens argues that the veiled middleclass woman is "a symbol of distinctively Malay modernity" (1998: 117). The veiling and covering of their bodies connotes 'modern femininity', status and a middle- or higher class situation.

Fig. 4.19 – the ideal of Malaysian family life (*TERBANG* 08:31 min)

当我父母做工回来
When my mother and father are back from work

Fig. 4.20 – Modern Malaysian family life (*TERBANG* 01:24 min)

Modernity in the commercials of Garuda Indonesia

Garuda Indonesia is the national airline of Indonesia. From June 2007 until July 2009 Garuda was on the EU blacklist, due to this Garuda was not allowed to fly to any European destination. This was the rock bottom for the airline which had been in decline for several years. After drastic safety reforms the ban was lifted and the Indonesian airline "reborn". This "rebirth" was underlined by radical changes in Garuda Indonesia's outlook: design, color schemes, outfits of the cabin crew and the logo were changed (Fig. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4). Garuda claims this to be part of their "Quantum Leap": an ambitious five-year reform plan (source: "The World's Best Cabin Crew 2014"). Main goal of this plan is to become one of the best airlines in the world again. This ambition is reflected in Garuda's contemporary slogan: "Our Journey to Excellence" (website Garuda Indonesia). The pillars of this "new Garuda" are: punctuality, friendly cabin crew, good meals and technical advancement –

especially when it comes to safety. These elements are repeated continuously in their marketing. Another element is their 'professionalism': they have professionals working at every level. This professionalism is "guaranteed" by strict recruitment procedures and comprehensive trainings of their employees, as the behind-the-scenes-videos show. The West sets these standards of 'professionalism'. Literally in the form of Skytrax: a London based company that hands out the awards for "Best Airline" and all kind of subcategories that an airline can be good in. On more emotive level the West sets the standard by the 'fact' that it is unthinkable that any airline could be (one of) the world's best airlines with an European or American flying ban. Another aspect is the use of English as the *lingua franca* of the airline-industry, in the videos. Part of 'being a professional of Garuda Indonesia' is to smoothly switch between Bahasa Indonesia and English: showing that both languages are 'natural' and part of your identity as professional, and thereby part of the international identity of the airline.

Fig. 3.1 – Garuda Indonesia before the "rebirth" of 2010: outlook of an aircraft - <http://www.sanalpilot.com/forum/showthread.php?7463-Garuda-Indonesia-Boeing-B747-4U3>

Fig. 3.2 – Garuda Indonesia's airplane after the "rebirth" of 2010: outlook of an aircraft (website of Garuda Indonesia)
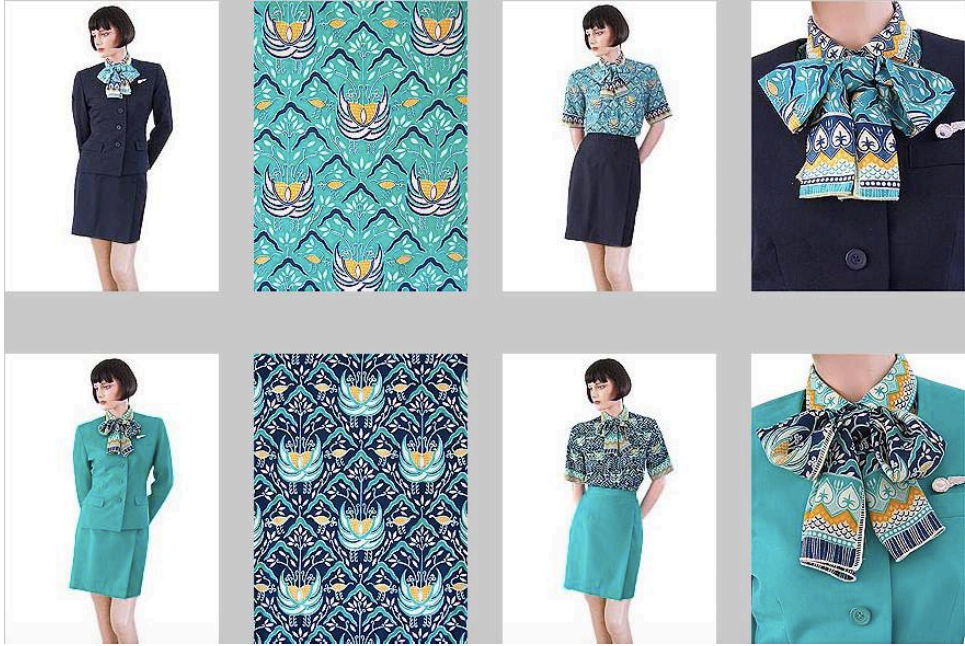

Fig. 3.3 – Outfit of Garuda's stewardesses before the "rebirth" of 2010 - <http://www.uniformfreak.com/1garuda.html>
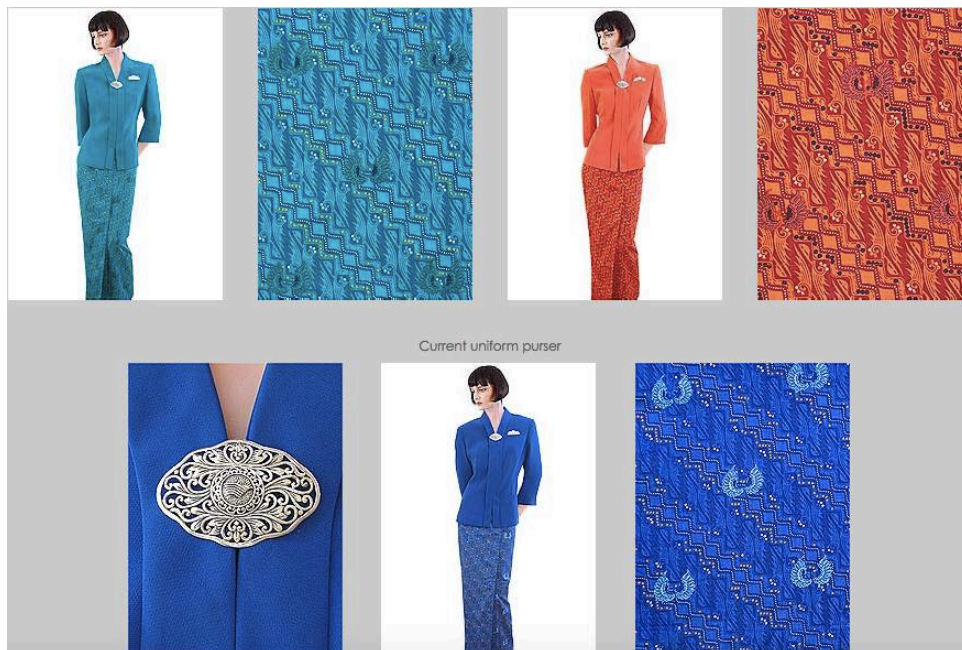
Fig. 3.4 – Outfit of Garuda stewardesses after the "rebirth" of 2010 -
<http://www.uniformfreak.com/1garuda.html>

Similar to the previous chapter I will look at the representation of modernity in the promotional videos of Garuda Indonesia. These videos are the heart of the marketing of the airline as other parts of the marketing (for example the texts and pictures of the website or posters) refer to these videos. I selected ten videos that were uploaded between January 2014 and January 2015. These videos can also be divided into two groups of 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' but this division works not as well as it does for the videos of Malaysia Airlines. Therefore I will not use this distinction in this chapter and focus only on the themes, and how these are represented in the different videos.

Representation of gender: the role of (wo)men
The Islam plays a significant role in shaping the contemporary gender roles in Indonesia. This seems the main outcome of academic research on gender in today's Indonesia. The nation accommodates the biggest Muslim population of the world and it is therefore not surprising that this religion takes an important place in Indonesian society (Van Wichelen: 2010, 1-2); Dzuhayatin: 2001, 259-60). Interesting is that Garuda Indonesia rarely refers to the Islamic background of their country. In some Malaysia Airlines' videos a few stewardesses wear headscarves, but none of Garuda's stewardesses wear one in Garuda's marketing. Even though it is known that stewardesses must cover their hair on flights to and from Saudi Arabia, this is

totally left out in the marketing. In some behind-the-scenes videos are female employees who wear headscarves, but they are never interviewed or having a leading role in the video (Fig. 3.6).

Dzuhayatin labels ideal Indonesian womanhood as *ibuism*:

> *"the cultural expression of this ideal is that of married women who tirelessly dedicate their lives to their husband's career and the enhancement of children's education define the parameters of the wife's role."* (Dzuhayatin: 2001, 260)

The man's role is public, the woman's role is domestic (Dzuhayatin: 2001, 260). Though this ideal was stronger present during the New Order era than today, it seems still applicable to Indonesian's general feeling of women's role in society: taking care –especially of the family- is seen as a typical feminine quality. Yano writes in her book *Airborne Dreams* that in the early days of civil aviation, airlines from all over the world had hard times getting women recruited because "public women" were disapproved. All women working outside the house were seen as "public women". As solution airlines started to present the cabin as a 'home' wherein the stewardess receives guests. Yano writes: *"That respectability included knowing the ways of housewifery. Thus stewardesses were encouraged to perform the role of hostess, with the cabin as their living room"* (Yano: 2011, 27). Consequence of this "solution" is that 'taking care' is reconfirmed as a typical and essential feminine quality.

Conservative ideas of 'what a woman should look like and be like' are still very strongly noticeable in the contemporary airline-industry. Though older and bald headed women are allowed to be stewardess for some Western airlines these days, Asian companies stick very strictly with the stereotypical young (connoting ideas of virginity), beautiful (which means: looking 'feminine'), gentle and considerate stewardesses. Yano describes this stereotype of the stewardess as follows:

> *"Let us turn briefly to the girl-next-door image –white, middle-class, and unmarried – as a structuring principle of the stewardess profession (…). First*

of all, she is a "girl." Unmarried, she brings youth and, by implication, her "virginal" freshness and sexual availability to the cabin. The job does not require much experience, which suggests that attending to the safety needs of passengers is not foremost among the job's responsibilities. To the contrary, youth is a fundamental part of the image, and the supply of "girls" is ever renewable, which points to the importance of the presentational, sexualized aspects of the job. Second, the image suggests familiarity and accessibility (…). She is empathetic because of her gendered "instincts" and because she has a similar background (…). Thus class and race are essential components of the empathetic intimacy that enhances the stewardess position. (…)That womanhood (of stewardesses) may have been raced, classed, and characterized to American specifications, but those specifications became synonymous with the prestige and modernity of air travel. Thus American aviation, which set the standard in its technology, also set a standard through a kind of service that emphasized a feminized cabin crew, with polished airhostesses at its helm (Yano: 2011, 26-7).

Yano's book is an historical research to the Japanese stewardesses of Pan-American World Airways. But the standards she outlines in the cited quote are applicable to the selection of many flight attendants in the contemporary airline-industry, not at least to the ones of Garuda Indonesia and Malaysia Airlines. Garuda Indonesia's female cabin crewmembers easily meet with these 'universal standards'. Garuda -and Malaysia Airlines- openly state that during the recruitment, they pay attention to a candidate's look and age: hereby reconfirming the sexualized aspects of the job. After affiliation these women have to wear uniforms that emphasizes their female body curves and that shows a part of their bare legs. There are two options for their hair-do: tied up in a bun or a bob cut, and also for the make-up are strict regulations. Garuda Indonesia uses the looks of their stewardesses to attract (male) passengers. More than Malaysia Airlines uses Garuda its flight attendants as important marketing tools of the airline, thereby not afraid of presenting them as exotic fruit. Let's take a closer look at two of these pictures from the website of Garuda. The first one (Fig. 3.5) shows a Garuda stewardess in an orange dress in an idyllic landscape. Central in the picture is the stewardess who holds a basket full of exotic fruits: pineapple, rambutan, mango, mangosteen, and papaya. Dominant

colors in the picture are orange and yellow which gives the image a sunny, warm and exotic feeling. The background is predominantly yellow, while the stewardess and the fruit basket are primarily orange. This adds to the idea that the stewardess is connected with the fruit basket. This idea is strengthened by the fact that she holds it in her arms, close to her body. The way she holds the basket is welcoming, as if you - the viewer- are welcome to pick a piece of fruit. At the same time she smilingly takes a bite of a papaya. In other words, the stewardess is presented as an exotic fruit from which the viewer is invited to take a bite. The second image (Fig. 3.6) shows a Garuda stewardess wearing a blue dress in a landscape that is characterized by an ocean and small island. This image emanates 'calmness' and 'sereneness', mostly because of the use of blue as dominant color. The stewardess holds a big shell to her ear, and seems to listen. Her eyes are shut and she smiles: she seems very calm, almost asleep. At the same time she holds the shell close to her face, as if it is something to cherish. The shell is the object that apparently brings 'sereneness' but this object is (similar to the fruit basket) strong related to the stewardess: she is the one that brings you calmness – is the message of the picture. These are two examples of how Garuda uses its stewardesses (not the aviators) and their looks (not their intelligence or skills in case of an emergency) for marketing purposes.

Fig. 3.5 – a Garuda stewardess as exotic fruit to attract passengers ("Service Concept" website Garuda Indonesia)

Fig. 3.6 – a Garuda stewardess in a calming environment to attract passengers ("Service Concept" – website Garuda Indonesia)

As I stated earlier Garuda does not pay much attention to the religious background of their nation in their marketing. The ideal of *ibuism* or motherism does not so obviously come to the forth: because these women are first of all working. Secondly these images suggest quite strongly that these women are young and unmarried. At the same time it is made clear that these stewardesses have the 'feminine qualities' of caretaking that the profession requires. In the behind-the-scenes videos men and women working for Garuda, are more equally filmed. Important to notice here is the clear distinction made between male tasks and female tasks.

A male host presents the videos "Wings of Safety" and "On Time Any Time". These videos show the technical maintenance of the aircrafts, and the center that is responsible for the logistic aspects of the airline: tracking and tracing the aircrafts and making sure every flight leaves on time with enough food, beverages and cabin crew. The other videos are presented by a heavily make-upped female host: "Aerofood ACS: Kitchen Confidential" and "Garuda Indonesia Training Center: The Boot Camp". These videos give an insight in the kitchen where the meals of Garuda are prepared and the training of the stewardesses. Extra attention is shown to the beauty-class wherein the future flight attendants learn how they have to dress their hair and wear their make-up. In these videos a clear distinction is made between work for men (jobs with technical aspects) and for women (mostly service-oriented jobs). This distinction is reinforced by the choice of hosts. The female host 'researches' beauty classes and the kitchen, while the male host is interested in the technical aspects of the airline (Fig 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9). Relying on these videos, which have a strong

marketing purpose are the men and women that run Garuda almost all young and single, probably to make sure their demanding tasks at work do not disturb their family-life. Older persons (both men and women) are merely teachers or managers, connoting wisdom and experience (Fig 3.10).

Later I will take a closer look at the "Cabin Crew Unrevealed"-videos. A series of three episodes where one flight attendant is followed for one day. Agnes, Dicky and Rayna are the three central characters of the episodes. I will research these 'figures of modernity' more extensively in the final paragraph of this chapter, but for now in the context of this paragraph about gender I mention them already because Dicky, Agnes and Rayna also represent certain gender patterns in their videos. Agnes is the main character in the first episode: a sportive girl who enjoys her work as flight attendant, and who does yoga and boxing in her leisure time. The second episode centers on flight attendant Dicky who enjoys photographing when he is free. Third episode is about Rayna who is fashion designer next to her work as stewardess for Garuda. Dicky, Agnes and Rayna are single, ambitious and living on their own: not having a relationship, but not living with their parents or family either. Dicky is not presented as higher in hierarchy than Agnes or Rayna. He is equal to the girls when it comes to daily work life. At the same time are the girls extremely feminine and Dicky clearly masculine. But an idea of equality is that both Dicky and the girls are free to be ambitious and to live on their own. No distinction is made here.

Concluding we can say that it was hard to link the general ideas of 'gender' that is presented in the academic articles to the way 'gender' is represented in the commercials. First of all because most academic research on gender in Indonesia focuses on the role of Islam, and in these commercials there are no clear references to religion. Something we can conclude is that there is a clear and 'traditional' distinction made between 'things for men' and 'things for women'. But both the male and the female employees seem to have put their work for Garuda central in their lives. Rayna's phone call with her mother, at the end of 'her' episode, makes clear though, that 'family' remains important: family forms a source of happiness and a 'social safety net'. This might be an indication that these young professionals are making a career for themselves to be able to raise a family on their own. Equal to men and women then, is raising a family presented as a main goal in life. The *ibuism*

that Ruhaini Dzuhayatin describes might be seen in the tasks of the stewardesses: tasks that require 'feminine qualities'. This far from unique for Garuda though, as flight attendants in the majority of airlines are still recruited for their 'feminine qualities'.

Fig. 3.7 - Women with headscarves cooking meals for Garuda: the kitchen as 'place for women' ("Aerofood ACS: Kitchen Confidential" – 5:21 min)

Fig. 3.8 - Men's jobs: technical maintenance and controlling an aircraft ("On Time Anytime" – 3:52 min)
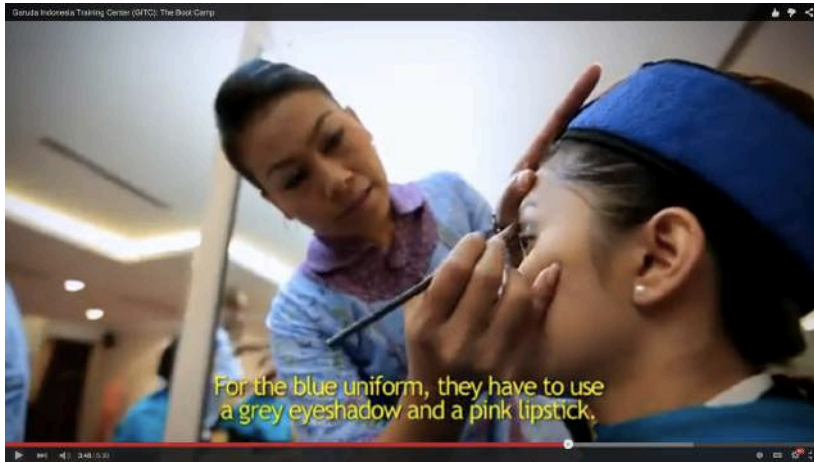
Fig. 3.9 - Future flight attendants participating in 'beauty class' ("Garuda Indonesia Training Center: The Boot Camp" – 3:48 min)

Fig. 3.10 - Older women (and men) are teachers and managers for Garuda Indonesia ("Garuda Indonesia Training Center: The Boot Camp" – 3:39 min)

Representation of Indonesianness and/or Asianness

Garuda Indonesia is Indonesia's flag carrier and therefore presenting itself most of all as 'Indonesian'. Indonesian *nation brands* are used to show this Indonesian-ness. Nation branding is something that every nation does, some more successfully than others. Leslie de Chernatony describes the concept of *nation brand* as follows:

> *"Nations are making increasingly conscious efforts to hone their country branding in recognition of the need to fulfill four major objectives: to attract tourists, to stimulate inward investment, to attract talent, and to boost exports"* (Chernatony: 2009, 1).

These processes on the other hand restore or increase national stability, international credibility, confidence of investors, and "enhance nation building by nourishing confidence, pride, harmony, ambition, national resolve" (Chernatony: 2008, 17). Most nation brands are related to national traditions and/or history. Examples of nation brands are particular food, dressing, designs or motifs, and landscapes (Chernatony: 2009, 1-2) (Fig 3.11). All of these are used by Garuda Indonesia to promote their home country. In the commercial *New Friend*, for example, is a blonde British boy named Nicky, travelling with his parents to Indonesia where they will stay for a longer period. He feels sad that he must leave his friends, but during the flight he meets an Indonesian girl of his age that is playing with Wajang puppets. Soon Nicky and the Indonesian girl are playing together: the Wajang puppets did function as "connection-maker" (Fig. 3.12 and 3.13). Something similar happens in the commercial *Father and Son* wherein a Chinese teenage boy and his father have nothing in common. But during a flight with Garuda they find out that they actually do not differ so much: enjoying the same games, the same music and the same (Indonesian!) food (Fig 3.13). Again Garuda Indonesia, as representative of Indonesia, brings people together whereby Indonesian food, music and games as national cultural expressions are the instigators for connection.

Fig. 3.11 – An 'Indonesian' setting: sarong kebaya and orchid as Indonesian or Southeast Asian nation brands (website Garuda Indonesia – service concept)

In the outline of Garuda's service-concept at their website they describe how they make use of nation brands for their design, and how this serves as promotion for Indonesia:

> *"(…) the new design of the interior cabin of Garuda Indonesia combines natural colors and traditional motifs of Indonesia, which reflects the visual beauty of the country, combined with the convenience of modern in-flight entertainment on the aircraft"* ("Service Concept – Sight": website Garuda Indonesia).

This quote shows how Garuda Indonesia is a modern airline –using 'modern' in-flight entertainment – while making use of national and 'traditional' meals, motifs and "Indonesian hospitality": *"(…) passengers of Garuda Indonesia are pampered with a sincere and friendly service, the epitome of Indonesian hospitality (…)"* ("Service Concept – Introduction": website Garuda Indonesia). Another clear reference to Indonesian tradition is the dress of Garuda Indonesia's flight attendants: a modern version of the traditional *sarong kebaya*. The dress not only connotes Indonesian-ness but also (Southeast) Asian-ness in general. Together with 'the vowing of hands by the stewardesses as greeting and after providing service' does the *sarong kebaya*, places Garuda in the group of 'Southeast Asian airlines'. This group consists of Garuda Indonesia, Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines and to some extend also Thai Airways. All of these airlines reinforce the stereotype of "the Oriental butterfly" to 'explain' and 'naturalize' the hospitality and attractive appearance of their flight attendants. Halualani and Vande Berg write the following about this stereotype:

> *"(…) the subservient "Oriental Butterfly" stereotype, of the exotic and hypersexualised yet "quiet, unassuming, and non-threatening doll" whose submissiveness reaffirms traditional Asian and American patriarchal authority"* (Halualani & Vande Berg: 2004, 375).

The airlines use this Orientalistic ideas and related stereotypes for their own benefit. But, by using these Orientalistic discourses, they reconfirm them at the same time. Thereby reinforcing the idea that the West and "the Orient" are still unequal.
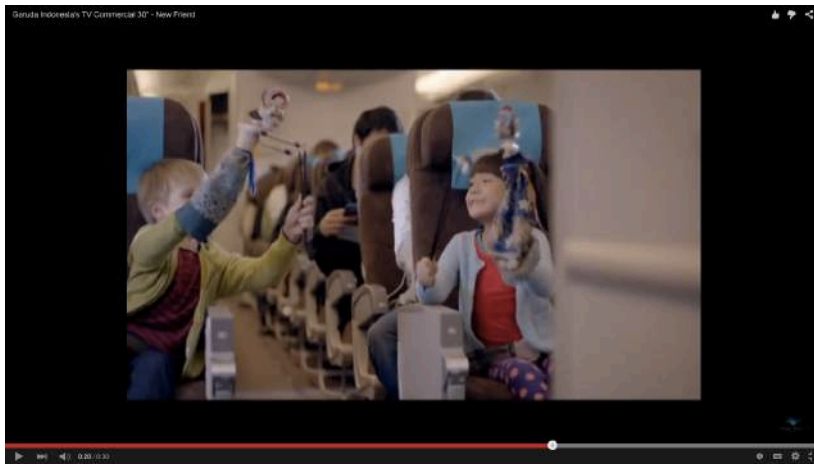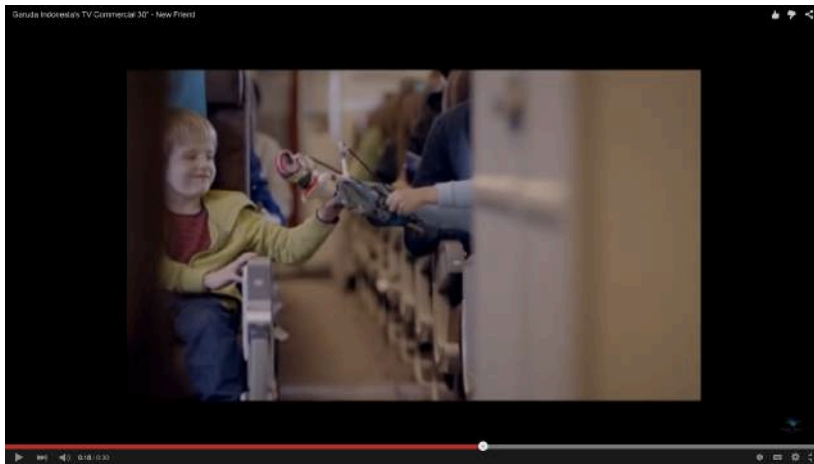
Fig. 3.12 – The Wajang puppet as way to connect (TV Commercial "New Friend" – 00:18 and 00:20 min)

Fig. 3.13 – Father and son improving their relationship through Indonesian food ("Father & Son" – 00:23 min)

Fig. 3.14 – Stewardesses of Garuda Indonesia vowing their hands as greeting ("Service Concept" - website Garuda Indonesia)

Representation of modern lifestyle: flight attendants as figures of modernity
In November and December 2014 Garuda Indonesia published three videos in the series *Cabin Crew Unrevealed Story*. In each of these videos the life of one flight attendant is shown. Agnes Setiawan is the main character of the first video. In her free time she enjoys jogging and boxing, her voice-over tells: *"for me, health is priceless"*. Dicky Hediawan is the central figure of the second video. His hobby is photography: *"To me life is about aesthetics, for that reason: I see the world from a different angle."* This quote can be interpreted in twofold: first, Dicky is seeing 'the world' through the lens of his camera, secondly: it refers to his profession. As flight attendant he sees many parts of the world and the world looks different -"from a different angle"- from the perspective of an airplane. This adds to the idea that Dicky's cosmopolitan lifestyle, which is strongly build upon his profession, gives him a different perspective. This perspective to the world is presented as something to admire and (obviously) not disapproved in the videos. Rayna Gracia is the principal character of the third video. She obtained a Bachelor-degree in Fashion, and combines her work as fashion designer with her work as stewardess for Garuda. The main goal of the three videos seems more to promote the lifestyle of Garuda's flight attendants than to attract future passengers. But these videos too are part of the strategy to create a strong brand for Garuda Indonesia. The lifestyle of these three flight attendants seems mostly 'shaped' by the economic growth of Indonesia.

The term 'figures of modernity' is central in the almost identical named book *Figures of Southeast Asian modernity* by Joshua Barker et al. In the book they describe their 'figures' as follows:

> *"many of the figures highlight novel aspects of social life that appear to be transcending classic elements of modernity. They embody the increased (yet often explicitly semipermeable) porosity of national borders, the development of transnationalism and flexible citizenship, the advent of instantaneous technology, and the critique of universalisms in the face of increasing global connections"* (Barker et al.: 2014, 12).

Agnes, Dicky and Rayna can be seen as ideal representatives of contemporary Indonesia: they are young, cosmopolitan, ambitious (words as "goals", "ambitions", "achieving things", "merits" and "challenges" are more than once used), professionals and Indonesian. Their cosmopolitanism is expressed in their choice of dressing, hobbies and their work for Garuda that allows them to see many parts of the world. These aspects give an idea that they are 'thinking global': knowing what is going on in the world, looking beyond their own nation. The magnets at Agnes' refrigerator symbolize this 'global mentality' beautifully. Each magnet stands for a nation and culture that is imported to Indonesia (Fig 3.15 and 3.16).

Different aspects of their lifestyle express this mobility, global activity and global awareness. Rayna for example did live in Singapore for a while and speaks several languages: Bahasa Indonesia, English and Mandarin, currently she is learning Dutch. All three: Rayna, Agnes and Dicky speak English -with a strong Indonesian accent- and easily switch between English and Bahasa Indonesia. In the *behind-the-scenes-videos* that I discussed earlier a similar usage of language(s) is visible. It shows how the cabin crewmembers of Garuda Indonesia (suggesting all Indonesians) have mastered the global *lingua franca* of today's world. They speak English next to their national language and this language is no reason for debate anymore. Sneddon has written that English is often used by educated Indonesians "to show their familiarity with so called prestigious cultures" (Sneddon: 2003, 173-7). None of Indonesia's regional languages or dialects is mentioned. The modern figure of contemporary Indonesia speaks Bahasa Indonesia and English, he is 'mobile' and 'active', but also: 'professional'.

Another important aspect of this professionalism is punctuality. There are several specific shots of watches: Dicky putting on his watch, Agnes checking her watch in

the taxi. These images connote 'punctuality' and underline the importance of "being on time" that Garuda is so heavily promoting in different commercials. Yet another aspect is the ability to use technical devices. Agnes, Dicky and Rayna are familiar with computers and smart phones: reflecting their level of education, class and standard of income, which is underlined by close-ups of their hands using these technical devices.

For all three 'flight attendant' is their dream job. They say to *"love travelling and meeting new people"*. They are 'naturally' friendly and service-oriented, and only need *"a smile"* in return. Another important aspect is their endless seeking for progress. They all say to be fond of *"challenges"* and *"to achieve things".* This can be linked to the (modern) idea of an open market wherein everyone must be judged by his/her merits, instead of gender, cultural- or ethnical background. In this type of society it is important to constantly renew oneself and stay up-to-date. Garuda Indonesia subsequently shows itself a modern employer by giving their cabin crew the opportunity to learn new languages and explore the world. Another important feature of the videos is the clear distinction that is made between 'professional' and 'private' life. A returning moment in the videos is the moment of 'transformation': the moment that Dicky, Agnes and Rayna 'change' from their private-selves to their professional selves. This change is best made visible in their outfits, and for the ladies also their hair and makeup (Fig 3.16).

Fig. 3.15 - Magnets at Agnes' refrigerator, representing a global mindset ("Cabin Crew Unrevealed Stories I – 4:27 min)

Fig. 3.16 – Agnes without makeup next to her collected magnets ("Cabin Crew Unrevealed Stories I – 4:32 min)

Garuda Indonesia and Malaysia Airlines: 'modernities' compared

In the previous chapters I tried to analyze what modernity looks like in Malaysia and Indonesia, as it is represented in the audiovisual promotion material of their national airlines. Now I will discuss the similarities and differences between the representations of 'modernity' and more importantly: overlapping themes that seem important 'shapers' of modernity in Malaysia and Indonesia. I distinguish three important themes that 'shape' and 'influence' the representation of modern gender patterns, the modern city, the modern family, the modern Indonesia and the modern Malaysia. These themes are: the colonial past and independence of the nations. Secondly, the economic development that has led to urbanization, consumerism and the upcoming of a new middle class: the ultimate symbol of this economic success (Chong: 2005, 47-64). Finally the influence of Islam that is strongly interwoven with politics and daily life. Not at least in the lives of these 'new' middle classes that generally seem to embrace the Islamic faith. At the end I will relate my research to Chong's assumption that there is a *"recognizable modern Southeast Asian culture"* developing (Chong: 2005, 56).

Post-colonialism

Malaysia Airlines' short film *TERBANG* opens with a scene in the primary school class of the main character: Ahmad. The multicultural class consists of Indian-Malaysian children, Chinese-Malaysian children and Malay children. Each student

has to present a *Merdeka*-story in front of the class: relating Malaysia's struggle for freedom to his/her daily life. This scene is the strongest but not the only reference that is made to the Independence of Malaysia or Indonesia in their commercials and *behind-the-scenes* videos. This reference is on the one hand a reflection of how the colonial history is repeated and kept alive in these nations: most (if not 'all') schools in Malaysia will teach their students of the nation's colonial history and independence from British rule in 1957. On the other hand the short film in itself and all the videos wherein references are made to this colonial past, help Malaysia and Indonesia with build a united nation-state.

Every nation is an *imagined community* and stories of a shared past, especially one that demands solidarity and cooperation against one enemy, help the population to feel united (Anderson: 2006, 6-7). At the same time the postcolonial history is 'used' as a way to convince people. For most viewers Malaysia's- or Indonesia's sovereignty is not to be debated. This 'fact' is accepted and internalized, which makes a reference to its colonial history a strong starting point, when at a later moment in the video, for example gender roles are shown. Just as 'justified' as Malaysia's Independence is, is the 'message' that 'the family' should be central in everyone's life, and that especially women should not think lightly about their caretaking roles in the family. It is a linguistic trick, that is often used by anyone who is trying to convince someone else: starting to discuss something that is (generally) accepted and that feels 'natural', followed by something more debatable that is presented as a logic outcome of the previous. For example: to stay healthy it is necessary to drink 1,5 liter of water everyday, therefore you should buy Evian. The first thing is something generally accepted, the second turns the first statement into an advertisement. It is not necessary to buy Evian to stay healthy. Neither is it necessary that mothers should spend a larger amount than their husbands, in their homes to take care of 'the family' because Malaysia's sovereignty would be in danger otherwise. Garuda Indonesia also wants to be associated with the postcolonial era of their nation. Their year of foundation is for example, based on a triumph flight of Sukarno from Yogyakarta to Jakarta in 1949 ("About" - website Garuda Indonesia).

With this colonial past fresh in mind and combated sovereignty it is of importance for Malaysia and Indonesia to maintain a 'unique' national culture. There seems a friction

between 'modernity' that is often associated with Western and capitalist ideas, and the fear of losing their national identity. The colonial past might explain the fear of (total) Westernization. Though nowadays there are also unquestioned Asian modernities in South Korea and Japan: Asian nations that could be imitated by Malaysia and Indonesia without the fear of becoming Western. The same fear can however also be applied to these 'dominant' Asian countries. It could then be stated that a 'double fear' exists: firstly to become too Western, secondly to become too Japanese/Korean/Chinese. Though these cultures are definitely Asian and therefore less a danger, it would still mean a loss of national authenticity when one of these cultures becomes too dominant. Besides: it should not be forgotten that in Japan and Korea too, the debates of *"Are we not becoming too Western?" "Are we not losing our cultural authenticity?"* have never been far away.

It seems quite hard to let the discourse of 'East versus West' loose. Especially since total isolation is not an option anymore: these nations' economic prosperity is based on an amount of openness to foreign companies and investors. Malaysia and Indonesia are highly dependent on (often) Western multinationals for the continuation of their nations' growth (Chong: 2005, 51-5). The Biggest foreign investors in Malaysia are Japan and Singapore. Other nations in the top ten of 2014 were: the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States. Indonesia's biggest foreign investors are Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States and South Korea (Santander Trade). This dependence on 'foreigners', not at least 'Westerners' is visible in the commercials of Garuda and Malaysia Airlines that focus on this group that have a budget for travelling. This is visible in the spoken language: English, the international *lingua franca* but it would not have been the chosen first language if the videos were addressed to Arabs or Indonesians only. One TV commercial of Garuda is fully in Bahasa Indonesia without subtitles, which is addressed to Indonesian hajjis. It is meaningful that this video is not made accessible to English-speaking viewers. Garuda intentionally chose to not affront the audience with Islamic references. This is representative to all of the videos of the airlines. Observing the destinations of Malaysia Airlines and Garuda: Europe, Asia and the West Coast of the United States, also show that the main focus is on Western business(wo)men and tourists that come to Malaysia or Indonesia, and the other way

around: prosperous Malaysians and Indonesians that travel abroad for business or holidays.

Malaysia Airlines and Garuda Indonesia refer several times to their colonial history. Thereby underlining a general feeling among their nation's citizens that they are afraid of losing their national identity, especially the fear of becoming culturally overwhelmed by ex-colonial nations' cultures. However at the same time shows this audiovisual material with a commercial goal, that these airlines make concessions to 'Western tastes', for example by leaving the Islam out of their videos and commercials. This religion has a negative connotation in many Western nations and could deter future passengers. Not only to fly with these airlines, but also to come to Malaysia and Indonesia in general.

Emerging middleclass
All the researched videos present only members of the middle class. 'The middle class' made these videos, with 'the middle class' as target audience. Employees of the airlines (part of middleclass themselves) form the principal characters of the audiovisual material, the videos are filmed on locations of the middle or higher classes' habitat: airports, the city and more quiet urban areas. The videos are made by professional filmmakers on behalf of a company that has middle classes as their 'target' for marketing.

Chong writes that the middle classes are symbols of economic prosperity in Southeast Asian nations (2005, 51). Their rise in Southeast Asia is the result of the region's economic growth in the last decades. These middle classes are the success stories of the economic growth. In Malaysia they are termed *Melayu Baru* (the new Malay): they have *"become the etnically inscribed face of Malaysian economic progress"* (Chong: 2005, 51). However the Malaysian middleclass is fragmented. While the Malays are *"nurtured by state-centred economic development",* the Chinese Malaysians have benefited from economic globalization in general (Chong: 2005, 49). Indonesia's growth is the result of the economic transformation during the New Order period (1967-1998) (Afif: 2014, 2). Similar to Malaysia's middleclass, Indonesia's middleclass is also ethnically divided and state dependent. Historically ethnic Chinese dominated Indonesia's middleclass, but more and more indigenous

Indonesians, often Muslims, have entered this class. Thereby making the Islam *"a lifestyle symbol among Indonesian middle class Muslims"* (Chong: 2005, 51). The life of these middle classers is often set in urban areas: especially in cities such as Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Penang. Educational backgrounds are another important aspect of similarity between the Indonesian and Malaysian middleclass: *"State-planned education has been vital in nurturing middleclasses"* (Chong: 2005, 50). Members of this class have often obtained degrees in high education and have not rarely studied overseas for a while, which gives them a cosmopolitan attitude (Chong: 2005, 50).

Chong observes among Southeast Asian middle classes similarities in incomes, social status and lifestyle choices. He lists three common features: they are *"shaped by Americanization, Japanization, and more recently, the economic rise of China"* (2005, 55), which will ensure, argues Chong, *"that the Southeast Asian middle classes remain open to, even dependent on, globalization and regionalization"* (2005, 55). Nations such as the United States, Japan and increasingly China are not only a threat because of their economic power, but also because of their successful 'soft power' politics: the ability to export popular culture products such as *Hollywood movies* and *manga* overseas. This is what Condry meant when he discussed the fear of 'becoming overwhelmed by other cultures' (2001, 386). Indonesian and Malaysian middleclass are known for their cosmopolitan lifestyles: picking and mixing 'the best' of global and local cultures. This 'picking' has become easier and more common with the emergence of consumerism in these nations.

This leads to Chong's second feature: Southeast Asian middleclass forms an expanding market for multinationals and mass consumption (2005, 56). Growing numbers of companies are starting to pay attention to the taste and wishes of these Asian consumers. Chong's third feature is that *"from the dynamism and cultural creativity of the Southeast Asian middle class, a regional or Asian identity will emerge. As a space in which the East and West, local and global collide"* (2005, 56). The videos that I researched can be seen as products that were made and produced by professionals of the Malaysian and Indonesian middle classes.

The influence of the Islam

Islam is the biggest religion in Indonesia and Malaysia. In both nations is the Islamic faith strongly interwoven with politics and daily life. In Malaysia Islam is seen as the traditional religion of the Malay population, as it still mostly is. The new middle classes, especially women (or at least they are the most researched by academics) show a 'turn to Islam' (Azalanshah: 2014, 306-7; Dzuhayatin: 2001, 257-60; Stivens: 1994, 85-8; Woodward: 2011, 3). Chong argues that Islam has become a *"life style symbol"* among middleclass Indonesians. The religion plays a central role in Indonesia's- and Malaysia's female fashion industry, and it has its role in celebrity culture, soaps and other television-shows. Stivens writes about Malaysian Muslim women that:

> *"to the Western, sometimes Orientalist, feminist the veiled Muslim woman in Malaysia and elsewhere is often, in a highly reductionist way, made to be representative of all that is antithetical to modernist or postmodernist feminisms. But (…) the various degrees of a supposedly purer Islam have great appeal for modern Malaysian women of both the middle and working classes. (…) [They see] themselves as the very models of modern good-living Malay womanhood. For middle-class Malay women some greatest adherents to the model of modern Muslim femininity, the veiling and covering of the body has become a potent symbol not only of 'modern' womanhood but of class situation and status"* (Stivens: 1998, 84-6).

In Stiven's quote two things come to the forth. First, the negative 'Western perspective' on the Islam: the religion is here seen as a stimulator of 'not-modern-behavior'. Muslim women, especially if they wear a headscarf, are in Western eyes quickly victims of a dictating religion. It is most likely therefore that wearing a headscarf is not compulsory and even discouraged for stewardesses of Malaysia Airlines and Garuda Indonesia (except from flights to Saudi Arabia). None of Garuda's flight attendants wear one in the videos, and only a few attendants of Malaysia Airlines wear a headscarf. Secondly, Stivens shows how these Malaysian middle classes (the same is applicable to Indonesian middle classes) that are known for their cosmopolitan attitudes, 'use' their Islamic identity as a sort of 'soft resistance' to the West. Islamic faith, or faith in general, is used as antidote to the 'bad

influences' of modernity and Westernization. Especially American culture is associated with hip-ness and success, but also with individualism, hedonism, or liberalism (Chong: 2005, 64). Stivens argues that: *"some Muslim thinkers [write] that a resurgent or socialist Islam might provide the ills of Western modernity, including individualism and materialism* (Stivens: 1994, 86). Schmidt substantiates this argument with her fieldwork in Indonesian shopping malls during Ramadan. People that she interviewed during her fieldwork argue that they buy less, or buy more gifts because of Ramadan (2012: 398-9). It is interesting to see that these people 'defend' their patterns of consumerism and visits to the shopping mall (a symbol of modernity) with their religious identity. Islam hereby functions as a 'moral compass' to avoid the 'traps of modernity'. The airlines represent these 'values' in their commercials because they reflect the ideals of their nation. On the one hand they avoid obvious references to the Islam: such as headscarves for stewardesses, on the other hand they show ideals and lifestyles of their nations and these are often highly influenced or defended with help of the Islamic faith.

Towards a "Southeast Asian modernity"?
Chong's concluding chapter discusses the 'form' and 'look' that Southeast Asian modernity will attain. He outlines a couple of contemporary processes that will influence this 'shape' of modernity in this region, for example the fast growing gap between rich and poor: from this processes is (obviously) nothing shown in the videos that I researched.

The videos used for my research are examples of Malaysian- and Indonesian produced representations of their nations' modernity. This audiovisual material shows how they present first of all their nations' 'uniqueness': for example in the modern versions of traditional clothing (only for the female flight attendants! Male flight attendants do not wear uniforms that are based on traditional clothing), the serving of national food and showing objects that function as national symbols, such as the *wau bulan* for Malaysia and *Wajang puppets* for Indonesia. They seem to differentiate themselves from the West in doing so. A different way of opposing the West, next to the Islam that is not so obviously represented, is by the development of discourses of 'Asian values' (Chong: 2005, 63-4). By using similar ways of representing their nations, these Southeast Asian nations form a block on the one hand to distinguish

themselves from the West, and from (East) Asia, while at the same time they form a 'Southeast Asian' block that is attractive for foreigners to travel with these airlines and to these nations for business or holidays.

Conclusion

Chong asks himself several times in his book: what will Southeast Asian modernity look like? Apparently it is something that is still in the making and developing. It is not something 'stable' and 'fixed' yet (if it will ever be). Together with other authors he gives suggestions of what this modernity will look like and even more what processes or 'groups' are influential for the 'shaping' of modernity in this region. Outlining Malaysian and Indonesian modernity through the commercials and videos of their national airlines shows several important 'shapers' of modernity in these nations. These 'shapers' influence what is seen as 'modern' or 'modernity' in different areas: from gender-roles and family-life, to 'what is typically Asian' and 'what a modern city looks like.' The main 'shapers' are: the colonial histories of Malaysia and Indonesia, which are histories of oppression by 'Others': mostly European powers and Japan. A second important 'producer' of Malaysian and Indonesian modernity are the new middle classes that have benefited from the recently obtained economic growth. They are not only influential because of their 'economic power' but also because of their professions. They give the nation a 'modern', more self-confident and cosmopolitan attitude. The characters of the researched videos are all middleclass: ambitious and prosperous 'winners' of economic growth. They live in designed homes of concrete and use technical devices with ease. But also at the level of filmmaking is chosen for a 'modern approach'. Filmic 'tricks' such as: split screens, quick editing, fast motion, beveled shots, and time lapses are used. Many of these techniques add a feeling of speed to the videos, similar tricks are often used in music videos, which adds a certain youth and hipness to these promotional videos. A third important aspect is Islam. It is often 'used' for moralistic reasons: a guide of how to be a 'good' person. Religion is hereby used as opposition to Westernization. This might be another reason, next to the many negative connotations that the Islam has in Western nations, that the videos of Garuda Indonesia and Malaysia Airlines are not keen on presenting their nation's religion so obviously.

Bibliography and used sources

About Garuda Indonesia. 2014. Garuda Indonesia. 11-10-2015.
    <https://www.garuda-indonesia.com/id/en/corporate-partners/company-
    profile/about/index.page?>

Aer Lingus Homepage. 2015. Aer Lingus. 25-05-2015. <www.aerlingus.com/html/en-
    GB/home.html>

American Airlines Homepage. 2015. American Airlines. 25-05-2015.
    <www.americanairlines.co.uk/homePage.do?locale=en_GB>

Amrith, Sunil. "Migration, Development, and the Asian City, 1950-1970." *Migration
    and Diaspora in Modern Asia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
    117-150.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* London: Verso, 2006 (third edition)

Afif, Syaiful. "The Rising of Middle Class in Indonesia: Opportunity and Challenge."
    University of Southern California. 2014.

 Md Azalanshah Md Syed and C. Runnel. "Malay women, non-Western soap
    operas and watching competencies." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14.3
    (2014): 304-323.

Barker, Joshua and Erik Harms, Johan Lindquist, eds. *Figures of Southeast Asian
    Modernity.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

Chernatony, Leslie de. "Adapting brand theory to the context of nation branding."
    Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice. Ed. Keith Dinnie. Oxford:
    Elsevier, 2008. 16-20.

Chernatony, Leslie de. *Note on Nation Branding.* 2009. William Davidson Institute:
    University of Michigan. 22-05-2015. <http://globalens.com/DocFiles/PDF/
    cases/inspection/GL1428772I.pdf>

Chong, Terence. *Modernization Trends in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

Condry, Ian. "Japanese hip-hop and the Globalization of Popular Culture." *In Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City.* Eds. Georg Gmelch and Walter Zenner. Illinois: Waveland Press, 2001. 357-87.

Dzuhayatin, Siti Ruhaini. "Gender & Pluralism in Indonesia." *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.* Ed. Robert Hefner. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. 253-267.

Experience. 2015. Malaysia Airlines. 26-05-2015. <http://www.malaysiaairlines.com/my/en/experience.html>

Foreign Investment in Indonesia. 2015. Santander Trade. 06-06-2015. <https://en.santandertrade.com/establish-overseas/indonesia/foreign-investment>

Foreign Investment in Malaysia. 2015. Santander Trade. 06-06-2015. <https://en.santandertrade.com/establish-overseas/malaysia/foreign-investment>

Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar. "Introduction." *Alternative Modernities*. Ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. 1-23.

Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Halualani, Rona Tamiko, and Leah R. Vande Berg. "'Asian or American': Meanings In, Through, and Around All-American Girl." *Critical Approaches to Television*. Eds. Leah R. Vande Berg et al. Boston etc.: Houghton Miffin Company, 2004: 214-35.

Hanchard, Michael. "Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics and the African Diaspora." *Alternative Modernities*. Ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. 1-23.

Kipnis, Andrew. "Introduction: Chinese Modernity and the Individual Psyche". *Chinese Modernity and the Individual Psyche.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 1-16.

Limin, Merie. *"Singapore Girl 2.0?"* Diss. (MA Thesis). Leiden University, 2014. Leiden, 2014.

Lim, William. *Alternative (post)modernity: An Asian perspective.* Singapore: Select Publishing, 2003.

Linning, Stephanie. "Malaysia Airlines to be nationalised in bid to rescue company after MH17 and MH370 tragedies put future in jeopardy amid mounting losses." *Daily Mail.* <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2720589/Malaysia-Airlines-nationalised-bid-rescue-company-MH17-MH370-tragedies-future-jeopardy-amid-mounting-losses.html>

McCarthy, Terry. "Who's B.J. Habibie?" *Time* 151.21 (1998) <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=6f6f6d0d-074f-4b66-891d6e9608419d9b%40sessionmgr111&hid=105&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=633702&db=aph>

Prammaggiore, Maria and Tom Wallis. *Film: a critical introduction.* London: Laurence King Publishing. Third edition, 2011.

Personeel Malaysia Airlines vertrekt. 2014. NOS. 26-05-2015. <http://nos.nl/artikel/690702-personeel-malaysia-airlines-vertrekt.html>

Raguraman, K. "Airlines as instruments for nation building and national identity: case study of Malaysia and Singapore." *Journal of Transport Geography* 5.4 (1997): 239-56.

"Sembah." *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*. Online version 1.5. 2015. <http://kbbi.web.id/sembah>

Service-concept. 2015. Garuda Indonesia. 26-05-2015. < https://www.garuda-indonesia.com/nl/en/garuda-indonesia-experience/service-concept/index.page?>

Sneddon, James. *The Indonesian Language: Its history and role in modern society.* Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003.

Schmidt, Leonie. "Urban Islamic spectacles: transforming the space of the shopping mall during Ramadan in Indonesia." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 13.3 (2012): 384-407.

Stivens, Maila. "Gender and Modernity in Malaysia." *Modernity and Identity: Asian Illustrations*. Ed. Alberto Gomes. Bundoora: La Trobe University Press, 1994. 66-95.

Stivens, Maila. "Sex, gender and the making of the new Malay middle classes." Gender and Power Affluent Asia. Eds. Krishna Sen and Maila Stivens. London and New York: Routledge, 1998. 87-126.

Timberman Newcomb, John. "The Footprint of the Twentieth Century: American Skyscrapers and Modernist Poems." *Modernism/Modernity* 10.1 (2003): 97-125.

Van Wichelen, Sonja. *Religion, Politics and Gender in Indonesia: Disputing the Muslim Body*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Williams, Raymond. "Modern". *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*. 1976. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Woodward, Mark. *Java, Indonesia and Islam*. Londen, New York, Dordrecht: Springer, 2011.

The World's Top Airlines. 2015. World Airline Awards. 05-05-2015. <http://www.worldairlineawards.com>

Yano, Christine. *Airborne Dreams*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011.

Videos

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Cabin Crew Unrevealed Story 1." *Youtube*. 23-11-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxo-ADJLrQc>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Cabin Crew Unrevealed Story 2." *Youtube*. 09-12-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fF5XrdVuTL8>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Cabin Crew Unrevealed Story 3." *Youtube*. 18-12-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8zTGben-i8>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Garuda Maintenance Facility: Wings of Safety." *Youtube*. 03-06-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnJa5M90hqc>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Garuda Plus Umrah." *Youtube*. 16-10-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvqA2tBlDpA>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Garuda Operation Center (GOC): On Time Anytime." *Youtube*. 03-06-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elAsti3HdMw>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia Training Centre (GITC): The Boot Camp."
　　　Youtube. 03-06-2014. 15-05-2015.
　　　<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw6OybwNJs>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia's TV Commercial – Father and Son." *Youtube*.
　　　20-01-2014. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlUFxdPyfR0>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia's TVC – New Friend." *Youtube*. 20-01-2014.
　　　15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhZEjhLDHSw>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Aerofood ACS: Kitchen Confidential."
　　　Youtube. 03-06-2014. 15-05-2015.
　　　<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c74hsmQZkpk>.

Garuda Indonesia. 'Garuda Indonesia Raih "The World's Best Cabin Crew 2014."'
　　　Youtube. 04-01-2015. 10-06-2015.
　　　<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksjTOKCw1k8>

Malaysia Airlines. "BLESSINGS, A Malaysian story - #keepflying – Chinese New
　　　Year 2015 short film." *Youtube*. 08-02-2015. 15-05-2015.
　　　<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DB5lMEnsZs>.

Malaysia Airlines. "A Dash of Colourful Kuala Lumpur #MH48hours." *Youtube*. 03-02-
　　　2014. 15-05- 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EmFrSlqu6k>.

Malaysia Airlines. "Destination Kuala Lumpur // Departing Home (Episode 1)."
　　　Youtube. 12-01-2015. 15-05-2015.
　　　<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05dmmDTjUAl>.

Malaysia Airlines. "Destination Kuala Lumpur // In the Air (Episode 2)." *Youtube*. 12-
　　　01-2015. 15-05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqvnFia3GiQ>.

Malaysia Airlines. "Destination Kuala Lumpur // Shopping & Luxury (Episode 3)."
    Youtube. 12- 01-2015. 15-05-2015.
    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4scCtL7tng>.

Malaysia Airlines. "Destination Kuala Lumpur // Food Capital (Episode 4)."
    Youtube. 12- 01-2015. 15-05-2015.
    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqrgnHp-jyI>.

Malaysia Airlines. "Destination Kuala Lumpur // Departing Kuala Lumpur (Episode
    5)." *Youtube.* 12-01-2015. 15-05-2015.
    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHUX9o4wNYQ>.

Malaysia Airlines. "TERBANG, A Malaysian story - #flyinghigh – Merdeka 2014 short
    film." *Youtube.* 24-08-2014. 15-05-2015.
    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKU1Kx9X0MM>.

Malaysia Airlines. "Under the Shades of the Twin Towers." *Youtube.* 02-01-2014. 15-
    05-2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suLKAHy7O_I>.

Pictures front page and Introduction

Garuda Indonesia. "Garuda Indonesia – Garuda Operation Center (GOC): On Time
    Anytime." *Youtube.* 03-06-2014. 15-05-2015.
    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elAsti3HdMw>.

Garuda Indonesia. "Service-concept - Sight" *Garuda Indonesia.* 2015. 15-05-2015.
    < https://www.garuda-indonesia.com/nl/en/garuda-indonesia-
    experience/service-concept/sight/index.page?>

Malaysia Airlines. "Experience – Inflight Entertainment." *Malaysia Airlines.* 2015. 15-
    05-2015. <http://www.malaysiaairlines.com/nl/en/experience/in-
    flight_entertainment.html>